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Translation and Philosophy

Edited by Lisa Foran

Peter Lang

Volume 11

Intercultural Studies and Foreign Language Learning

To what extent is philosophy reliant on translation and how does this practice impact on philosophy itself? How should philosophical texts be translated? Is translation inherently philosophical? Can philosophy be described as a 'type of translation'? The essays in this collection seek to respond to these intriguing and provocative questions. Exploring a wide range of issues, from the complexities of translating ambiguous philosophical terms to the role of language in concepts of identity and society, each essay highlights the manner in which the two disciplines rely on (and intersect with) each other. Drawing the collection together is an understanding of both translation and philosophy as practices which seek for meaning in our complex relationship with language and the world.

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Translation and Philosophy

Intercultural Studies and Foreign Language Learning

EDITED BY

Arnd Witte and Theo Harden

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Contents

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Philosophy in many senses is about opening up a space within which a questioning can take place. As such I would most like to thank all of the speakers who originally took part in the conference; their papers and the lively dialogues that ensued over those two days in March succeeded in opening up that space within which the relation between translation and philosophy could, and can, be described and questioned in ever new ways.

Funding for this publication was generously provided by The National University of Ireland (NUI). That such financial support is still available at a time of severe economic crisis; when cuts to education budgets, often most sharply felt in the humanities and social sciences, are so widespread; is not only surprising but reveals the deep and genuine commitment of that institution to education, scholarship and research. Such a commitment can only be admired, and I would like to thank the NUI most sincerely.

INTRODUCTION

What is the Relation between Translation and Philosophy?

This collection of essays was borne of a conference of the same name held in Dublin at Newman House in March 2010. Working on a doctorate in philosophy which focuses on Jacques Derrida, translation and the Other; and having worked as a practising translator, I had for some time been questioning the nature of the relation between these two fields.

It seemed to me that these two disciplines had been involved in a constant dialogue with one another, but on the surface at least, a dialogue that had in some senses been silenced, in any case and especially in the English speaking world. Coming from an English speaking academic background my own first experience of philosophy was through translation and though I was made familiar with non-English terms, the nuances of these terms were explored in English; a language usually other than the original. It struck me as strange that so little space in philosophy was given to explaining what takes place in any translation. At a time when English is becoming more and more the *lingua franca* of any international dialogue, it seemed that more attention needed to be paid to what it means to speak *in* translation. The paradox of the universality of English in our era is that on the one hand it permits more dialogue and communication; on the other hand, we must ask: what are the dangers of a homogenisation of a dialogue into one language alone? From yet another perspective, one might ask why it is that English has not yet been wholeheartedly embraced by philosophy, in the way that it has been, for example, in science. Translation studies, a field still coming to terms with its own boundaries since its foundation in the 1970s, is now more and more concerned with the practicalities of translation. Many translation studies courses focus on technological advancements made in the area, and educators are being forced more and more to push the philosophy of translation to one side, as they struggle to meet the demands of an ever competitive jobs market.

This is by no means of course to suggest that there were *no* conversations taking place about translation and philosophy. Andrew Benjamin, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Marc Crépon, Lawrence Venuti, Joseph Graham, Kathleen Davies, to name but a few, have published extensively on this very issue and their work is responsible for a heightening awareness of these issues.

The incredible response to the call for papers revealed that these are issues that occupy many people, of many disciplines and of course, of many languages. The practice of translation leads invariably to deeply philosophical questions. How is one to say precisely what a given word/sentence/phrase *means*? What indeed is the nature of meaning? To what extent does the surplus of any one word's meanings delimit and define in one language what it should say in another? In choosing one word over another how ethical is the choice of the translator? How much does a translator speak 'in the name of' the author? To what extent does a text *require* translation? Is something truly lost in this transformative process or is something only truly lost when it is *no longer* given over to the process of transformation? With philosophy, perhaps more than any other genre, translation is pushed to its limits in an effort to carry across terms that are not existent in the target language – words like *différance*, *Geist*, *Dasein*, to name but a few, are common currency in the English speaking philosophical world, how does this impact on English as a language in general? Could philosophy be said to be a type of translation? Given that so many philosophical works are read in translation, to what extent is philosophy dependent on it? To what extent has translation modified and re-invented the work of philosophers? From Descartes to Quine philosophy has often strived to provide a 'theory of translation', what impact, if any, do these theories have on translation in practice?

These questions are not only of concern to the translator but also to any discipline that seeks to explain, or at least describe, the experience of being in the world; a world in many senses constituted and constructed from our linguistic engagement. These questions are also those which guide this collection. Questions which may not have straightforward answers but then perhaps the most fruitful questions are precisely those that provoke more questioning; more wonder at the world in which we find ourselves.

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We begin the collection with the playfully entitled paper 'The Awful German Language, or, Is "*Die Geistige Entwicklung*" "The Mental Development"?' by Theo Harden. The title of the piece is taken in part from Wilhelm von Humboldt and in part from Mark Twain. Harden argues that although translation studies has engaged in a lively debate on issues surrounding literary translation, its response to the very particular issues surrounding the translation of philosophical texts has been somewhat muted. Many of these issues are rooted in the inherently ambiguous nature of philosophy itself, an ambiguity that often forces the translator to explicate a text; rather than embracing what can be a fruitful and intentional opacity. The essay centres on the problem of translating the German noun *Geist* and its derived adjective *geistig*. Tracing the problematic through the framework of formal and dynamic equivalence, Harden notes that while the translation of *Geist* into the English noun 'Spirit' may serve the translator; employing the English adjective 'spiritual' for its supposed German equivalent *geistig*, proves deeply problematic. Drawing on Jonathon Rée's claim that philosophy is always already a type of translation, Harden notes that 'Philosophical texts do not have a "home", they are polyglot by their very nature and they are obscure'; which is precisely why they are so intriguing. Harden ends his paper with a new and innovative translation of *Geist* – the surprise of which I will not spoil here!

Geist and the ambiguity of philosophical texts take centre stage in the essay by David Charlston entitled 'Translating Hegel's Ambiguity: A Culture of *Humor* and *Witz*'. The paper is an almost direct response to one of the questions raised above, namely: 'To what extent has translation modified and re-invented the work of philosophers?' Examining three different translations of Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Charlston highlights the (often neglected) fact that every translator operates from a particular historical context and is motivated by specific social, cultural, and ideological concerns. How these concerns impact on the translations they produce is perhaps most evident in the strategies adopted when translators are confronted with an ambiguous text. Re-asserting the importance of historical context not only for Hegel's translators but also for Hegel himself;

Charlston notes the extent to which ambiguity was an integral part of Hegel's cultural milieu. A reaction to the perceived 'dogmatism' of some pre-Kantian philosophers such as Christian Wolff, and a prevalent literary style; ambiguity, Charlston argues, was deliberately employed by Hegel as 'a fundamental starting point for speculative philosophy'. An examination of a particularly important yet opaque sentence from the *Phänomenologie*, deftly illustrates not only Hegel's deliberate use of ambiguity but also the ideological drives of his translators. From the British Idealism motivating Baillie's Christian rendering (1910/31), to the anti-Marxism behind Miller's 'right-Hegelian' translation (1977), right up to the 'Communitarianism' of Pinkard's version (2008): Charlston illustrates that not only is every translation a personal yet philosophical interpretation; but that every new translation can lead to a 'new' Hegel.

'Reading Oneself in Quotation Marks: At the Crossing of Disciplines' by Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan, weaves philosophy, literature and psychoanalysis together in an effort to understand what she terms 'the dynamics of self-translation'. She begins by noting the tension between *Heimlich* and *unheimlich* that operates in both translation as 'transference of meaning' from a home language to an other language; and the psychoanalytical concept of 'transference'. Erdinast-Vulcan traces the uncanniness of translation through the experience of self-translation in émigré authors. She highlights Eva Hoffman's encounter with the 'radical disjoining of word and thing' that takes place under self-translation and the ontological consequences of this process. The translated self, Erdinast-Vulcan points out, is one that is not at home in its own skin. Polish born Joseph Conrad is, of course, the example par excellence of the émigré author; writing not in his second but his third language. While it may seem that Conrad, unlike the authors he is often cited with like Beckett or Kundera, did not express in his work a nostalgia or wish to return 'home'; Erdinast-Vulcan takes us deeper into his opus. She notes that while his works may not be autobiographical they are what she terms 'heterobiographical'. That is, whereas autobiography engages in a type of delimitation of the self; heterobiography reveals the manner in which those limits or borders remain, to some extent, porous. Conrad's work, she argues, continually returns to the strangeness within the self – a strangeness he was all too familiar with through his own self-

translation. She alludes to the fact that these émigré authors are in a certain sense only exemplary, that, as Derrida and Freud have noted (albeit in slightly different ways); we all engage in a process of self-translation. Language constitutes the self and yet is always other to the self; it is always both *from* and *for* the Other.

'Moonless Moons and a Pretty Girl: Translating Ikkyū Sōjun' by Andrew Whitehead, enquires into the nature of philosophical translation, both in terms of the translation of philosophical texts, but also in terms of the necessity of philosophical engagement in the act of translation. Whitehead draws on the work of James Heisig in order to come close to an understanding of how philosophical translation should take place. Examining a poem by the Zen thinker Ikkyū and a number of existing translations; Whitehead highlights the extent to which 'meaning' is constituted, not just by the text, but also by the translator's approach to the text. Through an investigation of four existing translations of the poem he notes that in each case the translator imposes too much of their own interpretation without fully engaging with the philosophical drives behind the work. As a result of this lack of philosophical engagement, in this case with the tenets of Zen thinking, the translations produced are unfaithful to philosophy itself. Appreciating the subtleties of thinkers such as Nāgārjuna and Linji, particularly in terms of negation, affirmation and emptiness; Whitehead manages to achieve a balance between entering the world of the poet and providing a personal interpretation in his own original translation. Worth noting, however, is that this balanced philosophical engagement not only produces a translation closer to the original 'meaning'; but also one that is closer to the original form and rhythm in the poem. Indicating thus, that a philosophical engagement produces a translation that is not only more faithful to philosophy itself but also to the multiple layers of meaning – meaning expressed in words, but also in rhythm, structure, etc. – that take place in any one text. Therefore, translation, in the strictest sense of a 'carrying over', can really only take place at all when it is philosophically informed.

'Translation and Justice in Paul Ricoeur' by Angelo Bottone, examines the manner in which these two themes not only relate, but in a sense provide each other's frameworks in the later writings of Ricoeur. Bottone notes that Ricoeur spent much of his later years focusing on the problem

of justice. In terms of Ricoeur's earlier work, Bottone highlights the key role of the hermeneutic principle of distantiation. In writing, discourse itself becomes objectified; distanced from its producer. Interpretation is a reply to this distantiation, this objectification, and it is through interpretation of the text that the self not only comes to know the self but is in fact constituted. For Ricoeur, the juridical lies between both moral and political philosophy and it is characterised as an act of judgement. Translation too is an act of judgement; in both translation and in justice we are confronted with the problem of applying a general rule or law to a particular case. However, as Bottone notes, translation for Ricoeur is not just *similar* to justice because it entails an act of judgement; but more fundamentally translation always concerns alterity, hence, like justice, it is always ethical. Ricoeur elevates translation to a model of ethical engagement since translators employ the art of mediation and of hosting; hosting the foreign language in their 'home'. From this, Bottone concludes, one might view juridical translation as having a double ethical force in that as translation it engages in 'hosting' the other and that as juridical it is the condition of the possibility of justice.

Ricoeur's approach to translation is revisited in my own paper 'Translation as a Path to the Other: Derrida and Ricoeur' (Lisa Foran). Briefly tracing the concepts of 'text' and language through the writings of each thinker, I highlight points of intersection and departure in their work. Emmanuel Levinas's understanding of language is introduced to shed another light on the ambiguous relation between language and the Other. Central to the paper is the contrasting manner in which Derrida and Ricoeur approach the problematic of translation. For Derrida, every language is always already *in* translation; a state of impurity. Languages borrow terms from each, revealing the ever porous nature of the borders of language. Further, every text is both translatable and untranslatable. Totally translatable a text disappears; if it does not require a constant re-enactment of translation, a new way in which to be interpreted, it is subsumed. Totally untranslatable, a text also disappears; without the ability to reach beyond its own borders towards the Other, it remains isolated and removed eventually collapsing. For Ricoeur, on the other hand, the translatable/untranslatable debate is to be eschewed for what he terms the more 'practical' framework of faithfulness/betrayal. For Ricoeur, the translator operates in a third space

between original author and reader of the translated text, acting as host and bringing both together. The translator serves both but in each translatory choice betrays one in order to be faithful to the other. The paper seeks to marry these two frameworks of untranslatable/translatable and faithful/betrayal in order to highlight the necessity of translation and the Other in the constitution of the self.

Derrida is again taken up in Elad Lapidot's essay 'What is the Reason for Translating Philosophy? I. Undoing Babel'. Noting that philosophy continues to be translated, Lapidot asks not just *how* should philosophy be translated, but more fundamentally, *why* is philosophy translated? This, in turn, raises the question of why there is linguistic diversity in the first place. One of the narrative explanations often cited in response to this question is the biblical myth of Babel, and so Lapidot revisits this myth in search for an answer to this confounding/confusing question. While 'Babel' is often interpreted as a punitive action against man, Lapidot asks to what extent could God, the source of all and absolute power in the universe, really be threatened by his own creation (man), so threatened, so jealous in fact that he would punish and prevent man's own development? Can Babel really be the story of an angry God punishing his own creation? We know that man was created 'in God's own *image*' but this itself has become a certain mistranslation. The Latin *imago* or Hebrew *Tzelem* ('image') does not imply a visual correspondence between God and man, but rather a similarity of *essence*; and if the essence of God is to create then so too with man. Noting that God creates in and through language, Lapidot points out that language must also play its part in man's ability to create. Focusing his attention on the issue of the proper name in a close and original analysis of Rabbinic scholars such as Nahmanides and Kimchi, as well as Derrida's essay *Des Tours de Babel*; Lapidot argues that God's intervention at Babel empowered man with linguistic diversity as the genuine possibility to create. Translation reveals the very possibility of meaning in words and ultimately philosophy continues to be translated precisely because it too searches for meaning in words.

Translation, this revelation of meaning, as necessary to philosophy and the mutual necessity of philosophical engagement in any act of translation is further explored and illustrated in Alena Dvorakova's paper 'Pleasure in Translation: Translating Mill's "Utilitarianism" from English into Czech'.

Dvorakova describes the experience of translating John Stuart Mill's essay 'Utilitarianism' as the experience not just of having 'to do philosophy' but as 'having philosophy done to oneself'. The remarkable fact that this 'classic' is not yet available in Czech begs the question whether or not there is something in the text itself that resisted the Czech language. Among the many benefits of producing this translation, Dvorakova highlights that it may in fact disclose a certain way of thinking. Further, a translation would afford a Czech speaker the possibility of assessing the *force* of this text; of establishing in their own tongue, whether or not the text is in fact a 'classic'. Dvorakova draws attention to the differences between Jeremy Bentham and Mill's understanding of the word 'pleasure'; a word that in English has diverse meanings – something can *give* pleasure but also *be* a pleasure in itself. Problems with this subtle distinction arise in Mill's original English text; in Czech these problems are multiplied. Not only are there three levels of pleasure/pleasant in Czech, each of these three words can be used only with certain *kinds* of pleasure and further there are also a number of different verbs used to express each type of pleasure. As a result, the language of the translation, Czech, itself forces a deconstruction of Mill's text; it highlights the implicit ambiguity of the original and in so doing does not diminish its force but rather re-initiates a philosophical questioning of the word 'pleasure' itself.

'The Underlying Role of Translation: A Discussion of Walter Benjamin's "Kinship"', by Veronica O'Neill, re-examines this central term in light of translation theory which, more often than not, assumes a 'problematic notion of difference'. Debates surrounding the practice of translation abound, from 'literal against free', to 'domestication against foreignization', and a myriad of other dichotomous approaches. Implicit in these dualistic understandings of translation is a notion of imperialistic violence. However, as O'Neill points out, the idea of translation as inherently taking part in some sort of colonial power play (be that for or against it) is tied to and enshrined in viewpoints that see translation as an either/or choice and this in turn depends on viewing difference between languages as a problem to which translation has only two solutions. Translation *either* emphasizes difference (foreignization, literal translation etc); *or* it obliterates it (domestication, free translation etc.). Tracing these debates back to

Cicero, O'Neill astutely observes that these approaches ultimately depend on how one answers the question *why* – why translate? If, like Cicero, we are only interested in the 'transferral of meaning' then we may well be trapped within a dualistic approach to the 'problem' of difference. If, on the other hand, we follow Benjamin's more holistic approach to the 'task'; we discover that translation is not only about transferring meaning but is also a *process* through which 'one language momentarily eclipses another and reveals what contains them both'. Defending Benjamin from critics such as Ricoeur, O'Neill advocates a view of translation as a 'blueprint'; something that guides a target language reader through their *own* process of translation, revealing to them not just the meaning of the text but the reciprocal nature of all languages *as* language. This model results in every reading creating a new cultural context and in the translator becoming a 'passive facilitator' rather than one who imposes their own cultural bias.

The changing cultural context and social role of the translator is investigated in Sergey Tyulenev's paper 'Systemics and Lifeworld of Translation'. Marrying Niklas Luhmann's social systems theory with Juergen Habermas's theory of communicative action, Tyulenev sets forth a new theoretical framework for translation. He applies Aristotle's categories of philosophical knowledge; ontology, epistemology, politics, ethics and aesthetics, to translation. Tyulenev's focus, then, is on the politics of translation; as that which describes *how* translation functions in society; and the ethics of translation; as that which describes how translation *should* function in society. Translation can be described in Luhmann's terms as a social function subsystem with various characteristics; this however, offers us only the politics of translation. In order to come closer to the ethics of translation Tyulenev suggests adopting Habermas's theory of communicative action. Under this rubric the translator can be viewed as engaging in either communicative or strategic action. When motivated by a desire to achieve a mutually understanding consensus between opposing parties the translator exemplifies communicative action. When, on the other hand, the translator is motivated by egoistic goals (such as remuneration and/or perceived 'professionalism'), the translator engages in strategic action. Drawing on recent studies into trainee translator behaviour, Tyulenev highlights the fact that most early stage translators engage in ethically motivated translation,

indicating perhaps a natural impetus for communicative action. Since this often results in 'over-literal' translations, they are usually discouraged from this approach by translator trainers. Nonetheless, given that translations are usually commissioned on the side of the target language, one must ask to what extent has the professionalization of translation led to a diminished emphasis on the ethics of translation? Or in other words; to what extent has the systematization of translation encroached upon the lifeworld approach *to*, and/or the lifeworld *of*, translation?

Feargus Denman, in his essay 'Translation, Philosophy and Language: What Counts?' raises the problem of how we are to assess linguistic variety; a phenomenon usually measured by counting the number of languages spoken in the world. In order to undertake this reckoning there must first be established a definition of what is *a* language is. Drawing on Chomsky's notion of Universal Grammar, Denman notes that there has developed in recent debates a confusion between what Chomsky defines as *a* language, and what might be described as 'language' in general. A confusion borne of an abstraction from many languages to a notion of a 'pure' or 'original' language from which all our linguistic varieties have arisen – the 'language myth' – a myth that traces its heritage at least as far back as Leibniz. Denman notes that while there has been much opposition to such a view, it is one that in many instances still holds sway. Bringing into play Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of language as a 'lived reality', Denman notes that language is not just a set of varieties, but nor is it a transcendent phenomenon abstracted from those varieties. While George Steiner in *After Babel* (1998) expresses concern about the globalisation of the English language as detrimental to linguistic variety; Denman argues that linguistic variety is not just the *number of languages* spoken but rather, and more importantly, *the number of ways of saying*. When we think of language in this broader sense we can see that linguistic variation takes place in every act of communication, even in a monolingual setting. 'Meaning' is not a quality of something, but an *event* that takes place in every linguistic exchange. In the act of translation what 'counts' then, is not whether or not a phrase is Russian, Chinese or English; but the shifting social contexts that determine how to say the same thing in a different way.

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Gathering a number of disparate essays together into a single volume invariably leads to the question 'why?' 'Why bring these essays together into one book?' And there are many answers. Of course the most obvious is that they all centre on the book's title, *Translation and Philosophy*; each essay explores the relationship between these two disciplines, or perhaps better *practices*, and seeks to describe, in various ways, the nature of the relationship between the two. Certainly, this collection is not exhaustive – there are many other aspects of 'Translation and Philosophy' that could be explored – and perhaps the essays here presented in a single edition will whet the appetite of the reader and inspire further enquiry into the nature of this complex relation. Nonetheless, I feel the ultimate benefit of bringing all of these papers together is truly felt at the crossroads where they meet. With many different points of departure and taking many different paths, these essays yet all point to the same claim: that translation is inherently philosophical and that philosophy not only demands, but also itself engages in, a type of translation. I hope that through this collection the reader acquires an aerial view of the many ways in which these two practices are intimately entwined; the way in which they both disrupt, and yet therefore, enable each other.

— LISA FORAN, *University College Dublin, September 2011*

THEO HARDEN

The Awful German Language, or, Is '*Die Geistige Entwicklung*' 'The Mental Development'?

I Introduction

Appendix D of Mark Twain's essay collection[1] *A Tramp Abroad* has the title 'The Awful German Language', and the author introduces his American readership in a very entertaining way to a number of linguistic oddities of German and it is safe to assume that his article is to quite some extent responsible for the widely accepted reputation of the German language as being awful indeed. But there seems to be more to that particular notion. José Ortega y Gasset starts his seminal work 'The Misery and Splendour of Translation' by relating an event which occurred at a symposium in Paris, where the discussion of the impossibility to translate certain German philosophers into other languages led to the proposal of a study that would determine which philosopher could be translated and which could not (cf. Ortega y Gasset 1992: 93). These examples show that there is a certain unease when it comes to translation, particularly when German is involved.

II The Genre

Translating philosophical texts and preserving not only the intended meaning, but maintaining also a certain degree of stylistic accuracy is certainly an extremely demanding task. It is therefore quite surprising that so little

1 I am referring here to the 2007 edition published by Digiread.

of the relevant literature in Translation Theory is actually devoted to this particular field. The vivid discussion which has been taking place over the past fifteen years has a very different focus i.e. the translation of literary texts. The translation of philosophical texts has only a comparatively marginal position in the relevant debates.

One reason for this neglect might be rooted in what Roman Ingarden chose to call the 'inherent ambiguity' of philosophical texts.

> Philosophical texts are often ambiguous [equivocal]. What should the translator do in the face of this fact? To answer this question it is necessary to realize that there are different kinds of ambiguity deriving from different sources. They can be divided into three classes: (a) ambiguity intended by the author; (b) ambiguity not intended but having a deeper justification either in the author's mode of thinking or in the state of knowledge about a subject at the time of the work's creation or in the so called 'spirit of the language,' etc.; (c) ambiguity not intended but accidental [and] clearly overlooked by the author for some minor reasons.
>
> (Ingarden 1955: 169)[2]

This of course means that the translator not only has to have the capacity to detect these ambiguities but also the competence to evaluate them according to the three categories indicated by Ingarden. A translator following Ingarden thus adopts the position characterized by Charles Butterworth as follows:

> Opposed to this approach [the one which believes in the authority of the text as such T.H.[3]] is one that views human thought as limited by the time and place, even the linguistic conventions, in which it is formulated and as susceptible to being

2 It should be noted that the article from which this and the following quotes are taken is a translation from Polish into English and throughout the text the translator indicates alternatives in square brackets as in the above quote where apparently the Polish original can mean both ambiguous and equivocal.

3 When they strive in addition to represent the thought of the author rather than their own presuppositions about that thought, the task becomes all the more arduous. To avoid prejudging the author, they take the text as it appears, on its own terms, and try to make sense of what the author actually says. They do so because they start from the premise that the author in question knows what he or she wishes to communicate and they thus set as their goal understanding what the author intends (Butterworth 1994: 19).

> grasped only by means of a framework established through historical and philological conjectures. Followers of this approach view their scholarly task as that of stipulating, on the basis of supposedly irreproachable historical investigation, what a given author could have known and then interpreting the author in light of that determination. Guided by such estimates or insights, they reconstruct and then translate particular texts.
>
> (Butterworth 1994: 19)

Whichever position one wishes to take, the answer to the title question is, of course: *No*.[4] Nevertheless, what we have in front of us is an 'official' translation of the title of Wilhelm von Humboldt's famous introduction to his '*Kawi-Werk*', which is, and has been since it was first published, a source of inspiration, but also a well of a number of grave misunderstandings, misinterpretations and considerable controversy.[5]

III *Geist* and *Geistig*

To get right to the heart of the matter I would like to start with a brief synopsis of the three translations of the title of the '*Kawi-Werk*'. The original one in German is:

Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaus und ihren Einfluss auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts.

The most recent one by Peter Heath:

On the Diversity of Human Language Construction and its Influence on the Mental Development of the Human Species (1999).

4 It could even be *Yes* under certain contextual conditions, but in this particular instance it has to be a firm *No*, indeed.

5 Noam Chomsky, just to name the most prominent example, has been criticized quite severely for his claim to be a kind of heir to Humboldtian language philosophy. For a concise overview see Trabant (1998: 333–48).

This one was preceded by the following, also by Peter Heath:

The Diversity of Human Language-Structure and Its Influence on the Mental Development of Mankind (1988).

The earliest and most criticised translation, however, is the one by George C. Buck and Frithjof A. Raven:

Linguistic Variability and Intellectual Development (1971).

The three versions of the title are quite interesting in their own right. The first[6] and the second are – as already mentioned – Peter Heath's translation of the introduction to the '*Kawi-Werk*' and apparently, over the years some amendments were made to the title. *Structure* became *construction* and *mankind* became *human species*. *Mental*, however, remained unchanged, even though this is certainly the most misleading element in the title. The third one has been rubbished ever since it appeared as the translators took the same liberties, which are so blatantly manifest in the title, throughout the text. But even though the text itself has a number of grave shortcomings, it provides us with an instance of the difficulties which the translators encountered: how to translate *Geist*, or rather *geistig*? Instead of *mental* they opted for *intellectual*, which is, in this particular context, definitely closer to the original than *mental*.

The particular intricacies associated with the translation of *Geist*, and even more so with the derivational adjective *geistig* have created intriguing new readings of German philosophical texts, a phenomenon which will be discussed in more detail further down.[7] There is, of course, the time-

6 This particular edition has another quite unusual feature. The introduction by Hans Aarsleff does everything to rubbish Humboldt and even suggests that he might be some sort of proto-Nazi. So after reading the introduction the reader has the firm impression that the work that is being introduced is not really worth reading. This was changed in later editions.

7 Ingarden is quite clear on what the translator in his opinion has to do, and his judgement is based on his own, apparently quite frustrating, attempts to translate Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* into Polish.

honoured tradition of translating *Geist* as *spirit*. One would thus expect that the adjective *geistig* in German might find its English equivalent in *spiritual*. But this is not the case and the translators of Humboldt's text were well aware of this fact and so they chose *mental* and *intellectual* as both are not as much off the mark as *spiritual*, one might argue, but they are certainly not covering the area which Humboldt meant to cover.[8]

'Mental' development is generally related to the developmental stages of a child (cf. e.g. the works of Piaget and Vygotsky with regard to this particular kind of development), which, if it does not occur, might result in some kind of deficiency, a notion that is somehow present in the title and thus evokes the idea of measuring and judging (language x is not as conducive to a certain kind of development as language y). But this was not what Humboldt had in mind, there is no assessment or evaluation involved,[9] simply a statement of differences.

These observations lead us straight to one of the most fundamental questions within the whole area of translation theory: the question of equivalence.[10]

8 Humboldt himself, even though far from offering a precise definition, characterizes '*Geist*' as follows:
[...] *weil es ursprünglich von etwas Sinnlichem, dem verstärken reizender Getränke durch die Absonderung der wässerigen Theile (Weingeist) hergenommen ist. 2. weil es streng genommen, nie, es sey denn mit einem besonderen Zusatz, das rein Unsinnliche bezeichnet* (II: 332).
Because originally it [the concept – T.H.] was taken from something sensual i.e. the fortification of intoxicating drinks by separating the watery parts 2. because taken seriously, it [the concept – T.H.] never – unless additional information is provided – refers to the purely non-sensual (my translation – T.H.).
[...] *wo Tiefe der rein intellectuellen Kräfte mit Lebendigkeit der sinnlichen Einbildungskraft zusammenkommt* (II: 333).
Where the depth of the purely intellectual forces is combined with the vitality of the sensual imagination (my translation – T.H.).

9 A very detailed and unusually well written interpretation of some those aspects which have led to controversy ever since Humboldt's work was published can be found in Trabant (1996), *Apeliotes oder der Sinn der Sprache. Wilhelm von Humboldts Sprachbild*.

10 The condensed description of the two types of equivalence is based on the works of Catford (1965), Fawcett (1997), House (1977), Kenny (1998), Jakobsonman (1959),

Formal equivalence is characterised by the fact that the translator attributes priority to the source language (SL) text, and tries to render the SL text as faithfully as possible, not only in its content but also in its form including grammatical units, consistency in word usage, meanings in terms of the source context. Furthermore by the translator's attempts to faithfully give back the grammatical units, e.g. verbs are translated into verbs, and nouns into nouns, the boundaries of the sentences remain unchanged, punctuation, paragraphing, etc. also stay the same.

Dynamic equivalence on the other hand strives to achieve the closest natural equivalent of the SL text and to produce a 'natural' translation. In order to attain this goal the translator has to bear in mind three important factors: the receptor language and culture as a whole, grammar, lexicon, terms for which there are readily available parallels; terms which identify culturally different objects but with somewhat similar functions; and terms which identify cultural specialties. Of course certain contextual elements of the particular message (intonation, rhythm of sentences, style) have to be accounted for as well. These points indicate that the receptor-language audience plays a far more important role under this paradigm than under the one of formal equivalence as a translation should produce the same effect in the receptor language readers as the original piece did in the source language audience.

Nida (1964), Nida/Taber (1969), Vinay/Darbelnet (1995). It should, however, be noted that the concept of 'equivalence' has attracted severe criticism within the general area of translation studies. Snell-Hornby (1988: 22) points out that '... the term equivalence, apart from being imprecise and ill-defined (even after a heated debate of over twenty years) presents an illusion of symmetry between languages which hardly exists beyond the level of vague approximations and which distorts the basic problems of translation.' And Pym is even more radical in his rejection of the concept: 'There is no symmetry between languages (even in terms of power or ideology); There is no stable meaning that can be accessed by the translator or by the reader (meaning is constructed within the interaction between the reader and the text) (even psychological elements come into the play); Equivalence is associated with an essentialist view of the world that later studies in Translation theory tended to discard (manipulation school, deconstruction, cultural studies, post-colonial studies, for example);The concept is circular: equivalence is supposed to define translation, and translation, in turn, defines equivalence.' (Pym 1992: 37).

As we have seen above, when it comes to the concept of '*Geist*' there seems to be an equivalent in English: 'spirit'. But we have also observed that the equivalence is no longer present in the derived elements. Under the assumption that we are dealing with content focused texts when translating philosophical texts, there is one important element that has to be observed according to Katharina Reiss:

> Once a given text is identified as belonging to the content-focused type, an important component of its translation method has been determined. Content-focused texts require invariance in transfer of their content. The critic must above all ascertain whether their *content and information is fully represented in the target language.*
> (Reiss 2000: 30. My emphasis – T.H.)[11]

When we take Reiss' verdict seriously, then 'mental' is definitely the wrong translation and a superficial look at its field neighbours might suffice to prove this.

Table 1 Translations of *Geistig* and similar words

Geistig	Mental
metaphysisch	cerebral
unkörperlich	imaginative
unsinnlich	intellectual
unwirklich,	rational
intellektuell	psychical
seelisch	immaterial

11 With regard to the difficulties which different genres might present Humboldt has a very clear position, obviously based on his own experience as a translator:
No compositions will be found more difficult to be translated than those descriptions, in which a series of minute distinctions are marked by characteristic terms, each peculiarly appropriated to the thing to be designed, but many of them so nearly synonymous, or so approaching to each other, as to be clearly understood only by those who possess the most critical knowledge of the language of the original, and a very competent skill in the subject treated of (Humboldt 1992: 135).

