

World Literature and the Politics of Translation

An collection of quotations from secondary texts,
with comments (**in blue**) for class use

José María Pérez Fernández
Facultad de Traducción e Interpretación
Universidad de Granada

* This is a draft of a work in progress. Last update 12/03/17

Books discussed in this document

Emily Apter

Against World Literature. On the Politics of Untranslatability

London: Verso, 2013

Barbara Fuchs

The Poetics of Piracy. Emulating Spain in English Literature

Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

Barbara Fuchs, Larissa Brewer-García & Aaron J. Ilika, eds. & trans.
The Abencerraje and Ozmín and Daraja. *Two Sixteenth-Century Novellas From Spain*

Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

Belén Bistué

Collaborative Translation and Multi-Version Texts in Early Modern Europe

Farnham: Ashgate, 2013.

Barbara Cassin, ed.

Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon

[*Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles*. Paris: Seuil, 2004]

English translation edited by Emily Apter, Jacques Lezra and Michael Wood.

Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014.

There has been of late a renewed interest in the notion of World Literature, the ideological and political processes, the material infrastructure and the agents involved in the production, distribution and reception of the texts that gradually led to the eventual formation of the current multicultural international canon. This has run parallel to a redefinition of comparative literature, which has in turn brought about a reevaluation of the role played by translation in these complex processes of exchange.

Recent contributions in the field include Emily Apter's *The Translation Zone* (Princeton U.P., 2006) and *Against World Literature. On the Politics of Untranslatability* (London: Verso, 2013). These two volumes, together with the books published in the Princeton U.P. series Translation / Transnation—also coordinated by Apter—have redefined the field of comparative literature and translation studies under the light shed by a rich interdisciplinary approach. This has involved a fresh analysis of the sort of discursive exchange established between different communities—linguistic, political, religious, *inter alia*—and above all a critical account of how the global dominance of the English-speaking cultural policies and publishing corporations have come to determine the economic, editorial and academic dimensions of the current literary landscape.

In her book on collaborative translation and polyglot versions, Belén Bistué quotes a passage in *Don Quixote* where the man of La Mancha visits a printing shop. He is shown around, and surveys the different tasks required to produce a book. One of the men he meets is busy preparing the edition of a translation, which gives Don Quijote the opportunity to meditate out loud on the hidden virtues of the translator, and the complex nature of translation itself:

‘Osaré yo jurar que no es vuesa merced conocido en el mundo, enemigo siempre de premiar los floridos ingenios ni los loables trabajos. ¡Qué de habilidades hay perdidas por ahí! ¡Qué de ingenios arrinconados! ¡Qué de virtudes menospreciadas! Pero, con todo esto, me parece que el traducir de una lengua en otra, como no sea de las reinas de las lenguas, griega y latina, es como quien mira los tapices flamencos por el revés, que, aunque se ven las figuras, son llenas de hilos que las escurecen, y no se ven con la lisura y tez de la haz; y el traducir de lenguas fáciles, ni arguye ingenio ni elocución, como no le arguye el que traslada ni el que copia un papel de otro papel. Y no por esto quiero inferir que no sea loable este ejercicio del traducir; porque en otras cosas peores se podría ocupar el hombre, y que menos provecho le trujesen. Fuera desta cuenta van los dos famosos traductores: el uno el doctor Cristóbal de Figueroa, en su *Pastor Fido*, y el

otro, don Juan de Jáurigui, en su *Aminta*, donde felizmente ponen en duda cuál es la traducción o cuál el original.¹

Tobias Smollett translates this passage thus:

“I could almost swear you are hitherto unknown to the world, which is ever averse to remunerate flourishing genius, and works of merit. What talents are lost, what abilities obscured, and what virtues are undervalued in this degenerate age! Yet, nevertheless, a translation from one language to another, excepting always those sovereign tongues of the Greek and Latin, is, in my opinion, like the wrong side of Flemish tapestry, in which, tho’ we distinguish the figures, they are confused and obscured by ends and threads, without that smoothness and expression which the other side exhibits: and to translate from easy languages, argues neither genius nor elocution, nor any merit superior to that of transcribing from one paper to another; but from hence, I would not infer that translation is not a laudable exercise; for, a man may employ his time in a much worse and more unprofitable occupation. At any rate, my observation cannot affect our two famous translators doctor Christoval de Figueroa, in *Pastor Fido*, and Don Juan de Xaurigui in *Aminta*, two pieces they have so highly executed, as to render it doubtful which is the original and which the translation”²

Later on, the translator—whom the narrator refers to as ‘el autor’—informs Don Quijote that he is issuing the edition of the own translation at his own expense. He expects a profit of a thousand ducats with a print run of two thousand copies—both of them unusually large figures. The autor says that he is doing so because selling his text and rights to a publisher or a printer would only yield three *maravedís*, at most. He is also known to the world and famous, as an author, and only pursues profit with this translation—from an imaginary work in Tuscan—i.e. Italian—whose title is *Le bagatele*. The author also describes some of the tricks that publishers used to play upon authors and translators, such as surreptitiously printing more copies than those stipulated in the original contract.

Bistué uses this episode to illustrate the paradoxes and difficulties involved in translation—the notion of translation as a *res difficilis*, a difficult business, is a key concept in her volume, about which more below. The duplicitous irony in Don Quijote’s opinion about translation—not just in terms of its methodology and aesthetic results, but also as far as its material conditions are concerned—epitomizes a fundamental aspect of translation that has recently come to be the

¹ Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, II.62, ed. Alberto Blecua, Madrid: Austral, 2007, pp. 1246-47.

² Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*. Trans. Tobias Smollett (New York: The Modern Library, 2004, p. 1064; part II, book IV, chapter)

focus of scholarly attention. For of late translation and all its complex interdisciplinary dimensions has become a thriving field in literary and cultural studies—even, as Cassin demonstrates, in the field of philosophy.

The books quoted in this document deal with different aspects of the issues and questions raised by translation in its multiple dimensions—in different periods and different disciplines. In wielding the power to carry over and transform texts from one cultural milieu to another, translation itself as a subject of academic study has the power to become a proteic material of sorts, whose epistemological and methodological foundations are meld and transform into the texts and disciplines with which it is engaged.

Each of these volumes also pursue the political implications of translation practice. For if translation consists in the appropriation of all sorts of capital—linguistic, literary, cultural, or political—it then pervades critical historical moments, in particular those during which the balance of military, cultural and political power is undergoing dramatic transformations, or when it is suffering from the tensions that originate in geopolitical competition.

Thus Fuch's *The Poetics of Piracy* approaches Anglo-Spanish relations by using literary translation as an indicator of their evolution. She does so by examining significant cases of translation and appropriation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—when Spain was the dominant global power struggling to maintain this position in the face of ambitious up and coming new powers, such as England. She then traces the way in which the presence of Spanish literature—appropriated at a foundational moment in the English canon—has been occluded by historians of English literature, and successfully demonstrates that even today, when the global dominance of Anglo-American culture is thriving (thanks to the cultural and linguistic legacy of the British Empire), the mechanisms of literary and cultural production continue to obliterate the true nature of Spanish influence upon the English canon through literal and literary translation and also through the more manifold processes of cultural translation.

Apter's volume also approaches the global dominance of Anglo-American culture, in the editorial world and in academia, and challenges its principles and mechanisms—this is also one of the concerns in Barbara Cassin's dictionary, which has already elicited a variety of critical responses since its publication in French as *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies : Dictionnaire des intraduisibles* (Paris: Seuil, 2004). Note that in its English version the title and subtitle have been inverted, whereas the original French edition emphasised its nature as a

European philosophical lexicon, its English (North American) translation deletes Europe and highlights the question of untranslatability.³

Belén Bistué takes as her starting point the tradition of collaborative translation strategies that resulted in important medieval texts, in both literature and other disciplines, which combined—taking advantage of the rich polyglotism of the Medieval Mediterranean—the fruitful traditions of classical Antiquity (in particular Greek science), Hebrew and Arabic. In her view, this diversity of texts, sources, and collaborative translation techniques, as well as the linguistically diverse texts that they produced, managed to create a mostly neglected but nevertheless well-established tradition which continued in early modernity. Both medieval and renaissance readers were familiar with it. In spite of this, she claims, and starting with scholars like Brunetti and his *De interpretatione recta* (c. 1424-1426), the renaissance inaugurated a tradition of thinking about translation as a unitary linear process that obliterated the diversity of the techniques and strategies employed in it, and the multiplicity of agents involved in it. This went hand in hand with a tendency towards centralization, with the emergence of ever more powerful states and their bureaucratic machines, which used the new vernaculars, their cultural and literary traditions, as powerful elements for ironing out of difference.

The fifth book used in this document provides for English readers two short stories produced in early modern Castile which illustrate the persistence of cultural diversity within a political atmosphere and an official culture that aggressively sought unification and the accompanying obliteration of difference. For the two *morisco* novellas translated by Fuchs, Brewer-García and Ilika exemplify what Fuchs has described here and elsewhere as ‘literary maurophilia—the idealization of Moors in chivalric and romance texts’ (Fuchs et al. 2014, p. 1). This is a not very well known case of early orientalism, and therefore an interesting case of cultural translation / appropriation of the other from a position of hegemony which nevertheless also betrays the fascination and fear exerted by alterity upon the dominant culture.

In a previous issue of *Sendebarr* (n° 24, 2013, pp. 323-328) I reviewed a volume by David Belos (*Is That a Fish in Your Ear? The Amazing Adventure of Translation*, London: Penguin, 2012), which praised the powers of translation in bringing together of communities, providing a thread that could create a common path towards intelligibility and sustain domestic and international communities of all kinds. The present document culls texts from several volumes which, each in its own way, and within its own chronological and thematic scope, also focus

³ The English edition includes new entries: “with new contributions from Judith Butler, Daniel Heller-Roazen, Ben Kafka, Kevin McLaughlin, Kenneth Reinhard, Stella Sandford, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Jane Tylus, Anthony Vidler, Susan Wolfson, Robert J. C. Young, and many more” (<http://press.princeton.edu/titles/10097.html> accessed on 12 September 2014)

on the obstacles or difficulties encountered in translation, or in the diversity that underlies the policies of translation as unification. They lift the carpet, or as it were, look behind the tapestry to display its fragmented threads and the diversity of agents, components and strategies that go into the creation of the illusion of a unitary text or culture.

Emily Apter does confront Bellos—within the context of her own comprehensive survey of translation and its relevance within the field of literary and cultural studies as well as philosophy. This provides an interesting example of the contrast between the actual practice of translation—as conducted by Bellos, a successful and award-winning translator himself—and those devoted to critical and philosophical speculation on its import:

“It may seem counter-intuitive to argue for untranslatability in the era of a translational turn. Certainly there are critics who consider such a move to be unconvincing, if not downright folly. In his *Is That a Fish in Your Ear? Translation and the Meaning of Everything* (2011), the critic and accomplished translator David Bellos insists that nothing is *untranslatable*. ‘The circulation of novels,’ he writes,

among all the vehicular languages of the world and their incontestable conversations with one another demonstrate without a shadow of doubt that style does survive translation... In sum, the widespread notion that style is untranslatable is just a variant of the folkish nostrum that a translation is no substitute for the original.

Bellos treats the idea that certain contents are ineffable or ungraspable with similar skepticism, arguing with clever reverse logic, that ‘the ineffable is [not] a problem for translation, but translation is one big problem for the ineffable.’ Here, he is positioning himself contra Jerrold Katz’s Wittgensteinian *axiom of ineffability* (which states that ‘What cannot be expressed in any human language... lies outside the boundaries of translation and... outside the field of language too’). **For Bellos, ‘One of the truths that translation teaches us—is that everything is effable.’ →→→ In this sense, the view that everything is effable implies a faith in the limitless capabilities of rationalism to appropriate (aligned with what Heidegger would insist is the capacity to turn the earth into a world) ←←←.** Such a categorical statement about the conditions of optimal cognizability does not in itself necessarily offer a disproof of linguistic ineffability or untranslatability. It would seem that Bellos’ opposition to untranslatability is guided by his role as a professional translator having to overcome difficult hurdles.” (Apter 2013 p. 19)

“Thus a joke visiting card signed ‘Adolph Hitler—Fourreur,’ encountered in a shop by a character from Perec’s novel *Life: A User’s Manual*, is translated by Bellos as ‘Adolf Hitler—German Lieder.’ The match here works off the French term for ‘furrier,’ homonymically close to a French pronunciation of *führe* (leader), and the German word for ‘songs’ (*lieder*), whose English pronunciation sound out the English ‘leader.’ Bellos comments: ‘It may well be not the only or the best possible translation of Perec’s joke visiting card, but it matches well enough in the dimensions that matter... It doesn’t preserve all dimensions of the original—what ever does?—but matches enough of them, in my honest but not very humble opinion, to count as a satisfactory translation of a self-referring, metalinguistic, and interlingual joke’ [NOTE 17 to p. 20: David Bellos, *Is That a Fish in Your Ear? Translation and the Meaning of Everything*, USA: Penguin Books, 2011, 290, 152, 153 and 279]. While this maximal translation may be justified under the special constraints imposed by humor, **in dismissing the untranslated as a ‘dimension that does not matter’, Bellos leaves hanging the question of what matters.**” (Apter 2013 pp. 19-20)

Emily Apter's volume (*Against World Literature*, 2013) and the large range of critical and philosophical opinions that it surveys constitutes a useful and illuminating counterpoint to the pragmatically optimistic epistemology of practicing translators like Bellos. It also provides a sobering approach to counter the enthusiasm aroused by the relatively new discipline of **World Literature**. Like international relations and diplomacy—within one of the many spheres in which the discourses that constitute them circulate—translation also oscillates between universalist, even utopian, claims, on the one hand, and on the other its dialectical counterpoint, the emphasis on the essential difference from the other. The opening pages in Apter's volume provide an interesting, and important, survey of the history of the young discipline of World Studies, and its relation to translation studies. It also includes a discussion of important questions of philosophy and political issues as they relate to these two disciplines.

Taking as her starting point recent developments in World Literature, which she surveys in her opening pages, and above all, taking her major cue from Barbara Cassin's *Dictionary of Untranslatables*—originally published in French and recently published in an English translation supervised and edited by Apter herself, alongside other important scholars from within the field of Comparative Literature (recently rebranded as 'World Literature'), and translation studies, like Jacques Lezra, and Michael Wood, Apter embarks on a sort of reprise of the major issues raised by Cassin's large volume. The concept of untranslatability appeals to the *aporias* that lie so close to the epistemology and rhetoric of continental philosophy, above all French intellectuals and post-structuralist *philosophes*. Following up on the universal and radically comprehensive reach of Cassin's original compilation—which has been described, not without irony, by some of its reviewers as Borgesian in its design and nature⁴—Apter's book aims to examine the relevance of the concept of **untranslatability** in all its different dimensions, starting with its application as a new cornerstone for the field of comparative literature, and beyond this to question traditional assumptions in the field of literary studies and literary history. In this respect, we could say that World Literature and *untranslatability* is the cultural, literary and academic counterpart of the changing world in which we live, where geopolitics are being redrawn, where population movements are

⁴ "The *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, newly translated from the French original, wears its modest megalomania well. An 11-year project involving some 150 contributors and comprising more than 400 entries, the *Dictionary* suggests comparison with Volume XI of the First Encyclopedia of Tlön, described by Borges as 'a vast and systemic fragment of the entire history of an unknown planet.' The planet in question here is what we usually call 'continental philosophy.' . . . [A] heady universe of speculative thinking about the meaning of life, the history of ideas, the fate of mankind, and so on. . . . [T]he *Dictionary* is revealing for the way it sketches, lexically, a set of parallel but alternate intellectual traditions. What language teachers call 'false friends' are everywhere, inspiring a constant alertness to nuance. . . . Scrupulous and difficult, it's everything that the Internet, which wants everything to talk 'frictionlessly' with everything else, is not. No dreams of universal translation here—enjoy the friction. Use it for bibliomancy, the lost art of divination by book (with scripture or Virgil or Homer or Hafiz)." —Ross Perlin, *New Inquiry* (<http://thenewinquiry.com/essays/philosophers-of-babel-2/> accessed on 12 September 2014)

changing the social landscape of traditional societies, and mass media are bringing about cultural, political and even anthropological changes of unprecedented dimensions.

From the *aporia* of untranslatability—which lies close to the concept of translation as heuristics—Apter takes her reader on a comprehensive and vast survey that seeks to “**activate untranslatability as a theoretical fulcrum of comparative literature with bearing on approaches to world literatures, literary world systems and literary history, the politics of periodization, the translation of philosophy and theory, the relation between sovereign and linguistic borders at the checkpoint, the bounds of non-secular proscription and cultural sanction, free versus privatized authorial property, the poetics of translational difference, as well as ethical, cosmological and theological dimensions of worldliness.**” (Apter 2013 pp. 3-4).