übersinnlich	unreal
begrifflich	subconscious
ideell	subjective
imaginär	subliminal
immateriell	psychological
irreal	psychic

Even though there are quite a number of similarities regarding the general field covered, the differences are of a kind which somehow do not allow the concepts in question to be seen as 'equivalent'.

But the question is of course whether or not philosophical texts can really be regarded as the kind of text Reiss had in mind or if, as Gerald Parks (2003: 1) points out, we have to classify them as a genre of their own.

> The translation of philosophical texts may first of all be quite clearly separated from that regarding the mass of what are called technical texts. Although philosophical texts do use a kind of technical terminology, or even jargon at times, they cannot be classed together with strictly technical texts such as those of medicine, law or engineering. Philosophers frequently invent their own terms, or assign new meanings to old terms, or use ordinary words in a new, technical sense, etc. All of this means that the translator has to pay very close attention to the author's words, comparing and contrasting the different uses of one and the same word in different contexts.

What this means can be illustrated by another, certainly more famous instance of '*Geist*' and its translation: the Hegelian one.

> *Die Natur des Geistes laesst sich durch den vollkommenen Gegensatz desselben erkennen*. (Hegel, *Philosphie der Geschichte*: 30)

> The nature of Spirit may be understood by a glance at its direct opposite – Matter. (Hegel, *Philosophy of History*: 17)

The English translation contains an element which is not specifically mentioned but certainly implicitly present in the German original: the word *matter*. This, in a way, leads the reader away from the text, because, as Jacques Derrida (2002: 204) observed, as soon as we put two words where in the

original was only one, we are entering the realm of analytic explanation. The translator inserted it obviously to avoid ambiguity, but when we look at the German original we find that it is ambiguous. By making the contrast between 'Spirit' and 'Matter' explicit, the translation is more transparent than the original; and that is something that, according to Ingarden, should not happen, as ambiguity is not necessarily something negative.

> It may serve, for instance, as a means to foster in the reader certain associations, to suggest to him relations between objects under investigation, etc. Sometimes the work's overall achievement consists in the fact that the author begins with some ambiguous expression in order to demonstrate, for example, the apparent problematic rooted in the unnoticed ambiguity and, by stressing such an ambiguity, either to remove the false problematic, or to uncover the actual one, or, finally, to point out how to overcome the difficulty that emerged because of a given ambiguity, etc. *Ambiguity present in the original should, therefore, be preserved in translation not only because of the postulate of translation's fidelity, but also because its removal would annihilate a substantial part of the scholarly value of the work and, possibly, all of its theoretical significance* (cf. process of discovering by phenomenologists of ambiguities not yet consciously realized).
>
> Ingarden (1955: 170. My emphasis – T.H.)

This phenomenon, that of disambiguation, can also be detected in the above mentioned translation of Humboldt's '*Geist*'. 'Mental' indicates a direction, and a relatively clear one, that cannot be found in the German original.[12]

Let us examine the attempts at definitions given by Humboldt more closely.

> [...] *weil es ursprünglich von etwas Sinnlichem, dem verstärken reizender Getränke durch die Absonderung der wässerigen Theile (Weingeist) hergenommen ist. 2. weil es streng genommen, nie, es sey denn mit einem besonderen Zusatz, das rein Unsinnliche bezeichnet* ... (Humboldt 1903, II: 332)

12 The same, I think, is true for the one of the translations of Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. *Phenomenology of Mind* limits the conceptual framework substantially, whereas the competing one *Phenomenolgy of Spirit* preserves more of the original and rather obscure meaning of '*Geist*'.

> [...] because originally it [the concept – T.H.] was taken from something sensual i.e. the fortification of intoxicating drinks by separating the watery parts 2. because taken seriously, it [the concept – T.H.] never – unless additional information is provided – refers to the purely non-sensual ...
>
> (My translation – T.H.)

This definition, or rather explication, seems to be well within the sphere covered by 'spirit'. However, when looking at another description of '*Geist*' as given in the citation below, 'spirit' seems to be at least awkward and a translator might opt rather for the French '*esprit*', because the alternatives given in the translation quite obviously do not transmit what Humboldt had in mind when he assigned a higher degree of '*Geist*' to women.

> *Allein selbst die Verstandeskräfte wirken in dem Weibe weniger trennend als verbindend, woraus vorzugsweise die eigenthümliche Erscheinung entspringt, die wir* Geist *nennen, und die der Mann nicht immer mit gleicher Leichtigkeit erwirbt*
>
> (Humboldt 1903, I: 367. Emphasis in the original – T.H.)

> Even the intellectual forces of women are not so much analytical as synthetical, which results in that peculiar phenomenon which we call *Mind*? *Spirit? Intellect?*
>
> (My translation – T.H.)

As already mentioned above, even if translators manage to find an element which fits either the dynamic or the formal notion of equivalence in one particular verbal category; the real trouble starts when they have to deal with the derivational elements as is the case of the title in question.

There is a strong case to be made for maintaining the derivational pattern in the target language, but as we have seen, there are quite a number of instances when, proceeding along those lines, the result might be an utterly distorted or at least very unnatural target text. The German '*geistig*' and '*Geist*' do have the kind of relationship that allows us to refer to most things related to '*Geist*' as being '*geistig*'. But this is not the case for the English 'spirit' and 'spiritual' as the latter is semantically confined to a field which is more closely related to 'religious' matters in the broadest sense. The same dilemma will be encountered when opting for 'mind' as the root concept. The corresponding adjective is 'mental', which has connotations more closely associated with the brain, again understood in the

broadest possible sense. 'Spiritual health' and 'mental health' might show some overlapping, but they are relatively far apart and we refer to quite different phenomena when using one or the other.

Is there a solution to this particular problem? Not really, but I would like to make a couple of suggestions based on the considerations presented above. If we determine that the derivations (spiritual, mental, and even intellectual) do not work in a translation from German into English, why then use them at all? It would, in my opinion, be perfectly acceptable, at least for the translation of Humboldt's title, to avoid the adjective and use the noun instead. The 'Mental Development of the Human Species' would then become 'The Development of the Spirit of the Human Species'. And the full title of the 1999 edition would read *On the Diversity of Human Language Construction and its Influence on the Development of the Spirit of the Human Species*.

A title has the function to direct the prospective reader into a certain direction and the one suggested above would certainly fulfil that purpose slightly better than its competitors.

IV Conclusion

When contrasting the different problems arising for translators of literary and philosophical texts, Jonathan Rée (2001: 252) emphasises the fact that literary texts differ from philosophical ones in one particular instance: 'The novel, by contrast, typically aspires to inhabit a simple and undivided national linguistic habitat, and to sound always natural and at home in it'. Philosophical texts, on the other hand, do not and cannot have these aspirations. 'Being essentially an effort to discover something strange in even the most ordinary words, philosophy is from the beginning incongruous with the idea of unified national languages, rooted deep in a national soul or soil. Serious philosophical writing always sounds like a translation already' (Rée 2001: 253).

The fact that 'serious philosophical writing sounds like a translation already' could and should be a vantage point for taking a fresh look at its other characteristics and letting them inspire a new, creative and even daring approach to the task of translating. Philosophical texts do not have a 'home', they are polyglot by their very nature and they are obscure. But that is exactly what makes them intriguing and challenging. If one accepts this fully, there might even be room for an equivalent of '*Geist*' which has not been mentioned so far and which has, to my knowledge, never been considered in any translation: 'Ghost'. This may sound quite farfetched at a first glance, but looking at it more closely, we do find that 'ghost' is a concept that covers a phenomenon which is material and immaterial at the same time. Its presence can be felt, even though we do not know how. It's ephemeral, but it is also constantly there (in a haunted house, for instance). And furthermore, it would certainly give some of the major philosophical works, particularly of German Idealism, an interesting new aspect. After all: '[...] the language of philosophy is not a mighty tree, immovable and reassuringly familiar; it is flocks of strange birds, dispersing and regrouping, landing for a moment, and then flying away' (Rée 2001: 253).

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DAVID CHARLSTON

Translating Hegel's Ambiguity: A Culture of *Humor* and *Witz*

I Introduction

The present paper is situated in the field of Translation and Intercultural Studies. My aim is to compare three translations of the same canonical, philosophical source text to investigate the extent to which the translated texts are embedded in the historical private and public narratives surrounding the translator. The primary data are the three translations of Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (first published in 1807) in reverse chronological order by Terry Pinkard (copyright 2008), by Arnold Vincent Miller (1977) and by Sir James Black Baillie (1910 and 1931). To narrow the basis for my comparison, I shall be considering how the three translators deal with the translation of two notoriously ambiguous words *Geist* [mind/spirit] and *aufheben* [sublate/abolish/preserve] in context.

I begin this paper by outlining important contextual frameworks to the three translations, which suggest a pragmatic role of the translations within the philosophical discourse surrounding their publication.

I then turn to the central focus of this paper on ambiguity, which I argue has a positive and to some extent intentional function in Hegel's philosophy. I support this claim, firstly, with reference to the fascination with ambiguity found in the literary and musical culture of Hegel's time; secondly, with reference to the historical opposition between the 'dogmatic', pre-Kantian philosophers such as Christian Wolff (1679–1754) and the post-Kantian contemporaries of Hegel, for whom ambiguity provides a fundamental starting point for speculative philosophy; and finally, with reference to three translations of a short excerpt from the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*.

II The Three Translators and Their Work

Terry Pinkard is a University Professor of Philosophy at Georgetown University, Washington. Before undertaking the new translation, Pinkard published widely on Hegel, including a major biography (2000) and a detailed 'reconstruction' of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1996). Most importantly with regard to establishing Pinkard's own position within the contemporary field of philosophical discourse, Pinkard also published a book, *Democratic Liberalism and Social Union* (1987), which outlines his political philosophy (at least in 1987), which appears to be associated with a particular 'non-metaphysical' interpretation of Hegel. In this book, Pinkard seems to present Hegel as a kind of 'communitarian' counterweight to the neo-Kantian 'individualism' of Rawls and Nozick (Avineri 1992). Instead of emphasising individual (neo-Kantian) moral agency, communitarians stress the importance of mutual recognition within every society and the embeddedness of individuals within a community of language and values. This, I believe, is Pinkard's *Geist* or *spirit*.

Several features of Pinkard's translation are interesting from the point of view of the multimodality and social semiotics of translation. It has been published online since 2008 to allow time for revisions before going to print. The book itself is to be presented as a parallel translation in two columns with numbered paragraphs and with the source text on the right-hand side. Pinkard's translation also provides a brief glossary and a commitment to use certain terms consistently. In particular, Pinkard distances himself from the many inconsistencies in Arnold Miller's (1977) translation of the ambiguous concept of *aufheben* [elevate/preserve/negate/sublate], which plays such a major part in Hegel's logic. Pinkard identifies the many divergent translations of the same word in the Miller text as inconsistencies and settles on the use of *sublate* throughout. I believe that the 'consistent' style of the new translation has a pragmatic function of restoring the respectability of Hegel's voice as a serious philosopher against almost a century of virtual exclusion from Anglo-American philosophical debate, which has been predicated on normative standards relating to scientific objectivity,

falsifiability, physicalism, non-metaphorical language and above all accuracy. If Hegel's reputation can be restored at least in part by showing that the earlier translators had distorted his message, a powerful philosophical ally could be gained, for example, in support of democratic liberalism in the ongoing debate in political theory around individual agency and communitarianism or 'social union'.

Unlike most translators of philosophical texts, Arnold Vincent Miller (1899–1991) was an amateur philosopher; he was not a professor.[1] At various times in his life, including the date of completion of the translation, he lived in the 'Tolstoyan anarchist colony' at Whiteway near Stroud in Gloucestershire, where he met Francis Sedlak (Collins 1991), a fascinating 'Bohemian' refugee and Hegelian philosopher with a mystical stance. Miller, who describes himself as a 'kindred spirit' to Hegel (Miller 1983) and was interested in theosophical and anthroposophical thought, translated and/or revised no less than six of Hegel's works, most notably in collaboration with J.N. Findlay, a philosophy professor and Hegel expert. Findlay provides a long Foreword to the translation of the *Phenomenology* and an Analysis, which is in fact a synoptic translation and commentary with numbered sections corresponding to the numbered paragraphs of Miller's translation.

The Miller/Findlay translation could be seen as a contribution to the post-Second-World-War Hegel revival in the English-speaking world associated with Findlay (Findlay 1958) and Charles Taylor (Taylor 1975; Pinkard 2007). At another level, however, the pragmatic significance of this revival is its tacit opposition to the well-known association of Hegel with Marxism and social theory, especially in France. In other words, I suggest that the translation, especially with reference to its various levels of 'paratext' (Genette 1997), including epitexts, such as archival biographical sources, published works by the translator and editors; and peritexts, such as tables of contents, translators' prefaces, section headings and footnotes

1 Essex University houses an archive of correspondence and notes donated by Miller's estate. Several of the envelopes are addressed to Professor Miller. One correspondent apologises to Miller in a subsequent letter for having erroneously 'academicised' him.

and index, can ultimately be described as an orthodox, 'right-Hegelian' text (Singer 1983: 84–5) acting as a counterfoil to the perceived heresy of 'left-Hegelianism', which was powerfully evolving in the so-called continental philosophy.

While Pinkard criticises Miller's inconsistencies, Miller, in his own very short Translator's Foreword, obliquely criticises *his* predecessor as follows: 'I have done my best to steer a course which, avoiding loose paraphrase, departs at times from a rigid consistency in rendering Hegelian locutions' (Hegel/Miller 1977: 31). The first translation by Sir James Black Baillie (1872–1940) can be justly accused of 'loose paraphrase' in places, but possibly more shocking than this is Baillie's decision to switch from *mind* to *spirit* as the translation of *Geist* halfway through the book, which is entitled *The Phenomenology of Mind*. Baillie's footnote reads: 'The term "Spirit" seems better to render the word "*Geist*" used here, than the word "mind" would do. Up to this stage of experience the word "mind" is sufficient to convey the meaning. But spirit is mind at a much higher level of existence.' (Hegel/Baillie 1910: 250). Preliminary findings have shown that Baillie in fact introduces his own structuring in the translation. The first occurrence of *Geist* is translated tentatively as '*mind* or *spirit*'. Baillie moves to *spirit* from page 250 onwards but introduces *Spirit* with a capital *S* in the final section or chapter on Absolute Knowledge. There is no explicit typographical escalation of the status of *Geist* in the source text. Outrageous though this strategy might at first seem to modern translators schooled in the need for terminological consistency, Baillie's difficulty is still with us. The real problem with translating *Geist* is not just that there are two possible English translations; but rather, the problem is that the referential 'meaning' of the word really does change during the course of the book. *Geist* is a dynamic concept, the fluidity, indeterminacy or ambiguity of which plays a central role in Hegel's argument.

Through his paratexts, the lengthy introduction and explanatory essays inserted throughout the translation, as well as the footnotes and the 'loose paraphrase' (criticised by Miller), I suspect that Baillie asserts a broadly Christian interpretation of Hegel based upon nineteenth-century models but extending beyond this into the arena of British Idealism, with various undertones of intellectual elitism, racism, and perhaps jingoistic, nationalistic rivalry. I plan to investigate these suppositions in greater detail with

reference to the Baillie translation itself and also with reference to Baillie's published and unpublished writing.[2]

All three translators use a variety of strategies to deal with the ambiguity in Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Hegel 1970). In doing so, they each leave an interpretive legacy; a tendency to resolve or to explicate Hegel's indeterminacy in terms accessible to their own contemporaries and subtly expressive of their own point of view. My future aim therefore is to find a way of identifying and describing such features of the philosophical translations, which will lead from the investigation of micro-level linguistic features and shifts to a broader picture of the activity of philosophical translation which can correlate with and inform social semiotics and inferential semantics. This paper now proceeds to a presentation of the cultural and philosophical background to Hegel's ambiguity.

III A Literary-Philosophical Culture of Ambiguity, '*Humor*' and '*Witz*'

Far from being an obscure metaphysical concept or a linguistic problem, ambiguity (*Doppelsinnigkeit* and *Mehrdeutigkeit*) was almost a defining preoccupation of German literature, music and philosophy of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. In the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Hegel 1970), Hegel uses double meanings in a uniquely characteristic, double-meaning way, which, however, typifies rather than contradicts the wit and humour of the period. Alongside this humorous wordplay, there is the almost mystical sense that the German language contains secret and therefore possibly untranslatable meanings. The word *meinen*, which can mean 'mean' and 'mine', and the many instances throughout the book of alliteration between *Bewusstsein*, *Gewissheit*, *Wahrheit*, *Wesen*, *Wirklichkeit*, *Wissen*, all participate

2 Baillie was for many years Vice Chancellor of Leeds University and masterminded the building of the art-deco Brotherton Library there. The Brotherton Library archive holds Baillie's journal from 1931–6.

in the kind of German wit [*Witz*] described by Friedrich Schlegel as 'the power that allows us to posit connections between markedly contrasting entities' (Daverio 1993: 72). Hegel exploits phonology and morphology as well as lexicology to create a bewildering sense of coherence in the text. It is sometimes difficult to identify what a given paragraph is 'about', where it comes from and where it is going to; and yet each sentence has a density of cross references with other sentences, sometimes at several different levels. To seek and eventually to find a single thread of meaning or a logical sequence is certainly not the end of the task of reading Hegel. This very un-modern style of writing philosophy did not evolve in a vacuum.

The Schlegel quotation and the translation given in the last paragraph are taken from a book by musicologist John Daverio (1993), who crosses disciplinary boundaries to explain that the musical wit of the composer Robert Schumann (1810–56) is related to the literary *Witz* of the preceding generation, especially Jean Paul Richter (a pseudonym for Johann Friedrich Richter 1763–1825) and the poet Novalis (a pseudonym for Friedrich von Hardenberg 1772–1801). Although Jean Paul's books are seldom read nowadays, he was not only an extremely popular novelist in Hegel's lifetime; he was also an associate and eventually a friend of Hegel. By incorporating this literary dimension of wit into his philosophy, Hegel also crossed disciplinary boundaries.

To give a few examples of the kind of witty style in question here, Jean Paul refers to wit as 'a lightning flash' and 'electric charge' (Richter 1963: 197–9). For Novalis, '*Witz* is spiritual electricity' (Novalis 1975: 621). The pun in German is, of course, that *Witz* rhymes with *Blitz*, a lightning flash.

Daverio (1993) also cites Jean Paul Richter's theoretical treatise on aesthetics, *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (1804), in which Jean Paul speaks of the special German humour *Humor*, which 'delights even in contradictions and impossibilities' (Daverio 1993: 72). The main activity of the humorist is said to involve setting the 'small' against the 'infinite'. Elsewhere, in a letter to philosopher F.H. Jacobi written in 1802, Jean Paul decries the 'one-sidedness' [*Einseitigkeit*] of literature (de Bruyn 1996: 246). It is no coincidence that contradictions and impossibilities, the small and the infinite of Jean Paul's aesthetic theory seem to share common ground with the burgeoning German Idealist philosophy.

The idea of doubling, duplicity, duplication, which is clearly also associated with Romantic Irony, can easily be seen as a literary antidote to 'one-sidedness' and 'dogmatism'. The very lack of scientific rigour, which alienated and to some extent still alienates modern analytically trained philosophers from Hegel, was therefore not an accidental shortcoming; it was a deliberate stylistic choice adopted to confound the dry oversimplifications of the dogmatic philosophy of the time.

Within this literary-philosophical discourse of Schlegelian-Hegelian, word-spinning *Witz*, it is therefore no surprise that Jean Paul Richter, in some sense the great master of early German Romantic wit and irony, was impressed on reading Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes* by its 'clarity, style, freedom and force' (Pinkard 2000: 261). I believe that Hegel effectively exploited the fashion for ambiguity and wordplay in evolving his distinctively German philosophical style, especially associated with his time in Jena.

IV Ambiguity and the New Post-Kantian Philosophy

In post-Kantian literature and philosophy, it became conventional to deride the philosophy of the previous 'Enlightenment' generation as 'dogmatic' in its adherence to single, fixed meanings. Schiller and Goethe both at times adopt this new, Rousseau-inspired attitude. Apart from Leibniz, in his caricature in Voltaire's *Candide*, perhaps the most prominent and/or derided exponent of the pre-Kantian tradition was Christian Wolff (1679–1754). In the introduction to *A Hegel Dictionary* Michael Inwood (1992: 14) explains that 'contrary to the Wolffian ideal, Hegel has no general interest in using a word in the same sense throughout his works or even in a single text'. Inwood provides a detailed account of the reasons for Hegel's ambiguity, a full account of which is unfortunately beyond the scope of this essay – for the present, two short quotations will have to suffice:

> Hegel begins by using a term in one or more of its already familiar senses and then develops his own sense or senses from it.

> Hegel's thought usually advances in triads, the third term of which is a restoration of the first on a higher level. The same word is often used both for the first and for the third term of a triad, in distinct, but systematically related senses.
>
> (Inwood 1992: 14–15)

In its various shadings from humour to logic, ambiguity is an inescapable feature of Hegel's written style associated with the dynamic creation and development of 'meaning' through use. This aspect of Hegel's philosophy relates closely, for example, to Halliday's functional linguistics (2004) or Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), which stresses ambiguity as an inescapable feature of language use, but also to the work of Pittsburgh philosopher Robert Brandom on 'inferential semantics'. For example, in *Articulating Reasons* (2000: 19–44), Brandom associates Hegel with the early beginnings of the 'linguistic turn' in philosophy. Elsewhere, in a witty review of Hegel's *Phänomenologie*, Brandom writes, 'I would love to have written this book. Perhaps some day I will' (Brandom 2008). The trajectory of my thesis is directed from the detail of functional linguistics towards the broader picture of social semiotics and inferential semantics. I mention Brandom more as a potential destination than as a component of my theoretical framework.

V Example

The following excerpt is taken from the famous section of Chapter 2 of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* on self-consciousness, just before Hegel mentions the '*lord and the bondsman*' or the '*master and the slave*'. The initial 'it' refers back anaphorically to '*self-consciousness*', which has just encountered another self-consciousness.

180. It must sublate *its otherness*. This is the sublation of that first two-sided ambiguity and is for that reason itself a second two-sided ambiguity. …	180. *Es muß dies sein Anderssein aufheben; dies ist das Aufheben des ersten Doppelsinnes, und darum selbst ein zweiter Doppelsinn …*
181. This double-edged sense of the act of sublating its double-edged sense of otherness is likewise a double-edged sense of a return *into itself*. …	181. *Dies doppelsinnige Aufheben seines doppelsinnigen Andersseins ist ebenso eine doppelsinnige Rückkehr in sich selbst; …*

(Hegel/Pinkard 2008: 165)

181. This ambiguous supersession of its ambiguous otherness is equally an ambiguous return into itself.

(Hegel/Miller 1977: 111)

This sublation in a double sense of its otherness in a double sense is at the same time a return in a double sense into its self.

(Hegel/Baillie 1910/1931: 104)

Because of its fame, this passage is crucially important, especially for Pinkard's social and political, 'non-metaphysical' interpretation of Hegel. It is therefore interesting that Pinkard gradually introduces the 'sword' metaphor here. Pinkard's translation of *doppelsinnig* moves from '*two-sided ambiguity*' to '*double-edged sense*' thereby subtly introducing a conceptual metaphor of battle, perhaps anticipating the 'battle to death' that is to follow; perhaps it is symbolic of the translator's struggle to do justice to Hegel's meaning, referring metaphorically, that is, to the sword of justice. It is certainly not as literal as Miller. Perhaps Pinkard is uncomfortable with the concept of 'ambiguity' as if it required 'explicitation' or 'disambiguation'; perhaps he uses the metaphor to foreground this crucial concept in his reading of Hegel.

This kind of detailed comparison between the German source text and the translated target text is very common in translation studies and refers to the related concepts of equivalence and shifts. The Miller translation

exhibits a high degree of word-level equivalence in this example. Almost every word in the source text can be mapped onto an equivalent in the target language. Any departures from this kind of equivalence are described as 'shifts' and, as such, require some kind of justification or explanation. Pinkard could justify his shift here, for example, by arguing that the apparently equivalent word '*supersession*' used in the Miller translation for *Aufheben* is so uncommon in modern English that it obscures Hegel's meaning and requires further explanation or explicitation. Accordingly, etymological equivalence is taken here merely as a starting point for a comparison of the translations. Although House (2001: 247) introduces 'translation equivalence' as 'a concept clearly reflected in conventional everyday understanding of translation' and continues that '"equivalence" is the fundamental criterion of translation quality'; the limitations of equivalence as a theoretical concept have also been recognized in translation and interpreting studies for some time. For example, the entry on equivalence from the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* states that 'Equivalence is a central concept in translation theory, but it is also a controversial one' (Kenny 1998: 77); this article then outlines the history and salient aspects of the controversy. Indeed, it is now widely acknowledged that there is much more to translation than simply finding a word-for-word match between the source and target languages. Obviously, matches do have to be found and consistency is an important issue, but it is the use of words in a lexicogrammatical context which determines their meaning. In fact, the relative similarities between German and English make word-level equivalence seem more possible than it really is.

VI Conclusion

This paper presents one aspect of a project which is clearly still in progress. In summary, I have tried to show some positive aspects of ambiguity identifying this positive approach to ambiguity with a historical trend in the literary

scene around the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries and suggesting that Hegel participated in and exploited this trend in developing his philosophical ideas at the time. By contrast, the translators have been engaged in a contrary trend away from the wit and ambiguity of Hegel's Jena style, which he shared with his contemporaries, such as Jean Paul Richter and Novalis, and with the later German Romantic generation, towards a more scientific, disambiguated style of philosophical writing more compatible with the aspirations of twentieth-century Anglo-American analytical philosophy. The three translations represent different stages of this trend, which I intend to characterise on the basis of a detailed analysis of how the translators deal with the two ambiguous key words *Geist* and *aufheben*. The future direction of this project is best outlined with reference to the research questions guiding my doctoral thesis:

- How and why do the English translations differ in their handling of potential ambiguities in Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes*?

- What is the rhetorical role and philosophical significance of ambiguity in Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes*?

- How can the ambiguity of *Geist* and *aufheben* in Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes* and in the translations be analysed and described most effectively for the purpose of comparison?

- To what extent can the differences between the translations be attributed to a personal bias of the translator and/or to historically and culturally determined narratives?

My future project aims to investigate how and why three English translations of Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes – G.W.F. Hegel – The Phenomenology of Mind* translated by J.B. Baillie (1910/1931) and *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* translated by A.V. Miller (1977) and by Terry Pinkard (copyright 2008, available online but not yet published) – differ in their handling of Hegel's potential for ambiguity.

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DAPHNA ERDINAST-VULCAN

Reading Oneself in Quotation Marks: At the Crossing of Disciplines

The short essay offered here is part of a broader, still embryonic project which I've been mulling over for a while, and as such it will probably offer more questions than answers. As the title indicates, it is interdisciplinary and draws on insights from the fields of philosophy, psychotherapy, and literature in an attempt to understand what I would call the 'dynamics of self-translation'. To introduce the subject, let me open with some thoughts on the Freudian Uncanny, *das Unheimliche*, a term which – incidentally, but perhaps not accidentally – presents a perennial problem for translators. Themes of uncanniness, Freud writes, are 'all concerned with the phenomenon of the "double", which appears in every shape and in every degree of development' (Freud 1919: 629). It is a relation marked by 'the fact that the subject identifies himself with someone else, so that he is in doubt as to which his self is, or substitutes the extraneous self for his own. In other words, there is a doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self' (Freud 1919: 629–30). Like the figure of the double, translation is both the same and other, both familiar and strange, both *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, taking place between a 'source language' (a home-language, as it were) and a 'target language', a language of 'arrival'.

Translation is a transference of meaning, and the distinct kinship between these terms, both derived from the Latin 'carried across', has not escaped psychoanalytic theory, which turned the etymological link into a relation of substance.[1] Transference, that 'acting out or realization of the

1 Noting that the Greek for *transferre* is *metaphorein* Patrick Mahony concludes that 'metaphor, transference, and translation are [etymologically] identical', and one may therefore 'conceive of the whole analytic treatment to be metaphorical' (Mahony 1987: 44, n. 15).

reality of the unconscious' (Lacan 1978: 137) which underlies the dynamic of the psychoanalytic relationship, is also a mode of translation, producing that which is both the same and an other. According to Freud's graphic formulation, it is a 'stereotype plate' which is constantly reprinted afresh. Text and psyche are closely related.[2]

Freud's essay, standard fare on most 'literature and psychoanalysis' syllabi, presents, as I discovered while trying to teach it, a peculiar challenge: its expository design, whatever can be summarized, encapsulated and – quote unquote – 'applied' in a classroom context, cannot be isolated and cordoned off from its performative or literary aspects which tend to cloud rather than clarify the issues at hand. To put it briefly, what Freud has to say about the uncanny is heavily coloured and sometimes unsettled by the particular mode in which it is said. This response to the text, shared by quite a few of Freud's readers, accounts for the fact that it is often studied as a symptom rather than as a diagnosis or, to get to the heart of the matter, as literature rather than theory.

'It is only rarely', Freud says in his preface to the essay, 'that a psychoanalyst feels impelled to investigate the subject of aesthetics' (1919: 619), but the sense of urgency and inevitability of being 'impelled' is soon hollowed out with the relegation of the uncanny from psychological experience to the realm of the fictional, which, he says, is 'a much more fertile province than the uncanny in real life, for it contains the whole of the latter and something more besides, something that cannot be found in real life' (1919: 640), i.e. the imaginary license of the writer, which allows for the creation of fantasy. If this is the case, we may ask, why does the psychoanalyst feel 'impelled' by his own testimony, to investigate this construct?

A stylistic instance of the same ambivalence is evident in the variance of the rhetorical distance Freud puts between himself and his subject matter;

2 'Freud, I recall, consistently compared analysis to a process of translation ... Unanalyzed transference works the way a mistranslation does when it remains unnoticed and becomes canonic, accruing to itself a set of interpretations' (Bass 1984: 81). The 'affirmation of doubleness' is 'the metaphor that imposes itself upon any conception of the analytic situation', and it is 'no more secondary and exterior to such concepts as transference and resistance, ego and id, than writing is to speech' (Bass 1984: 82).

notice the switch from the first person singular of the opening paragraph ('I know of … I must confess', 'I have not made' 'my paper'), to a remote somewhat pompous passage referring to himself in the abstract, disclaiming any and all personal experience of the uncanny:

> The writer of the present contribution, indeed, must himself plead guilty to a special obtuseness in the matter, where extreme delicacy of perception would be more in place. It is long since he has experienced or heard of anything which has given him an uncanny impression, and he must start by translating himself [!] into that state of feeling, by awakening in himself the possibility of experiencing it …
>
> (1919: 620)

We will return a little later to the concept of self-translation.

Yet another instance of oddity might help us along. Turning to Reik's sampling of dictionary definitions of the same quality of feeling (yet to be defined) in other languages, Freud writes: 'the dictionaries that we consult tell us nothing new, perhaps only we ourselves speak a language that is foreign' (1919: 620). And so he goes back to German, the *heimlich* language, to explore the etymology of the word-concept and its transformation into its own opposite, and concludes that '*Heimlich* is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich*' (1919: 624). But the oddity of the initial formulation remains with us: 'we ourselves speak a language that is foreign'. How can a native speaker relate to his own language as 'foreign'? Foreign to what? As Nicolas Royle astutely comments, this may well be a reference to 'the foreign language of the self' (Royle: 61). Indeed, what Freud seems to recognize and resist at the same time is the uncanniness that cannot be safely relegated to fictional tales of horror; an uncanniness which cannot be contained, lying at the very core of language and subjectivity as such, including his own.