‘World Literature, as a disciplinary rallying point of literary criticism and the academic humanities, became increasingly prominent from the mid-1990s on. Between 1991 and 1997, under the editorial stewardship of Djelal Kadir, the journal *World Literature Today* cast World Literature as a hosting ground to literary postcolonialism. Pascale Casanova’s watershed book *La République mondiale des lettres* sparked renewed interest in World Literature in France after it appeared in 1999 despite an opening salvo that sounded anxieties over whether it was even legitimate to speak of World Literature. In its second life in English as *The World Republic of Letters*... the book became a flashpoint in literary and cultural studies, especially with respect to allegations that it preserved a Eurocentric (and more specifically Francocentric) perspective in its reliance on the metropole-periphery distinction and Europe-generated criteria of cultural legitimation. *Debating World Literature*, a collection of essays edited by Christopher Prendergast in 2004, assessed the impact of Casanova’s book as well as Franco Moretti’s influential essay ‘Conjectures on World Literature’ (2000) as it set out to rescue the ‘literature’ half of the World Literature configuration from the de-aestheticizing jaws of globalization. A conference held at Istanbul Bilgi University in December 2008 titled ‘World Literature in Between’, which kicked off with a conversation between David Damrosch and the Nobel Prize-winning Turkish author Orhan Pamuk, served as a prelude to the launch of The Institute of World Literature, spearheaded by David Damrosch at Harvard University. The Institute held its inaugural session at Peking University, Beijing in 2011 and on the same occasion marked The First Congress of the World Literature Association with a special focus on ‘The Rise of World Literatures.’ As anthologies, volumes of **critical essays and specialized studies with a world literary focus** propagate—**some emphasizing networks and systems oriented around Marx’s hypothetical of a literary International, others emphasizing a Goethean lineage adjusted to an era of global finance capital**—the disciplinary construct that is here designated with upper case has secured its foothold in both the university institution and mainstream publishing. It stands in contrast to lowercase ‘world literature’, which may be considered a descriptive catch-all for the sum of all forms of literary expression in all the world’s languages’ (Apter 2013 pp. 1-2)

‘A primary argument of this book is that many recent efforts to revive World Literature rely on a translatability assumption. As a result, incommensurability and what has been called the Untranslatable are insufficiently built into the literary heuristic. Drawing on philosophies of translation developed by Jacques Derrida, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Samuel Weber, Barbara Johnson, Abdelfattah Kilito and Édouard Glissant, as well as on the way in which the Untranslatable is given substance in the context of Barbara Cassin’s *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles* (whose English translation I supervised with co-editors Jacques Lezra and Michael Wood), the aim is **to activate untranslatability as a theoretical fulcrum of comparative literature with bearing on approaches to world literatures, literary world systems and literary history,**

the politics of periodization, the translation of philosophy and theory, the relation between sovereign and linguistic borders at the checkpoint, the bounds of non-secular proscription and cultural sanction, free versus privatized authorial property, the poetics of translational difference, as well as ethical, cosmological and theological dimensions of worldliness. Though the book is divided into chapters, it is conceived as a long essay in which the problematics unfold with reference to a central thesis about the interest of **an approach to literary comparatism that recognizes the importance of non-translation, mistranslation, incomparability and untranslatability.**' (Apter 2013 pp. 3-4)

'Translation studies' particular appeal derived from its ability to respond to a planetary remit without sacrificing engagement with the world's languages. The number of publications, books, book series, articles in journals about, and journals devoted to the practices and theory of translation spiked from 2000-2012, attesting to the combination of excitement and disaggregation characteristic of the emerging discipline. **Translation studies gained traction in the humanities because it was interdisciplinary without diluting a disciplinary formation in comparative literature. It drew on the tradition of *translatio studii* in Renaissance humanism (so important to comparative literature's foundation as a discipline), reworking it for a contemporary global education.** Among the substantive issues that transferred most obviously from early periods to the present, I would mention **knowledge transmission; philosophies of 'world,' 'humanity' and 'human rights'; the idea of a 'classic'; aesthetic judgment and its critique; vernacularization and linguistic ethnocentrism in tension with cosmopolitan culture.** Such topics go to the heart of what is of direct concern to graduate students preparing to teach subjects in the humanities at a difficult juncture in the economy of education. As teachers in training, graduate students have an obvious stake not only in acquiring pedagogies (competence in the translation *practicum* and the related subfield of translation theory), they also need to identify problems and topics that clearly communicate why the humanities matter in contemporary society. Translation remains one of those areas that relates to a larger public without sacrificing intellectual nuance. **It is also the kind of paradigm—the translational humanities—whose global relevance has just begun to be understood in relation to public policy, legal theories of authorship and intellectual property, and international security, and whose implications as a language technology for media theory ask to be more fully explored.**' (Apter 2013, pp. 4-5)

Apter explores translation, World Literature (as a new discipline and critical category), global markets, and the expansion of 'Globish' (including the post-national situation of the international literary markets) and how the push for a French version of World Literature naturally relies, as its Angloamerican counterpart does, on colonial postulates and cultural power struggles (which have prompted the proposal of alternative terms and concepts such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivek's 'planetary'). In one of her chapters Apter denounces the commercial, homogenizing ethos that drives the creation of a new discipline in academia, i.e. that of World Literature (with its competing, French counterpart in *Littérature mondiale*) which runs parallel with the development of a global editorial market facilitated by the new material conditions for the production and distribution of literary markets (where frequently novels, for instance, are written with an eye on their easy translatability into other languages, and the use of plots, characters and conventions that can similarly appeal to a translational audience). She then embarks on the philosophical deconstruction of the

concept of ‘World / Monde / Welt’, to expose the underlying ideologies that lurk underneath this particular untranslatable

‘The appellation World Literature in institutional academia abolishes the ontologically objectionable “us-them” dichotomy between national and “foreign” language departments. Global literary markets generate new consumers of literature with tastes, interests, and cultural literacies no longer satisfied by writing authored by or aimed principally at *les français de France* [or in the case of Angloamerican literature, merely to those two markets, but a global, Globish speaking market, even beyond the boundaries of the former British Empire, towards countries where English is not the language of the former colonial power, but the international lingua franca]... **World Literature is suited to an era in which the electronic dissemination of information, even in countries with restricted Internet and Web access, has transformed the economics of literary distribution and editorial gatekeeping.**’ (Apter 2013 p. 176)

‘Any French version of World Literature respectful of the Goethean / Auerbachian heritage in the humanities will perpetuate Eurocentric humanist universalism as well as a static lexicon of style, periodization, and genre defined largely by Western classics. ... World Literature inadequately takes stock of the impact of colonialism and decolonization on literary history. *Littérature-monde*, like World Literature paradigms in general, either reinforces old national, regional, and ethnic literary alignments or projects a denationalized planetary screen that ignores the deep structures of national belonging and economic interest contouring the international culture industry. World literature remains oblivious to the systematic critique of globalized literary studies contained in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s concept of “planetarity” (in *Death of a Discipline*). In their rush to franchise “global” campus outposts all over the world, universities seize on World Literature as a catch-all rubric for flimsy programs in the humanities that ignore rather than deepen local knowledge’ (Apter 2013 p. 177)

‘... *litt-monde* partisans and detractors alike assume translatability as both a given and heuristic good, thereby devaluing the importance of non-translation and untranslatability for the politics of cultural relationality. And second, the term “world” in *littérature-monde* remains curiously under-theorized as a reserve of philosophical untranslatability and conceptual density... More emphasis on how philosophy has defined “monde” would contribute theoretical substance to the paradigm of *littérature-monde* and nuance debates around world literatures in every language’ (Apter 2013 p. 178)

Apter on translation, intellectual property rights, and national canons

‘Building on Derrida’s articulation of linguistic disappropriation in *Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of Origin* (“I speak only one language and it is not my own”), I conjecture that one reason why literary studies falls short as anti-capitalist critique is because it insufficiently questions what it means to “have” a literature or to lay claim to aesthetic property. Literary communities are gated: according to Western law and international statute, authors *have* texts, publishers *have* a universal right to translate (as long as they pay), and nations *own* literary patrimony as cultural inheritance. →→→ Translation, seen as authorized plagiarism, emerges as a form of creative property that belongs fully to no one. As a model of deowned literature, it stands against the swell of corporate privatization in the arts, with its awards given to individual genius and bias against collective authorship. A translational author—shorn of a singular signature—is the natural complement, in my view, to World Literature understood as an experiment in national sublation that signs itself as collective, terrestrial property.’ (Apter 2013 p. 15)

World Literature and its new cartography vis à vis (or built upon) ‘a combative arena of competing literary nationalisms’. This can be compared, and amplified, through Jean-Luc Nancy’s work: at a time when globalization lies at the centre of controversies, proposals and counter-proposals that seek to redefine our highly / densely communicated world in a non-imperialist, non Euro-centric, non Western, manner or mode, a study of how translation contributed to bring Europe (or the concept thereof) into existence as the forerunner of the Enlightened universalism and the mercantile ethos that underlies current concepts of World Literature and its accompanying cultural, political and economic globalization and homogenization, is a pressing necessity.

The French *mondialisation* as a positive, expansive and creative process vs. the English *globalization*, which flattens, homogenizes and annihilates differences (and creativity, one would add) into a mercantilist totality where everything has already been translated. In contrast, *mondialisation* (its proponents claim) preserves some of the untranslatable components, which turn it into a more original process, also more respectful of differences. At a certain level this reads like a culture war, a competition for global cultural supremacy, in which French theory and philosophy casts itself as the positive ideology or discourse that respects difference and humanity (‘the expanse of the world of human beings, cultures and nations’), as opposed to mercantile Anglo-American globalization, dominated by the free circulation of goods, capital and currency, creating a totality where difference has been demolished under the weight of the dominant discourse (which has spread all over the globe by virtue of international financial markets, and the political and military power of the British Empire, first, and then the American position as dominant world power during the post WWII period). Under *Globish*, all difference, all identities have been translated into a homogeneous ‘enclosure in the undifferentiated sphere of a unitotality’. Naturally, *mondialisation* and its champions see themselves as standing upon the moral high ground, not only because they respect and contribute to preserve difference, but also because they do so within a perspective that is respectful of the environment. Apter concludes this chapter with a paragraph that lists the proliferating alternatives to evil *Globish* and globalization.

‘For some literary critics, the worlds of literature are mapped in a combative arena of competing literary nationalisms (Pascale Casanova) and emergent literary world-systems... For others, the worlds of literature are thinkable as data systems based on quantitative indices of plot and style, as suggested by Franco Moretti.’ (Apter 2013 pp. 186-7)

Jean-Luc Nancy’s *The Creation of the World or Globalization...* brings to light the manifold differences between “globalization” (**the crushing uni-totally of the network society**) and *mondialisation* (a creative “world-forming”), not to mention the more subtle distinctions between the English “globalization” and the French *globalisation*. **Nancy casts the philosophy of world as a translation**

problem. Taking his cue from Cassin's *Vocabulaire*, he defers to the Untranslatable *mondialisation* in his preface to the English edition of the book:

It is not without paradox that in many languages the French term *mondialisation* is quite difficult to translate, and that perhaps this difficulty makes it almost “untranslatable” in the sense that the term has acquired in the recent *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies*. This difficulty lies in the fact that the English term *globalization* has already established itself in the areas of the world that use English for contemporary information exchange... **there has been in the English *globalization* the idea of an integrated totality, appearing for example with the “global village” of McLuhan, while *mondialisation* would rather evoke an expanding process throughout the expanse of the world of human beings, cultures, and nations.**

The usage of either term, or the search for an English translation that would keep the semantics of “world” are not without real theoretical interest: **the word *mondialisation*, by keeping the horizon of a “world” as a space of possible meaning for the whole of human relations (or as a space of possible significance) gives a different indication than that of an enclosure in the undifferentiated sphere of a unitotality. In reality, each of the terms carries with it an interpretation of the process, or a wager on its meaning and future. This also means that it is understandable that *mondialisation* preserves something untranslatable while *globalization* has already translated everything in a global idiom** [Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World*, trans. Jeffrey Librett, Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota P., 1997]

Mondialisation is summoned to offset the negative effects of globalization, itself cast as the philosophical equivalent of *Globish*.’ (Apter 2013 pp. 187-8)

‘Nancy projects a non-sovereign multiplicity of worlds that disavows the conventional alignment of planetary law with unequal territorial distribution: *cosmos / nomos*. Here, one could say, he approaches Peter Szendy’s “nomos of the sensible,” characterized by the aesthetic repartition of the world’s material forms. Finally, **Nancy’s philosophical wording asks to be read with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s notion of “planetarity,” set apart “from notions of the planetary, the planet, the earth, the world, the globe, globalization and the like in their common usage.”** Associated with “a species of alterity belonging to a system that we inhabit on loan,” **planetarity for Spivak refuses a custodial model of sustainability “that keeps geology safe for good imperialism” and “emphasizes capital’s social productivity but not its subalternizing tendency”** (Apter 2013 p. 189)

‘In these interrogations of the cosmopolitical, cosmological and philosophical dimensions of World, all wheels are turning and **no point of orientation is consistently privileged**. Philosophical world-making, another way of defining what world literatures do, is called out with different names—*mondialité* (Nancy), philosophizing in languages (Cassin), planetarity (Spivak), *toutmondialisme* (Glissant), *philosofictions* (Szendy). And these names emerge as heterocosms (alternative worlds accessible to all) that encourage reimagining what in the world the “world” in literature might be.’ (Apter 2013 pp. 189-90)

‘Homogenizing difference, flattening forms, and minimizing cultural untranslatability, these are familiar critiques leveled at World Literature. They constitute a significant aspect of what makes its “upscaling of the humanities at a global level” problematic. I have emphasized a related but rather different issue: the extent to which World Literature, like the world-class museum or art collection, affirms a psychopolitical structure of possessive collectivism normally associated with smaller-scale collectivities like the nation or some other politically affirmed form of community. Writ large, that is to say, scaled up to the proportions of World, possessive collectivism resembles “possessive individualism”, with its self-regarding notion of personhood (of “self” as self-ownership) and happy fit with neoliberalism.” (Apter 2013 pp. 328-9)

On the question of cultural appropriation / translation national, cultural and linguistic identity – the concept of POSSESSIVE COLLECTIVISM

‘Despite the tendency to think of World Literature as a politically abstracted meeting ground—the anthology or university course syllabus—where the languages and cultures of all peoples freely mix, in my view we should do more to frame world literatures as **a parlous collection of national canons each dedicated to “possessive collectivism”**. Rebecca Walkowitz used this expression to speak of the nation’s association “with permanent unique qualities such as a soul, a spirit, and personality”, and contrasts it with Benedict Anderson’s paradigm of “imagined communities”, which, she suggests, “associates the nation with the experience of simultaneity among people who never meet”. **Possessive collectivism points to an arena of translation theory that focuses on how communities treat language as a form of exclusive cultural property that entitles them to impose monolingualism, or a policy of other-language abstinence, on its speakers. Relevant here are studies in art and archaeology that focus on patrimonial claims to heritage.**’ (Apter 2013 p. 320) [Rebecca Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature* (forthcoming, Columbia U.P. Apter also cites Yasemin Yildiz, *Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual Condition*, New York, Fordham UP, 2012)]

‘Acquiring artefacts from conquered territories and piling them up in national museum collections enhances the possessive collectivism of imperially aggrandized nation-states.’ (Apter 2013 p. 322)

On the question of authorship and intellectual property rights, in relation to the complex issues raised by Shakespeare’s ‘lost play’, *Cardenio*, and its sources in Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*, its English translation by Shelton, *inter alia*, see also Fuchs 2013, pp. 115-119

‘I now turn to a very different version of Spanish materials in the hugely successful 2011 Royal Shakespeare Company version of *Cardenio*, “reimagined” by chief associate director Gregory Doran. Because of the RSC’s significant cultural authority and resources, this production carried enormous weight, in contrast with the minor productions of *Double Falshood* in London and New York earlier the same year. Much like the different versions of Spain on the English stage that I analyzed in Chapter 3, the RSC *Cardenio* makes it clear that **transnational appropriation involves not only questions of intellectual property but the reification and even fetishization of cultural difference**. On the one hand, the marketing for the production has prominently featured Shakespeare, playing on the notion of the missing play restored to the fold. Under the headline “*Cardenio*: Shakespeare’s Lost Play Reimagined,” the RSC website taunts the potential viewer and the Shakespeare aficionado: “Think you’ve seen every Shakespeare play? Think again. Join us on a journey to 16th century Spain as RSC Chief Associate Director Gregory Doran re-imagines Shakespeare’s ‘lost play’ *Cardenio*.” Yet, on the other hand, Doran and the RSC have been playful and even exaggeratedly transparent about their sources, making much of the play’s complex genealogy and emphasizing their return of the play to Spain.’ (Fuchs 2013 pp. 115-16)

‘The published *Cardenio* typescript problematizes the question of authorship from cover to cover. The spine shows no author and the cover reads *Cardenio: Shakespeare’s “Lost Play” Reimagined*, information repeated on the primary title page. A few pages later, however, there is a second title page, which amply makes up for the first’s lack of an author by supplying multitudes...’ (Fuchs 2013 p. 116)

‘This playful, even performative version of authorship is genially inclusive—everyone from the translator Shelton to the “conceivable adapter” Davenant gets a nod. The second title page recognizes quite openly not only the complex mechanisms of textual transmission for early modern theatrical texts but also **the fact of collective authorship in the context of production**. The tongue-in-cheek emphasis on possibility and probability, eschewing the proper authority of a title page, bespeaks a sophisticated recognition, in the light of the most up-to-date criticism, that **what we call a “Shakespeare play” is a highly artificial and constructed product**. At the same time, the repeated inverted commas around “lost play” suggest a further instability: is the lost play only purportedly “lost” because there is no such thing, or because it has been abundantly found, by the long laundry list of contributors to *Cardenio* cited above?