The uncanniness of translation, the inextricability of self and other, takes the most acute form when it comes to self-translation, the task undertaken willy-nilly by exiles, émigrés and refugees having to reinvent themselves in an alien culture. The state of 'Extraterritoriality', as Steiner called it, the position of exilic writers who have become the standard bearers of the Modernist sensibility, has become something of a glorified cliché, and I

would not dwell on it here beyond a brief reference to the work of Tzvetan Todorov. Todorov left his homeland Bulgaria, then under an oppressive regime, and chose to live in the West and write in French, and has described this experience of uprootedness as a sense of 'double exteriority'. The deterritorialized subject (*l'homme depaysée*), Todorov argues, goes through a paradigmatic ethical experience of navigation between the relative and the absolute. The exilic mode of being, a living on boundary-lines, effects a constant relativization or 'transvaluation' (1991) of one's home, one's culture, one's language, and one's self, through the encounter with, and acknowledgement of, otherness. It is an experience of reading oneself in quotation marks, as it were (Todorov 1996); a homesickness without nostalgia, without the desire to return to the same, to be identical to oneself.

But this exilic capacity is dearly bought, and it is the dark side of exile which I would like to address here. To understand some of the losses incurred in the process of self-translation or 'double exteriority', let us recall the story of Eva Hoffman who emigrated as a young girl with her family from Poland and became an intellectual celebrity in America. Hoffman's case is obviously a success story, but her memoir, *Lost in Translation* (1991), written at the very height of her professional accomplishment, is all about the losses incurred in the process of assimilation into a new culture, which she significantly describes as a labour of self-translation. Reconstructing the experience of the immigrant child, she writes:

> Every day I learn new words, new expressions. ... The problem is that the signifier has become severed from the signifieds. The words I learn now don't stand for things in the same unquestioned way they did in my native tongue. 'River' in Polish was a vital sound, energized with the essence of riverhood, of my rivers, of my being immersed in rivers. 'River' in English is cold – a word without an aura. It has no accumulating associations for me, and it does not give off the radiating haze of connotation. It does not evoke. The process, alas, works in reverse as well. When I see a river now, it is not shaped, assimilated by the word that accommodates it to the psyche – a word that makes a body of water a river rather than an uncontained element. The river before me remains a thing, absolutely other, absolutely unbending to the grasp of my mind.
>
> (Hoffman 1991: 106)

This radical disjoining of word and thing becomes, for the exiled child, a 'desiccating alchemy, draining the world not only of significance but of its colours, striations, nuances – its very existence. It is the loss of a living connection' (Hoffman 1991: 107), and it leads to the loss of interior language, the very sense of one's subjective existence (Hoffman 1991: 108).[3] The 'Saussurean crisis' described by Hoffman would be familiar (albeit on a much smaller scale) to anyone who learns a second language. It is only our first language which offers this apparently unmediated correlation with reality, only our mother tongue which will always retain its privileged, ontological status. Hoffman's loss of that formative contact with the first language, a loss which is total and irremediable, seems to undermine the very foundations of subjectivity. This has nothing to do with attaining proficiency in the other language. The translated self remains incomplete, not at home in her own skin.

A more extreme or even hyperbolic articulation of what gets lost in self-translation is offered by Jacques Derrida. Freud's subversion of the *Heimliche-Unheimliche* opposition is, of course, an exemplary deconstructive move. Indeed, Derrida's objections notwithstanding, it is hardly surprising that psychoanalysis is often perceived as closely related to deconstruction, which explores the uncanniness of both language and thought. So let me now turn to a slim volume by Derrida, entitled *Monolingualism of the*

3 The same sense of loss, the linguistic exile described by Hoffman, is experienced, albeit unconsciously and to a much lesser extent, by anyone learning a foreign language. When we learn our mother tongue there is no sense of mediation: it seems that the words are identical to their referents and express the world directly. When we learn a foreign language, we begin to realize that words are only representations, or – to use the Saussurean term – that signifiers are arbitrary, and their relation to their signifieds is purely a matter of linguistic convention. This experience, though common enough to become invisible, should cast some doubt on the currently fashionable Lacanian view of language itself as the form of estrangement. The acquisition of language, for Lacan and his followers, marks the child's banishment from the seamless plenitude of the Imaginary Order and dyadic relations with the mother, and the entry into the Symbolic Order governed by the Name-of-the-Father. I would suggest, however, that Lacan, who seldom lets pedestrian facts stand in the way of his theorizing, ignores the psychic reality of the mother-tongue experience.

Other (1998), which deals with the losses incurred not in the translation of one language to another, but within one and the same language. Written in the first person singular and focused on Derrida's relationship with the French language as a Franco-Maghrebian Jew, the essay seems to have all the generic markers of an autobiography. But the author insists, time and again, that the text is *not* a memoir, or a 'pacified autobiography', to use the slightly pejorative term he coins (1998: 31). Indeed, the very concept of autobiography turns out to be the core issue of this text:

> Autobiographical anamnesis presupposes identification. And precisely not identity. No, an identity is never given, received, or attained; only the interminable and indefinitely phantasmatic process of identification endures. Whatever the story of a return to oneself or to *one's home [chez-soi]* ... no matter what an odyssey or bildungroman it might be, in whatever manner one invents the story of a construction of the *self*, the *autos*, or the *ipse*, it is always *imagined* that the one who writes should know how to say *I*. At any rate, the *identificatory modality* must already or henceforth be assumed: assured of language and in its language ...
>
> (1998: 28, italics in original)

> [The identificatory modality is] sculpted by cultural, symbolic, and sociological figures. From all viewpoints, which are not just grammatical, logical, or philosophical, it is well known that the *I* of the kind of anamnesis called autobiographical, the I [*je-me*] of I recall [*je me rappelle*] is produced and uttered in different ways depending on the language in question. It never precedes them; therefore it is not independent of language in general ...
>
> (1998: 29, italics in original)

It is no wonder, then, that this moving account should be introduced with a paradoxical Derridean formula: 'I have only one language; it is not mine' (1998: 3). This logical inconsistency is magnified and probed as Derrida goes on to describe his monolingualism as 'an absolute habitat':

> I would not be myself outside it. It constitutes me, it dictates even the ipseity of all things to me, and also prescribes a monastic solitude for me; as if, even before learning to speak, I had been bound by some/ vows. This inexhaustible solipsism is myself before me. Lastingly. Yet it will never be mine, this language, the only one I am thus destined to speak, as long as speech is possible for me in life and in death; you see, never will this language be mine. And, truth to tell, it never was ...
>
> (1998: 1–2)

If being-at-home (*être-chez-soi*) in a language is the enabling condition of identity (1998: 17), it is entirely appropriate, given the historical circumstances, that Derrida should describe his Jewish-Franco-Maghrebian descent as a 'disorder of identity' (1998: 14), having belonged to a group 'deprived of easily accessible models of identification' neither French, nor Arabic, Berber or Hebrew, who 'could not properly identify themselves, in the double sense of "identifying oneself" and "identifying oneself with" the other' (1998: 52). This disorder, says Derrida, accounts for his 'neurotic' relationship with French (1998: 56), 'feeling lost' outside the language which he inhabits and is inhabited by, and feeling a stranger within it: 'One entered French literature only by losing one's accent. I think I have not lost my accent; not everything in my "French Algerian" accent is lost' (1998: 45). And, in a move which can only be afforded at the end of a glorious career, he confesses to the felt 'necessity of this vigilant transformation' of his accent, the desire to eliminate it through writing. 'I am not proud of it', he says: 'An accent ... seems incompatible to me with the intellectual dignity of public speech. (Inadmissible, isn't it? Well, I admit it). Incompatible, a fortiori, with the vocation of a poetic speech' (1998: 46).

But the linguistic history of Franco-Maghrebian Jews, being doubly and trebly colonized, or, as Todorov would call it, in a state of multilayered 'exteriority', is not the point of the story Derrida sets out to tell. It is just a point of departure for a much broader claim in relation to language as such. The impossibility of autobiography is not an accident of historical circumstances – be they forced exile, voluntary emigration, or the withdrawal of citizenship as in the case of the Algerian Jews under Petain's regime – but an existential position; a state of being or not-being-at-home in the world.

Extending his own 'exemplarity', which allows him 'to read in a more dazzling, intense, or even *traumatic* manner the truth of a universal necessity' (1998: 26, italics in original), Derrida claims that his case is not the exception but rather the law of language:

> Anyone should be able to declare under oath: I have only one language and it is not mine; my 'own' language is, for me, a language that cannot be assimilated. My language, the only one I hear myself speak and agree to speak, is the language of the

> other. This abiding 'alienation' appears, like 'lack', to be constitutive. ... It is not only the origin of our responsibility, it also structures the peculiarity and property of language. It institutes the phenomenon of hearing-oneself-speak in order to mean-to-say. But here we must say the phenomenon as phantasm. Let us refer for the moment to the semantic and etymological affinity that associates the phantasm to the *phainesthai*, to phenomenality, but also to the spectrality of the phenomenon. *Phantasma* is also the phantom, the double, or the ghost. We are there.
>
> (1998: 25)

His, Derrida insists, is only an exemplary case, then, because 'in any case we speak only one language – and ... we do not *own* it. We only ever speak one language – and, since it returns to the other, it exists asymmetrically, always *for the other*, from the other, kept by the other, coming from the other, remaining with the other, and returning to the other' (1998: 40, italics in original). The *unheimliche*, for Derrida as for Freud, inhabits the very core of the *heimlich*.

Be that as it may, the susceptibility to the uncanniness of language is certainly more powerfully felt in a state of 'extraterritoriality' like that of Hoffman, Derrida, or, to get to our third case-in-point, that of Joseph Conrad, a Polish-born writer who left his homeland at the age of seventeen, whose second language was French, and who became a British citizen, anglicized his name (the original was Joseph Konrad Korzeniowski), and wrote some of the greatest Modernist masterpieces in his third language, English. In most discussions of extraterritorial writers, Conrad features in a place of honour among the usual suspects, as a prototype of Joyce, Beckett, Nabokov, Brodsky, or Kundera. But unlike some of those later exiles, Conrad is not a nostalgic writer. With the exception of memoirs and very few short stories, he does not go back to the *Nostos*, the home he left behind. What is truly amazing about his work is precisely that apparently seamless transition, the smooth translation of authorial subjectivity from one language into another.

But, of course, that transition is neither smooth nor seamless. However successful it is, or perhaps when most successful, the translation of one's self from one language to another is experienced as a kind of betrayal, especially, as in the case of Conrad, in the context of a homeland torn and tormented under alien rule. The biographical evidence we have on this issue is almost

trivial: the heavy accent of Conrad's spoken English; his occasional lapses of intonation; his extreme sensitivity (outbursts of fury, actually) on the issue of his English proficiency; his aversion to being considered 'a sort of freak, an amazing bloody foreigner writing in English' (as he wrote in a letter to Edward Garnett on 4 October 1907 – Conrad 1907: 488); and his rather hollow claim that he was 'chosen' by English rather than the other way around – all of these pale into insignificance against the incredible achievement of his having become one of the great literary masters of the language and having stamped it with his very own voiceprint. But in the bright lights of this glaring success – or *súccess*, as he used to say – there are shadows of anxiety and desire which cannot be driven away. And it is to these shadows that I would like to turn now, and to the problem of self-translation in Conrad's work.

Let me go back for a moment to the testimony of Derrida whose 'neurotic relationship' with French accounts not only for the embarrassments of accent, but also for his 'loving and desperate appropriation of language' (1998: 33), the need to develop one's own idiom within it, to test its resistance and drive it to the greatest lengths. That is why, Derrida says, his 'ultra-radical' (1998: 46) use of French is nearly untranslatable; why he feels at his best, 'when I sharpen the resistance of my French, the secret "purity" of my French ... Hence its resistance, its relentless resistance to translation; translation into *all* languages, including another such French' (1998: 56, italics in original). It is impossible to miss the distinct erotic note so clearly audible in his confessed desire for and need for intimacy with the language, as 'a newcomer without assignable origin, [who] would make the said language come to him, forcing the language to speak itself by itself, in another way, in his language. To speak by itself. But for him, and on his terms, keeping in her body the ineffaceable archive of this/ event' (1998: 51–2). Substitute English for French, and this passage might have been written by Conrad, had he been more inclined to embarrassing confessions.

I would suggest that much of Conrad's work can, in fact, be read as a conversion of his linguistic extra-territoriality into an ontological homesickness, an anxiety of paternity and filiation. He had given birth to himself, as it were, in leaving his paternal heritage behind (his father, Apollo Korzeniowski, was a renown poet, a Polish patriot, and – significantly – a

translator from English into Polish), and turned into a 'homo duplex' by his own testimony, afflicted (or blessed) with that internal doubleness, the 'strangeness within', as I would call it, which becomes a constant motif in his work. Having translated, not only transcribed, his own name; having written in what was, in fact, a foreign language for him; having grappled with the issue of loyalty and betrayal throughout his life, he offers a poignant instance of the proverbial affinity of *traduttore* and *traditore*. The same vulnerability, both temperamental and circumstantial, which is rendered by Derrida in philosophical terms, is translated into a preoccupation with the uncanny, with the strangeness within the homely enclosure of selfhood in Conrad's work.

'Why does one write? Why does one read?' asks André Green, whose psychoanalytic work is immensely relevant to our concerns. His answer is unequivocal: 'Writing (as Derrida, in his own way, has eloquently demonstrated) is, according to Freud, communication with the absent, the reverse of speech, which is rooted in presence' (1978: 282). Green suggests:

> The work of writing presupposes a wound and a loss, a work of mourning, of which the text is the transformation into a fictitious positivity. No creation can occur without exertion, without a painful effort over which it is the pseudo-victory. Pseudo, because this victory can only last for a limited time, because it is always contested by the author himself, who constantly wishes to start over, and thus to deny what he has already done, to deny in any case that/ the result, as satisfying as it might seem, should be taken as the final product.
>
> (Green 1997: 283–4)

One does not have to look far for the wound, the loss, and the work of mourning in the case of an author who had been orphaned of his mother at the age of seven, lost his father when he was eleven, and left his homeland and language behind when he was seventeen. Though none of Conrad's fictional texts are autobiographical in any conventional sense, they are, as I've suggested elsewhere (1995), 'heterobiographical', in their inscription of anxieties which cut across and overflow the borderlines of narrative and text and in their portrayal of the 'strangeness within'. The uncanny, as Nicolas Royle observes, 'has to do with a strangeness of framing and borders, [with] an experience of liminality' (2003: 2). If 'autobiography', as traditionally conceived, is all about framing and borders, aspiring to a

territorial enclosure of the self as 'the figure behind the veil', 'heterobiography' is the uncanny double of this genre, pointing to the precariousness of its enclosures and the permeability of its borderlines.

Rarely, if ever, does Conrad openly address the issue of his linguistic and ontological homelessness. But the consciousness of the *unheimliche*, the strangeness within, is translated in his fiction into an overpowering effect of uncanniness which, I would suggest, accounts for his aesthetics and becomes the hallmark of his work. 'Silence, solitude, and darkness' – the Freudian ingredients of 'infantile anxiety' which triggers the uncanny and 'from which the majority of human beings have never become quite free' (1919: 642) – are his very element; ghostly absences are everywhere called into provisional presence; doubles proliferate both within the narratives and on their boundary-lines through the framing and embedding of stories within stories. Conrad's translation of his own subjectivity into a foreign language might have been meant as an act of resolute exorcism, an attempt to close the door on an almost unbearable past; but it turned, instead, into a powerful invocation (or, in Freudian terms, a transference) of uncanniness, of not-being-at-home. The strangeness lies within, and, to quote Derrida once again, 'everyone reads, acts, [and] writes with his or her ghosts' (1994: 139).

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ANDREW WHITEHEAD

Moonless Moons and a Pretty Girl: Translating Ikkyū Sōjun

I Introduction

The term 'translation', ironically enough, is a mistranslation. James Heisig notes that 'Leonardi Bruni (1369–1444) misread a line in the *Noctes Atticae* of Aulus Gellius where *traducere* meant "introduce, lead into" as "carrying over" and hence "translating". The etymological mistake carried over to French and Italian in the fifteenth century and was simply repeated in English' (Heisig 2003: 49). Our contemporary understanding of translation is therefore one of 'carrying over'.

In this paper, I will address the difficulties encountered when doing a philosophical translation, both in the sense of translating what might be understood as philosophical works, and in the sense of philosophically engaging a text in a foreign language and 'carrying' it 'over' to one's native tongue. In the context of some issues that arise from my current research, I will borrow some ideas from the work of James Heisig, which I will then apply to the task of translating a poem by the Zen thinker Ikkyū Sōjun, comparing my translation to those already published by other translators.

While a number of translations of Ikkyū's work exist, none of these adequately capture the philosophical undercurrents that run throughout his poetry and prose. Without these, translations are unable to 'carry over' what the original text aims to convey. Because of this, I believe that Ikkyū's ideas are, at present, unavailable in English.

Ikkyū's poems are assembled in the *Kyōun-shū* (Anthology of the Crazy Cloud)[1], and many of them deal with classical Chinese scripture and literary works as well as traditional Zen *koāns* (Ch. Kung-an; literal translation: 'public document'. They deal with standard problems which have been established by tradition to judge a student's understanding of Zen). Knowledge of Zen, therefore, remains an unquestionable prerequisite to understanding and translating the poetry of Ikkyū.

Two questions arise concerning the role of the translator with respect to a given text. In a philosophical translation, how much should be contributed by the translator him/herself in response to the original text? To what degree can this be allowed while still remaining a proper 'carrying over' of foreign ideas?

Heisig begins his essay 'Desacralizing Philosophical Translation in Japan', by noting the various levels of translation that have to be dealt with when doing a philosophical translation. He notes that while 'the need for speech – the translation of what we say to ourselves into what can be communicated to others – is universal to consciousness, its definition, both in amount and in content, is cultural and temporal' (Heisig 2003: 50). The cultural and temporal definition of how speech is defined is often overlooked, especially when dealing with medieval Japanese works. A number of the translations of Ikkyū's work have fumbled on precisely this point. Translators have worked through contemporary Japanese versions of his poems, and, in so doing, have in effect produced second-order translations. This is a difficulty for any translator who is working through historical, let alone classical, texts. The fact that a text is from the past presents new difficulties for the translator. Regarding a text written before he was born, Heisig notes 'I translate it, even if it is in my native tongue. In fact the past is a foreign country, whose distance from us is perhaps even more than that which separates the contemporary language of Europe from that of Japan' (2003: 50). This brings to light the idea that *meaning* might have

1 The Anthology is said to have been compiled by Ikkyū's student Bokusai after his death. My research focuses on the 1997 Hirano Soujou first edition, published by Tosho Printing Corp.

something to do with the ways in which a translator approaches a text, and forces us to confront the question of whether or not meaning can be found in the/a text alone.

Heisig finds that, in philosophical translation, 'the multiplicity of meanings can be hidden in a term, in a phrase, or in the flow of the argument. Which is primary will depend on the context, but without attention to all three, the layers of meaning are likely to be lost more often than preserved' (Heisig 2003: 57). Depending on the text, or fragment of text, the necessary meaning to be conveyed and disseminated finds itself hidden in some part of the original language. This should not be surprising, given the vast differences, both idiomatic and culturally precedent, that exist between closed systems of language. Heisig is, therefore, quite right in noting that Ortega y Gasset is sound in his assessment that 'translation without interpretation is a naïve fantasy, and surely not everything is translatable' (Heisig 2003: 51). But, if this is the case, how are we to proceed? What hope is there for translation, let alone philosophical translation? To what extent can any original meaning be translated?

The answer may lay in the paradox of translation: '[a] translation is done as if transcending the very things that give the original its vitality, in order that its otherness might be preserved in the translation. In this way, the demands of style in the translation language are slackened out of a sense of fidelity to the original' (Heisig 2003: 53). The multiplicity of meanings contained in the original, if it is to be preserved, must be abandoned and re-appropriated anew. The vitality of the translation is necessarily different from that of the original, and, in this way, is preserved.

When I began my research on Ikkyū, it quickly became apparent that there was tremendous discrepancy between translations. I started to question how such different representations of the same text could be possible. I believed in what Heisig refers to as 'the sacred cow of fidelity to the original text' (Heisig 2003: 48). I will examine the various translations of one poem, entitled 'The Middle of Autumn and No Moon', and provide brief remarks about each. I will then substantiate my criticisms through reference to the ideas regarding translation already discussed.

II Existing Translations

The first translation to be examined is that of Maryse and Masumi Shibata, from their book *Ikkyū: Nuages Fous* (1991). Their rendition of the poem, aside from the title, is virtually unrecognizable as a translation of the original and is a perfect example of Heisig's contention that 'to remove all sense of the unfamiliar by assimilating the text without remainder into familiar language is particularly unhealthy for philosophical thinking' (Heisig 2003: 58). Their translation meets the majority of criteria laid out for classical romantic poetry, and none of those for Zen poetry. It reads as follows:

> Mi-automne Sans Lune
>
> Cette nuit je ne vois pas la lune, [This night I do not see the moon,]
> Je ne verrai donc pas une belle fille. [I will therefore not see a pretty girl.]
> Assis tout seul, calme, [Sitting all alone, calm,]
> Face au chandelier de fer, je récite une poésie. [Facing the iron lamp, I recite a poem.]
> Tous les poètes du monde [All the poets of the world]
> Deviennent mélancoliques au crépuscule. [Become melancholic at the dusk.]
> J'écoute la pluie ce soir, [I listen to the rain this night,]
> Et je revois les dix années précédentes. [And I review the preceding ten years.]
>
> (Shibata 1991: 17. My translation – A.W.)

This recreation of the poem abolishes all ties to what might be considered an original context, or even a contemporary Zen context. Instead, the poem now finds itself re-contextualized in such a way as to render it entirely new, without any preservation of the original. I assure you there is no girl, let alone a pretty one, in the original poem.

John Stevens' version can be found in his book *Wild Ways: Zen Poems of Ikkyū* (2003). He writes:

> A Moonless Midautumn
>
> No moon on the best night for moon viewing;
> I sit alone near the iron candle stand and
> quietly chant old tunes—

The best poets have loved these evenings
But I just listen to the sound of the rain and
recall the emotions of past years.

(Stevens 2003: 40)

Philosophically speaking, the most important line of the text is the first one, and Stevens fails to convey the meaning. In fact, the only way in which the meaning can be retained is to translate the line exactly as it is found in the original. The multiplicity of meanings is forfeited for the sake of a concrete and personal meaning posited by the translator.

James H. Sanford, in his book *Zen-Man Ikkyū* (1981), produces a number of excellent translations, again despite being more or less unfamiliar with the nature of his subject (Zen philosophy). While there exists some freedom for interpretation of classical Chinese characters, Sanford, like the other translators discussed so far, takes liberties he should not. He translates the poem as follows:

Moonless Night in Mid-Autumn

No moon, and brilliance is just a name.
I sit in solitude, singing before an iron lampstand.
This night leaves no heart unwounded;
In the sound of rain a dozen years' passion.

(Sanford 1981: 127)

While a great deal of the meaning can still be extrapolated from the poem in this rendition, it seems odd that Sanford would mistranslate (and, it seems, deliberately mistranslate) a number of the characters. In the final line, the character used is for the number ten, not a dozen. While this difference is of very little philosophical significance, it raises the question of why Sanford would so (mis)read such a simple character.

The late Jon Carter Covell translates the poem as follows

Poem to an Autumn Evening with No Moon

Tonight, no moon, yet 'tis cloudlessly bright.
Solitary zazen, quietly humming, only the iron oil lamp
(for company).

> From a poetic viewpoint, 'tis a sorrowful evening.
> Rain's sound seems decade-long this lonesome night.
>
> (Covell 1980: 26)

She inserts a temporal reference for the event itself, 'tonight'. My primary criticism of Covell's translations, however, involves the insertion of narrative. In her book, *Unraveling Zen's Red Thread: Ikkyū's Controversial Way* (1980), she focuses on what she sees as the struggles, relationships (familial, sexual, and personal), and overcoming, that one can find throughout his life. This reading not only lacks historical support, but equally lacks textual support for the translations themselves.

Having examined these poems, I am left agreeing with Heisig that 'faithful translation ... always involves some balance of mimesis and poesis, between the attempt to preserve the original vitality of the text by trying to enter in and repeat the experience of the author, and the attempt creatively to read it from one's own point in time' (Heisig 2003: 61). In order to enter into and repeat the experience of Ikkyū, I contend that translators must have a thorough understanding of the philosophical positions in which he was trained and which served to inform his writings, in addition to an extensive comprehension of the history of the Zen tradition.

III Philosophical Translation

Perhaps the most difficult problem for a translator of Zen Buddhist writings is getting beyond the paradox of the use of language. Given that Zen is often referred to as 'the doctrine beyond words and letters',[2] its position with regards to language has remained enigmatic to say the least. What becomes interesting for a translator is to grapple with the fact that, while the language remains empty, its message and meaning are plentiful. If one

2 For example, we might consider Bodhidharma's 'Bloodstream Sermon', where he is recorded as saying 'the ultimate Truth is beyond words. Doctrines are words. They are not the Way. The Way is wordless' (Pine 1987: 31).

is not grounded in the philosophies that support the discourses of Zen, it can become easy to look for an entirely different kind of meaning than that intended. How then, can one undertake the task of translating the meaning of the meaningless? The first step is to familiarize oneself with the history and philosophical developments of Zen.

The lack of familiarity with the philosophical positions held by Zen is perhaps the greatest failing of the translations written to date. One of the translators even goes so far as to note that he had done away with the characters for 'being' and 'non-being', because they made the prose too clumsy in English. This would seem fatal to the translation, insofar as without those characters any translation misses the point entirely. Ikkyū, like most Mahayana Buddhists after Nāgārjuna, eloquently espouses the doctrine of emptiness. Without a thorough understanding of the Buddhist conception of emptiness, any translation would seem to me futile. In order to deal with this criticism, I will offer a rough suggestion of what familiarity of these concepts would entail.

Nāgārjuna's major contribution involved the doctrine of non-dualism, especially with regards to the emptiness of all things (in the sense that no thing has an essence). Jay Garfield contends that 'central to Nāgārjuna's view is his doctrine of the two realities. There is, according to Nāgārjuna, conventional reality and ultimate reality. Correspondingly, there are two truths' (Garfield 2003: 4). Through detailed and even 'infuriating' arguments, Nāgārjuna sets up 'a series of self-contradictory oppositions, [by which he] disproves all conceivable statements' (Garfield 2003: 4). Such 'conceivable statements' are precisely the four propositions of the *catuṣkoṭi* (four propositions of Mahayana logic). The four positions are as follows:

> *All things exist: affirmation of being, negation of nonbeing*
> *All things do not exist: affirmation of nonbeing, negation of being*
> *All things both exist and do not exist: both affirmation and negation*
> *All things neither exist nor do not exist: neither affirmation nor negation*
> (Dumoulin 2005: 43)

Nāgārjuna is able, using skilful means, to dispel each position through its self-contradiction upon analysis. However, it remains the case that the reality with which we, as translators, are concerned *when translating*, is that of convention (which is based in nominalism and agreement).

By means of emptying all statements (and thereby all things) of an essence, one is able to attain a 'view from no-where'. In this sense, the Chinese Chan master Linji's formulation of the true human not only depends on nothing, but, as a result of being without qualities, is nothing. In other words, failing to have any qualities whatsoever, all things become non-distinct, non-other, non-dual. Linji's four procedures are summarised in the *Teachings of Linji* as follows:

> At times one takes away the person but does not take away the environment. At times one takes away the environment but does not take away the person. At times one takes away both the person and the environment. At times one takes away neither the person nor the environment.
>
> (Watson 1993: 21)

This structure can be understood as a Zen version of Nāgārjuna's four propositions. This movement leads to results drastically different from the work of Nāgārjuna, namely the affirmation of nothing as opposed to the negation of everything. This position is unique to the school of Rinzai Zen.

Having acquainted myself with the ideas of emptiness and nothing, I have translated the poem as follows:

> The Middle of Autumn and No Moon
>
> There is no moon, only the name moon.
> Sitting alone, reciting towards [facing;before] an iron lamp.
> Under heaven a poet, a heart-broken evening.
> The rain sounds for one night, ten years of emotion.

Using Nāgārjuna's four propositions with regards to the 'moon' (there is moon, there is not moon, there is both moon and not moon, there is neither moon nor not moon), Ikkyū shows the emptiness of the reference 'moon' insofar as it has no referent (in an absolute sense). The idea that there is no moon depends on the doctrine of co-dependent origination, which is embraced by all schools of Buddhism. The moon has no essence, in the sense that it has no independent existence, but depends on all of the conditions which constitute its presence. From Linji's four procedures, we can say that this line takes away the object/environment. It shows the object

to be empty. The second part of the first line, by contrast, takes away the subject/person. The subjective constitution of the reference-referent relation falls apart, in virtue of the fact that the object is empty. In this sense, the subject's referential viewpoint is also emptied. This first line accounts for the emptiness of things, the emptiness of emptiness, insofar as it uses Nāgārjuna's four propositions to describe Linji's first two procedures. Both the object and the subject can be shown to be empty.

The second line takes away both subject/person and object/environment. It depicts the practice of *zazen*, which aims to see through the emptiness of the subject and object simultaneously. The theory of co-dependent origination plays a large part in allowing for practitioners to realize that both they and the phenomena before them are illusory (*zazen* is practiced with the eyes open), and in this way empties all things. It, therefore, accounts for Linji's third procedure.

The third line re-posits both the subject/person and the object/environment, with specific attention paid to the interrelation of the two. Both are co-dependently arisen and empty of self-nature, and each remains only a conventional designation. In this way, one takes away neither the subject nor the object. The dependence of each on the other is shown through the ambiguity as to whether the subject is a poet because of the heart-broken evening and, thus, full of sentiment, or whether the evening is heart-broken because of the poet. Neither stands independent of the other.

This theme is carried further in the final line, where the subject and object are shown to be non-dual. The image is of the mirroring of subject and object, insofar as the rain and the emotion remain one and the same. Subject and object are no longer distinctly differentiated, but contain and refer to one another. Both are nothing.

The style of the poem in this translation remains balanced in the same way as the original, constantly moving between subject and object in equal proportion and on every line. None of the other translations discussed have adequately re-presented this balance, a balance which is extremely important for the rhythm and form of the poem.

IV Conclusion

What is meant by philosophical translation? It would seem that a philosophical translation involves both a philosophical reading and a philosophical (re)writing. It is intrinsically rooted in a philosophy of translation, insofar as some idea as to what can and cannot be 'carried over' must be recognized and appreciated. A philosophical translation deals with the philosophy of texts (be they philosophical works or works grounded and based in philosophy). In this sense, a philosophical approach and interpretation becomes requisite when undertaking the task of translating a work philosophically.

But is a philosophical translation philosophy? I would be inclined to agree with Heisig, who notes that '... the translation of a philosophical text is faithful to philosophy itself to the degree that it is aware of the role of language in communicating thought; and to the extent that it is not aware, or does not allow its awareness to interfere with the translation process, it is unfaithful' (Heisig 2003: 56). The various previous translations of 'The Middle of Autumn and No Moon' can be understood as being unfaithful, to the extent that they fail to take the role of language used in Zen into account. With the more complex amoral texts in the Anthology, this fault proves philosophically devastating for English readers of Ikkyū's work.

Sadly, Heisig's contention that '... only a fraction of philosophical translation is great, most of it passable, and a solid mass of it downright awful' (Heisig 2003: 59) seems to be an accurate one. It is my hope that my translation avoids the problems ascribed to the other attempts, and proves at least passable.

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ANGELO BOTTONE

Translation and Justice in Paul Ricoeur

Introduction

In the recent philosophical literature the problem of translation has been treated by a relatively small number of thinkers. We might recall the contributions of Donald Davidson and Willard van Orman Quine in the analytical tradition; while in continental philosophy Jacques Derrida and Paul Ricoeur are the greatest thinkers who have explicitly thematised the practice of translation and its effects from a speculative point of view.