But even this is not the last word on authorship: before the back cover, a copyright page duly notes “Gregory Doran with Antonio Álamo” to be the copyright holders for “this adaptation of *Cardenio*.” Yet what exactly is held in copyright, given that no text of *Cardenio* exists? The text before us most closely approximates Theobald’s *Double Falshood*. The well-populated second title page for the RSC *Cardenio* now appears in an entirely different light, as the generous multiplication of author-figures contextualizes the appropriation by Doran and his Spanish collaborator of Theobald’s fully extant text... As Doran explains, he had long been interested in the “potential” of *Double Falshood* but had found “that the plotting (particularly at the beginning) was convoluted and it was missing several scenes.” The breakthrough comes when Doran realizes that those missing scenes “might be reimagined from the very same source material that Shakespeare and Fletcher must have used,” and takes on a Spanish collaborator in the playwright and novelist Antonio Álamo.” (Fuchs 2013 p. 117)

‘The RSC’s “reimagined” *Cardenio* works in two directions. On the one hand, it makes strategic, surgical additions to Theobald’s text, driven by the dramatic exigencies of staging and production. On the other, it restores an earlier nomenclature as part of an effort at authenticity, in Doran’s own return *ad fontes*. Together, the two moves tend to obscure Theobald’s text, driven by the dramatic exigencies of staging and production. On the other, it restores an earlier nomenclature as part of an effort at authenticity, in Doran’s own return *ad fontes*. Together, the two moves tend to obscure Theobald’s text as the material that is actually being played in these performances. **Given the many layers to Theobald’s own confection, and the enduring critical debates over his authorship, any appropriation or marginalization of *Double Falshood* would seem par for the course, and yet it seems difficult to take this as a separate text, which is what the copyright page attempts to establish. Different regimes are at work here: “copyright” is too blunt an instrument to discern the scale and import of the authorial contributions by Doran and Álamo, yet the very authors who on their second title page recognize and showcase the limits to individual authorship cannot afford to relinquish the rights to their version, however slightly it adapts their immediate source. The exigencies of intellectual property become particularly pressing when the property in question so ably harnesses the cultural capital of both Shakespeare and Cervantes to become a valuable commodity, as the success of the production confirms.**’ (Fuchs 2013 pp. 118-19)

Apter 2013 also has a chapter on the subject of translation and intellectual property (“What Is Yours, Ours, and Mine”, Apter 2013, pp. 298-319). She describes an recent case, involving J.D. Salinger, which resembles very much

the case of Cervantes and Avellaneda (i.e. the appropriation of a literary character), and also the case with Shakespeare's Cardenio.

Apter explores quite deftly not only the legal issues raised by cases like these, but also how the legal debates and the sophisticated distinctions established by lawyers and courts somehow validates the claims of literary theory which were traditionally viewed as Byzantine-academic discussions with no relevance in the real world.

June 2, 2009: J.D. Salinger... files a suit in a Manhattan federal court to stop the publication, sale and advertisement of *60 Years Later: Coming Through the Rye*, a parodic *canular* written by a Swedish author going by the name of J.D. California. The suit affirms that "the Sequel infringes Salinger's copyright rights in both his novel and the character Holden Caulfield, who is the narrator and essence of that novel" (Apter 2013 pp. 298-99)

"The established and robust field of "law and literature" has a long history spanning the 1710 Statute of Anne, Benjamin Cardozo's 1925 essay, "Law and Literature", and the 1971 amendment of the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (unrecognized by U.S. Law), which affirms the *droit moral d'artistes* (moral rights of the author). As an academic specialization straddling legal studies and the humanities, "literature and law" traces back to James Boyd White's 1973 *The Legal Imagination*, a textbook designed to refine understanding of the language of law, its professional rhetoric, the imagination of the lawyer, the judicial opinion and the poem, and the legalistic versus literary approaches to language control. Nourished by a triennially published journal (*Literature and Law* published by the Cardozo Law School), the huge gamut of topics addressed includes inheritance law, music plagiarism, deception and art forgery, and the relationship between property and selfhood in the work of specific authors. Much of this field has been shaped by "eccentric" cases that parse the shifting, evolving, overlapping criteria applied to **fair use** (traditionally governed by a rule of access without permission for citations under four hundred words), **copyright** (which protects exact expression, not ideas); **plagiarism** (the non-transformative, derivative appropriation of "original" material); and **intellectual property title** (a vast catchall covering artistic work, ideas patents, discoveries, phrases, symbols, trade secrets, designs and trademarks). Cases involving the harsher treatment of satire than of parody by the courts (the former in its dependency on the original deemed to be harmful to the market of the original; the latter judged to be more of a product in its own right) are especially interesting not just because **they demonstrate how legal scholars must perform like literary critics in the application of hermeneutical techniques of close reading but also because they extend questions of ownership beyond authorship into matters of form, genre and expressive medium.**' (Apter 2013 pp. 299-300)

'... the legal field of property law comes ever closer to poststructuralist theory, with its long history of engagement with aesthetic appropriation, plagiarism, pseudo-translation, copyright, signature, and authorial possession' (Apter 2013 p. 302)

'Translation offers a particularly rich focus for discussions of **creative property and the limits of ownership** because it is a peculiar genre; one that, counter to Romantic values and myths of avant-garde originality, **exalts the art of the copy, flaunts its derivativeness, and proudly bears the lead weight of predication on literary antecedent** [NOTE 13 to p. 303: Jack Lynch reminds us that "it was only during the eighteenth century that 'originality' in the modern sense became an ideal". An important milestone is **Edward Young's *Conjectures Concerning Original Composition***, which appeared in London in 1759. There, Young celebrates novelty and attacks imitation: "*Originals* are, and ought to be, great Favourites, for they are great Benefactors; they extend the Republic of Letters, and add a new province to its dominion: *Imitators* only give us a sort of Duplicates of what we had, possibly much better, before" Good authors are original, bad authors copy, and copying is no better than "sordid theft". See Jack Lynch's "The Perfectly Acceptable Practice of Literary Theft: Plagiarism, Copyright, and the Eighteenth Century", in *Colonial Williamsburg: The Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* 24:4, Winter 2002-2003, 51-4]. In what is perhaps a unique case of art as authorized plagiarism or legal appropriation, **the translation is encouraged to pilfer the original with no risk of copyright infringement or**

allegations of forgery. It is granted this licence because **it implicitly claims to be of the original; that is to say, possessed of no autonomous textual identity.** Translation thus challenges legalistic norms of ownable intellectual property' (Apter 2013 p. 303)

Very interesting: authorial ownership, publishers, booksellers and censorship. Translation as labour (and therefore enjoying a different legal status, and also a different creative status too) – the labour invested by the translator in the translated text somehow makes it his or her own (if not totally at least partially)

'... translation throws into arrears the whole idea that authors of "originals" are the sole owners of their literary property.

Authorial ownership, even if it is considered without the benefit of Butler's heuristic, is a complex problem that has been approached in multiple ways by historians of book and print culture. Robert Darnton (*The Business of the Enlightenment*), Mark Rose (*Authors and Owners*), Meredith McGill (*American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting*), Jody Greene (*The Trouble with Ownership*), and Adrian Johns (*Piracy: The Intellectual Property Wars from Gutenberg to Gates*) are among those who have brought renewed focus to the shifting legal determinations of literary property, emphasizing how **in Britain and France it was only publishers or booksellers rather than authors who were held liable in cases involving literary censorship** [NOTE 15 to p. 304: In Britain, the Copyright Act of 1710 (often referred to as the Statute of Anne) invigorated an author's proprietary claim but made him or her more personally vulnerable to censorship charges.]... What about a translation? Where does it sit legally between publisher and author(s)? Who lays ultimate claim to it? As Jody Greene notes in *The Trouble with Authorship: Literary Property and Authorial Liability in England, 1660-1730*, the watershed case in England over author / publisher liability involved, interestingly enough, a translation. In *Burnet v. Chetwood*, the estate of the author George Burnet (author of a work on natural history and theology titled *Archaeologiae Philosophicae* that was published in Latin in 1692) filed for an injunction against William Chetwood, a representative of a group of English publishers who wanted to publish an English translation of the work. Greene observes:' (Apter 2013 p. 304)

"The first case brought on behalf of an author under the Copyright Act thus involved **the difficult question of whether a translation constitutes a new work or simply a version of an existing one.**

The booksellers argued in court that a translation 'may be called a different book, and the translator may be said to be the author.' On this textual argument, they grounded their case that the injunction against them should not be granted. The presiding judge, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Macclesfield, concurred with them, arguing that **'a translation might not be the same with the reprinting of the original, on account that the translator has bestowed his care and pains upon it.'** Macclesfield thus made **→→→ the Lockean argument that the translators had mixed their labor with the text in question and thus could be said at least in some degree to be the new work's proprietors ←←←**" [NOTE 16 to p. 305: Elizabeth Ladenson, *Dirt for Art's Sake: Books on Trial from Madame Bovary to Lolita*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007, 18; Greene, *The Trouble with Ownership*, 147]

(Apter 2013 p. 305)

Very interesting: on the concept of **World Literature**, its relation to Translation Studies, and the problems raised for a new, supposedly multicultural and global

discipline by the inbuilt typologies (genres, periods, etc.) of Western academia. Note how both Apter, and also Amir Mufti, emphasize the fact that the encounter between English and other Western languages, and also languages of the “global periphery”, took place well before “the re-arrangement of world literary space in philological work on classical languages of the East prior to Herder’s writings on language in the 1770’s”—here we must also take into account the important canonizing role played by Germany in the 18th and 19th centuries (for further details on this see André Berman’s *L’épreuve de l’étranger* (1984, translated into English as *The Experience of the Foreign*, 1992).

‘In France, the resurgence of engagement with World Literature had a lot to do with the impact of **Pascale Casanova’s *World Republic of Letters* (1999)**. The book projected a **new model of World Literature** by assailing the old universalist form. The author showed how France’s success in defining the World Literature canon in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries guaranteed its national prestige and its dominance as a geographic axis of cultural capital. **Casanova also underscored the role of translation in assigning national authors and literary works a place in the world literary system of publication, distribution and critical review** (despite failing to account for the “re-arrangement of world literary space in philological work on classical languages of the East prior to Herder’s writings on language in the 1770s,” as Amir Mufti has argued [NOTE 5 to p. 7: Mufti’s criticism of Casanova relies on “a rather obvious historical claim but one that has been rigorously present in a great deal of contemporary critical discussion, namely, that the deep encounter between English and the other Western languages and the languages of the global periphery as media of literary expression did not take place for the first time in the postcolonial era, let alone in the supposedly transnational transactions of the period of high globalization but, especially, at the dawn of the modern era itself and fundamentally transformed both cultural formations involved in the encounter.” See Amir Mufti, “Orientalism and the Institution of World Literatures,” *Critical Inquiry* 36, Spring 2010, 461]. **Though no utopian program of a retrofitted World Literature was explicitly promulgated, the book pointed implicitly in the direction of →→→ a galaxy of micro-mondes in translation ←←←, in which the role of hegemonic societies in the management and mediation of literature was curtailed.** More recent work in France, all of which bear Bourdieu’s imprint, focused on **the migration of ideas and the displacement and re-formation of intellectual networks** (Laurent Jeanpierre, Yves Chevrel) **the sociology of translation** (Gisèle Sapiro, Blaise Wilfert) and **the genealogy of *Weltliteratur* as a Goethean “situated universalism” with prophetic resonance for contemporary translation studies** (i.e. François Xavier Landrin’s “La sémantique historique de la *Weltliteratur*: genèse conceptuelle et usages savants”). **In 2012 Jérôme David’s *Spectres de Goethe. Les métamorphoses de la “littérature mondiale”*—a tour de force of critical ventriloquism in the manner of Goethe’s conversations with Johann Peter Eckermann—attested to *Weltliteratur*’s renewed piquancy as a literary paradigm.**’ (Apter 2013 pp. 6-7)

‘Both translation studies and World literature extended the promise of worldly criticism, politicized cosmopolitanism, comparability aesthetics galvanized by a deprovincialized Europe, an academically redistributed area studies and a redrawn map of language geopolitics. Partnered, they could deliver still more: **translation theory as *Weltliteratur*** would challenge flaccid globalisms that paid lip service to alterity while doing little more than to buttress neoliberal “big tent” syllabi taught in English.’ (Apter 2013 pp. 7-8)

‘Unfortunately, though, translation studies and World Literature, even in their renewed and best-intentioned guises, inevitably fell short of such objectives. Their institutional forms could not escape being too pluralistic, too ecumenical, insufficiently hard-line in the face of appropriation by universities seeking to justify the downsizing of national literature departments or the cutting of “foreign” language instruction...

Both fields, moreover, were unable to rework literary history through planetary cartographies and temporalities despite their recourse to world-systems theory. →→→ Shaped by classical genre theory, Renaissance humanism, Hegelian historical consciousness, Goethean

Weltliteratur, Diltheyan *Geistesgeschichte* and the Marxist ideal of an “International of Letters,” literary history has been beset by what Christopher Prendergast, following Arjun Appadurai, calls the “Eurochronology problem.” This is a problem arising from the fact that →→→ critical traditions and disciplines founded in the Western academy contain inbuilt typologies—“epic”, “classicism”, “Renaissance”, “realism”, “the avant-garde”, “the postmodern”—adduced from Western literary examples.’ (Apter 2013 p. 8)

Emily Apter’s interesting proposals for a new type of comparative literature and its relation to translation studies – the genealogy she establishes naturally mentions encyclopedism, the Kantian vision of perpetual peace, the world republic of letters, and the question of a transnational citizenship, *inter alia*. Apter also proposes a “translational model of comparative literature” (which she harnesses for the establishment of non-imperialist cartographies of planetary literatures)

‘World Literature is the blue-chip moniker; benefiting from its pedigree association with **Goethean *Weltliteratur***. World Literature evokes **the great comparatist tradition of encyclopedic mastery and scholarly ecumenicalism**. It is an encapsulating model of literary comparatism that, in promoting **an ethic of liberal inclusiveness** or the formal structures of cultural similitude, **often has the collateral effect of blunting political critique**. Then there is **“the world republic of letters,”** historically tied to a Francocentric republican ideal of universal excellence (“the literary Greenwich meridian” in Pascale Casanova’s ascription), and denoting world literature’s adjudicating power manifest in prize-conferring institutions of cultural legitimation. **“Cosmopolitanism,”** and its contemporary variant **“the cosmopolitical,”** both steeped in a **Kantian vision of perpetual peace through enlightened common culture, often act as code for an ethics of transnational citizenship, worldliness as the basis of secular criticism, and minoritarian humanism.** →→→ **“Planetarity”** would purge **“global”** of its **capitalist hubris, greening its economy and rendering it accountable to disempowered subjects.** “Literary World-Systems,” Braudelian and Wallersteinian in inspiration, rely on →→→ **networks of cultural circulation, literary markets and genre translation** ←←←. *Littérature-monde* is the banner term for a writers’ movement that refuses postcolonial sectorizations of the literary field (*francophonie* is denounced as “the last avatar of colonialism”). Here **decentralized polyphonic voices that are mondiale in address give rise to a concept of fluctuating, relational, unbordered language worlds.** I would add to this list “cities,” which treat metropolitan nexuses as metonyms of World. Despite its current seductiveness as a unit of analysis, cities remains vulnerable to the charge of depoliticization levied recently by a *New Left Review* editor: “City spaces are studied in abstraction from their national contexts” and “The wielders of economic power and social coercion remain anonymous.” Efforts to correct for unipolar logic that persists in each of these paradigms have yielded supplemental vocabularies for non-national blocs of culture: “the Global South,” “imagined communities,” “the Americas,” “the terraqueous globe,” “Bandoon,” “parastates,” “translingualism,” “diaspora,” “majimboism,” “silicon cities,” “circum-Atlantic,” “iles-refuges,” and so on. And though such terms add some measure of specificity and localism to networks that striate nation-states or ethnic borderlands, they are inconsistently and haphazardly entered into the lexicon of comparative literature. In this respect, they fail to answer fully the challenge of making comparative literature geopolitically case-sensitive and site-specific in ways that avoid reproducing neoimperialist cartographies.’ (Apter 2013 pp. 41-2)

‘**Comparative literature** is no more beset than other humanities fields by the constraints imposed by its historic subject fields (genres, periodizing frames, theoretical paradigms). But it faces the rigors of the globalist injunction with a heightened awareness of **the Babelian ironies of disciplinary self-naming**, and remains more vulnerable than national literatures to the charge of shorchanging non-

Western approaches because of its commitment to inclusiveness. It also rubs up against what Nirvana Tanoukhi identifies as a fundamental disciplinary paradox: **comparative literature’s “cartographic claim to scale” and a “poetics of distance” leading to “the task of charging zones, paths, and crossroads obscured by strict adherence to ‘national traditions’.**” This task is undercut by the fact that **“comparison depends for its existence on the entrenchment of nation-based geography.”** [NOTE 9 to p. 42: Nirvana Tanoukhi, “The Scale of World Literature,” in *Immanuel Wallerstein and the Problem of the World: System, Scale, Culture*, ed. David Palumbo-Liu, Bruce Robbins, and Nirvana Tanoukhi, Durham, NC: Duke University Press]’ (Apter 2013, p. 42)