My text will focus on Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) who has dealt with the problem of translation in a few lectures and articles, occasionally presented over the last fifteen years of his long life and later collected in two volumes: *Le Juste 2* (2001) and *Sur la Traduction* (2004). What is unique about Ricoeur, when compared to the other philosophers just mentioned, is that he identifies in translation a paradigm of the attitude towards alterity; claiming that the ethical purposes relating to what he calls 'linguistic hospitality' are the model for any kind of hospitality. In this way translation becomes a model for ethical and juridical thinking. It is not coincidental that one of the essays of the second volume that Ricoeur dedicated to his theory of justice, *Le Juste 2*, is precisely about translation.

In my intervention I will concentrate on the relationship between translation and justice and show how it appears within his entire philosophical system; with a particular focus on his analysis of his hermeneutical concept of 'distantiation' and of the act of judging. '*La distanciation*', which is the just distance between subject and object, is a key concept in Ricoeur's hermeneutical theory, but it is also the principle that lies at the foundation of his understanding of justice, it is the principle that is objectified in juridical institutions.

The act of judging is analysed by Ricoeur not only in the juridical sphere but also in the medical, moral and esthetical realms. In this way he shows the main characteristic that is common, among the other things, between translation and justice; that is the necessity to apply a general principle to particular cases through an action – the act of judging.

II Translation and Justice in the Writings of Ricoeur

Paul Ricoeur, who with Hans-Georg Gadamer is the father of philosophical hermeneutics, wrote on translation only in his last years. These papers and presentations (from 1997–2002), have been collected in two volumes: *Le Juste 2* (2001) and *Sur la traduction* (2004). Domenico Jervolino, one of the most authoritative interpreters of Ricoeur's thought, has suggested that translation is the model that synthesizes and best articulates his whole philosophy (2008), for reasons that I will return to later. What is relevant for this paper is the last period of Ricoeur's life which was devoted, in a more extensive and systematic manner, to the topic of 'the just'. In doing this Ricoeur sought to fill what he perceived as a vacuum in contemporary thought, i.e. the lack of a reflection on justice.

This is a topic that has interested philosophers since ancient times and, according to Ricoeur, it has been neglected in recent decades even by those who have written on ethics and political philosophy. The reason for this neglect is the violence that has characterised the twentieth century, a violence which has been the focus of philosophers, to the detriment of other issues.

A number of Ricoeur's papers (public lectures, reviews, articles) on justice and on the just have been published in two collections covering the years 1992–4 (*Le Juste*, translated into English as *The Just*) and 1995–2000 (*Le Juste 2*, translated into English as *Reflections on the Just*).

During this same period Ricoeur presented, his ideas on translation, claiming that it is a 'trial', in the double sense of 'ordeal' and 'probation'.

What has to be tested is our desire to translate. He compares the task of the translator to the Freudian work of remembering and mourning, and argues that translation runs into 'resistance' (in the psychoanalytical sense) on the part of the mother tongue, which refuses to be subjected to the test of the foreign, but also on the part of the foreign language, which presents continuous problems and difficulties: semantic fields cannot be superimposed on one another, syntaxes are not equivalent and connotations are different. The paradox of translation is that source and target texts are supposed to say the same thing in different manners, yet there is no third text that can be taken as a perfect model for comparison. This is what he calls 'equivalence without identity' (Ricoeur 2007: 22).

Ricoeur claims that it is only by renouncing the ideal of a perfect translation, and mourning this loss, that translation is possible (Ricoeur 2004: 26) but we need to be aware of the limitations and fallibility of the human condition.

He compares the difficulties encountered in intralingual translation (within the same language) with those encountered in interlingual translation (between different languages) and shows that they are linked to the wider phenomenon of language. Therefore, translating, in every possible sense, can become a model for interpretation, a model for hermeneutics. As a phenomenologist Ricoeur is not concerned with issues in the theory of translation. He takes for granted that, in spite of theoretical and practical difficulties, translation is possible. Rather, what matters for Ricoeur is what philosophy can learn from translation theory and practice. Ricoeur will consider translation as a model for reflection not only in linguistics or hermeneutics but also in ethics (Ricoeur 2004: 42).

Let us begin by considering the link between language, hermeneutics and jurisprudence. As already mentioned, in the 1990s Ricoeur decided 'to do justice of justice', focusing on this topic and working with the *Institut des Hautes Etudes pour la Justice* in Paris and with the *Ecole Nationale de la Magistrature* in Bordeaux. The fruits of this work are the reflections, collected and published in two volumes *Le Juste* and *Le Juste 2* in which he maintains that the juridical lies in between moral and political thought. If war is the theme of political philosophy, then peace is that of the philosophy of law. The act of judgment, which gives visibility to the

juridical, aims at establishing peace in the long term future; and at resolving a conflict in the short term (Ricoeur 2000: 127). This happens through a discourse in which words (written laws, dispute, final verdict) prevail over violence. Even when no peace is achieved between parties, the parties have at least recognised each other reciprocally. It is only with rehabilitation, only when the guilty person regains the fullness of his juridical abilities and the exercise of citizenship, that the act of justice attains its final goal; which is the reestablishment of social peace (Ricoeur 2000: 131). Ricoeur conceives justice as 'just distance', this is a concept that is linked to his hermeneutics and it is appropriate to recall it briefly. He claims that we do not understand the world immediately, as by intuition, but through a series of mediations. The first form of distantiation is discourse; an event which involves subjects, refers to something else and permits communication. Language, through discourse, becomes an event and is significant; it becomes an action, something that changes the world.

> While language is only a prior condition of communication for which it provides the codes, it is in discourse that all messages are exchanged. So discourse not only has a world, but it has another, another person, an interlocutor to whom it is addressed. The event, in this last sense, is the temporal phenomenon of exchange, the establishment of a dialogue which can be started, continued or interrupted.
>
> (Ricoeur 1981: 133)

Discourse is objectified in the text. The text is particularly important in Ricoeur's hermeneutics as it represents *distantiation*, which is the distance between the producer, who has a history of its own, and the receiver, who is already an other. Moreover, the text creates a world of its own, with its rules, it produces a distance of the real from itself. This is particularly evident in works of fiction or poetry where first order references are suspended in order to generate a new reality.

Interpretation is therefore a reply to this fundamental distantiation that is constituted by the objectification of discourse in the texts. It is only through this distantiation, which is objectified in narratives and myths, that we understand ourselves and the world. This 'long route' of signs, which humanity has deposited in cultural works, should not be overcome but is necessary for comprehension:

> In contrast to the tradition of *cogito* and the pretension of the subject to know itself by immediate intuition, it must be said that we understand ourselves only by the long detour of the signs of humanity deposited in cultural works. What would we know and love and hate, of moral feelings and, in general, of all that we call the *self*, if these had not been brought to language and articulated by literature? Thus what seems most contrary to subjectivity, and what structural analysis discloses as the texture of the text, is the very *medium* within which we can understand ourselves.
>
> (Ricoeur 1981: 143)

Opposing a philosophy of the *cogito* and the pretence of the subject to know himself immediately, Ricoeur maintains that mediations establish the necessary distance that makes understanding the world possible at all. What initially appeared as contrary to subjectivity, that is objectification, is the very means that permits the emergence of the sense of the subject: 'To understand is *to understand oneself in front of the text*' (ibid.). Contrary to the reflective tradition, Ricoeur argues that the self constitutes its identity through a dialogical and relational structure and this dialogue involves other subjects as well as the world of experience.

This brief summary of Ricoeur's hermeneutics will help us to understand his use of the notion of distantiation in the juridical sphere; Ricoeur indeed claims that distantiation is also the principle that lies at the basis of his conception of justice, a principle that is objectified in juridical institutions.

III Justice as 'Just Distance'

Juridical institutions, which objectify the principle of justice, are placed between antagonists to put an end to a conflict. In contrast to vengeance, which adds violence to violence, justice creates a distance among subjects; penal laws consist in establishing a difference between the crime and the penalty, a difference that does not exist in vengeance. This is possible with the appearance of a third party who is not involved in the conflict. Justice is therefore a synonym of impartiality – 'just distance' (Ricoeur 2000: ix).

Earlier I mentioned how the self constitutes its identity through a dialogical structure; this dialogue involves both interpersonal relationships, based on proximity (such as friendship, kinship), and institutional relationships, based on distance. As in hermeneutics, where distantiation is the necessary moment for comprehension, in the juridical-political sphere distantiation, represented by the institution, is the necessary moment for justice to be.

What has all this to do with translation and why did Ricoeur include one of his essays on translation in the collection *Le Juste 2*? Links and analogies between translation and justice are many, but the most evident, according to Ricoeur, is to be found in the act of judging common to both translation and justice. In more than one essay of his two volumes on the just (see Ricoeur 2000: 127–55 and Ricoeur 2007: 23–31; 106–20) he shows what is specifically common between translation and justice, that is the necessity of applying a general principle to particular cases in the context of a practical activity: this is the act of judgement. Judging is analysed by Ricoeur not only in the juridical sphere but also in the medical, moral and esthetical realms.

He claims that once rules have been established – whether they be moral, juridical or linguistic – the problem of their application arises. This problem has at least two moments: the first consists in the recognition of the concrete situation, and from this recognition the choice of the right thing to do follows, while the second moment regards the application of a general rule to a singular case, and this application requires practical wisdom or prudence. These two moments in the deliberative process are explained by Ricoeur with reference to the Kantian concepts of 'determinative judgement' (from the rule to the case) and of 'reflective judgement' (from the case to the rule) (Ricoeur 2000: 94–100). After presenting a brief phenomenology of judgement Ricoeur shows its possible forms in different spheres of practical life, with a particular emphasis, in *Le Just* and *Le Juste 2*, on legal judgement.

If practical reason has always been an important theme for Ricoeur, in his last years he devoted his reflections to how practical reasoning plays a role in justice. Already in *Oneself as Another* (1990), probably his most complete work on ethics, Ricoeur maintained that the synthesis he was

elaborating between the teleological approach (inspired by Aristotle) and the deontological approach (inspired by Kant) was still a preparatory exercise for a confrontation with the tragic dimension of action. The tragic dimension of action regards all conflicts where the judging conscience has to decide between different norms – be they moral or juridical – and act consequently. This tragic dimension is most evident in the judge. Ricoeur privileges the judiciary because it is there that the idea of justice in action can be seen, embodied in the humane figure of the judge.

Justice finds its concrete fulfilment only at the level of application of the norm in the exercise of judgment, in a particular situation. In the same way, it could be said that language finds its concrete fulfilment only in its daily exercise, in discourse. Applying a norm has at least two opposing risks: on the one hand applying a norm can be conceived as a purely mechanical operation, on the other hand it can be too discretional. The problem is how to find a middle zone; a balance. The search for this balance involves, according to Ricoeur, many disciplines: rhetoric, understood as reasoning about what is probable; hermeneutics, as an exercise of understanding and explanation; and poetics, as long productive imagination and the invention of appropriate solutions, are all necessary (see Ricoeur 2000: xxii).

With reference to the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis* (*prudentia* in Latin), the virtue of good sense, Ricoeur underlines the personal character of every judgement. The entire person is involved in judgement; the expert is not only someone who knows but also someone who knows how to choose and he has acquired this virtue from a practice repeated through time, from an action that has become habitual. This is true obviously not only for the juridical judgment but for every manifestation of practical wisdom (including translation), in every search for the just, understood as the just thing to do (Ricoeur 2007: 54–7).

Finally, the just can be inflected in many ways: it is what we call *good*, on the teleological level; *legal*, on the deontological level; and *equitable*, on the level of practical reason. In every case it answers the question 'what is the just action?' and this is a question that qualifies a decision which has to be taken in a situation of conflict and uncertainty. This is the tragic dimension of action – it is tragic because it is human.

IV Translation as an Ethical Model

To return to translation; one could think that it is simply one area of the possible exercise of the faculty of judgement, as the legal or the medical areas, but Ricoeur goes beyond and elevates it to a model for ethics. Why? Because in translation one deals with diversity, with alterity.

The necessity for translation arises from the diversity of languages which, according to Ricoeur, is a sign of human vulnerability but also of the plurality that characterizes us. Language exists in reality in many languages and similarly humanity exists in a plurality of forms and cultures, in a fragmented way. To the undeniable theoretical and practical difficulties that translation poses Ricoeur responds with a matter of fact: translation is possible, men have always translated, there are bilinguals, interpreters, etc. How do they do it? It is in answering this question; that is, through a phenomenology of translating, that we discover the paradigmatic character of this practice. When we watch translators we learn the art of mediation, we recognize the desire that guides them, a desire to welcome the other in their own language, to open up, to make space – to host.

We could say that a philosophy of translation does not teach but rather learns from those who translate. In doing so it shows what is perhaps implicit, it problematizes what appears to be obvious, it provokes reflection.

Ricoeur believes that the exemplarity of the act of translating is caught not only in the well known difficulties that are met by translators but also in the work which is necessary to cope with them. In this way the practice of translation acquires a moral value as long as the desire of translating corresponds to an active dimension, a doing, an acting in the world; the production of some good. To this moral dimension he adds a hedonistic one since translating is also a pleasure and therefore a form of enjoyment (Ricoeur 2004: 19).

Ricoeur calls translation linguistic hospitality; that is, hosting the foreign language in one's own. Something is gained in this exercise of hospitality because with translation the resources of one's own language are discovered; we understand ourselves better. But we also discover the limits of our own language; those limits appear more evident when we translate

from one language into another, but they are present in one's own in the forms of the unsayable, the ambiguous, the hermetic. When we host the stranger we discover strangeness in ourselves (Ricoeur 2007: 120).

Linguistic hospitality, which is the pleasure of receiving the foreign word into our home, can be a model of other forms of hospitality. In his papers Ricoeur presents some uses of this model of linguistic hospitality: in the ecumenical dialogue among different Christian churches, among the cultures engaged in the building of European identity, etc. In all these cases we deal with plurality and diversity that characterize us as human beings. Translation is for Ricoeur the paradigm of the encounter with the other because it establishes the just distance between the different parts involved.

Domenico Jervolino, as we mentioned before, maintained that in this hermeneutical model of translation we find a synthesis of Ricoeur's thought that goes beyond the paradigm of the text. Distantiation is a necessary moment of understanding but it is precisely in translation, even more than in reading, that we can see how the other is regained paying the price of a test and maybe of a loss. What is tested, in its double sense of 'ordeal' and 'probation', is our desire to translate. To this test corresponds a form of pleasure, the pleasure of hospitality, that transforms the world and ourselves.

In conclusion, even if the translation of legal texts in a strict sense has not been thematised by Ricoeur, we can say, in light of his reflections just summarized, that juridical translation has a twofold ethical force: firstly, as a translation, it is an attempt to host the other, and secondly, and even more fundamentally, as juridical, it aims to facilitate the exercise of justice.

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LISA FORAN

Translation as a Path to the Other: Derrida and Ricoeur

I Introduction

This essay offers a brief summary of the writings of both Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) and Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) on the theme of translation. Given the importance both thinkers accord language and the text; the theme of translation, while not always explicit in their writings, is certainly a background concern throughout them. We will here, however, focus on their specific dealings with the theme and how these might relate to theories of the Other. What will be revealed is that, although both writers differ on various points, ultimately they both argue for the necessity of translation for the survival and enrichment of a language; and that this positive aspect of translation in linguistic terms might be viewed, analogously or not, as an argument for the necessity of the Other in the constitution, and indeed the very survival of the self. Central to this analysis is the role played by the text, by meaning, and by the dichotomies of faithfulness/betrayal and translatability/untranslatability.

II The Text and Language

For Ricoeur a text is 'any discourse fixed by writing' (1981: 145), it is important to note that for Ricoeur then the 'text' is a purely linguistic object. While in *Oneself as Another* (1992) Ricoeur is keen to overcome the problem

of being trapped in language, of surmounting what he terms 'a closed semanticism, incapable of accounting for human action as actually *happening* in the world' (1992: 301), it is difficult to see how this might be overcome in light of his theory of narrative identity. If identity of the self is to be found in narrative, and if self understanding is to be found in the creation and interpretation of that narrative, are we not doomed to language? If my identity is subject to the narrative of history/time (as Ricoeur posits) is not that identity doomed to linguistic interpretation?

For Derrida, famously, the text is a considerably broader concept than it is in Ricoeur. In the Derridean context 'text' might well refer to books or papers or a 'discourse fixed in writing' but it also refers to events and happenings. And he urges us all to 'read' texts, to interpret them and understand them:

> I believe this to be the condition of political responsibility: politicians should read. Now, to read does not mean to spend nights in the library; to read events, to analyse the situation, to criticise the media, to listen to the rhetoric of the demagogues, that's close reading and it is required today more than ever.
>
> (Derrida 1999: 67)

If, *il n'y a pas de hors texte*, there is 'nothing outside of the text', then we might well assume that the self is to be viewed as a text or at least as part of a larger text. Though Derrida, like Ricoeur, is keen to maintain the importance of action and insists that the 'text' is not opposed to it (1999: 65); if the text is to be 'read' then surely it must be linguistic? It would seem that though both thinkers wish to distance themselves from the prevalent 'everything is language' axiom, and although both wish to reassert the importance and relevance of action, that ultimately action must at some point be dressed in language if we are to make any sense of it at all. While action may be understood via Husserl and Merleau-Ponty in an intuitive apperceptive sense (that is non-linguistically), if it is to be appropriated as knowledge through the faculty of Understanding, we need it to wear linguistic clothing.[1]

1 While one may object that not all *knowing* relies on language (knowing how to play the piano/open the door etc.), and while a full discussion of the relationship between knowing and understanding is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to

Thus while everything may not *be* language, it is certainly through language that everything might be *understood* and from here the importance of translation can in no way be understated – 'to understand is to translate' (Steiner 1993).

***

We may at this point open a parenthesis on the aforementioned notion of language. The problem to be addressed is what constitutes 'language'; what are we to understand by this profound term? It will be useful in our enquiry to briefly introduce a third interlocutor here, to investigate the notion of language and to try and delimit (in what is here a limited space) what language might be said to achieve in our relation to the Other. Emmanuel Levinas (1906–95), and in particular his notion of the 'face-to-face encounter' may well be raised as a point of objection against the claim that language is the foundation upon which our understanding of being in the world is built. We may well ask whether or not the face-to-face, 'the primary event of signification', is in fact linguistic. We may well object that for Levinas, it is the *look* of the Other, the *touch* of the Other that founds meaning; rather than the often totalising system of language. However, this of course depends on what we take 'language' to mean. Levinas offers a multiplicity of ways in which to describe language, of note however, is the fact that language is the gift. The world is always already *given* to us as our theme, and through its givenness it presupposes the primordial relation of the Other who is the 'giver' of the world *through language*: 'The world is offered in the *language* of the Other; *it is borne by propositions*' (Levinas 1969: 91, my emphasis – L.F.). Language is also the gift in that it is that which allows me to give what is mine to the Other (Levinas 1969: 76). Further, language, as that which is the passage from the individual to the general, is also that which permits the individual at all; language is what prevents the individual from being subsumed into the universal (Levinas 1969: 88). What is always and primordially signified in language is the Other.

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note that knowing (knowing how *and/or* knowing that) is not necessarily the same as understanding – which I believe *does* rely on language in some form.

Language and thought for Levinas, cannot be separated (1969: 206); yet we must bear in mind that it is not the linguistic sign that makes signification possible but rather that signification, found in the face of the Other, first makes the sign function possible at all (ibid.). Language constitutes a relation with the Other, a relation that is not reciprocal for it is a relation which cannot be reduced to a 'consciousness of ...' since it is a relation with the infinity of the Other (Levinas 1969: 204). Thus, although it is the look and the touch of the Other that is foundational, crucially for Levinas language is that which gives us the very world form which we live; language accomplishes an *ontological* structure (1969: 205).

However, paradoxically, Levinas does not allow for the relation with the Other to be in any sense mutually appropriating and constitutive. For Levinas the Other will remain always in a position of height, unattainable, unknowable. We cannot be said to be *dependent* on the Other for in Levinas's terms this would place the Other and us on the same level; forcing the Other into a totality and thus reducing their very alterity (1969). We will therefore close our parenthesis here and leave Levinas, for though he offers us a wealth of insights into language and its role in the complex relation between self and Other, he does not take the final step that we are here establishing – namely mutual appropriation and dis-appropriation between self and Other; the translation of self to Other; as necessary to the constitution and survival of the self.

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For Ricoeur the text *is* meaning; meaning which is to be interpreted, and this interpretation is one that is open and never finished. The reader for Ricoeur is engaged in what he terms 'a dialectic of two attitudes', one being the explanation of the text in terms of its internal structure, the other being the interpretation of the text.

In the first of these attitudes the reader is transferred into the nonplace of the text and engages in a 'special' project where suspense about the relation of the text to the world and the writer is prolonged. In this case 'the text has no outside but only an inside' (1981: 153). In the second approach however, the approach of interpretation, the reader is involved in appropriation as it is to be found in Schleiermacher, Dilthey and Bultmann.

Appropriation, coming from the Latin *ad proprius*, is to 'make one's own' and it is this notion of making something that was initially foreign 'one's own' that Ricoeur draws on most heavily (1981: 159).

While reading for Ricoeur is not dialogical, there is no dialogue between reader and writer (1981: 147); translation is a somewhat different case. In translation, there is created what might be termed a 'third space' between the text of the original and the reader of the translation and it is here that the translator operates. The translator acts as host to two guests; the original work and reader of the translation, serving as it were two masters, striving to achieve a balance between 'bringing the author to the reader' and 'the reader to the author', to borrow Schleiermacher's terms, and it is in this mediation that the test or trial (*épreuve*) of translation lies. The translator engages in what Ricoeur terms an act of 'Linguistic hospitality, then, where the pleasure of dwelling in the other's language is balanced by the pleasure of receiving the foreign word at home' (2006: 10).

For Derrida, 'the question of deconstruction is also through and through *the* question of translation' (1988: 1). Deconstruction is not to be confused with a method or a concept, it is rather the state in which things always already are, an event without author or subject. Translation thus mirrors (though is not the *same* as) the state of deconstruction that language, people and events always already find themselves in. For Derrida, translation is always already happening.

Part of the reason for this state of eternal translation that language finds itself in is due to the impurity of language. There are no 'pure languages' that exist isolated and independent of each other, and here Derrida and Ricoeur concur. Rather languages bleed into each other providing words to each other for as yet unnamed new concepts (Derrida 1985a: 97–9). Take, for example, our everyday use of words such as *déjà-vu*, *sushi*, *jihad* and so on. Indeed this bleeding of one language into another is necessary for a language's development and enrichment, the English language today would be inestimably poorer was it not for the wealth of terms it borrowed from Latin, Greek, German and French. Spanish would be a very different language was it not for the powerful influence of Arabic during the eighth century, and so on with all languages. This process of borrowing between languages – their eternal translation into and from each other – is a favourite

theme of Derrida. He plays, for example, on the Latin word *hostis* as being the shared etymological root of the words 'hospitality' and 'hostility' (Derrida 2000: 45). This use of etymology not only illustrates the way in which languages borrow from each other but shows too the power of language to translate itself within itself to create new words.

Curiously, *hostis* may well have its roots in a proto-European language as the word *ghostis*, which in turn lead to the Latin *hostis* and the English 'guest' / 'host' but also and most interestingly 'ghost' (Baugh and Cable 1993: 19). Though Derrida does not raise this point, we might say that in terms of translation, neither the 'host' language, the language of the translation, nor the 'guest' language, the language of the original text, can realise an absolute presence. Both, in a sense, are 'ghostly'. Both are haunted by the other languages that inhabit them. In terms of self and Other, in our role of host in welcoming the Other who, for Derrida contra Levinas, can never be an *absolute* Other (Derrida 1967/2001); we are haunted by all the other Others whom we have welcomed before and indeed all the other Others who have in turn welcomed us. There is no absolutely pure language, untainted, uncontaminated, untranslated. There is equally no absolute Other, nor an absolute self, no untranslated self or Other, that has not in some way been informed and enriched by many Others.

We find in Derrida a return to a more literal approach to translation, such as that advocated by Benjamin, and in this literalness we find the calling of a somewhat messianic pure language, that is not to be likened to a universal language such as Leibniz's, nor a language as an *original* language; but rather the purity of languages *as* language. It is, characteristically, the borders between languages (where the translator operates) that provide a glimpse of the unity of all languages as language (Derrida 1985b).

III A Faithful Betrayal in Translating the Untranslatable

For Derrida the issue of translation centres on the problematic of the translatable/untranslatable; for Ricoeur this is a problematic that should be eschewed for what he terms the more practical alternative of 'faithfulness/betrayal'.

However for Derrida the translatable/untranslatable issue is not (as is often the case in translation theory), a dichotomy: it is not an either/or situation. Every text; and we must here remember the broad sense of the word 'text'; must be *both* and *at the same time* translatable and untranslatable:

> A text lives only if it lives *on* [*sur-vit*], and it lives *on* only if it is *at once* translatable *and* untranslatable. Totally translatable, it disappears as a text, as writing, as a body of language [*langue*]. Totally untranslatable, even within what is believed to be one language, it dies immediately.
>
> (Derrida 1979: 102)

Derrida ultimately argues that he does not believe in the absolutely translatable any more than he believes in the absolutely untranslatable (2001). In other words language must be unique and self referential in that it cannot be totally subsumed into another language, yet it must also be able to reach beyond itself to another linguistic entity. One might here go further to suggest that one as self, must be open to the Other, translatable, yet still, somehow, maintain the self's individuality and identity. If we cannot be understood by the Other then we cannot move beyond ourselves; we cannot be enriched by the Other. Ultimately without the Other, the self collapses upon itself, but we will come back to this relationship between self and Other further on.

Returning to language, the relationship between the translatable/untranslatable is, argues Derrida, bridged by the condition of a certain economy (2001). Economy might also here be understood as contract or agreement. Language exists as language only when it is understood by the other. There is an agreement, a contract, an economy of sorts, which allows for language to *mean* something. One may, for example, invent a word for an already existing object, one may invent numerous words; but unless those words are understood, at the very least by one other person, then they are useless in any act of communication. There must first exist an agreement or a contract or an economy, which relates the word to the object that it designates so that it may be understood. There is such an economy between languages – without it communication, or learning a second or third language, would be impossible. And while meanings may change over time – as Benjamin notes in 'The Task of the Translator' (1923/2000) – they change only with permission so to speak, only when

their new meanings are understood in light of existing ones. Communication can only happen where there is understanding and understanding can only take place when an agreement or a contract or an economy has been agreed between languages. Economy here signifies both property and quantity: 'on the one hand what concerns the law of *property* (*oikonomia*, the law – *nomos* – of the *oikos*, of what is proper, appropriate to itself ...) ... and *on the other hand*, a law of *quantity* – when one speaks of economy, one always speaks of calculable quantity' (Derrida 2001: 178–9).[2] Every translation is therefore an attempt at achieving what is most 'proper', most appropriate to the original, not only in terms of what the original *means* but also in terms of the *number of words* that are used. Translation forms the link between the untranslatable and the translatable, any translation is always somewhere between the best and the worst translation.

However, for Ricoeur translators must give up the 'translatable/untranslatable' dichotomy, and take up instead the more rewarding and indeed practical challenge of 'faithfulness / betrayal' (2006: 8; 14). Why is this so? Given the ubiquity of the problem of 'the untranslatable' in theories of translation and interpretation, why must this now be set aside? Ricoeur offers a number of reasons.

The untranslatable finds its origin in the ethno-linguistic theories of Whorf and Sapir who 'endeavoured to underline the non-superimposable character of the different divisions on which the numerous linguistic systems rest' (Ricoeur 2006: 14–15). The differences between languages are numerous and evident. Different words contain different concepts within one language, and all of these concepts do not necessarily 'carry across' when translated. Languages differ too in their grammatical, syntactical and temporal structures. 'If you add the idea that each linguistic division imposes a worldview [...] we must conclude that misunderstanding is a right, that translation is theoretically impossible and that bilinguals have to be schizophrenics' (Ricoeur 2006: 15).

2 Also note: 'the translation must be *quantitatively* equivalent to the original, apart from any paraphrase, explication, explicitation, analysis and the like' (Derrida 2001: 179). The measurement of this quantity will be the word itself: 'it is not a question of counting the number of signs, signifiers or signifieds, but of counting the *number of words*, of lexical units called words. The unit of measurement is the unit of the word ... At the beginning of translation is the word' (*ibid.*: 180).

But translation happens all the time, which has led many to search for a hidden structure in language that somehow explains *how* this happens. There are, what Ricoeur terms, two 'tracks' along which this search proceeds. One of these is the 'original language track', pursued by the Gnostics amongst others. This posits a pre-Babelian language that has somehow been lost and which we must now proceed to find. This ideal is sought too by Benjamin who sees in translation 'the great motif of integrating many tongues into one true language' (Benjamin 1923/2000). For Ricoeur such 'nostalgia' provides little help to the actual practise of translation (2006: 16). We mentioned earlier, the relationship between Derrida and Benjamin, it is important however, to note that while Derrida certainly follows Benjamin's literal approach to translation, it is doubtful he would see as beneficial the homogenisation of all languages into 'one true language'. Indeed it is the struggle between maintaining a language's uniqueness and difference while also allowing it to move beyond itself that Derrida is so keen to point out.[3]

But we return to Ricoeur, if the first 'track' is that of the original language, the second is that of *a priori* codes, transcendentals that we must reconstruct. If language is universal in that all men speak; yet plural and diverse in that there exists a multiplicity of tongues; there must yet be some underlying universal structure upon which the multiplicity is built. This path is evident in the post Enlightenment quest for a universal library from which all the 'untranslatables' have been erased, Leibniz's universal lexicon of simple ideas or Bacon's hope of eliminating language's imperfections (Ricoeur 2006: 9; 16).

One might here add machine translation's unrealised dream of an interlingua into which and from which all languages may be translated; the problem being, as Chiew Kin Quah notes, 'there is no definitive methodology that results in the building of a true language-neutral representation' (Quah 2006: 73).

3 See for example Derrida, *Des Tours de Babel* (1985 b), though this is only exemplary – given the value Derrida places in sustaining heterogeneous states of affairs throughout his work. For a different interpretation of Benjamin and one that defends him against the criticisms of Ricoeur in particular, see Veronica O'Neill's essay 'The Underlying Role of Translation: A Discussion of Walter Benjamin's "Kinship"', in the present volume.

While Ricoeur grants that some advances through Chomskian generational grammars have been achieved, he insists they fail on a lexical and phonological level. The conclusion is thus that the gap between universal and empirical language cannot be bridged; we must leave behind this desire for the 'pure language' of Benjamin, Hölderlin or Leibniz.

Therefore the problem of the 'untranslatable' becomes for Ricoeur an exercise in futility, one that prevents the translator from engaging on a practical level with the text. This practical approach to the concerns of translation is mirrored by Mounin, who might here be viewed as a bridge between Ricoeur and Derrida. Mounin, like Ricoeur, sees problems with the universal grammar posited by Chomsky and with the circularity of the Sapir and Whorf hypothesis (Hervey 1993). For Mounin translation is a dialectical exercise and while personal experience is unique and therefore untranslatable, this does not paralyse translation into a state of total untranslatability: 'there is no doubt that communication through translation can never be completely finished, which also demonstrates that it is never wholly impossible either' (Mounin, cited in Basnett 2002: 44).

So what of Ricoeur's 'practical alternative' of faithfulness/betrayal? This is the choice that the translator is faced with, but it is important to note that this is not the usual issue of faithfulness so prevalent in translation theory and so criticised by feminist thinkers.[4] We must remember that Ricoeur does not in fact specify to whom the translator is to be faithful (or who to betray). This is not a return to being 'faithful' to the author; the problem is far more dynamic. The translator is always between both text and reader and the task is to be faithful to both – an impossibility; hence there is betrayal.

However, Ricoeur fails to notice that the translator not only has to be faithful to the reader and the original text, but also and perhaps most problematic, is the fact that the translator must be faithful to herself. The translator can thus betray on three levels – betray the original text, betray

4 On the issue of feminist theories of translation see, for example, 'Translation and Gender' and 'Steiner's Hermeneutic Motion' in Munday (2001), 131–3 and 163–8.

the reader of the translation or betray themselves – faithfulness to any one of these three aspects results in unavoidable betrayal of the other two.