‘A translational model of comparative literature goes some distance in answering such concerns and paradoxes. **Languages are inherently transnational and time sensitive. Their plurilingual composition embodies histories of language travel that do not necessarily reproduce imperial trajectories. They create small worlds of idiom and creative idiolect** that ford the divide, often imposed on postcolonial writers, between those deferring to the experimental modernity of the West (stream of consciousness, wordplay) and those adhering to a colonial realism informed by local custom, tradition, and the romance of political aspirations to national self-determination. **Language worlds that bleed out of dichotomized generic categories afford a planetary approach to literary history that responds to the dynamics of geopolitics without shying away from fractious border wars.** This **translational transnationalism** corresponds to a critical praxis capable of adjusting literary technics—interlinear translation, exegesis, gloss, close reading—to the exigencies of a contemporary language politics marked by:

- **language diasporas** that bolster transnational literary communities;
- the internationalization of (North) American literary studies with multilingualism from within;
- the critique of linguistic imperialism: specifically global English and the bipolar competition for language dominance between English and Mandarin Chinese;
- the ecology of endangered languages and the statistics of language extinction;
- the impact of accents, vernacular, code-switching, argot and diglossia within non-standard language use;
- **translation and war**—and the particular vulnerability of translators, stringers, and cultural interpreters to targeting;
- the conflation of anti-terror and anti-immigrant language politics (exemplified in language profiling and linguistic racism, or the merge of Arabophobia and Hispanophobia);
- and the critique of legislation aimed at shrinking language literacy, the self-defeating parochialism of English-only policies, and the blindness to the socioeconomic advantages of English Plus in the world economy.’ (Apter 2013 pp. 42-3)

On Eurochronology and periodicity: the Western canon vs the realities of **transgeneric texts**. One of Emily Apter’s greatest virtues is her comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach. Models for **translational literary history**

‘Shaped by **classical genre theory, Renaissance humanism, Hegelian historical consciousness, *Geistesgeschichte*, Goethean *Weltliteratur*, and the Marxist ideal of an “International of letters,”** literary history has been beset by what Christopher Prendergast, following Arjun Appadurai, calls the **“Eurochronology problem.”** This is a problem arising from the fact that **critical traditions and disciplines founded in the Western academy contain inbuilt typologies**—“epic,” “classicism,” “Renaissance,” “genre,” “world history”—adduced from Western literary examples [NOTE 1 to p. 57: Christopher Prendergast, “The World Republic of Letters,” in *Debating World Literature*, ed. C. Prendergast, New York: Verso, 2004, 6]. It is impossible, for instance, to disintricate the idea

of ancient Greece as the foundation of Western civilization. **Developmental narratives of literary history that structure the unfurling of national literary traditions privilege the works of canonical authors as peaks in a world-literary landscape. They tend to naturalize parameters of comparison that exclude certain kinds of cultural production from the realm of “art,” or assign the term art only to certain kinds of objects.**’ (Apter 2013 p. 57)

‘European literatures carry the prestige of print culture (heightened by a special claim on the modern novel), while non-European literatures, subject to Eurocentric standards of literariness and readability that class them closer to folklore and oral culture, tend to occupy a more tenuous position in World Literature. Clearly, **the nations that name the critical lexicon are the nations that dominate the classification of genres in literary history and the critical paradigms that prevail in literary world-systems.**’ (Apter 2013 p. 58)

‘Discrepant modernisms necessitate the conversion of conventional paradigms of literary history or incite the invention of new ones altogether. As already noted, in Western literary criticism, even when the purview is World Literature, Occidental genre categories invariably function as program settings. And when non-European literatures are addressed, they are often grouped under monolithic rubrics such as “Islam” or “Asia” (a tendency criticized by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in *Other Asias* [2008]). **Dipesh Chakrabarty has gone some distance to correct for Eurochronology in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000, new edition 2007).** He challenges emulative problematics in the study of non-Europe, and argues convincingly that, in the words of one reviewer, “Historical experience establishes that no country can be an unquestioned model to another country.” Avoiding the simplistic substitution of Asiaticity or Afrocentricity for Eurocentricity, which rests on a caricatural logic of divided world-systems and cultural Othering, Chakrabarty proposes translational approaches that negotiate among regionally marked concepts, practices and institutions in his 2007 preface.’ (Apter 2013 pp. 59-60)

‘A translational literary history would take its cue from Chakrabarty’s critique of European historicism as well as from Johannes Fabian’s 1983 classic *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*, which revealed the “denial of coevalness” in the historiography of comparative culture; from Edward Said’s practice of “contrapuntal reading,” on which basis, in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), the author argues for “reading with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history and of those subjected and concealed histories against which the dominant discourse acts”; and from Ania Loomba’s *Re-Orienting the English Renaissance* (2008), which contests the dominance of Western chronotopes in the early modern period.’ (Apter 2013 p. 60)

‘Kathleen Davis shows how “the Middle Ages” and “feudalism” operate as Untranslatables of periodicity within a larger politics of time. In *Periodization and Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism and Secularization Govern the Politics of Time*, Davis extracts the period monikers from their clichéd use as generic terms for the unmodern, and, as it were, re-translates them historically in relation to law, politics and religion.’ (Apter 2013 p. 62)

Apter also mentions:

- Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, eds. *Medieval Modern: Art Out of Time*
- Kathleen Davis and Nadia Altschul, eds. *Medievalisms in the Postcolonial World: The Idea of the “Middle Ages” outside Europe*

‘... literary history needs to open up to radical re-sequencing, through anachronic timelines, non-Eurochronic descriptions of duration, and a proliferation of new names for periods as yet unnamed, or which become discernible only as Untranslatables of periodicity’ (Apter 2013 p. 65)

Emily Apter's political stance – translation, untranslatability, and politics. Here, Apter's references to Tolstoi as an example of these issues / concepts, and how (in her somewhat overstretched point) aspects of *War and Peace* prefigure the international circulation of *The Communist Manifesto* in translation, we find one case in which questions of translation approximate utopianism. Apter (pp. 18-20) also contrasts her own stance on the relevance of untranslatability with Bellos' recent *Is That a Fish in Your Ear?* (2011). The proliferation of publications like Apter, Bellos, Lezra, and others testifies to the recent interest in this most interdisciplinary of fields, which branches out towards comparative literature, political discourse, linguistics, philosophy, and cultural studies, *inter alia*.

'*Against World Literature* is obviously not a "how-to" book for teaching world literature in translation. Nor is it a comprehensive census-taking of the field of World Literature with pretenses to regional coverage and equitable language distribution... If there is a scene of instruction in play, it is an oblique one, which is to say, **an array of loosely affiliated topoi—otherworldedness, literary world-systems, terrestrial humanism, checkpoints, theologies of translation, the translational interdiction, pedagogy, authorial deownership, possessive collectivism. These topoi—hardly exhaustive—provide so many ways of looking at how untranslatability plays out in literary studies. Hardly programmatic, they nonetheless imply →→→ a politics of literature critical of global literary management within corporate education ←←←.**' (Apter 2013 p. 16)

'*Against World Literature* tests the hypothesis that translation and untranslatability are constitutive of world forms of literature. Consider, for instance, how Tolstoy gained admission to the precinct of the "world novel" by opening *War and Peace* in French. This gambit may look paradoxical—to attain greatness as a Russian novelist, write in French!—but it confirms that one function of foreign languages is to certify the novel's non-provincialism; its bona fides as *Weltliteratur*...' (Apter 2013 p. 16)

'Tolstoy arguably trademarked the world novel as a chronicle of political instability and crisis by leaning heavily on untranslatability, whether in the guise of non-translated passages in French and German, Russian-inflected French, or unreliable translations of textual segments earmarked for translation in the notes.' (Apter 2013 p. 17)

'The "invasion" of French onto the territory of the Russian language in *War and Peace* reiterates the plot structure, which devolves around the Napoleonic incursion and its consequent shake-up of the old social order. **It may not be too great a stretch to say that Tolstoy's heteroglossic micro-society, with its subterranean revolutionary urges multilingually channeled, foreshadows *The Communist Manifesto* circulating the world over in multiple translations.** This idea of a translational International leads us to a free translation of World Literature as "screwed-up literature" based on a passage of *The Communist Manifesto*. Marx and Engels wrote:

In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, **universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property... and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature.**

Jonathan Arac notes:

So much of the business of this passage is condensed in the single word translated "intercourse": German *Verkehr*. A standard dictionary lists the meanings for this word in sequence as: **traffic, transportation, communication, commerce, intercourse** in its sexual as well as other senses, and **communion**. It is all but communism (in German

Kommunismus), for which Marx and Engels required recourse to Latin, rather than a Germanic, derivation, perhaps to signal the movement's internationalism. The related verb, *verkehren*, means to turn over, with the usual off-key sense carried by the prefix *ver-*, so to put it colloquially, to screw up. *Die verkehrte Welt* is the world turned upside down, which in the metahistory of Marx and Engels is just what the bourgeoisie does by means of its *Verkehr*.