While Ricoeur states the translator serves two 'masters', he does not demote the translator to 'slave', he in fact empowers the translator as the conferrer of meaning, the conferrer of equivalence 'which is *produced* by translation rather than *presupposed* by it' (2006: 35, italics in original). The reason that translation must face this dilemma of faithfulness/betrayal is that there exists no means to check a translation as being absolutely perfect thus: 'Translation can aim only at a supposed *equivalence* that is not founded on a demonstrable *identity* of meaning. An equivalence without identity' (Ricoeur 2006: 21, italics in original).

The translatable/untranslatable is that state of affairs in which language finds itself, according to Derrida, and for Ricoeur, the faithfulness/betrayal choice is one that the translator is faced with. We must ask however, whether or not these pairs are mutually exclusive. Is it not the case that the translator operates in a dynamic web of faithfulness/betrayal while also and at the same time confronting the paradoxical situation of language as translatable/untranslatable?

III Translation and the Other

At this point we will take the issue of translation beyond the linguistic sphere to see how it may relate to the Other. As a self, a unified individual, the confrontation with the Other is so often seen as a negative or threatening force; if the self opens up too much to the Other there is the danger of losing the self, of being annihilated and subsumed into an undifferentiated mass; the universal totality that Levinas so abhors. Julia Kristeva notes this as being the danger found in stoicism, which sought to absorb all men into a community of reason, but in absorbing all men it disallows the individual (Kristeva 1991: 41–64). Similarly, as Derrida notes, a text that is totally translatable disallows linguistic uniqueness. However, if a

text is totally untranslatable, if it cannot reach beyond its own borders, then it is doomed to an eventual non-existence; those texts that have not been translated over time (and who can now know what they were?) are forever lost. Thus in terms of the Other, the self must open to the Other, must give a little of itself as self to be appropriated by the Other (and we recall here our discussion of the Levinassian notion of language as the gift). And yet the self must also take a little, appropriate a little of the Other *as* Other; if the self seeks to maintain a pure 'uncontaminated' existence then it will disappear. As Ricoeur notes, we are all translators of sorts, retelling our own narrative in a new way each time that we engage with the Other and discovering our self through this engagement 'it is as several people that we define, that we reformulate, that we explain, that we try to say the same thing in another way' (2006: 25).

And so we will here end with neither Derrida nor Ricoeur, but rather with Steiner who notes, that 'to understand is to translate' and, following Heidegger, that 'being consists in the understanding of other being' (Steiner 1993: 314); in which case we might say that 'being consists in the translating of other being'.

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ELAD LAPIDOT

What is the Reason for Translating Philosophy? I. Undoing Babel

I Reason for Translating

Now, in what appears to be an increasingly multilingual reality, it seems clearer than ever before that translation is essential to philosophy's concrete existence. Philosophy itself, however, notwithstanding its long history of translations, has rarely conceived its own translation as inherent to its concept, or translation in general as one of its central themes. This lack of discussion is not just a theoretical failure to explain translation, but the failure to find a good reason for translating, which inevitably leads to the failure to translate.

In fact, the dominant approach in science[1] seeks both the condition of the possibility of translation and the reason for translating in the notion that different languages are just different names for the same things. According to this understanding, the factual diversity of languages constitutes a mere pathology of communication, which translation is called upon to alleviate. If we can't all speak the same language, translation is the lesser evil. However, if linguistic diversity is in itself a pathological case of communication, then the way to deal with the empirical diversity of languages should not be translation. If translating from one language to another means using different names for the same thing, then translation itself only creates confusion and so, at least for science and philosophy, is

1 I develop and demonstrate this claim elsewhere – see Elad Lapidot 'Translating Philosophy' [forthcoming].

not simply the lesser evil, but evil pure and simple. Consequently, science's policy in dealing with the empirical diversity of languages has never been translation, but rather the creation of one universal language.

For philosophy, which, for some reason, keeps translating, failing to find good reason for translation leads to denial. Philosophy denies that translation, far from undoing the linguistic difference, itself reproduces it. The translation is required to be 'the same' as the original: its *copy*. An inter-lingual copy is often subject to transliteration, such that translated philosophy can only aspire to be a *bad* copy of the original Greek *φῐλοσοφία*. Philosophy thus loses itself in transliteration. 'Philosophy' itself becomes a proper name that no longer says anything.

Having philosophy acknowledge its translation is today, therefore, crucial for its very existence. The guiding question is how philosophy should be translated. The basic observation being that philosophy *is* for some reason translated, the first question should be about the reason for translating philosophy. The reason for translating philosophy refers back to the very reason there is translation in the first place. Translating is actively generating linguistic difference. To translate is therefore to give good reason to the factual diversity of languages. The first step towards uncovering the reason for translating philosophy thus lies in finding good reason for the diversity of languages.

In what sense can the empirical linguistic diversity be founded in reason? In what sense can this reason be a good one? One of the oldest and most constitutive attempts to provide a reason for linguistic diversity is the biblical story of the Tower of Babel. This short and enigmatic myth tells how and why – i.e., for what reason – it was that God created linguistic diversity. However, God's linguistic creation in Babel appears to have created confusion, which, as aforesaid, constitutes the bad reason for the diversity of languages and thus also for translation. And so, Babel has been, and still is, widely understood as giving linguistic diversity and translation both an origin and a bad name. This article thus begins the search for the good reason for translation by revisiting Babel.

II The Generation of Secession

Within the narrative structure of the book of Genesis, the story of Babel has a very significant place. It is the last in the series of events recounting the history of all humanity, of all mankind, from the moment of Creation, from the very Beginning, until and as prologue to the story of one person, namely the story of Abraham. In the process of Genesis, the Tower of Babel stands at the limit between the universal and the particular.

The story of Babel takes place shortly – in the book as well as in the narrative – after the Flood, in which the entirety of humanity, save the passengers of Noah's ark, was exterminated by its creator. In this sense, the after-flood is a new creation of humanity, a new beginning. However, not long after the catastrophic annihilation of the evil Generation of the Flood, as this era of human existence is referred to by rabbinic literature, God once again sees himself forced to intervene in the spontaneous development of his creation and, again, to undo man's doings. The analogy to the Flood appears striking and Babel has in fact most habitually been read in rabbinic exegesis as its sequel catastrophe.

However, Babel's humanity was not exterminated, was not wiped off the face of the earth, like the Generation of the Flood, for being 'only evil' (Gen. 6, 5 KJV[2]). In Babel, God's intervention consisted, on the contrary, in *scattering* humanity 'over the face of the whole earth' (Gen. 11, 8 NASB) into many different peoples. Babel's is the Generation of Secession. And secession is generated through the 'confusion' of the one common universal human language that was reportedly spoken by all humanity – this is the starting point for the story: 'And the whole earth was of one language and the same words' (Gen. 11, 1 KJV/NASB) – into a diversity of tongues. The Generation of Secession is the generation of linguistic diversity, the age of humanity in which we, who read the Hebrew bible in English, still live today.

2 I will refer to three English translations of the Bible: King James Version (KJV), New American Standard Bible (NASB) and Young's Literal Translation (YLT).

In Babel, God divided humanity by dividing language. It is in this sense that there resides in Babel a reason for the factual, current diversity of human languages. So what is this reason? Why was linguistic diversity generated? Why did God intervene? What did Babel's man do? The answer to this basic question is not obvious. The difficulty was acutely acknowledged by early rabbinic generations – 'the deeds of the generation of the Flood are explained, whereas those of the generation of Secession are not explained' (*Midrash Rabbah* 38, 6) – and repeatedly discussed in later rabbinic Bible commentaries.

Compared to God's intervention in the Flood, his act in Babel is preventive: 'and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do' (Gen. 11, 6 KJV). It is directed against a future evil, against an intention – it prevents a certain *end*. What end? Man's intended end is clearly stated in the text. There seems to be no ambiguity about it: 'let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth' (Gen. 11, 4 KJV). In our time, when more than half of humanity lives in cities, the Babel construction project seems very clear and understandable. So much so that precisely how this projected end can constitute a future *evil* in need of being prevented is rather unclear.

On the contrary, it seems that the Tower of Babel is THE human project *par excellence*. All humanity, united in agreement, is joined together in a constructive design to build a place of co-existence, a *polis*, a commonwealth, a Republic: 'the people is one, and they have all one language' (Gen. 11, 6 KJV). Not only is this constructive generation not analogous to the evil generation of the Flood, but it seems to be its complete opposite. Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki (Rashi), an arch commentator of the Bible from the eleventh century, in fact points to the unity and agreement of Babel's humanity as the 'good thing that they had' (1866), in order to explain the relatively mild punishment inflicted on the Generation of Secession as compared to the Generation of the Flood.

But this common good seems to be so good that it becomes utterly incomprehensible as to why it should be punished and prevented at all. Why would God wish to prevent man's good and happy end? Indeed, in the absence of any real doubt as to man's reason for building the tower, the

story of Babel was turned into a singular myth about God and mankind, who confront each other on an apparently equal footing. It is end versus end, will versus will, a power conflict as it were, a Gigantomachy. In this struggle, linguistic diversity is understood as God's weapon against man's own good reason.

It is in these terms that a series of medieval commentators, such as Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra, Rabbi Shmuel Ben Meir and Rabbi David Kimchi, read the story of Babel. Rabbi David Kimchi, for instance, proposed a clear and illuminating explanation of how common sense and good reason tie together all the various aspects of man's Babylonian plan into one coherent end:

> We shall make ourselves a name – namely, if we have a high place in this city, everyone will have a name for it, so that if he goes outside of the limits he will remember the city and return to it or one of those who went away will remind the other and they will return, or otherwise we may be scattered all over the earth, since those who go out will forget the society and will remain there where they went … and our society will be dispersed.
>
> (Kimchi 1842: 34. My translation – E.L.)

Consequently, in order to understand the conflict in the story, Kimchi opposes man's good-willed end, the construction of the city, to God's good-willed end, as it was explicitly imparted by a supreme command to man upon his creation, namely 'fill the earth' (Gen. 1, 28, NASB):

> Human being who goes after the passion of their heart and do not pay hid to the deed of God that he saw fit to populate the land from east to west and they seek to sit in one place of the land alone and cancel the will of God.
>
> (Ibid. My translation – E.L.)

To impose his own will, God therefore breaks man's. For this reason human language is 'confounded'. Linguistic diversity is brought in as a tactical weapon, designed to make man weaker, albeit for his own good.

Other interpreters push further beyond the specific dispute over the right form of human settlement and point to the more general issue of man's struggle against God. Early rabbinic sources consider the Babylonian plan, literally, as man's explicit up-rising against God: 'It's not to Him to

take the Highs for himself and give us the Lows' (*Midrash Rabbah* 38, 6. My translation – E.L.). According to this exegesis, Babel man did not just disobey God but sought to replace him altogether: 'Let us make us a tower at the top of which we will set an idol holding a sword in its hand, which will thus appear to wage war against Him' (ibid.).

However, where in the biblical text can this radical reading be found? Thirteenth-century Rabbi Moses ben Nahman Girondi (Nahmanides) gave us a clue, writing:

> He who knows the meaning of 'Name', will understand their intention ... – and he will know the extent of the meaning of what they intended to do in the tower, and will understand all this matter, because they had an evil thought, and the punishment that they received to separate them in tongues and lands, was a measure for measure, because they were destroying plants [= committing idolatry]
>
> (1881: 18–19. My translation – E.L.)

Nahmanides here focuses our attention on the issue of the Name, thereby intensifying the text and bringing closer its central, seemingly disparate themes: building and language, acts and words. The basic plot, however, seems to be all the more conflictual. Man's Babylonian project is not even a lesser good, but pure evil. God's intervention is therefore neither just, nor preventive, nor simply tactical, but properly punitive. The confusion of tongues was inflicted on rebellious man by his furiously jealous God, as was the flood:

> Look and see that in the whole matter of the flood God is mentioned and in the whole matter of secession the Proper Name is mentioned, because the flood for corrupting the earth, and the separation because they were destroying plants, and they are punished by his great name.
>
> (Ibid. My translation – E.L.)

But what does it mean for the creator to weaken or to punish his creation? Does God need to fear man's idolatry, to fear for himself? Does man's war against God really threaten God himself? Would creation's idolatry have the power to undo its creator? Is there really any good reason to believe that the Idol is stronger than God? This line of thought is obviously problematic. In this article, it leads to a reconsideration of Babel.

In what follows, I shall thus try to construe God's intervention in Babel not as a punitive, but as a corrective measure. This means that by imposing linguistic diversity God does not at all mean to weaken or harm man, but that, on the contrary, by intervening and preventing, God corrects and improves his own creation. In other words, I shall suggest that linguistic diversity does not make man worse, but makes him better; that, in this sense, there is a good reason for linguistic diversity.

III The Verbal Creation

What does it mean for man to be better? Better with respect to what standard, compared to what model? This is maybe *the* fundamental question to which the whole Bible may be considered an answer. The basic idea, or generative thought, however, is formulated as the very thought that leads to man's creation: 'let us create man in our image, according to our likeness' (Gen. 1, 26 NASB). Here, I shall cut through many generations, and otherwise necessary argumentative steps, of iconoclastic debate by indicating that neither the Hebrew word '*Tzelem*' (צלם) nor its Latin translation *'image'* necessarily mean visual representation, but rather a similarity of essence. What the first twenty-five verses of the book of Genesis tell us about God, prior to the creation of man in his image, is not what God looks like but what he essentially is. God is the creator. And if man is the creature created in the image of the creator, then, for the purpose of the present discussion, this means that man was created to create. Arguably, then, bettering man consists in making man a better creator.

In fact, perhaps more striking than its resemblance to the story of the Flood is Babel's analogousness to the story of Creation. As we noted above, the Tower of Babel appears as the image of the human project of creation, namely building: 'They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly". And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar' (Gen. 11, 3 NASB). The first act of humanity's construction

project consists in the most basic process of building in general, the essence of technology and art, namely turning God-created nature into man-made artefact. Man's creation is that of an artificial world, 'brick for stone'. In Babel begins man's creation or recreation of the world.

God's image in man's creation is manifest by the logical, verbal nature of the act: things are said to be done. Creating by saying is in fact the essence of God's creation: 'And God said, Let there be light: and there was light' (Gen. 1, 3 KJV). What God says comes to be. Indeed, this is precisely the way in which man's Babylonian creation is described in Hebrew. All the English translations also preserve the verbal initiation of the action ('they said'). However, almost all of them also obliterate the fact that this verb, *the verb*, the verbal act, is in fact the only verb in which man's creative deed seems to consist. Having said, man does not further do or use or have, but, as Young's Literal Translation renders, having been said, the brick, immediately 'is'. In fact, the Hebrew text graphically manifests the fact that man's words themselves actually, morphologically, become things: 'Levena' (לבנה, brick) becomes 'Even' (אבן, stone), 'Hemar' (חמר, tar) becomes 'Homer' (חמר, mortar). Perhaps it is to compensate for the loss of this morphological effect that all the English translations without exception take the singular liberty to put in man's speech when creating the tower the exact same performative words as in God's speech when creating man himself: 'let us' (cf. Gen 1, 26 and Gen 11, 4). Having been created in the image of the divine creator, man thus also creates with words.

The central, constitutive place of language in the story of Babel now becomes clearer. This story is a tale, a *logos*, a word, concerning the word-ly creator's intervention in his creature's word-ly creation. God's intervention itself is none but verbal and formulated again in the same words as the verbal act of God's creation of man: 'Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language' (Gen. 11, 6 KJV). God does not touch the tower, only language. God's intervention is one in language: he confounds man's single uniform language to create a diversity of tongues. God does not intervene in man's creation itself, but rather in man's power of creation, which is to say in language.

However, isn't God's action, once again and even more clearly, revealed as a form of harm inflicted on mankind? If, like God, man's creation is

verbal, does confusing human language not amount to a mortal blow to man's ability to create? Is linguistic diversity, therefore, not a fundamental weakness? Is cutting down the Tower merely the image of God castrating the human creator? Is the generation of linguistic diversity not revealed, again and more clearly, as a curse inflicted on rebellious man by his furiously jealous God, as was the flood?

But, once again, the question smacks of idolatry. Should God really be jealous of his own creation? Is he really threatened by man? Does creation really threaten to overthrow and undo its creator? Does the true power of creation not rather lie in the creator's supreme and permanent ability to undo his creation, as God demonstrated in the Flood? Does the true creator not set and determine his own creation's end, instead of the other way around? Would a creator who was unable to stop his own creation, like the Sorcerer's Apprentice – '*Die ich rief, die Geister, werd' ich nun nicht los*' – be himself in need of his creator, of his Lord? – 'from the spirits that I called Sir, deliver me!'[3]

He would. This is why the story of Babel does not tell us of God's but rather of man's creative impotency. In Babel, it is man who risks losing control of his own creation. His first act of creation threatens to be his last. In fact, God's problem with the construction of the tower is not man's beginning it, but that once the project has begun it can no longer be stopped: 'And this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do' (Gen. 11, 6 KJV). 'Nothing'? Evidently, God can always restrain man. And he does in fact intervene. Rather, it is man who is unable to restrain himself once the construction has begun; who can no longer put an end to his own creation.

Wherein resides the impotence of the human creator? Naturally, it resides in man's power of creation, which is to say in man's language. God

3 The English sentence is Brigitte Dubiel's translation of Goethe's German one. It is, however, interesting that the two sentences do not say the same thing: the German is a mere complaint about the apprentice's inability to free himself from the spirits 'that I called', whereas the English sentence is an explicit call to the sorcerer himself for deliverance. This is why I separated the two sentences as two different enunciations: the second follows from the first, as my own sentence suggests.

explicitly explains the logical reason for his concern: 'the people is one, and they have all one language'. Man's impotence regarding his own creation results from his having a single language. Why does the oneness of man's language limit his power as a creator? If man, like God, creates with words, is having a united human language not more of a strength? What precise element in human verbal creation, in man's creation with words, is at issue here?

As the rabbinic tradition in general notes, and Nahmanides in particular underscores, the central piece in the crossword of Babel is the *Name*. The name is indeed an essential element of verbal creation, of creation with words. As noted by Walter Benjamin (1991), the basic procedure of God's verbal creation ends with giving the name: 'And God said, Let there be light: and there was light ... And God called the light Day' (Gen. 3, 5 KJV). However, this procedure is puzzling. The light is created by God's word, namely by the divine word referred to by the English word 'light'. At the beginning was the word. But then, why would God, having created the thing itself, namely light, call it by another word, rendered with the English word 'Day'? Why not just call light 'Light', which is, by definition, what it is, as created by God?

However, the last step of creation is precisely the establishment of the created thing as existing independently of its creator. For so long as God's created thing is nothing but 'Light', it is nothing but God's intention, purely God's will. The giving of a different name seals creation: it lends the created thing a being of its own, separated from God's intention. Named, it now simply *is*, that is, of itself, spontaneously, independently of its creator's intention. In this sense, fundamentally, the name has nothing more to do with the *essence* of the thing, as God intended. It doesn't say anything *about* the thing, but says the thing itself. There is no room for asking the question 'why is it called such and such?' It is called such-and-such because that's what it *is*. God's names have no meaning, can be given no explanation. The distance between the creating word and the name equals the distance between the creator's meaning and the independent being of the created thing itself. In fact, in the second version of the story of Creation, God lets man do the naming of God's creation of animals (Gen. 2, 19–21).

It is therefore only logical that man's own plan of creation would be completed by the giving of a name: 'Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name'. Man's creation aims at something that is independent, an independent being that bears its own name, without any meaning. The man-given name would liberate man's creation from man's intention. Just like the God-given name for God's creation. However, nothing is ultimately independent of the ultimate Creator: neither the latter's own nor man's creation. God can undo anything in the created world, but not so man, the created creator. There are things that exist independently of man's will, namely God's creations. Man's creations are conditioned. This is why man does not properly create nature, but always constructs art. In the story of Babel all the words designating human artifacts have meanings. They all mean God-created elements: 'Levena' (לבנה, brick) comes from 'Even' (אבן, stone), 'Khemar' (חמר, tar) comes from 'Khomer' (חמר, mortar or material). In this sense, they are not, properly speaking, names.

Thus, by seeking to seal his creation with a name, man intends to establish his man-made construction as an independent being, as if it had been created by God. This being would thus tie man and stone together in one name, without meaning. The thing's being would no longer be dependent on man's end, but on the contrary would define man himself, to the point of giving him a name, of putting an end to man's power of creation, to man as a creator. To the point of having man, the created creator, substitute his creation for his creator, which is the ultimate problem of all idolatry.

Consequently, in his intervention, God does not undo man's creation, but gives man the power to undo his own doings, which, as God mightily demonstrated in the Flood, constitutes the true power of creation. Babel is not a story about castration, it is one about empowerment. By empowering man to undo his own doings, God enables man to recreate himself and so to prevent the next Flood.

How does linguistic diversity empower man with respect to his own power of creation? If man's weakness with respect to his own ability to create lies in his ability to name, then the gift of linguistic diversity amounts to an ability to un-name. How, then, does linguistic diversity enable man to un-name?

IV Un-naming Babel

Jacques Derrida pointed out the live presence of linguistic diversity within the very occurrence of language, the very text that tells the origin of linguistic diversity. Babel's *logos* is in this sense self-evident, demonstrating and thus performing itself, taking shape in its own logic. This performative speech is what Derrida calls the 'Babelian Performance'. Derrida is extremely sensitive to this effect, to the living existence of *logos*, which is far more intensive than any formalization. In his own text on translation, 'Des Tours de Babel' (1985), he begins by reading translations of the story of Babel, and he reads them precisely *as translations*, and thus looks at the story of Babel itself as it is revealed not through but *in* its translation between different languages. In Derrida's text, translation transpires as a multi-lingual prism.

From there, Derrida is able clearly to see the heart of Babel in the *name* 'Babel' itself, as it is simultaneously used and referred to in the biblical text, as it seals the tale. In fact, the concluding sentence of the story recounts the concluding occurrence in the event of Babel, which is the last step of verbal creation in general, namely the giving of the name: 'its name was called Babel' (Gen. 11, 9; NAS). In the same breath, in the same verse, the biblical *logos* also provides an etymological explanation for the name 'Babel', which is said to be given 'because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth' (ibid).

Wherein resides the etymological explanation exactly? It was lost in the English translations. The original Hebrew text in fact suggests that the etymology of the mythical city's name Babel resides in the Hebrew root of BLL, whose basic meaning is 'to confound'. Derrida points out that this explanation, which concludes the story about the origin of linguistic diversity and so, apparently, about the necessity for translation, is itself necessarily lost in translation and therefore renders the text 'untranslatable'. Babel, Derrida concludes, simultaneously 'imposes and forbids translation'.

As the origin and reason of linguistic diversity, however, this sounds less like empowerment and more like punishment. Constituting '[t]he necessary and impossible task of the translation', the diversity of languages appears to have been generated by a 'jealous God' wanting to create confusion,

practically returning creation to the state of chaos, in other words un-creating the world. Similarly to Rabbi Kimchi, Derrida, for his part, ultimately seems to have a tendency to understand linguistic diversity and translation as a necessary evil, one that was imposed on humanity against its will, and even against its good reason, but for its own good:

> Seeking to 'make themselves a name', to establish at the same time one universal language and one unique genealogy, the Semites want to call the world to reason, and this reason can mean both colonial violence (because they would thus universalize their idiom) *and* pacific transparency of the human community. Inversely, when God imposes his name on and opposes it to them, he ruptures the rational transparency but also interrupts colonial violence or linguistic imperialism.
>
> (Derrida 1985: 218. My translation – E.L.)

But why does Babel forbid translation? Why is Babel untranslatable? According to Derrida, it is untranslatable in the sense that 'it is, for the translator, without any satisfactory solution', insofar as in the biblical text the name Babel is 'simultaneously a *proper* name and a *common* name'. That is to say, in the biblical text Babel is at once the Hebrew word for 'confusion' and the proper name of an individual city. Therefore, in the translation of the story into another language, 'Babel', as a common name, *must* be translated, namely as 'confusion' (that is, into English as well as French). However, as the proper name of the city, Babel is not, and *cannot* be translated, but only copied, transliterated.

What is, however, a *proper* name? Why can such a name not be translated? The proper name purports to name an individual thing using an individual name, that is, *its* own name. In this sense, the proper name is the ideal name; it is *the* name properly speaking. It purports no longer to have any relation of *meaning* to the named thing.[4] In this sense, the paradigm of

4 This paradigmatic lack of meaning has been a central theme of analytic philosophy, because it embodies analytic philosophy's paradigm of the word in general. This absolute lack of any relation of meaning between the proper name and the properly named thing seems, however, to mean that they are no longer completely two different things, or, in other words, that the relation between them – because they *are* somehow related – is on the level of *being*. In a certain sense, the proper name would *be* – at least a part, an essential part of – the named thing itself. Cf. Saul Kripke's

the proper name is no longer that of man's word but rather of that of God:[5] it doesn't say anything about the thing, but says the thing itself, as it is. As such, the proper name does not *forbid* translation or make it impossible, but, much more fundamentally, it renders translation and thus shows the latter, and with it linguistic diversity in general, to be purely and simply *unnecessary*.

In fact, as the text of Babel clearly shows, it is precisely in inter-lingual transfer, in translation, that the proper name properly appears. Only in translation does the proper name perform as such, taking the shape of an independent being, one that is disconnected from language, free of meaning, unchanged in all linguistic diversity and transfer. It is certainly no coincidence if proper names are often borrowed from other languages. It is almost as if Interlingua were the river in which the name is baptized proper.

Is this river, however, where all languages are confounded, confused and converge, a Jordan or a Lethe? This is the basic question of translation. This is the true choice that the ferryman, the *Übersetzer*, the translator, has to make. Only in translation does the question arise insistently: does the name really have no meaning at all? Is it in actual fact no more than a mere proper name? It is the translator of the Bible that first has to decide whether, as regards the story of Babel, the Hebrew word *Shem* (שם) is the proper name of a certain 'Who' (the sons of Noah's son Shem, the Semites), or if it indicates a general 'Where' (*Sham*, שם, 'there'), refers to the common What (*Shem*, שם, 'name'), or even perhaps stands for God himself (*HaShem*, השם, 'The Name' as God is often referred to in Hebrew tradition as a substitute for God's explicit name, YHWH). Only in translation is the proper name effectively put into question as such.

Interlingual translation reveals the fact that a decision is necessary in founding the proper name, by opening the possibility to re- or un-name it, by re-enacting the proposition: 'let us make us a name'. Linguistic diversity does not mean the necessity but the *possibility* of translation. Only in

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'Causal Theory of Reference' (1981) according to which the 'rigid designator' refers to the designated object 'in every possible world' in which this object exists.

5 See Benjamin *supra*: 'The proper name is the community of man with God's *creative* word'.

translation does it occur that the name can be translated, that words actually do have meanings. This applies above all to Proper Names, especially those given to man-made things, which typically all and always have some meaning, i.e. can be translated. These man's wannabe-names are, like the farce of a *tour de force*, erected high-up in Majestic Majuscules – which ironically only captions the essential difference between heaven and earth. Proper names, far from exhibiting the sovereignty of God's creating word, are typically meaningful language; conceptual constructions that express architectural structures which have dwindled down into meaningless sounds, petrified words that designate nothing but stones. In this downfall of man's creation, linguistic diversity, by offering the possibility of translating, opens the possibility of a renaissance.

This is precisely the epochal feat of the biblical author *as a translator*. Indeed, the biblical narrative itself, constantly resuscitating Hebrew proper names back to word-ly existence, back to meaning, makes an example out of the name 'Babel', by indicating that it is not just proper but *foreign*, or rather that it cannot be a proper name, since it belongs to a foreign language. This is suggested by the etymological explanation provided in the text. According to this explanation, according to what it says, to the meaning that it ascribes to the name, 'Babel' obviously did not come from the tongue in which it was translated back into meaning, into language, namely from Hebrew. Obviously, the builders of the mythological city of Babel did not call their great architectural construction by the name 'Confusion'. In their tongue, 'Babel' likely meant something else, something worthier of a city. As Derrida, following Voltaire, indicates, originally Babel may have meant something like 'God's Gate'.

But in spite of Voltaire's puzzlement and contrary to Derrida's surmise, suggesting a Hebrew etymology for a non-Hebrew name is no confusion. The biblical *logos* of Babel takes the name of Babel, declaratively, as the mythological Babylonians themselves intended it to be, namely as a name, a proper name, one that transcends all meaning and therefore rejects all translation. As such, the biblical author accepts the tradition of the people who 'made themselves a name'. For the Babylonians, Babel no longer had any meaning, no longer said anything. For them, Babel had become an autonomous being, independent of man, like God's own creation.

The bible, however, which is the revelation in words of the godly creator, refuses to confuse God's creation with that of man. It certainly refuses to do so by negating the meaning of human words, which purport to put human creation *above* that of God. After all, even the word '*Or*', אור, 'light', man's name for God's first creation, has a meaning and is therefore universally translated – why would this not also be true for 'Babel'? Would Babel alone, of all creation, step aside, stand alone, without any meaning or explanation, beyond good and evil, more proper and solid than Earth itself?

The text in which the reason for the diversity of languages is given as the possibility to translate names back to meaning, that is, the power to undo and recreate, now demonstrates itself, performs. 'Babel', having been ejected from the mythological name-seeking Babylonian tongue, is now resurrected with a new creation of meaning in language, namely the Hebrew text of the Bible. Babel is not destroyed as a pile of stones, but undone as a human project, revisited as a concept. The tower no longer stands for 'the gate to God' but henceforth as a symbol for confusion. This process constitutes the essence of what is expressed by Derrida in a single concept, one that has almost become the proper name of Derrida's philosophy, and practically even a synonym of the name 'Derrida' itself: deconstruction.

Linguistic diversity is not the reason for translation but translation is the reason for linguistic diversity. The diversity of languages does not impose and forbid but *enables* translation. Translation does not replace a name in one language with an equivalent name in another language, but, on the contrary, prevents the meaningful word from becoming a meaningless proper name. The good reason for translating is therefore the revelation of meaning in words. To return to the key question of this essay, it can now be said that the reason for which philosophy is translated has to be that it is looking for meaning in words.

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ALENA DVORAKOVA

Pleasure in Translation: Translating Mill's 'Utilitarianism' from English into Czech

I Introduction

This essay is an attempt to come to terms with a particular experience of translating philosophy and thereby finding oneself, as a translator, to be doing philosophy by way of translation – or, perhaps more accurately, of having philosophy done to oneself in translation. Specifically, the aim of this work is to describe a difficulty with translating the key term *pleasure* in John Stuart Mill's classical treatise on utilitarianism.[1]

The body of this essay consists of three sections: the first section considers the project of translating Mill's 'Utilitarianism' from English into Czech; in the second section, the problem with pleasure is presented from a philosophical perspective; and, third, the difficulty of conceptualizing pleasure is reconsidered as a problem of translation.

II Translating Mill's 'Utilitarianism': The Project and its Implications

'Utilitarianism' was originally published in 1861 in *Fraser's Magazine*. The short treatise (or a long essay) was aimed at a lay readership and intended

1 All references will be to the 1863 version of the treatise used in John Stuart Mill, 'Utilitarianism', in Mary Warnock, ed., *Utilitarianism* (London: FontanaPress, 1962), 251–321.

as a commonsensical presentation and a defence of utilitarianism: an act of rehabilitation especially against accusations that it represented, as Mill himself puts it in the second chapter, 'a doctrine worthy only of swine' (1962: 258). Since then, the essay has come to be recognized as one of the classical formulations of the utilitarian doctrine as well as a seminal text in the history of ethics.

The treatise has not yet been translated into Czech.[2] (It has only recently been published in Slovak – a language largely comprehensible to most educated Czechs – in tandem with Mill's 1838 essay on Jeremy Bentham.[3]) This gap in the Czech literature on utilitarianism may of itself be considered remarkable. Utilitarianism represents one of the three main approaches in contemporary normative ethics besides Kantian deontological ethics and Aristotelian virtue ethics. Moreover, it is probably the most influential of the three approaches, especially when it comes to formulation of social policy in Western democracies.[4]

Does the absence of a translation mean there are no Czech utilitarians? Clearly, that is not the case. So why is it that until now, close to the 150th anniversary of its first publication, no Czech translation has appeared? Is it a mere accident of history, an inexplicable act of omission, or, on the contrary, a proof that there has been and still is no need for such a translation? In the latter case it might be argued, for example, that since its publication the work has been superseded in some way: proven to be mistaken

2 The first Czech translation of 'Utilitarianism' came out unannounced a few months after the final version of this paper had been submitted for publication [John Stuart Mill, 'Utilitarismus', trans. by K. Šprunk (2011) Praha: Vyšehrad]. It has therefore not been possible to include an analysis of its problematic use of '*potěšení*' as *the* term for Mill's 'pleasure'. The author's own translation, which in its use of several equivalents for pleasure attempts to foreground the irreducible multiplicity of the term, is due to be published in 2012, in an academic collection of classical texts on utilitarianism prepared by Oikoymenh in Prague.

3 Vasil Gluchman and Marta Gluchmanová, *Bentham. Utilitarismus* (Prešov: LIM, 2000).

4 For both claims see, for example, relevant entries (such as 'Utilitarianism' or 'Virtue Ethics') in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu> accessed 2 December 2010.

or comprehensively overhauled by later utilitarian theories or simply no longer as readable as more contemporary works in the field. Or perhaps a translation has been attempted and abandoned? Is there something in the text that resists the act of translation into the Czech language or culture? In order to understand the import of these questions let us consider what is entailed in an act of translation from a functionalist perspective.[5]

From this perspective the determining factor for any act of translation – if and when it is to be made, and what the end result should look like – is the intended *function* of the translation (*loyalty* to the original remains important but it comes second). Who is the translation for? What purpose is it envisaged to serve? What effect should it have and on whom? Expert readers of the translation (be they philosophers, social scientists or economists) might be familiar, if not with Mill's text in the original, then at least with Mill's terminology and the gist of his arguments. They will certainly have access to later works and arguments by utilitarians and critics of utilitarianism that point out the limits of Mill's thought and the philosophical usefulness of Mill's text is bound to be affected by this. If the translation is intended for these expert readers, is there anything they might gain from it that is not theirs already? What is to be gained from translating a (supposedly superseded) philosophical classic?

In defence of such an act of translation, it may be said that a translation represents an attempt to force every reader's hand with respect to defending or abandoning alternative ways of thinking, speaking and writing about utility and pleasure: there is always the *final* version of any translation and one must decide what is going to be in it (and what is going to be imposed on the reader) at the expense of other alternatives. At the

5 There are a variety of functionalist approaches to translation. Here I rely on the functionalist theory of translation presented in Zbyněk Fišer (2009) *Překlad jako kreativní proces. Teorie a praxe funkcionalistického překládání* (Brno: Host), which further develops theories of translation originally presented by Katharina Reiss and Hans J. Vermeer (1984) in *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie* (Tübingen: Niemeyer) and by Christine Nord (1988) in *Textanalyse und Übersetzen: theoretische Grundlagen, Methode und didaktische Anwendung einer übersetzungsrelevanten Textanalyse* (Heidelberg: Groos) and other texts.

very least a translation of a classic may help to crystallize (if not codify) a certain unified way of speaking and writing about a topic, a discourse to be *shared* by both self-professed utilitarians and critics of utilitarianism (lay and professional). And this remains true even if this shared discourse is arrived at by criticizing the supposed errors of a translation of a superseded classic. The creation of such a shared discourse might be envisaged as a good in itself in that it seems to entail an awareness, in those who take part in it, of the existence of a community of shared interest. Thus it may be supposed that insofar as the appearance of a translation is an event that attracts the attention of people interested in some aspect of it, it may set into motion other events and thereby initiate a process of arbitration of various disputes, clarification of the participants' terminology as well as philosophical positions, and possibly help create a new awareness of the existence of a certain community of shared interest.

Further, a translation of a seminal text may result in a quasi-authoritative text that could be used in teaching. And, last but not least, the existence of a translation may enable the Czech proponents of utilitarianism to use Mill's essay the way that Mill was using it: to proselytize, to spread the word to people outside the narrow (English-speaking and English-writing) expert circles – i.e. to establish utilitarianism as a force in general public consciousness. Given that utilitarianism originally arose in direct response to the need for social and legal reforms; and that it remains strongly reformist to the present day, such a publicity demand seems to be part and parcel of utilitarianism.

All these ends, however, may be achieved in other ways. More fundamentally, a translation may help both professional and lay readership to better appraise the *force* of a way of conceptualizing reality inscribed in the original – precisely by forcing them to give it an expression (or accept/dispute the translator's expression of it) in a *language of their own*, intimately linked to their own way of life and potentially resistant to the original conceptualization. We only call a text a classic if it somehow, in spite of years or even centuries of linguistic and cultural shifts, critiques, counterarguments, parodies and translations into alien contexts, it does not lose its *force*. It remains a classic as long as we acknowledge it as worthy of renewed engagement, in spite of its (now known) shortcomings – be they stylistic deficiencies or fallacies of argumentation. By asking what it

is about Mill's 'Utilitarianism' that does and/or does not easily translate into Czech, the translation might teach us something useful both about a certain way of thinking (Mill's conception of pleasure) and about what it is in us and in our way of life that seems either to enhance its status as a classic or, on the contrary, deprive it of its force.

III Philosophical Pleasure

The aim of this part is, first, to make it clear how central the term *pleasure* is to Mill's arguments in 'Utilitarianism' and, second, to help us understand the problem with conceptualizing pleasure. Let us start with a brief characterization of utilitarianism in general and, more specifically, with Mill's take on pleasure in relation to the utility principle.

Utilitarianism can most generally be characterized as the doctrine that morally right action produces or tends to produce the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of human (and possibly all sentient) beings. It is the consequences of actions that matter for our moral evaluation of actions, and not, for example, their motives. The end good to be considered from the moral point of view is not just the good of the agent but also the good of others who are affected by his/her actions: everyone's good matters and it matters the same.

Both Bentham and Mill identify the good with happiness, arguing that only happiness can be thought of as self-evidently the ultimate end of all human endeavour: happiness and only happiness is desirable in itself. That is why the principle of greatest happiness is also called the principle of utility: the ultimate use of everything we do – as individuals and as groups of people – lies self-evidently in the promotion of happiness.

Both Bentham and Mill seem to think that happiness is a life full of pleasure and free from pain. The differences in their respective accounts of utilitarianism emerge from their respective conceptions of human nature and of pleasure, i.e. the pleasure that can be and should be thought of as *constitutive* of happiness.

In the main, for Bentham, the pleasure that is constitutive of human happiness is a state of consciousness with a distinct feel about it. The qualitative differences in the pleasure produced by different sources (objects or activities) have strictly speaking *no force*. The only determining difference is in the *quantity* of the pleasurable feeling produced by them: from it derives the force and therefore the value of the pleasure (Bentham 1948: 30).[6] The quantity of pleasure is measured by reference to seven parameters: intensity (how much of it there is), duration (how long it lasts), certainty (how likely it is to follow upon action), propinquity/remoteness (how soon it is to follow upon action), fecundity (how productive it is of further pleasure), purity (to what extent it is mixed with pain) and extent (how many people or sentient beings are affected by it). On this quantitative 'happiness calculus', the game of push-pin might well come out as better – i.e. more conducive to human happiness – than poetry (one of Bentham's famous comparisons).[7] Bentham is said to be a hedonist about value: objects and activities are good only because they produce in us individually the mental state *commonly called* pleasure – the only thing good in itself. Every individual is thought to be a natural egoist, concerned with maximizing pleasure in himself / herself.

Bentham's conception of pleasure has its problems. How is the belief in individual egoistic striving for pleasure to be squared with the idea that the end of our actions must be the greatest amount of good for the greatest number? How are we to conceive of the happiness calculus concerning communities rather than individuals: as the total sum of pleasure for all concerned, regardless of either distribution, or the numbers involved? As the average pleasure per head? But above all: how are we to reconcile the calculus with our intuitive understanding that some pleasures are bad, or at least not as good as others (the pushpin-versus-poetry debate)?

6 Bentham sets out the principles governing the calculation of this force and value of pleasure – and therefore of happiness – in Chapter IV of this treatise first published in 1789.

7 'Prejudice apart, the game of push-pin is of equal value with the arts and sciences of music and poetry. If the game of push-pin furnish more pleasure, it is more valuable than either'. The passage is to be found in Book III, Chapter I of Bentham's *The Rationale of Reward* (1843), Classical Utilitarianism website, <http://www.laits.utexas.edu/poltheory/bentham/rr/> accessed 1 December 2010.

In 'Utilitarianism' Mill attempts to improve on Bentham's account.[8] Pleasures are to be ranked not just by quantity but by quality first and quantity second: on the principle that pleasures consistently preferred over others by so-called competent judges are to rank as higher or better, *regardless* of the quantity of pleasure produced.[9] So, for example, some negative feeling – discontent, perhaps even pain – may be mixed up with the pleasure produced by the so-called higher pleasures; and yet this mixed or lesser or more remote pleasure will bring more happiness, and therefore more of the good than a purer, more intense, more immediate pleasure produced by a pleasure of the lower sort. Think of ranking philosophy over sex or drink as a higher pleasure because it will be regularly preferred to sex or drink by people capable of both having sex or a drink and doing philosophy, no matter how relatively discontented philosophizing may make them with their own lives (and possibly with the human condition per se – this latter possibility will be touched on below).

It is clear from the above that Mill's introduction of the so-called higher pleasures into the happiness calculus complicates our understanding of pleasure. He seems to be equivocating between two different conceptions of pleasure: 1. pleasure understood as a mental state produced by a thing or an activity; and 2. pleasure understood as a *kind* of activity which, in those who engage in it, produces an effect such that the activity is nearly always preferred to others, no matter how pleasurable it is as per 1. In this second respect, we might talk of philosophy or music or health as pleasures. This latter understanding of pleasure could perhaps be given a subjective definition: 'pleasure' would be whatever mental state such that whoever has it wants to go on having it and therefore desires the activity that gives

8 Interestingly, Mill misquotes the passage on push-pin: 'He says, somewhere in his works, that, "quantity of pleasure being equal, push-pin is as good as poetry"; but this is only a paradoxical way of stating what he would equally have said of the things which he most valued and admired' (1962: 123).

9 Mill asserts this in the second chapter of 'Utilitarianism': 'If I am asked, what I mean by difference of quality in pleasures, or what makes one pleasure more valuable than another, merely as a pleasure, except its being greater in amount, there is but one possible answer. Of two pleasures, if there be one to which all or almost all who have experience of both give a decided preference, irrespective of any feeling of moral obligation to prefer it, that is the more desirable pleasure' (1962: 259).

rise to it: even if this state is not entirely or not at all pleasurable in the commonsensical way. We have not yet departed from the original; but in effect we are already assuming the existence of two languages of *pleasure*, so to speak – a commonsensical language of pleasure and a philosophical language of 'pleasure'.

The distinction between higher and lower pleasures creates problems for Mill. He now has to explain why human beings should prefer to engage in activities that are (on the commonsensical reading) not half as pleasurable as others: think philosophy and sex again. Mill attempts to explain this preference in the second chapter of 'Utilitarianism' as follows. It comes about because our happiness (as opposed to our contentedness) depends in the highest possible degree on the satisfaction of our sense of human dignity:

> [...] a sense of dignity, which all human beings possess in one form or another, and in some, though by no means in exact, proportion to their higher faculties, and which is so essential a part of the happiness of those in whom it is strong, that nothing which conflicts with it could be, otherwise than momentarily, an object of desire to them.
>
> (Mill 1962: 260)

We see our higher capacities as essential to our humanity. Our desire for and appreciation of the activities in which we exercise these higher capacities does not derive from the fact that they give us pleasure but expresses a judgment about the value of the life entailed by their exercise. We take 'pleasure' in higher pleasures not because they give us pleasure – in fact, it is conceivable that we might take 'pleasure' in them without getting any commonsensical pleasure, although Mill does not explicitly affirm this possibility. We take 'pleasure' in them because we think that to do this, to live like this is what it means to be human.

What is the problem with this ambiguous way of conceptualizing *pleasure* as commonsensical pleasure and philosophical 'pleasure'? There is still something not quite right with the idea of the so-called higher pleasures. If it is true that we value certain things and activities highly because they are essential for our humanity and take 'pleasure' in them on the basis of this valuation – why is it, that the 'pleasure' we get in this way is less

than the pleasure we get from things like sex (the lower pleasures), which are supposedly not intrinsically valuable and which we seem to engage in only *because* they give us pleasure? Should it not be the other way round: the more intrinsically valuable something is to our own sense of dignity, the more pleasure (of the commonsensical kind that everyone is familiar with) it should give us? On Mill's reading of humanity as it is there seems to be something wrong with human nature and possibly with the nature of the world. The things which we judge to be extrinsically valuable, but not intrinsically so, seem to give us (a lot) more pleasure than the things that we judge to be valuable in themselves.

To summarize the problem with the way *pleasure* is conceptualized by Bentham and Mill: if we understand pleasure as a mental state and, as value hedonists, argue that our happiness (the only intrinsic good) ultimately comes from pleasure, then we might find it difficult to understand why a lot of people would choose philosophy over sex, even though the kind of gratification one gets from philosophizing is quantitatively much weaker than the pleasure associated with sexual bliss (and quite possibly mixed up with discontent and pain). It seems something less pleasurable may yet be more desirable for humans. Moreover, people often wish to prolong or hold onto states of consciousness that are very painful (for example, when they are self-harming). Is then the 'pleasure' constitutive of our happiness – the 'pleasure' that makes something intrinsically desirable – something different from commonsensical pleasure?

If we understand pleasure as a *kind* of activity (i.e. exercise of the higher human faculties) essential for the preservation of our dignity, and if we argue, as value perfectionists, that pleasure comes from what we essentially affirm about ourselves as humans, we might then have difficulty in understanding why this 'pleasure' should be so much less (and so much less important) to most humanity than the pleasure derived from, for example, our capacity to have sex (which we have in common with swine and therefore is presumably not essential to our dignity as humans). If we value sex as highly as philosophy (or more highly still), are we therefore deficient in our humanity? And is it really possible that we would think of philosophy as fundamental to our happiness even if philosophizing gave us no commonsensical pleasure at all, only 'pleasure' and a lot of pain?

To the reader of the original it cannot but seem on reflection as if Mill were trying to have it both or rather all ways. Note how difficult it is to speak of this in English and not lose track of the argument. One may speculate that this is what happens in 'Utilitarianism': perhaps Mill, too, lost track of the argument because of the way *pleasure* works in English, occluding the gaps between concepts, and between concepts and things.

IV Pleasure in Translation

Speaking as a translator rather than as a philosopher, what is the problem with Mill's *pleasure*? It seems to be this: in Czech one can only extract a readable version of 'Utilitarianism' if one translates the text somewhat against the grain, in effect if one deconstructs the unitary *pleasure* into pleasures (at the very least into pleasure and 'pleasure'). It is as a translator that one cannot but immediately – *without having to give it much thought* – become deconstructive of Mill's use of the term.

What happens to *pleasure* in the Czech translation?[10] First, there is no term that corresponds sufficiently closely to the English *pleasure*: the distinctive quality of the English *pleasure* being the remarkable versatility of its usage. Sex, eating, music, philosophy – all can be thought of as giving one pleasure at the same time as being a pleasure.

The closest you get to *pleasure* in Czech is the word *požitek* – which has the linguistic advantage (and philosophical disadvantage) that it can be used, at least in some contexts, both about a mental state and about an activity. But the uses of *požitek* are relatively restricted. It is characteristic of Czech that as a rule one must be fairly specific in one's choice of the word for *pleasure* depending on what kind of pleasure one is talking about (what kind of experience of what intensity goes with what kind of activity). In

10 All examples are from the second chapter where Mill defines the utility principle in terms of pleasure and presents his qualitative conception of 'higher pleasures'.

Czech one tends to automatically differentiate – on a lexical level – between pleasures in degree and in kind, using rather more specific terms to describe the pleasurable effects of various pleasures (activities).

Note, for example, that in Czech the terms used for *pleasant* or *pleasurable* will tend to express the intensity of the pleasure in question (see Table 1). Thus, the three main terms for something pleasant or pleasurable in Czech are not really synonyms: *příjemný* (an average, unremarkable level of pleasure); *libý* (a special or in some way extraordinary pleasure: if used about a smell, for example – *libá vůně* – there will be something out of the ordinary about the smell as opposed to a merely pleasant smell, *příjemná vůně*); *slastný* (an intense pleasure).

Table 1 Uses of *pleasant*

English	Czech
a pleasant smell a pleasant feeling	*příjemná, libá, slastná vůně* *příjemný, libý, slastný pocit* (not synonyms but gradations)
a pleasant melody/song	*příjemná, libá melodie/píseň* (gradations; *x slastná*)
a pleasant person	*příjemný člověk (x slastný, x libý)*

Moreover, these terms are kind-specific, i.e. they cannot be used about all kinds of things that cause pleasure indiscriminately. Thus lower pleasures – by which one as a rule means bodily pleasures in Czech (above all sex, drugs, eating etc.) – tend to give one *slast* (a very intense pleasurable sensation). Higher pleasures – by which one as a rule means spiritual pleasures in Czech – give one different kinds of pleasurable goodness, depending on what their exercise consists in, for example, whether the desirable quality is based on a primarily sensual or intellectual engagement. (Sensual engagements will further be differentiated depending on what sense is engaged). For illustration see Table 2.

Table 2 Uses of *pleasure*

English (the pleasure of ...)	Czech
sex	*sexuální slast* (*požitek* unusual)
eating culinary pleasure	*požitek z jídla* *kulinářský zážitek* Note the switch from *požitek* to *zážitek* – a 'remarkable experience' – when a more complex eating experience is involved.
reading	*radost* or *zážitek z četby* (joy from reading, a memorable reading experience) *požitek* unusual
philosophy	*duchovní požitek z filozofie* (awkward) common usage: *potěšení* či *potěcha z filosofie* (satisfaction from philosophy) Note the shift away from an intense pleasure to a much weaker satisfaction: *potěcha* is closely related to *útěcha* (consolation) as in *The Consolations of Philosophy*.

Hence in 'Utilitarianism' Mill's *pleasure* must be differentiated in Czech (at the very least) into *požitek* and *slast*. Two examples of this differentiation follow. When Mill uses *pleasure* in his definition of the principle of utility at the beginning of the second chapter, one cannot but use the word *slast*.[11] The reason being that Mill's definition opposes *pleasure* to *pain*: the pleasure of *požitek* cannot successfully function as an antonym of pain (*bolest* or *strast* in Czech) – only *slast* can do the job. But when Mill, just a few paragraphs later, speaks of 'some *kinds* of pleasure' – with emphasis on the kind of activities that a human being may engage in – one cannot

11 'The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure' (Mill 1962: 257).

but use the word *požitek* in the plural (there are no *kinds* of *slast*: *slast* is *slast* in the way that pain is pain).

When Mill uses a phrase like 'the mere pleasures of the moment' (1962: 256), the phrase cries for disambiguation in Czech. His emphasis is clearly on the temporary, fleeting nature of these pleasures. Is he talking about the effect of an activity, or the nature of the activity itself? One might respond in puzzlement: is it not the nature of pleasure as a mental state that it just *is* momentary? (Here we mean pleasure as we commonsensically understand it and as it is used by Mill himself in his definition of the principle of utility: the pleasure meaningfully opposed to pain.) All pleasure just *is* pleasure of the moment – the only difference being whether the moment is relatively short or relatively long (but even the longest sustainable pleasure is still quite brief in terms of the duration of human lives). Or are we to take it that the phrase 'mere pleasures of the moment' refers rather to those activities which cannot sustain long-term engagement and therefore cannot produce a relatively long-lasting mental state of pleasure (probably by constantly renewing that state)? But would, on that count, music or poetry – as supposedly higher pleasures – really fare any better than sex or pushpin? Does one not tire of them in a similar way?

Compare the following example unrelated to 'Utilitarianism': the Czech title of Jan Švankmajer's surrealist film *Spiklenci slasti* (1996) has been translated into English as *Conspirators of Pleasure*. The English title, unlike the Czech one, gives little away. One may imagine, for example, that the eponymous conspirators might be philosophers of some kind (modern-day Epicureans?). But the Czech title clearly hints at perversion: a *slast* is an experience tending to the extreme (just like pain) so that, more often than not, it is problematic in cultural terms – it tends to be overwhelming, strange, unspeakable and often illicit (something to be kept out of sight, out of the public realm, at the very least). And this is born out by what happens in the film: one of the intense, illicit, surreal pleasures depicted therein is the obsessive snorting of green peas. In Czech there is something *prima facie* not quite right with a human being who gets a *slast* from doing philosophy (a philosophy addict?). Yet if the *pleasure* constitutive of our happiness is to be the opposite of pain, what other than a powerful *slast* can be thought of as capable of defeating or at least outweighing pain?

The second feature of Czech that is philosophically relevant here is the way a pleasurable encounter is syntactically inscribed (see Table 3). Mill tends to avail himself of various *nominative* constructions when writing of pleasure: one example may be his talk of 'pleasure in some of its forms; of beauty, of ornament, or of amusement' (1962: 256). Once again, a certain kind of disambiguation of the genitive construction seems to be called for in translation. One may ask: but what is this 'pleasure *of* beauty'? How can it be both the same thing and not the same thing as the pleasure *of* food and *of* amusement and *of* philosophy? That is how can it produce a unitary mental state of pleasure and yet be a lower (less desirable) as opposed to a higher (more desirable) pleasure?

To translate 'pleasure of beauty' into Czech as a *požitek z krásy* (the only functional option, it seems) is to say hardly anything at all: it is the equivalent of saying 'one gets a good experience from beauty'. But that, surely, is to leave the whole question unanswered: the onus is on Mill as a utilitarian to convince us that he is right in identifying this good (and all the other goods *of* food, *of* music and *of* philosophy) with a singular *pleasure*, while defending the distinction between less and more desirable varieties of the same thing.

Contrast such nominative constructions together with the versatility of the English verbs *to enjoy* and *to like* with the way pleasures are talked about in Czech. The syntactical construction commonly used when a pleasurable encounter of some sort is described is a verbal construction in the form of '[it] does something to me': where 'does something' tends to be a verb fairly specific to the particular experience (see Table 3).

Table 3 Expressing pleasurable encounters

English (I enjoyed/liked ...)	Czech (re-translated into English)
the food.	*Chutnalo mi to*. (It tasted good to me.)
the film. (visual experience)	*Ten film se mi líbil.* (The film looked nice/good to me.)
the party. (entertainment, games)	Bavilo mě to. (It amused me.) *Bavil jsem se.* (I entertained myself.)

the conference. (intellectual pursuits)	*Hodně mi to dalo.* (It gave me a lot.) *Byla to dobrá konference*. (It was a good conference.)
the Bayreuth festival. (a complex experience engaging all senses and the intellect)	*Ohromilo mě to*. (It overwhelmed me.) *Byl to zážitek*. (It was a major experience.) *Opravdu jsem si to užil*. (I really 'lived it out'.)

Czech resists the expression of *pleasure* as a single, unitary phenomenon and therefore refuses to refer pleasure to a single standard. It names *pleasures* as complex dynamic encounters in which a human being engages with an object or another human being or in some activity with the result that something both significant (*zážitek*) and pleasurable (*požitek*) is experienced. What is it that prevents the reduction of all of these different encounters to one pleasure?

Could we, for example, interpret the Czech way of speaking about the pleasure in the following way? Different *degrees* of pleasure signal different *kinds* of pleasure: where the pleasure involved is really intense, it is that pleasure itself (no matter how momentary) that is desirable and may, of itself, constitute the significance and the value of the activity. Where the pleasure is weak (or possibly hardly there in the commonsensical way), it is a sign that the activity must be desirable (and therefore valued) for some other reason. Philosophy 'gives you something' even if you suffer while doing it: it brings its own satisfaction. It is precisely the weakness of the pleasure in engaging philosophy that in effect signifies the nature of the experience: that something other than pleasure is the source of its value.

Interpreted philosophically, could it be that it might be appropriate to be a hedonist about some values and perfectionist about others? Is it possible that we value sex because it gives us a very intense pleasure but that we value philosophy because of the kind of activity it is (essential for our high valuation of the beings we are as philosophers) and that act of self-affirmation (rather than affirmation of humanity) produces a feeling of satisfaction akin to, but not identical with, attenuated pleasure?

Or could we just be mistaken (moralistically) about the nature of the so-called lower pleasures? Perhaps they give us very intense pleasure because of the high valuation we put on ourselves as *living, embodied beings* (as

opposed to thinking philosophers): notice that both *požitek* and *zážitek* are derived from the root *živ* meaning alive (the equivalent of Latin *vivus*) – just like *život* (meaning both life *and* belly in Czech). Perhaps the lower pleasures of life and belly are not any less essential to our humanity just because we share them with animals, including swine: and their essential value is signalled by the intensity of pleasure. Should we then perhaps refuse Mill's distinction between higher and lower pleasures and treat all pleasurable encounters (perhaps with reference to a third and higher term, something like Nietzsche's will to power) as qualitatively distinct complexes of memorable, self-affirming or rather life-affirming experiences (a *zážitek* entailing a *požitek*)? Pleasures, then, would be constellations of valuable and pleasurable activities and feelings about which it is not possible to *universally* determine what comes from what (and to what degree): whether pleasure from value, or value from pleasure.

V Conclusion

What conclusions may be drawn from this resistance to Mill's conceptualization of *pleasure* as experienced in the act of translation from English into Czech? The Czech translation reads like an unwitting critique, if not a deconstruction, of the original. I say unwitting because in my experience this effect of translation has little to do with the individual translator's philosophical or linguistic probity or intent (to reconcile the translatological imperative of function with one's loyalty to the original). It seems to be the language of the translation itself that is deconstructing Mill's conception of pleasure.

Can we conclude, then, that the Czech translation simply undermines the force of Mill's classic? Paradoxically, the translation seems to re-affirm the value of the original even as it deconstructs it. It does undercut the forcefulness of Mill's arguments insofar as it enables the reader to pinpoint – rather more easily than is the case with the original – the conceptual

ambiguities in Mill's uses of *pleasure*. At the same time however, it challenges the translation-enlightened reader to come up with a better conception and thereby makes him or her aware that, some 150 years after 'Utilitarianism' was first published, we still do not really know what we talk about when we talk about pleasure.

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VERONICA O'NEILL

The Underlying Role of Translation: A Discussion of Walter Benjamin's 'Kinship'

I

One language eclipses another in the process of translation, drawing attention to what contains them both. Translation theory today assumes a problematic notion of difference: whether it is to obliterate it through domestication or to emphasise it through foreignization. This retains a too close and consequently blinding focus on this difference and leads to polarization. Of course translation assumes difference; it must do as its starting point. The initial impetus to translate comes from a desire to transfer something from one language to another; without difference there would be no such thing as translation. Nevertheless, as well as assuming difference between languages as a starting point, translation, as its ultimate goal, also points to a common origin, kinship; a kinship that also reaches beyond this common origin to a common purpose, the representation of what 'they [all languages] want to express' (Benjamin 1923/1999: 73). Walter Benjamin's ideas on the kinship of languages in 'Task of the Translator' (1923/1999) have potential implications for both the theory and practice of translation. Emphasising 'sameness of difference' between languages he potentially reflects a similar emphasis on cultural kinship. In this context the translator is cast in the role of passive facilitator – passive in that they do not interpret meaning – while the reader in the target-language is drawn into the process of interpretation and translation of the original. While Benjamin's text may not intend practical potential for translators, such potential should not be disregarded in the consideration of his ideas on kinship of languages, particularly in the context of cultural misrepresentation in the process of translation.

Translation studies is littered with violent and imperialistic metaphors. St Jerome uses the military image of the original being marched into the target-language like a prisoner by its conqueror (Robinson 1997). Conversely, Brazilian translation theorists use the metaphor of cannibalism to stand for the colonizing language being devoured and its life force invigorating in a new purified and energized form (Vieira 1999). Specifically with regard to power relations between languages Michel Foucault (1964) talks of translations that 'hurl one language against another'. It is pointless to distinguish which language is being hurled against which in this context, as the violence can go either way. With this kind of a translation, locked in polarity and a problematic notion of difference, there is always violence. While it may be useful to make such a distinction in the consideration of power relations between cultures (reflected in their languages), translation as such, with all of its potential expressions, should not be tarred with the same brush. Benjamin (1923/1999: 81) quotes Rudolf Pannwitz as follows: 'Our translations, even the best ones, proceed from a wrong premise. They want to turn Hindu, Greek, English into German instead of turning German into Hindu, Greek, English'. The quotation goes on, and Benjamin was illustrating a different point, one that we will come back to later, but it is interesting to note that it still remains within the same dichotomy; it simply flips the coin.

Translation as a humanistic enterprise, bridging the gap between peoples, also perceives difference problematically – there is a gap to be bridged. What is this gap? What does it contain? Where did it spring from? Tejaswini Niranjana (1992: 47–8) suggests that such a bridging is only necessary, indeed possible, due to the imperialist repression of heterogeneity in the first place. Such repression of heterogeneity leads to the construction of 'other' as something out there, separate, and problematically different. It also introduces a culture of dualism, and translation studies is characterised by antagonistically opposing positions, be it with regard to technique, text, language or culture. Some examples: source-language vs target-language, source-text vs target-text, adequacy vs acceptability, source-culture vs target-culture, literal vs free, word-for-word vs sense-for-sense, fidelity vs license, form vs content, letter vs spirit; the list goes on. The debate has traditionally been reconciled in favour of a free approach to translation, and concomitantly the target-text/language/culture; and as such it could appear that the violent and imperialistic metaphors are linked purely to such an approach. However, if

we look at the opposite extreme, the foreignizing approaches that become popular with nineteenth-century German theorists, while difference is not obliterated, it is emphasised, and mainly emphasised in opposition to its obliteration. Lawrence Venuti (2000: 20) comments: 'for although German theorists and practitioners bring an increased awareness to translation, treating it as a decisive encounter with the foreign, they translate to appropriate, enlisting foreign texts in German cultural and political agendas. The social functions they assign to their work reveal the imperialistic impulse that may well be indissociable from translation.' He has a point; but the point is not that translation as such is indissociable from the imperialistic impulse, but rather that translations within the dichotomy of the problematic notion of difference are. To apply such indissociability to translation as such is to limit consideration of translation to within this dichotomy.

It is also to assume that this problematic notion of difference is essential to the theory of translation. This is not the case, as the early Greco-Roman context illustrates. Both Cicero and Horace had influentially far-reaching views on translation, and both discuss translation within the wider context of two main functions of the poet: that of acquiring and disseminating wisdom, as well as the art of making and shaping a poem (Kumar Das 2005: 13). In his introduction to his own translation of the speeches of Aeschines and Demosthenes, Cicero (46BCE/1949CE) outlines his theory of translation. He makes an important three-fold distinction: between two different types of translator: interpreter and orator; two different functions of translation: interpretation and oration; and two different approaches to the process of translation: approaches that would become known as 'literal' and 'free'. He writes: 'and I did not translate them as interpreter, but as an orator, keeping the same ideas and forms, or as one might say, the "figures" of thought, but in language which conforms to our usage. And in so doing, I did not hold it necessary to render word for word, but I preserved the general style and force of the language' (Cicero 46BCE/1949CE: 364). The origin of the literal vs free debate in translation can be traced to this initial distinction, and with it, the beginning of translation theory. This debate, although often understood purely in terms of opposing translation methods, also sets up opposition in terms of functions of translation and types of translator, opposition that has important and far reaching implications outside of a Greco-Roman context.

A problem arises when what presents itself as 'natural' is merely the familiarity of a long-established norm, a norm which has forgotten, not just the unfamiliarity from which it arose, but also the particular set of circumstances within which it arose. This is the case with both the sense-for-sense approach and the problematic notion of difference in translation theory. The normativity of 'sense-for-sense', originating with Cicero in terms of a specific cultural context, goes on to ignore subsequent changes in cultural context; specifically, and importantly, a lack of knowledge of the source-language in the target-text reader. Roman translation of Greek texts was not subject to the same cultural challenges that have come to characterise the theory and practice of translation. The Romans saw themselves as a continuation of their Greek models (Bassnett 2002: 49), a natural development, and not 'other'. The perceived problem of 'otherness' was not present; translation was not seen culturally in dichotomous terms as it came to be; debates about the favouring of either source-text or target-text, and by extension source or target-language and source or target-culture, were not an issue, as one was seen as an extension of the other rather than as diametrically and problematically opposed. In fact the only debates in opposing terms were with regard to technique and perhaps text-type, and this opposition was not seen problematically. Instead, the distinction between commercial and literary texts, along with that of interpreter and orator, were purely descriptive and aimed at discovering the most effective techniques for continuing the development of Greek thought in Roman terms. In this context, with most Roman readers bi-lingual in Greek and Latin, a sense-for-sense approach was not actually 'unfaithful' to the original as the target-text reader would have had access to the meaning of the original in the source-language. So in fact, the sense-for-sense approach was advocated by Cicero within a context where the original was not at risk of misrepresentation due to unfaithful rendering in the target-language. As such, while a sense-for-sense approach was indeed advocated as opposed to a 'word-for-word' or 'faithful' one, it did not equate with 'unfaithful' in reality; 'sense-for-sense' was not at the expense of 'faithfulness' as eventually came to be the case, with 'sense-for-sense' as a long-established norm, having forgotten, not just the unfamiliarity out of which it arose, but also the relevance of the specific set of circumstances within which it arose.

This point is crucial to understanding certain unexamined preconceptions of translation theory today. A sense-for-sense approach has come to be typically associated with favouring the target-text/reader/language and culture, all at the expense of the source-text/language and culture, and it is not difficult to see how this could come about in a context where 'sense-for-sense' has become an established and largely unquestioned norm. Although it may have originated in a context where it was not at the expense of fidelity and regard for the source-culture, this can be, and is, easily overlooked in contexts where the application of such a technique is at the expense of the source-culture, and the assumption can be, and is, made that the long established normativity of this technique justifies this favouring of target-culture, that it is in fact 'natural'.

While translation theory originates with Cicero's articulation in certain terms of an opposition between 'literal' and 'free', and his favouring of a sense-for-sense approach came to be the unquestioned norm in different cultural contexts, this does not take account of Cicero's own preconceptions. Possibly the most entrenched unquestioned preconception at the root of translation theory is that of the function of translation being purely the transferral of meaning. This leads to an automatic judgement of a translation based on notions such as equivalence or domestication, in turn bringing the focus on to the target-text: whether it is loyal to the original or not, or whether it reads in the target-text as though it had originated there. It is clear how this primary unquestioned preconception with regard to the function of translation leads to a similar preconception as to the primacy of target-text over source-text, and by extension, as we have seen, the unquestioned acceptance of a sense-for-sense approach to the practice of translation. In fact, the dichotomous nature of translation theory, while appearing to originate with Cicero's first articulation of opposing approaches to the practice of translation, can be traced to a deeper question; that of the 'why' of translation. While Cicero also made a distinction between two functions of translation: interpretation and oration, both of these fall under the category of the transferral of meaning from one language to another. As such, his articulation of opposing approaches was within the context of this one function.

Ultimately what Benjamin does is to shift the focus of the function of translation away from a singular emphasis on and duty to transferral of meaning from one language to another, with its concomitant taking of sides: 'literal' or 'free', source-text/language/culture or target-text/language/culture, etc., and allows for the co-existence of another function of translation, that of the revelation, albeit momentarily, of 'the reciprocal relationship between languages' (Benjamin 1923/1999: 78). Specifically in relation to the polarisation that arises out of the problematic notion of difference in translation theory manifesting in the debate between 'fidelity' and 'license', Benjamin notes that: 'these ideas seem to be no longer serviceable to a theory that looks for other things in a translation than reproduction of meaning. To be sure, traditional usage makes these terms appear as if in constant conflict with each other' (ibid.). With this he explicitly refers to the existence of another function of translation besides that of the transferral of meaning. He also makes reference to the conflictual polarisation that is characteristic of the literal vs free debate in translation theory, a polarization that arises from the problematic notion of difference that in turn arises when the focus is exclusively on one function of translation; that of the transferral of meaning between languages.

Benjamin's theory could have remained within a dichotomy in terms of functions of translation: transferral of meaning vs momentary revelation of the central reciprocal relationship between languages, adding just another facet to the dichotomous nature of translation theory. He does not do this. Instead both functions remain central to his theory, symbiotic and intertwined, the function of transferral of meaning being essential as the initial impetus for translation, as is in turn the heterogeneity of languages essential as initial impetus for the drive to transferral of meaning from one language to another. When Benjamin sheds light on this original unquestioned assumption, he also reveals the preconceptions that subsequently arise from it, and this in turn neutralises any debates that have developed around these preconceptions, including the literal vs free debate.

II

Benjamin does not need to obliterate or emphasise difference to shift focus onto kinship: languages, like everything else, exist within a 'play of difference'. The fact of the possibility of translation points to kinship of languages; the process of translation reveals their kinship, but at the moment of translation, in the process of translation, and not definitively. Benjamin makes a number of references to the processual nature of translation, for example: 'translation is so far removed from being the sterile equation of two dead languages that of all literary forms it is the one charged with the special mission of watching over the maturing process of the original language and the birth pangs of its own' (Benjamin 1923/1999: 74). Of course there is more on this, but what is important in this context is the implication of continuity of action. Translation is not suggested to be something that is carried out once and for all – definitive; instead its role is 'watching over', and what it watches over is 'the maturing process'. Neither of these expressions implies finality or definitiveness. Benjamin builds on this subtly implied premise with regard to the role of translation as follows:

> This, to be sure, is to admit that all translation is only a somewhat provisional way of coming to terms with the foreignness of languages. An instant and final rather than a temporary and provisional solution of this foreignness remains out of the reach of mankind: at any rate, it eludes any direct attempt ... in translation the original rises into a higher and purer linguistic air, as it were. It cannot live there permanently, to be sure, and it certainly does not reach it in its entirety. Yet, in a singularly impressive manner, at least it points the way to this region: the predestined, hitherto inaccessible realm of reconciliation and fulfilment of languages.
>
> (1923/1999:75)

Kinship of languages is revealed, released, pointed to fleetingly in process. This is not to say that it is fleeting. The window to it is only opened fleetingly, and this is in the process of translation.

Terry Eagleton (1977) offers a useful and interesting model within which to consider this process. He talks of replacing the opposition of the source-text and target-text with the notion of intertextuality. He writes:

'It may be then, that translation from one language into another may lay bare for us something of the very productive mechanisms of textuality itself – may figure as some kind of model or paradigm of the very secret of writing' (1977: 73). Eagleton is also articulating the fact of the possibility of translation pointing to an in-betweeness that momentarily lays bare something that is ineffable due to its originary nature. In terms of the process of translation Eagleton continues: 'it is perhaps only the literal translator who knows most keenly the psychic cost and enthrallment which all writing involves' (ibid.), suggesting both the method of translation to be employed in order to reveal the 'secret of writing', as well as the transitory nature of the experience for the translator. Eagleton's ideas on translation in terms of intertextuality are interesting, both in terms of the nature of kinship of languages as revealed momentarily due to the fact of, or in the process of translation, and also in terms of the literal vs free debate. On the one hand the intertextuality model allows for 'free' translation, having freed the translator from any duty of care to any fixed 'truth' of the original, while on the other hand, the 'laying bare of the very mechanisms of textuality itself' (Eagleton 1966: 73) that occurs in translation from one language to another, is only available to the literal translator. So literality, the impetus for it, in this context at least, moves from being due to fidelity to a source-text, to being incited by the promise of a glimpse of: 'the very secret of writing' in Eagleton's terms, 'pure language' in Benjaminian terms.

Neither Benjamin's 'pure language of translation', nor Eagleton's 'secret of writing', have anything to do with the 'perfect translation' that Paul Ricoeur (2006) accuses Benjamin of aspiring to in 'Task of the Translator'. In fact Benjamin's 'pure language of translation', is more akin to the 'language being one' that Richard Kearney (2006: xiii) talks about in his introduction to Ricoeur's *On Translation*. This oneness is 'pure language', translation reveals it, lays it bare, and it holds the secret, the ineffable secret of language and writing. Ricoeur talks about 'giving up the ideal of a perfect translation'. He writes: 'this mourning also makes it possible to take on the two supposedly conflicting tasks of "bringing the author to the reader" and "bringing the reader to the author". In brief, the courage to take on the well-known problem of faithfulness and betrayal: vow/suspicion' (2006: 8). Ricoeur is talking about side-stepping/transcending the dichotomy of

translation, suggesting that the 'ideal of a perfect translation' is somehow complicit in the problem. It is. With the ideal of a perfect translation there is a fixing, a defining, a killing, rather than a phenomenological 'permitting things to be the standard for what is real' (Heidegger 1951/2001: 168). This mourning, Ricoeur argues, must continue 'until we reach an acceptance of the impassable difference of the peculiar and the foreign' (2006: 9). Benjamin and Ricoeur are clearly in agreement, however Ricoeur's assumption that Benjamin's theory aims to re-capture universality is erroneous, in fact even the suggestion that universality ever was captive is. Benjamin's theory points to universality, both through translation and momentarily. It is wrong to assume that it aims for any kind of capture of, or indeed re-capture of universality. In answer to Ricoeur's (2006: 9) suggestion of Benjamin's 'desire for perfect translation', Benjamin's desire is not for perfection of translation, instead it is for whatever mode of translation best reveals, momentarily, the perfection there is; 'pure language', universality.

Benjamin is not motivated by a drive to 'equivalence', 'adequacy', or even 'fidelity' to either 'sense' or 'foreignness' of the original. He is quite explicit about this when he writes:

> With this attempt at an explication our study appears to rejoin, after futile detours, the traditional theory of translation. If the kinship of languages is to be demonstrated by translations, how else can this be done but by conveying the form and meaning of the original as accurately as possible? To be sure, that theory would be hard put to define the nature of this accuracy and therefore could shed no light on what is important in a translation.
>
> (1923/1999: 77)

A perfect translation in terms of adequacy, equivalence etc., would not only 'hide the light of the original', but do so in such a way as to ignore the original entirely. A target-text reader reading a translated text as though it had been written in the target-language might as well be reading a new original: the fact of translation is not evident. Even if this perfect translation could be shown to be completely faithful to the meaning, including all potential interpretations of that meaning, the fact of its translation is hidden, and with it the momentary view of 'pure language'.

A literal translation, on the other hand, draws the target-text reader into the process; the fact of the text's translation cannot be ignored, and if the reader is not blinded by an unexamined expectation of a 'perfect translation', they see, albeit momentarily, the window to the ineffable, the universal, origin. So while it is clearly not difference that is the problem, nor is it universality, nor even the search for universality. If there is a problem associated with universality it would be the attempt at capturing it. This is, in fact, what is referred to in the myth of the Tower of Babel. In trying to make a name for himself, man was not talking about fame, but instead about naming, the language of naming, which can be applied to all things, but not to man. The Tower is an analogy for the attempt at capturing the universality of man, which is doomed, as would the perfect translation, to eclipse any view of this universality. Hence, the heterogeneity of languages ensures that the view to universality remains open in the process of translation: one language momentarily eclipsing another and revealing what contains them both.

III

What does this mean in practice? If the view to 'pure language' is momentary and reached only in the process of translation, the translator then needs to provide an opportunity for the reader in the target language to 'sit on his shoulder' as he translates. This can be done through a highly annotated, word-for (or perhaps after)-word, or even as Benjamin suggests, an interlinear translation. A translation should do no more than offer a blueprint to any number of readers in the target-language to translate the original themselves in the act of their reading. The translator thus facilitates translation, the target-language reader being in turn cast in the role of translator. Ultimately, either side of the coin within the terms of reference of the traditional debate: foreignizing/domesticating, literal/free etc. doesn't matter much with this kind of translation, the kind of translation that is concerned with *more* than the transferral of subject matter.

Benjamin uses the analogy of life to describe this 'moreness', suggesting that: 'all manifestations of life, including their very purposiveness, in the final analysis have their end not in life, but in the expression of its nature, in the representation of its significance. Translation thus ultimately serves the purpose of expressing the central reciprocal relationship between languages.' (1923/1999: 73). Translation represents the significance of the original, and that significance is in turn the representation of the central reciprocal relationship between languages. The role of the translator is to facilitate the representation of this relationship, so that it can be re-experienced any number of times and in any number of ways by readers in the target-language, regardless of their individual or collective subjectivity or, indeed, the cultural context. Benjamin continues: 'it cannot possibly reveal or establish this hidden relationship itself; but it can represent it by realizing it in embryonic or intensive form' (ibid.). It can only be experienced fleetingly, in process, the process of translation. Avoiding cultural misrepresentation, thus, is not even a goal of this kind of translation. Cultural context is created in the act of reading, and is re-created with each new reading. If the source-text is translated anew with each reading of the translation (blueprint), it must depend on the nature of the subjectivity of the individual reader in the target-language as to how the source-text/language/culture is construed. Importantly, the complicity of translation as such in cultural misrepresentation, 'the imperial impulse', when we find it, is revealed for what it is: as belonging to human subjectivity and not as innate in translation as such.

This kind of translation would, by necessity, be extremely and purely literal and word-for-word and it would be easy enough, given the pervasiveness of the pattern of antagonistic opposition in translation theory, to assume such an approach to take up a foreignizing position in opposition to a domesticating one in the continuing debate. This would be a mistake. We need to differentiate between foreignizing and word-for-word approaches. Word-for-word translation is often used as a part of a foreignizing strategy, but is not in itself foreignizing. Foreignizing strategies are, as are domesticating ones, loaded with socio-cultural and political power struggles and the subjectivity that comes with such an approach far surpasses that of an individual translator. Benjamin's theory is different. He states: 'for if the

sentence is the wall before the language of the original, literalness is the arcade' (Benjamin, 1923/1999: 79). He sees the word, the smallest intelligible unit of text, as both the gateway to the language of the original, and the window to extra-linguistic meaning. Benjamin's intention has nothing to do with traditional dichotomous translation theory debates. In fact Benjamin's approach has both everything and nothing to do with opposites. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's ideas in 'Interrogation and Dialectic' (2000) provide a useful context. He writes: 'a philosophy that really thinks the negation, that is, that thinks it as what is not through and through, is also a philosophy of being. We are beyond monism and dualism, because dualism has been pushed so far that the opposites, no longer in competition, are at rest the one against the other, coextensive with one another' (2000: 54). For Benjamin, literal translation as literal translation 'through and through', as literal pushed so far that it is no longer in competition with free, is at rest with free, is coextensive with free. It is at this point for Benjamin that kinship of languages is revealed, as 'the totality of their intentions supplementing each other: pure language' (Benjamin, 1923/1999: 74).

With regard to practical potential for Benjamin's theory a quotation from Alain's *Propos de Littérature* encapsulates, or at least points to, such a potential. He writes:

> J'ai cette idée qu'on peut toujours traduire un poète, anglais, latin ou grec, exactement mot pour mot, sans rien ajouter, et en conservant même l'ordre, tant qu'enfin on trouvera le mètre et même la rime. J'ai rarement poussé l'essai jusque là; il y faut du temps, je dis des mois et une rare patience. On arrive d'abord à une sorte de mosaïque barbare; les morceaux sont mal joints; le ciment les assemble, mais ne les accorde point. Il reste la force, l'éclat, une violence même, et plus sans doute qu'il faudrait. C'est plus anglais que l'anglais, plus grec que le grec, plus latin que le latin [...]
>
> I have this idea that one can always translate a poet, English, Latin, or Greek, exactly word for word, without adding anything, and even keeping the word order, to the extent that one finally finds the meter and even the rhyme. I have rarely pushed the experiment that far; it requires time, I mean months, and a rare patience. One arrives first at a sort of barbaric mosaic; the pieces fit together badly; the cement assembles them, but lends them nothing. The strength remains, the brilliance, a violence even, and more than necessary without doubt. It's more English than the English, more Greek than the Greek, more Latin than the Latin [...]
>
> (Alain, 1954: 56–7. My translation – V.O'N.)

This 'moreness' is Benjamin's kinship of languages illustrated in the practice of translation. It is rare, however, for such an approach to be taken to the necessary point. To refer back to the rest of Benjamin's quotation of Pannwitz, and perhaps the point he was actually making: 'the basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue' (Benjamin 1923/1999: 81). Translations, even literal ones, tend to hold back to some degree, not allowing the source-language free reign over the target-language. As long as there is this holding back, the process of translation is happening within the dichotomy of power relations between languages. The translator as facilitator lets go of such an active role, and rather than, as Pannwitz concludes, 'expanding and deepening his language by means of the foreign language' (Benjamin 1923/1999: 81), he passively allows the expansion and deepening of his own language by means of the foreign language as he passively represents the central reciprocal relationship between languages, their kinship, 'language as one', 'pure language'.

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SERGEY TYULENEV

Systemics and Lifeworld of Translation

There is nothing so practical as a good theory.

— KURT LEWIN

Ce n'est pas moins *de théorie qu'il nous faut, mais* plus *de théorie, plus de recherche pour construire une pédagogie efficace et des traducteurs compétents.*

— ANNIE BRISSET

I Introduction

After the social turn in translation studies, a curious form of purism has developed. This purism manifests itself in that it is believed that such sociological theories as Bourdieu's theory of social fields and Luhmann's social systems theory are incompatible. Among the reasons why they are so, it has been suggested that even the creators of these paradigms dismissed each other and, if so, how can we combine them? I addressed this issue elsewhere (Tyulenev 2009a) and, in this paper, I am not going to repeat my argumentation, but rather, build on it. I will attempt to consider some aspects of translation, as practiced in what can loosely be referred to as modern Western world, in terms of the theories elaborated by Niklas Luhmann and his life-long opponent Juergen Habermas. Arguably, a combination of the two theories can provide valuable insights into the social functioning of translation in modern world.

II Systemics of Translation

Translation is a system because it can be described as a system. This statement may be criticized for being too reductionist and constructionist. Yet, it is no more reductionist than any description of a phenomenon of reality because any phenomenon of reality is inevitably more complex than any attempt to capture its complexity. The incomprehensible complexity of reality or any of its objects is reduced to determinately structured complexity. This determinately structured complexity results from the application of a set of criteria which exclude some of the aspects of the phenomenon in question. Lack of reductionism generates indeterminate complexity and, in the case of a scientific attempt to reflect all the complexity of the studied phenomenon, the description would turn out to be virtually tantamount to just repeating the original complexity and thereby lose any sense of orderly presentation. Indeterminate complexity is lack of information (Luhmann 1995: 27–8). Therefore, to say that translation is a system is no more reductionist than any other statement about translation.

This statement is also, no doubt, constructionist. Yet again, it is as constructionist as any other scientific statement (Weinberg 2009). Even the most positivist approach is inevitably based on the researcher's views and convictions which influence the selection of material under investigation, the way data are analyzed, etc. Hence, it is only a matter of degree of constructionism and not a matter of 'either / or': either a constructionist statement or not.

Translation can be described as a social system (Hermans 1999, 2007; Tyulenev 2009b). This means not only that it belongs to the realm of the social but also that it is an operational closure. Translation distinguishes itself as a particular type of activity with its specific nature. The nature of translation manifests itself in translational communication events. Translation fulfils a specific social function by virtue of being what it is: as such, it increases the likelihood of social interaction. Translation mediates between interacting parties. By virtue of its mediating nature, translation sets itself apart from any other social activity. The mediating

nature of translation has a temporal aspect: translation as a system unfolds recursively over time, creating a sort of memory of translation. Each translational communication event is based on prior translational operations and anticipates future ones. Translation is possible because translation marks certain phenomena as belonging to itself and *being* itself; it also marks all other types of operations as alien phenomena, thereby drawing a boundary line between them and itself. This process of observing difference between itself and everything else constitutes translation as an operational closure. Translation operations lock on themselves. This systemic circularity makes translation an autopoietic system, that is, a self-(re)producing system.

As a social system, translation has the following characteristics. Translation has a function in society which is to increase social interaction. Translation as a system considers all communication events as either mediated or not mediated. What is not mediated, it mediates. In the case of retranslation, the existing mediation is found lacking according to this or that criterion, and is, therefore, re-mediated. Theories, strategies and policies of translation constitute the programs of translation. The programs of translation make its binary code (mediated/non-mediated) more flexible and capable of fitting into different social contexts. Translation exists in the medium of mediation, whether it is intralinguistic, interlinguistic or intersemiotic mediation. That is to say, translation is one possible form of mediation qua medium.

Translation as a system can be viewed from different perspectives. In the present study I will apply to translation the categories which, after Aristotle, are used to categorize philosophical knowledge. Ontology studies being as being. Epistemology inquires into how we know what we claim to know. Politics describes society as it is. Ethics suggests better ways to live in the society and substantiates its propositions by providing criteria of what may be considered 'better' and why. Aesthetics deals with the nature of the beautiful. When we apply these categories to translation studies, ontology would be described as addressing the fundamental question of translation studies as a discipline: what is translation? The epistemology of translation is called upon to explain how we qualify a certain type of human activity, or its results, as translation. Politics of translation demonstrates

how translation functions in society; whereas ethics of translation goes on to discuss how translation should function. Aesthetics of translation is a research of what makes translation 'better' or 'worse' and what criteria are used for deciding what is 'better' or 'worse'.

The focus of this paper is on the politics and ethics of translation. We have seen that translation can be viewed as a social system. I draw on Niklas Luhmann's social systems theory in describing translation as a social system because his sociological theory is probably one of the most suitable and well developed for this purpose. Luhmann portrays modern western society as a social system with function subsystems. As we have seen translation has its own social function. This makes it a social (sub)system.[1] Translation is one of a number of function subsystems, other subsystems being religion, economy, art, education, law, etc. The politics of translation stops here. The application of Luhmann's social systems theory cannot help us to explain aspects of translation practice such as ethical issues of translation. To address this facet of translation as practiced in modern society, the theory of communicative action by Juergen Habermas may be of help.

III Lifeworld of Translation

In his magnum opus *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1981), Habermas studies the rationality of modern society. Habermas's theory of society is informed by his personal social involvements. He has been known as a social activist who defies the pessimism of social theories of modernity. Habermas disagrees with the overemphasis which is laid on the instrumentalism of

1 I refer to translation as a system when I describe it as a social unit as opposed to other social units. I refer to translation as a subsystem when I describe it as a social unit within a larger social unit – society at large.

social practices. He argues that social reality is more complex and, although indeed it has strong instrumental leanings, that the desire for consensus and cooperation is at heart of social human activities.

Although the sociology of Luhmann and Habermas differ considerably in their philosophical underpinnings and methodology, there are also points which allow us to combine them, or complement one with the other. The two scholars always conducted a dialogue, or rather a debate; a debate which produced positive and constructive results. One of which is Habermas's adaptation of the concept 'system' from functionalist sociology, notably, from Luhmann's social systems theory. Habermas explains the instrumentalism of modern society as caused by its systematization. The systemics of modern society is contrasted in his theory with what he terms 'lifeworld'.

Lifeworld is defined by Habermas as the context of communicative action; it is: 'the horizon within which communicative actions are "always already" moving' (Habermas 1987/1981: 119). Lifeworld as the horizon is 'always already' there because it is constituted by language and culture into which the subject is socially initiated (ibid.: 125). Importantly, 'communicative action relies on a cooperative process of the interpretation in which participants relate simultaneously to something in the objective, the social, and the subjective worlds' (ibid.: 120). Thus, lifeworld is the locus where the socially installed desire for consensus informs the subject's activity. The gradual uncoupling of institutional system from lifeworld leads to 'a state in which legitimate orders are dependent upon formal procedures for positing and justifying norms' (ibid.: 146). Systemic mechanisms are counter-intuitive in that they 'are out of the reach of a member's intuitive knowledge' (ibid.: 149). Systems can be exemplified by economic structures and state bureaucracy as ultimate manifestations of legally restricted communication.

The overall dynamics of modern society is described by Habermas as follows:

> [S]ystem and lifeworld are differentiated in the sense that the complexity of the one and the rationality of the other grow. But it is not only qua system and qua lifeworld that they are differentiated; they get differentiated from one another at the same time. [... T]he uncoupling of system and lifeworld is depicted in such a way that the lifeworld, which is at first coextensive with a scarcely differentiated social system, gets cut down more and more to one subsystem among others. In the process, system mechanisms get further and further detached from the social structures through which social integration takes place. [... M]odern societies attain a level of system differentiation at which increasingly autonomous organizations are connected with one another via delinguistified media of communication: these systemic mechanisms – for example, money – steer a social intercourse that has been largely disconnected from norms and values, above all in those subsystems of purposive rational economic and administrative action that, on Weber's diagnosis, have become independent of their moral-political foundations.
>
> (Ibid.: 153–4)

Thus, the growing rationalization of modern world leads to the systems' colonization of lifeworld. Instrumental action gains the upper hand over communicative action.

IV Translation in the World and the World of Translation

Besides the above mentioned legality and delinguistified steering media of communication, the pre-eminence of professionalism over the intuitive desire for consensus and mutual assistance is another feature of the rampant systems' colonization of lifeworld (Habermas 1981/1987: 154, 156, 159). According to sociological studies of profession as a social phenomenon (summarized in Paige and Martin 1996: 39), profession has a distinctive body of specialized knowledge. Professionalism is usually acquired by means of special training programmes at educational institutions. Practice and theory in a given professional field are sanctioned and controlled by special organizations usually constituted by the most educated and experienced representatives. Professional ethics defines norms of professional conduct and constitutes the benchmark for evaluating professional performance.

Over time, as a professional field acquires these characteristics, it earns public respect and becomes self-sustaining and self-perpetuating with little external influence or intervention.

The colonization through professionalism can be observed not only on the scale of the society at large, but in particular subsystems of highly differentiated modern societies. Translation can be viewed as a battleground of such colonization, which is seen in the increasing preference of formally conditioned professionalism to translational mediation informed by the lifeworld-nurtured desire for facilitating social consensus. In other words, translation might be seen as a world in itself with rivalling lifeworld and system rationales on the one hand, and, on the other, translation might be seen in the world of a certain society which moves away from pristine lifeworld, originally coextensive with the entire social space, to rationalization and ensuing differentiation of the society.

I will start with the latter because the general social rationalization causes the inward rationalization of the translation world. Society is a bounded unit. It is traditional in social anthropology to distinguish between different stages of social evolution. The first stage is segmentation. Tribal societies are the prime example of such social organization where each segment is similar to another segment in its structural and existential self-sufficiency. Another stage is the differentiation of society based on functional stratification, characteristic of modern society (Luhmann 1997: 634–776). Understanding these stages of social evolution is germane in the context of this paper because these stages outline the phylogenetic evolution which reverberates in the ontogenetic evolution and experience of the individual translator.

Habermas theorizes the tribal society as the closest to the society-coextensive lifeworld and communicative action. This is explained by the kinship calculus of social relations. The social actor views the other as a family member and, therefore, 'action oriented to mutual understanding and action oriented to success cannot yet be separated' (Habermas 1981/1987: 159). Moreover, communicative action is universalized in such society: every communicative event is handled according to this principle of reaching mutual understanding and lending mutual assistance. 'This sketch of a collectively shared, homogeneous lifeworld is certainly an

idealization, but archaic societies more or less approximate this ideal type [...]' (ibid.: 157). Hence, this type of society is a paradise-like site where 'one is obligated in one's behaviour to honesty, loyalty, and mutual support – in short, to act with an orientation toward mutual understanding' (ibid.: 157). The principle of 'amity' gains the status of a metanorm 'that obliges one to satisfy the presuppositions of communicative action in dealing with one's kin'; although rivalries, altercations and minor hostilities can still be observed, the principle of amity 'normally does exclude manifestly strategic action' (ibid.: 157).

Strategic action whose only end is to reach a goal by fair means or foul is, in pre-state societies, exercised only beyond the tribal boundary. The boundary is porous because exogamy requires mixing up with neighbouring tribes. Interestingly, there are two types of interaction possible between the tribes: marriage or war. Thus, the logic of dealing with alien tribes is as follows: 'we marry those with whom we fight' (ibid.: 158). It is here in dealing with foreigners that translation steps in. Translation is one of the mechanisms of opening the boundary, making it porous because no interaction with the 'outside' is possible without this or that level of linguistic and cultural mediation. However, there is little professional differentiation in the pre-state society. Translators are translators not professionally but by happenstance and they act within the lifeworld horizon. Yet, the translators' horizon becomes somewhat broader to include the horizon of the alien tribe: translators understand the aliens' language and culture. Translators, therefore, may be said to be initiated into the aliens' lifeworld and that is what qualifies translators as mediators either in war or in marriage. Importantly, even during intertribal hostilities, translators still have to act more on the basis of the intra-kinship logic rather than that of extra-kinship. This is why, not infrequently, they are viewed as traitors. Yet, with the growing differentiation of their society, with the resulting professionalization when social integration separates from system integration, translators seem to lose their lifeworld ethics in favour of becoming professionals (Araguás and Jalón 2004: 132, 135, 138). What is happening may be described in terms of Habermasian theory: the system of translation as a profession forces the lifeworld of translation to shrink to a subsystem amongst other subsystems. Translators' loyalty is given to their commissioners; translators'

orientation towards communicative action is ousted to the periphery of the translation system by translators' preference of strategic action. The world of translation, thus, follows the general flow of the world.

V Ontogeny Recapitulating Phylogeny

Whether Ernst Haeckel's idea that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny in biology holds water or not is not yet a fully settled question (Gould 1977). In the development of an individual translator, however, there may definitely be found traces of the phylogeny of translation as a social phenomenon as has been presented above. Ethical issues of translation as observed in the ontogeny of translators-to-be seem to reflect a similar clash of lifeworld and system. Prompted by their lifeworld intuition, translators (at least initially) sincerely intend to contribute to the establishment of mutual understanding between the parties communicating through them. For instance, this is obvious in the naïve literalism of young translators: they try to be (hyper)faithful to the original texts. Partly such loyalty to the source text is prompted by students not knowing better, but no doubt, they also try to keep as close to the original as possible and defend this by saying 'this is how it is worded in the original' (cf. Tyulenev 2004: 69). As a result their prevalent technique is to exoticize the text (Franzon 2006). Johan Franzon conducted an experiment with students at the department of translation studies at the University of Helsinki for five consecutive years trying to answer the question, if exoticizing (foreignization), domestication, generalization (preference of a less specific variant for a literal rendering) and the opposite operation termed 'explicitation' were 'so elemental as to appear even in target texts by amateur translators' (ibid.: 90–2). A highly culturally coloured text (about a Finnish Christmas tradition), targeted at a specific readership (children of about ten to fifteen years of age), served as the source for translation. Fifty eight students participated in the experiment and 'no student deviated very much from the source

text in terms of information content and general disposition' (ibid.: 92). In Franzon's analysis of all Finnish source-text fragments and their renderings into the target language (Swedish), exoticizing was by far the most preferred strategy (ibid.: 94–101). The result of the experiment supports the observation that the budding translator starts with literal renderings. That this predominant literalness of inexperienced translators is anchored in ethical reasons, can be seen in Omar Sheikh Al-Shabab's explanation of this type of strategy:

> The Translated Text (TT) reveals that there is little engagement in the process of moving to the TL [Target Language] system and culture to reach the interpretation and activate the required elements in the TL and culture. The translator may lack training or experience in the TL and culture. S/he may lack proper acquaintance with a specific variety of the SL [Source Language] or TL into which s/he is interpreting. All in all, the translation suffers from obvious gaps due to the translator's knowledge and a sense of 'betrayal' of the ST [Source Text.] and the profession.
>
> (Al-Shabab 2006: 158)

However, this lifeworld intention is reduced to an atavism in the course of training and professional career. Naturally, the instructor recommends improving this or that aspect of beginners' versions by introducing various professional strategies and techniques as is the case in the above-cited experiment described in Franzon (2006: 94–101). Characteristically, the recommendations are aimed at improving the professional side of translations (which is of course the immediate goal of Franzon's paper) and do not discuss possible reasons why the translations were made the way they were made, why or whether it would be worth distinguishing between the tendency to keep as closely to the source text as possible and creating a more target language oriented version (deemed also as more professional). Bearing in mind Al-Shabab's explanation of the literalness in translation, the forgetting or dismissing of the ethical aspect acquires the status of a symptom rather than a simple failure or setting this aspect aside. Ethics is usually relegated to further stages of the translator training and even there it is likely to be treated almost as an embellishment for down-to-earth practical training.

This shows how translation as a profession and consequently its supporting subdivision, translator training, have evolved into a system: the translator mediates between interacting parties and is remunerated for such mediation – not for efforts to establish consensus. Mediating has become a necessary and sufficient condition of practicing the profession of translator.

VI Phylogeny Recapitulating Ontogeny

To use Ernst Haeckel's hypothesis again, the ontogeny of the budding translator recapitulates the phylogeny of the trade into which s/he is being initiated. If the following description applies to anybody in our present-day world, the translators-to-be are definitely among the likeliest objects:

> [T]he freedom projected by Adorno [is the one] that Habermas claims to have determined with the theory of communicative action [...] Whoever 'meditates' on Adorno's enigmatic statement that the reconciled [intersubjective] state would 'find its happiness where the alien remains distant and different in its lasting nearness, beyond the heterogeneous and beyond that which is one's own' will become aware, Habermas contends, 'that the condition described, although never real, is still most intimate and familiar to us. It has the structure of a life together in communication that is free from coercion. We necessarily anticipate such a reality ... each time we speak what is true. The idea of truth, already implicit in the first sentence spoken, can be shaped only on the model of the idealized agreements aimed for in communication free from domination.'
>
> (Morris 2001: 12)

The description may strike us as too idealized. Looking for 'reciprocity of mutual understanding' based on the ideas of 'reconciliation in terms of an intact intersubjectivity' (Habermas 1981/1984: 390), where the otherness is not forced into the sameness but is respected in its otherness, may seem to us to be too utopian, yet it is exactly that sort of questions which are raised today by intercultural trainers in general (Paige and Martin 1996: 37) and translator trainers in particular (Al-Rubai'I 2006).

Alya' M.H. Ahmad Al-Rubai'I (2006) discusses how to optimize interpreters' functioning as intercultural mediators. The paper is based on real-life instances of interpreters' performance and relevant sociological and translator training theory 'in order to stress the importance of profound knowledge of active and passive cultures' and to work out the basis for intercultural-oriented training with 'the main objective to sensitize the trainees to intercultural communication, to help them acquire intercultural awareness and competence' (ibid.: 167, 178). Although the author does not explicitly use the term 'ethics' or its derivates, the actual thrust of her paper is in the realm of ethics. For example, Al-Rubai'I insists: 'Being a bicultural or even a tricultural, if the interpreter belongs to a culture other than the speaker's and the hearer's, is not enough. The interpreter should also develop the kind of cross-cultural attitude that can be conducive to effective intercultural interactions' (2006: 173). Such an attitude, according to Al-Rubai'I, should include open-mindedness to new ideas, experiences; it should be characterized by intercultural empathy, non-judgementalness and minimal ethnocentrism. This cannot but remind us of Adorno and Habermas' ideal of intersubjective communication, on the one hand, and the intra-kinship nature of translators' mediation in pre-state societies, on the other. The examples adduced by Al-Rubai'I show the interpreters who 'find themselves torn between both [communicating] parties' and are blamed and criticized for trying to avert a conflict (ibid.: 173–4). At the same time, a few examples are given of interpreters who mishandled intercultural communication, by either putting aside ethical considerations or by being ignorant about important aspects of the target audience's culture; thereby hampering the communication they are supposed to facilitate. The two aspects – ethics and expertise in intercultural communication – are considered as two sides of the same coin. In discussing the two aspects, Al-Rubai'I draws on the theory of social mediation by the German sociologist Georg Simmel. According to Simmel, the mediator in a dyadic social interaction has two functions. The mediator 'may function as a non-partisan either if he does not have a particular attitude or opinion about the contrasting interests and opinions, and is actually not interested in both; or if he is equally interested in both, being influenced by his specific interests or by his total personality' (summarized in Al-Rubai'I 2006: 173).

It is clear that intersubjective (or intercultural) mediation acquires ethical overtones. This becomes especially obvious when the mediator identifies himself/herself with one side in the interest of personal gain; becoming, in Simmel's terminology, *tertius gaudens*: 'The "tertius gaudens" identifies himself with one of the influencing agents and disassociates himself from the other for the sake of his egoistic interests' (ibid.: 174). The non-partisan stance of the mediator is motivated by the desire to facilitate intersubjective interaction according to the lifeworld logic and therefore furnishes an example of communicative action. On the other hand, when the mediator behaves as a *tertius gaudens*, his/her action is strategic and informed by the instrumentalism of the translation system. Such behaviour is rooted in the uncoupling of lifeworld and system; communicative action and strategic action.

Al-Rubai'I sees intercultural training as indeed 'pressing' (ibid.: 178) since, as the examples analyzed in her paper illustrate, the nature of the interpreter's task is critical for communication, and the interpreter's mediation, although without being so named, is understood as intrinsically ethical:

> Interpreters who have the intercultural competence required can help participants achieve better understanding, thus investing their competence to the best of both parties. However, those interpreters who lack some of the components of this intercultural competence may be prone to prejudices or other negative attitudes. They may also lead to cultural misunderstanding and practical difficulties.
>
> (Ibid.: 181)[2]

Casuistically one may argue that Al-Rubai'I's propositions cannot be considered as legally imposable requirements because they go beyond the strict professionalism of mediation. Yet, one cannot but agree with Al-Rubai'I that mishandled mediation, although it may be still remunerated, will seem fraudulent.

2 Cf. the following description of the attitude required from practitioners of the intercultural communication: 'a lifelong commitment on their own professional development, a deep concern for the welfare of their clients, and ethical behaviour in all aspects of their work' (Paige and Martin 1996: 36). Arguably, the training programmes for intercultural workers should adequately address ethical issues.

This ethical side of the problem is especially important when intercultural mediation in a variety of its manifestations is viewed in the context of 'job enlargement' (Al-Rubai'I employs Richard W. Brislin's term, 2006: 174). Indeed, interpreters are often consulted as experts in both cultures. Obviously, vested with such responsibility on top of their interlinguistic and intercultural mediation, translators and interpreters gain even more importance for intersubjective communication. This additional importance makes ethical aspects more critical.

Where do we find a foothold to set off in quest of the 'lost paradise' of the translator's lifeworld-nurtured desire for ethically fulfilled intercultural mediation, based not only on impeccably professional instrumentalism but also on communicative action? Perhaps, phylogeny should reverse its move by looking at ontogeny again.

In the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity, Al-Rubai'I suggests sensitizing translators-to-be to both similarities and differences between cultures, starting with 'dissecting pre-interpreting knowledge' (2006: 179). This dissecting, however, aims only at helping trainees realize 'that their behaviour is culture-bound' (ibid.). I should like to emphasize that Al-Rubai'I looks for a foothold for trainees' professional development not in the denial of their pre-training experience and knowledge. We saw such a denial in the above-mentioned teaching model described in Franzon (2006). Yet, I suggest to go a step further: the pre-training knowledge and experience of trainees have not only a part which is to be rejected (their unprofessionalism as shown in Franzon 2006) or a part which is to be dissected (Al-Rubai'I 2006) but also a part to keep intact. This third part is the lifeworld part in the ontogeny of our students which they inherited from humankind's phylogeny.

The naïve literalism of trainee translators is deprecated as unprofessional indiscriminately: the aspect of communicative action in it (the desire to help interacting parties better understand each other), which might be praised and nurtured, is dismissed as extra-professional. As a result, translation is reduced to strategic action. Professionalization turns into *systematization* of the translator. Ontogeny is shaped after phylogeny. However, the realization that such professionalization is deficient has grown to the point where voices are being raised in favour of introducing ethics into

translator training on a fuller scale. One may conclude that perhaps the time has come for phylogeny to learn from ontogeny: trainers, as representatives of the translation profession, should distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' professionalism, between a trainee's 'good' and 'bad' amateurism; the way 'good' and 'bad' cholesterol is distinguished in medicine – one is kept, the other is gotten rid of.

VII Conclusion

In a nutshell, the functionalist approach to the study of the social involvements of translation, inspired by Luhman's social systems theory, would stop at the level of the politics of translation. The critical sociological approach to translation, based on Habermas, goes on to discuss how translation can (should?) contribute to the optimization of social interaction. Thus, one can distinguish the theory of translation as a systemic activity, translation as it is actually practiced 'warts and all', from translation theory at the level of ethics, where translation students consider the ethical values of translation as well as their own theory. Within the latter approach, one can observe the opposition of the Habermasian Lifeworld and the Luhmanian System in translation theory and practice. Translation as a systemic formation may be seen as colonizing translation as a Lifeworld structure, contributing to the optimization of social interaction on the one hand, yet obstructing it on the other. I exemplified the controversial relationship of the systemics of translation and its lifeworld with the translator training, where young translators are taught to conform to professional standards of translation as a profession. Yet, arguably, their intuitive desire for contributing to social consensus is worth keeping and fostering. To be sure, such controversy is also experienced by mature translators. They often find themselves between their honest attempts to help the interacting parties better understand each other, bring one to the other by rendering the source texts in a fashion that would make the other (the source) acceptable to the target audience.

Often this attempt entails creating texts with a pronounced 'otherness' in them. This, however, is not always welcome by representatives of the target society, editors, the readership for whom the text is translated, etc. My aim in the present article was not to suggest any solutions, but rather provide a theoretically grounded diagnosis. Understanding the problem, then, may help to solve it.

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FEARGUS DENMAN

Translation, Philosophy and Language: What Counts?

I Introduction: Defining Translation

George Steiner wrote, 'to understand is to decipher, to find significance is to translate ... In short, inside or between languages, human communication equals translation' (Steiner 1998: 49). In this essay I arrive at a position echoing Steiner, but advance a different argument. Steiner focuses on the hermeneutics of interlingual translation, proceeding from the assumption of a distinction between given languages. I dwell on the basic criterion for translation taking place, where differences of language are categorised as difference between languages. Whereas Steiner takes as a point of departure the truism that 'translation exists because men speak different languages' (Steiner 1998: 51), this essay notes that the challenges of translation are due as much to the nebulous nature of languages as such, as to the division between them. By definition, any effort at translation requires an acceptance of the division between sender and receiver languages, from which and into which translation should occur. But in the preparation for that work, and in doing it, we rightly suspend that assumption: the language from which translation must occur is not known from the outset, but recognised and reinvented in the interpretation of each text. I interrogate the disaggregation of a notion of language, read as an uncountable noun, into so many languages. This essay does not purport to resolve the challenges of translation, but rather to recast such difficulties as inevitably arise in practice. We may ultimately return to a conventional understanding of translation between two known languages; but only after an interruption.

There is practically no difference between paraphrase and translation, insofar as both entail restatement by use of other words. It is working with a plural number of languages which technically makes a translator. Perhaps, in the case of paraphrase, we expect that someone understanding a source text ought to understand its replacement likewise. But when a paraphrase is supposed to render a text's import more accessible, then it has the countenance of translation. A translator obliges us by putting unintelligible text into (a) language that we can understand. The difference is subtle, but it defines translation.

Even within English and on the scale of a single, simple sentence, there is always room for manoeuvre between interpretations. For example, Kwame Anthony Appiah says translation is 'an attempt to find ways of saying in one language something that means the same as what has been said in another' (1993: 808). One might choose from many formulations, but this one seeming, at least to the author, satisfactory, merits some reflection. Appiah's translator should look toward an equivalence of source and target texts with measured ambition, noting that it is not the accomplishment of this equivalence that marks translation, but its attempt. Moreover, one does not seek the one right way, but trusts in several possibilities. It is not a (pretended) repetition of what has been said, but rather the effort to say something that means the same. That might seem much the same thing, especially on a reading of the phrase, 'something that means the same' with 'meaning' as a stative verb, where meaning is matter of fact. But if meaning is a dynamic verb, then we will understand it to denote a process.

Our sense of (the term) 'meaning' is commonly abstracted from the verb at its root, and from its original event, a happening. If we are trying 'to say something that means the same', is this based on a transitive verb taking a direct object ('meaning the same thing'), or with a qualified intransitive verb (meaning identically)? On the latter reading, the sameness at issue is more a quality of the text's effect, an adverb rather than a fixed quantity. In Appiah's phrasing, 'a translation aims to produce a new text that matters

to one community the way another text matters to another' (1993: 816).[1] It is not a matter of saying the same thing, or of saying something with the same meaning; but of trying to say something new which, is meant to do the same meaning.

The reading of 'meaning the same' that contains 'the same meaning' involves meaning as 'the substance' of a text, where, the substantive gist may be imagined as a direct object, signified. This resonates with what has been called a 'conduit metaphor of language' in English. This metaphor, fund in a great number of idiomatic expressions, would seem to suggest that 'communication transfers thought processes somehow bodily' (Reddy 1993: 166). Getting one's message across, conveying sense, texts full of meaning, words seeming hollow, all of these depend on the assumption that meaning exists as an object, rather than an event. And this distinction, in turn is allied to into what Lawrence Venuti calls 'the simplistic notion of translation as an untroubled semantic transfer' (Venuti 2003: 258). But while paired languages broadly delimit a task of translation, as Appiah notes 'what we translate are utterances, things made with words by men and women, with voice or pen or keyboard' (Appiah 1993: 809). The stark emphasis on technology in this description reminds us that one has to work with artefacts as much as ideas.

II Difference All The Way Down: Conceiving of Languages

Venuti identifies with 'the philosophical project of concept formation' (Venuti 1998: 122). His adaptation of the original phrasing from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari directs the translator to an appropriate emphasis within philosophy as the 'art of forming, inventing and fabricating concepts'

1 This discussion parallels Stanley Fish's (1980) substitution of the verb 'do' in the question 'what does a text mean?' The point here is simply that one need not change the word to find a different sense, though it does add emphasis.

(Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 2). Translation is initially responsive, an art of reinvention instead of innovation, or at least, more avowedly given to the former. It is in giving her sense of a text new form that a translator has especial responsibility. The innovated form is not expected to be unrecognizable, but properly appears within the guise of another language. And between removal from a source to reorientation within another, translation depends on the differentiation and the specification of languages. This is a philosophical moment worthy of some reflection: our (formation of the) concept of a language.

Among the most influential contributors to the formation of this concept has been Noam Chomsky, who famously defined '*a* language' as 'a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length' (Chomsky 2002: 13). This is commonly cited as a definition of 'language' generally.[2] That subtle conflation is likely due to the character of Chomsky's treatment of language, which emphasizes universality over particular kind. But the distinction is significant, if not for investigation of some innate Universal Grammar, certainly in the understanding of languages' dispersal. One might concede to Steiner (1998: xv) 'the cardinal irrelevance of the Chomskyan project to poetics and hermeneutics', but the distinction between 'language' and 'a language' is fundamental to our concept of translation.

Citing Wilhelm von Humboldt's dictum that every language 'makes infinite use of finite means' Chomsky can claim that 'modern work in generative grammar is simply an attempt to give an explicit account of how these finite means are put to infinite use in particular languages and to discover the deeper properties that define "human language," in general' (Chomsky 2006: 113). Indeed, he does not hesitate to infer linguistic universals from the study of a single language, since that division is taken to be of no consequence (Chomsky, Piattelli-Palmarini, and Piaget 1980: 48).

Because of the prominence of Chomsky's contributions in recent decades, declaring an interest in the connection between language in general

2 For example, a search of the open web or within Google Scholar for 'a set (finite or infinite) of sentences' + 'Chomsky's definition of language' + 'of a language', shows twice as many instances of the former association.

and particular languages might seem akin to embracing his 'nativist' theories. A Chomskyan disposition is often viewed warily with regard to the humanities' conception of language which tends to embrace difference. But regardless of one's intuitive or informed estimation of Universal Grammar, those moments at which language is seen to subsist in discrete varieties lead us directly to the threshold of translation. The difficulty to which I would draw attention is not in the inference from one language to all, but rather the premise of beginning with one.[3] At issue is not whether or not natural language is variegated, as it clearly is, but in determining where one disregards variation to hold in view a unitary variety.

Whereas classical grammar and philology studied the range of languages and their interrelation, linguistics came of age as a specialist study of language in general, notably with Chomsky's part in the 'cognitive revolution' of the 1950s. Debate over (the theoretic value of) Universal Grammar continues unabated.[4] However, there is scant discussion of the anatomy of language's varieties in cognitive studies. From a generativist point of view, one would not attempt the delimitation of any single variety, assuming a deeper, common structure to be the object of inquiry. Non-generativists and typologists emphasize variation and diversity but focus on particular structures rather than the case for identifying a specific language. Nicholas Evans and Stephen Levinson foreground the inadequacy of empirical evidence in support of claims for linguistic universals, which is drawn from a comparatively small set of some fifty languages (2009: 436). They further insist that the diversity encountered in the hundreds of languages that have been formally documented contradict the universals that have been proposed. However, they do not make explicit a core issue. Querying what can be constant about the neural implementation of language processing when 'children learn languages of such different structure, indeed languages that

3 Chomsky began with this assumption for the purposes of his exploration, assuming 'intuitive knowledge of the grammatical sentences of English' available to both himself and the reader (Chomsky 2002: 13).

4 For extensive critique and debate, see Evans and Levinson 'The Myth of Language Universals: Language Diversity and its Importance for Cognitive Science' and responses, in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 32(5). 429–92.

vary in every possible dimension' implies that children acquire language in separate varieties (Evans and Levinson 2009: 431). More precisely, children learn vastly different structures of language – since language varies in every possible dimension – their use of which conforms more or less to the norms of the environment in which their linguistic capacities develop. The challenge to universal grammar stands alongside a challenge to the concept of all given language varieties. The stunning detail of linguistic diversity is not the number of languages which exist, but rather in the number of 'ways of saying' that have evolved.

The cognitive linguist George Lakoff offers an alternative conception of a language as: 'a collection of form-meaning pairs, where the meanings are concepts in a given conceptual system' (1987: 539). This begs the question as to the scale at which a conceptual system is postulated. What kind of community has the conceptual system in common and for how long, or does such a system endure even within a single individual's consciousness? We might posit the worldview of a culture at the level of ethnicity or nation as have some representations of strong Whorfian hypothesis (languages are a given and they shape their speakers' thought). Or instead, define a particular language in relation to abstract conceptual systems: the language of Marxism, say, or the language of Boolean algebra. Lakoff's meaning is closer to the former, but he disavows the assumption that conceptual systems are monolithic, such that they could impose a single, consistent worldview: 'people can have many ways within a single conceptual system and a single language of conceptualizing a domain' (Lakoff 1987: 317). Still this position sustains the identification of stable language varieties by association with cultures as they are conventionally reckoned. The translator is better served by a less conventional reckoning, because the work of translation entails dealing with language as it operates, not in abstraction. One so rarely encounters a language; it is always language which confronts us.

III How Languages Have Counted

The most common basis for languages' specification is by association with a given peoples' heritage and as an emblem of its identity. The interrelation between language and the categories of nation, ethnicity and culture does not depend on a single hierarchy. Nationalisms argue from cultural and linguistic bases to make a case for sovereign self determination; a particular language is identified as that which pertains to some set of people sharing a common heritage. The nation state formalizes the arrangement. It is not so much a matter of circular reasoning as a conceptual latticework, crystalline at room temperature but liable to melt under examination. By its logic, state flags stand for national languages. But, as the enormous number of unofficial languages scattered throughout the world attest, languages do not simply map onto bodies politic.

The typologies of comparative linguistics betray a similar, albeit moderated, bias toward (historic) political interests. Disputes around the recognition of different varieties of English, Bosnian-Serbian-Croatian and Moldovan/Moldavian *vis a vis* Romanian highlight the difficulties of resolving a language's proper status. Reducing the population of a language to smaller scale, linguistic anthropologists work with the speech community as a unit of analysis. Still, as Michael Silverstein (1996) notes, community is a 'gradient notion' and language based community doubly so: neither community membership nor speakership of a particular language constitutes a simple datum, as each implies both subjective apperception and inter-subjective accord. Generally, we stick to reckoning languages' number within reason, rarely having occasion to acknowledge or imagine more than maybe a hundred. Experts estimate 'somewhere between 5,000 and 8,000 distinct languages' in some 300 phylogenetic groupings, with about one hundred isolates – languages with no proven affiliation – existing today, and up to 500,000 languages having existed in the course of human history (Evans and Levinson 2009: 432). But if it were not for a practical interest in the production of formal models, one could have scant reason to cap the tally even there.

If language in general is taken to be our capacity to communicate, a language could be counted at any instance of communication. A translation, after all, is any example of translation. The difficulty with this analogy may lie in our accustomed understanding of translation as something that happens, whereas language is more commonly considered in terms of system. An event counts in the instance, but a system exists unto itself. But even conceiving language in terms of sets of sentences, one might count as a language any arbitrarily described subset. We take such license in colloquialisms that say 'they were speaking different languages' when people simply misunderstand each other. And this could be the sense in which Evans and Levinson marvel at the human brain's capacity to acquire 'such different languages' on a point of implementation of isolated syntactic structures (2009: 431). But one immediately inclines to imagine a more stable containing system.

The abstraction, by Ferdinand de Saussure among others, of *langue* (the implicit norms of a language) from *parole* (being language as it occurs) facilitated the study of linguistic structures on formal terms, which was key to the establishment of linguistic scholarship as a modern discipline. But the formal study of language in terms of structure is also related to what Nigel Love calls 'the fixed code concept' of language, according to which communicating involves the encryption and deciphering of content, while 'if this is what communicating is, then languages have to be fixed codes to enable communication to take place' (Love 2004: 529). Despite having said that 'to understand is to decipher', George Steiner would probably deny having intended a notion of fixed codes but this mode of expression evokes the same myth.

There are several schools of thought formally rejecting the fixed code concept of language. In Interactional Linguistics, one finds 'the concept of grammatical structures, not as a product of an abstract system but as "communicatively ... real events in time"' (Auer 1996: 59). From an anthropologist's vantage, reflecting on code-switching between French and English in Québec, Monica Heller concludes: 'once you look at patterns of practice, it is hard to keep your lens on putative language systems [...] the systematicity appears to be at least as much a function of historically rooted ideologies (of nation and ethnicity) and of the ordering practices of social life as of

language per se' (1988: 175). Love, on the other hand, is associated with Integrational Linguistics, which challenges the very tenet that languages are feasible objects of inquiry. Integrationists take their departure from interrogation of 'the language myth' according to which:

> Individuals are able to exchange their thoughts by means of words because – and insofar as – they have come to understand and to adhere to a fixed public plan for doing so.
> The plan is based on recurrent instantiation of invariant items belonging to a set known to all members of the community.
> These items are the 'sentences' of the community's language. They are invariant items in two respects: form and meaning ...
> Being invariant, sentences are context-free, and so proof against the vagaries of changing speakers, hearers and circumstances
>
> (Harris 2002: 2)

In recent decades, the ascendance of variationist sociolinguistics, pragmatics and functional grammars in the midst of language science has done much to dispel this myth. But it persists nonetheless and occasionally finds clear, uncritical expression.

IV The Possibility of Designing a Definitive Language

The language myth relates to both the acceptance of languages' circumscription as distinct varieties and also to hopes for the possibility of a single perfect language. Lojban is one of many artificially constructed languages that have been invented with a view to freeing the expression of thought from cultural bias and grammatical irregularities. It shares in a tradition going back through the seventeenth century to the *characteristica universalis* of Gottfried Leibniz, in the quest to create a perfectly logical language as a vernacular for philosophical discourse. Lojban is designed to be culturally neutral, with a completely regular grammar based on the principles of predicate logic and an unambiguous phonetic orthography, and it is supposed to

offer 'the full expressive capability of a natural language' (Logical Language Group [LLG] 2010). But the idea that such a language could match the expressive capability of a natural language is self-contradictory: deviation from the rule in a given context is often the very essence of a speaker's self expression. Nonetheless, it is claimed that Lojban can accommodate metaphor and ellipsis and that, as people come to use the language naturally they are expected they make it their own.

The designers of Lojban accept that the language should necessarily evolve through usage, but they betray adherence to a version of 'the language myth' in claiming that 'to the extent to which details of an artificial language is pre-defined, the internal structure of such a language is far better known than that of any natural language' (LLG 2010). The idea that a natural language could have an undiscovered internal structure analogous to that of an artificial language has no formal basis. The quest for a purely logical language of philosophy embodies the wish to turn language myth into reality. But an ideal language's logic must be corrupted in every moment of actual communication, even written. Such corruption is the stuff of poetry: 'we fill pre-existing forms and when/ we fill them, change them and are changed' (Bidart 1998: 231, 233).

Many have hoped that a purer philosophical language might bring speech closer to things as they really are. If one believes with Bertrand Russell that 'the essential thing about language is that it has meaning – i.e. that it is related to something other than itself, which is, in general, non-linguistic' (1995: 11), then it can be hoped that language's meaning might be made more transparent. On that basis, a logical language might make for an absolute science. But while meaning is paramount in language, the latter clause here needs revision. 'The essential thing about language is that it has meaning', stands. But that is to say, it is (intended to be) related to something other than itself by some conscious intelligence: 'language, when it means, is somebody talking to somebody else, even when that someone else is one's own inner addressee' (Holquist and Emerson 1981: xxi).

Verbs of meaning have the deceptive capacity to appear simply monotransitive. If we ask what X means, we expect an answer something like 'X means Y'. But verbs of meaning are essentially ditransitive, implicating some third party for whom their subject is meaningful. In the sentence

'X means Y (to Z)', even where the parenthesis is omitted, X only means Y to Z. Pressed to accept this, someone might insist Z can stand for all right-thinking persons, or at least some authoritative dictionary, deference to which is a hallmark of the speakers of the given language. But if one does not allow some Z in parenthesis, X really cannot mean anything. One need not then forsake the assumption that there exist ancillary, significant links between language and the non-linguistic. Led into essentialism here, we simply acknowledge a fundamental fact – the meaning – of meaning. In its barest objective reality, language does not relate. But insofar as its essence entails relation, that relation – its meaning – is all in a mind.

Expanding from the barest reality of language, at which level meaning disappears, we speak of discourse. Looking to 'language in its concrete living totality, and not language as the specific object of linguistics, something arrived at through a completely legitimate and necessary abstraction' (Bakhtin 1984: 181), one may approach from a somewhat more sympathetic vantage. From such a perspective, languages are not counted in set varieties, each with a standard set of normal or codified rules. Nor is language a transcendent phenomenon abstracted from so many discrete varieties. Language is the effectively infinite and endlessly anatomizable body of discourse: it is not impossible to count languages; just futile to attempt a tally. When it comes to interpretation, one entertains 'the actual reality of language/speech, is not the abstract system of linguistic norms, nor the isolated monologic utterance, nor the psychophysiological act of its implementation, but the social event of verbal interaction implemented in an utterance or utterances' (Voloshinov 1986: 94). Conceptions of language at the level of national variety or dialect are useful for describing language as a general property of some population or literature. But they are crude tools for interpreting language in the moment of speech, and inadequate to the practice of translation.

If seeing the 'actual reality' of language in 'the social event of verbal interaction' sounds like a basis for an unchecked speciation of languages at every instance of communication, one is reassured we have no need for a tally of languages' absolute number: we only count some language as a specific variety with regard to the context of its meaningfulness and of its specification. And this is not to say we derive an inventory of languages

matched against abstract conceptual systems, though we might yet speak of the language of Marxism, or indeed of Mikhail Bakhtin. Contexts of meaningfulness are as much about concrete social conditions as theoretic frame or content, and all these constrain the meaningfulness of any enumeration. Bakhtin understood linguistic discourse to be 'ideologically saturated', and he is among many authors to have noted the link between demarcating language boundaries and the cultivation of national consciousness. More broadly, though, he connected the aspiration toward a 'universal grammar' (as conceived by Leibniz) to those 'centripetal forces in sociolinguistic and ideological life' that have served the project of centralizing and unifying the European languages (Bakhtin 1981: 271). These ineluctable forces are the basis of all unitary languages' conception, whatever the labels applied.

V Unitary Languages at Every Level

Bakhtin is most celebrated for his attention to those forces opposing the centripetal, for their resistance to power and affirmation of marginal identities. However, Bakhtin is as emphatically clear on the point that 'every utterance participates in the "unitary language" (in its centripetal forces and tendencies)', even as he sets the utterance within a context of 'social and historical heteroglossia (the centrifugal, stratifying forces)' (Bakhtin 1981: 272). But, as this essay has argued, unitary language is not as simply reckoned as custom suggests. Indeed, I would amend the classic translation by Emerson and Holquist of this passage.

Bakhtin's text, translated by Holquist and Emerson above, here transliterated by the author, reads *'Kazhdoe vyskazyvanie prichastno "edinomu jazyku" (centrostremitel'nym silam i tendencijam) i odnovremenno social'nomu i istoricheskomu raznorechiju (centrobezhnym, rasslojajushhim silam)'* (Bakhtin 1975: 85). Not having articles, the Russian leaves nominal determination less marked than English, and the above passage can be read as saying 'every utterance is involved in ['a' or 'the' or nothing here] "unitary language" in ['its' or 'the' or again, perhaps, the target grammar undetermined] centripetal forces and tendencies' and, at the same time,

'in social and historical heteroglossia in [('the')] centrifugal, stratifying forces'. The definite article which Holquist and Emerson append to 'unitary language' and a possessive pronoun determining 'centripetal forces and tendencies' conspire to suggest a single, specific exemplar of unitary language contextualizing each utterance. What springs to mind are the centralized European languages to which Bakhtin alludes in a preceding passage: every utterance is involved in, one might say, some (one or other) known language. However, Bakhtin elaborates from that passage, here in Holquist and Emerson's own translation:

> [...] at any given moment of its evolution, language is stratified not only into linguistic dialects in the strict sense of the word (according to formal linguistic markers, especially phonetic), but also – and for us this is the essential point – into languages that are socio-ideological: languages of social groups, 'professional' and 'generic' languages, languages of generations and so forth.
>
> (Bakhtin 1981: 271–2)

Speaking of language in units such as English and Russian is often sensible and in any event indispensable. But language's meaning is neither encapsulated, nor engendered by named languages and their centres are not the points of meaning's coalescence. As the brief example above should suggest, it is possible to make sense of Russian text and attempt to find ways of saying something in English that means the same – but it demands subtler categories than those which come as standard.

VI Conclusion

George Steiner concludes *After Babel* with a concerned regard for the future. 'Global English' is cast as 'a principal agent in the destruction of natural linguistic diversity' threatening the world's many minor languages (Steiner 1998: 494). It is clear that the economic and cultural currents by which English has attained its present status threaten many varieties of language, posing a deleterious hazard to so many ways of saying evolved in human speech. But the natural diversity of language does not consist in

the number of languages that we count; it is in the great variety of ways of saying, although we measure it by standard units, this diversity of language is at every level, diffracting even monolingual discourse.

On a basic definition of translation as something that occurs between languages, there are three tenable positions in respect of the translator's task. From one position, we might deny that translation as such can or need ever occur, counting all language as a single phenomenon within which one moves ever remaining within. But this would be to ignore undeniable boundaries which constrain our communication. Secondly, we might insist that any proposition immediately implies translation, since language is perfectly plural, and discourse always dialogical, but this makes a nonsense of our actual communication and the supposition of shared understanding. A third stance, which accommodates but is not simply conventional practice, accepts the difference between languages not as a given, but as yet to be determined. When it comes to working through a text's translation though, the translator does not find her way by the set coordinates of standard language varieties. A shifting sense of the contexts informing an original composition and one's target readership properly shapes the product of a thoroughly complex process. Confronting the debates over values such as fidelity, transparency and even the sheer possibility of translation, philosophy should offer some consolation. While the task of the translator remains pervaded by points of contention, what counts most consistently is an attempt; the way one puts it is negotiable.

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Index

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