Verkehrte Weltliteratur, or screwed-up literature, has precisely the right impertinent coding. For in standing the world on its head, it encourages the literatures of the world to mess with World Literature, turning it into a process of translating untranslatability. It beckons one to run the experiment of imagining what a literary studies contoured around untranslatability might be.' (Apter 2013 pp. 17-18)

Apter has to confront another defender of translatability, and this one she finds more difficult to deal with, since Alain Badiou is very much part of her post-structuralist, post-marxist stance. Here translation studies display their relevance for a history of philosophy—for instance, the case of Averroës's translations of Aristotle (or the controversies on the translation of Aristotle into Latin—see in this respect Richard Tuck's *Philosophy and Government 1572-1651*, in particular pp. 12-20). From this perspective, the history and the canon of Western philosophy, like the canon of Western literature, can be traced through maps of mistranslations and misreadings. Alain Badiou's concept of 'hypertranslation' (see below) deserves further study. For further details on how mistranslations have played an important role in the transmission of Aristotle, see also Apter 2013 pp. 32-33 (and also Etienne Balibar's entry on "Subject" in Cassin's *Vocabulaire*)

In addition to giving short shrift to temporality and periodization, translation studies and World Literature ignored problems more internal to their theoretical premises. With translation assumed to be a good thing *en soi*—under the assumption that it is a critical praxis enabling communication across languages, cultures, time periods and disciplines—the right to the Untranslatable was blindsided. In a parallel way, at its very core World Literature seemed oblivious to the Untranslatable—as shown by its unqueried inclusion of the word "world." **World was famously interrogated by Heidegger alongside "finitude" and "individuation" in his *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*.** It was defined as that which humans (as opposed to animals or stones) richly "have." In having World—that is to say, in having the capacity for World made possible by language and subjective accessibility—being become human. The concept of World, Heidegger affirms, "means the accessibility of beings as such rather than beings in themselves." Aside from the dichotomies of animal / human or living / non-living—they are juggernauts of critical theory at the current pass—the philosophization of World remains a fundamental problem demanding →→→ the rephilosophization of literary history through the history of translation. "The history of philosophy," as Abdelatif Kilito reminds us with reference to the historic importance of Averroës's translation and exegesis of Aristotle, "is at its core the history of translation."

[NOTE 6 to p. 9: Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker, Bloomington: Indiana U. P., 1995, 280 (original German text: *Grundbegriffe der metaphysik: Welt-Endlichkeit-Eisamkeit*); Abdelatif Kilito, introduction to *De la traduction*, by Abdessalam Benabdelali, trans. (from Arabic) Kamal Toumi, Morocco: Editions Toukbal, 2006, 9] **The expression "history of translation" from my perspective implies a decided emphasis on when and where translation happens, and, especially, on how and why it fails.'** (Apter 2013, pp. 8-9)

‘Alain Badiou’s opposition to philosophical untranslatability proves harder to contend with, coming as it does from a philosopher recently turned translator whose ideas have been much with me during the course of writing this book. Badiou’s “hypertranslation” of Plato’s *Republic* (*La République de Platon*, 2012) is a true adventure in philosophy. He theatricalizes the mise-en-scène of Platonic discourse (in a cross between Brecht and Beckett). He introduces French slang and he takes liberties with Plato’s content to the point of inventing a new female character. Throughout, there is an attempt to stage an encounter with “the real” through recourse to colloquial diction; a diction contributing to the translation’s political intention. Badiou valorizes equality (rather than liberty or freedom of expression, associated with “the politics of appearance and opinion”) alongside the text’s potential for a contemporary politics of justice. According to him, “I turned to the *Republic*, the masterwork of the Master, precisely dedicated to the concept of Justice, to allow its power to scintillate the present.” [NOTE 19 to p. 20: Alain Badiou, *La République de Platon*, Paris: Fayard, 2012, 10]. As Susan Spitzer, the translator of the text into American English, intimates, Badiou’s *Republic* may be seen as an exercise in “communist” translation whose “fidelity” to the Greek original should be gauged in political terms:

“Hypertranslation” is the word Alain Badiou has used, in *The Communist Hypothesis* and elsewhere, to describe his treatment of Plato’s *Republic*. Not a “simple” translation into French of the Greek original, then, and still less a scholarly critique of it, Badiou’s text transforms the *Republic* into something startlingly new by expanding, reducing, updating and dramatizing it, leavening it with humor and revitalizing its language with his own philosophical lexicon. Yet, for all the plasticity of the hypertranslation, its freewheeling appropriation of the source text, it still remains an adaptation based firmly on his painstaking translation of Plato’s language into modern French. [NOTE 20 to p. 21: Susan Spitzer, “Translator’s Preface,” in Alain Badiou, *Plato’s Republic: A Dialogue in Sixteen Chapters, with a Prologue and an Epilogue*, trans. Susan Spitzer, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2012, xxiv]

(Apter 2013 pp. 20-21)

‘The result, he avows, is not a “translation” in the strict sense of that term but a faithful philosophical transcription; a translation that militantly refuses “capitulation” to editorial normalization in the name of staying constant to the text’s “eternity.” Badiou modernizes images (the cave becomes a moviehouse) and adds anachronistic references (to the Paris Commune, World War I, Freud, AIDS, Jean-François Lyotard, etc.). This “faithful” infidelity, jarring though it may be, supports the creation of “Badiou-Plato”: a sublation or philosophical event referring to a politics of Truths and an ontology of the Subject. It is this construct that authorizes Badiou’s strong translation of Plato’s “Idea of the Good” (*Idée du Bien*) as “Truth” (*Vérité*); “soul” (*âme*) as “Subject” (*Sujet*); “God” (*Dieu*) as “Big Other” or “Other” (*grand Autre, Autre*); and “Republic” (*République*)—a notoriously difficult Untranslatable going back to the Greek *Politeia*, commonly construed as “constitution”—as “State” (*État*) or “politics” (*politique*).’ (Apter 2013 pp. 21-22)

Apter takes as one of her most important starting points Barbara Cassin’s *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles* – as mentioned above, a map of mistranslations or untranslatable terms that have been an important part of the intellectual and philosophical history of Europe. She resorts to the concept of untranslatability as an epistemological fulcrum – which leads to the establishment to an “intellectual cartography without a hegemonic global paradigm”. Here we find the core of Apter’s proposal, or alternative, to what she calls neoliberal globalism and World Literature, in the shape of what she denominates *translational humanities*: “Using the *Vocabulaire’s* construct

of the Untranslatable, one can construe a translational humanities whose fault lines traverse the cultural subdivisions of nations or “foreign” languages while coalescing around hubs of singularity.” Apter also acknowledges the important genealogy that precedes the concept and the aim of the *Vocabulaire*, although it was not so systematically compiled during the Renaissance, when the networks of translators, publishers, artists, editors, patrons and other agents of exchange engaged in the process of appropriation of literary, philosophical, cultural, artistic, and political capital which we call *translatio studii*. Under this perspective, Cassini’s *Vocabulaire* is part of a larger project of appropriation in current *translational humanities*, a *translatio studii* for our global world →→→ “the *Vocabulaire* succeeds within its terms as a **latter-day version of the humanist *translatio studii***”. We can establish an analogy between the new revisionist history of philosophy that Cassini proposes with her *Lexicon* (“**The Untranslatable yields a revisionary history of ideas that gives full weight to mistranslation**”) and proclaim the need for a revisionary history of European / Global literature as a cartography of mistranslations.

Barbara Cassin’s *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles* produces **wide-span intellectual cartography without a hegemonic global paradigm**; that is to say, through interpretive procedures that reveal philosophical world-systems in the making. **The book uses untranslatability as an epistemological fulcrum for rethinking philosophical concepts and discourses of the humanities**. With critical finesse, it calls into question the very possibility of naming the predicates of Western thought even as it shows how such lodestones have been and continue to be actively translated. **It is an exercise in the reclamation of sophistry and logology over and against the Platonic tradition of positing truths in an absolute sense, as a kind of mathematical intelligence un beholden to language**. This semantic predicament is consequential for the humanities; useful in defining a translational condition that complicates nation-based epistemes and literary denominations. **Using the *Vocabulaire*’s construct of the Untranslatable, one can construe a translational humanities whose fault lines traverse the cultural subdivisions of nations or “foreign” languages while coalescing around hubs of singularity.**’ (Apter 2013 p. 31)

‘With a linguistic range that includes ancient European languages (such as Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Arabic) and modern ones (such as English, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Danish, German, Arabic), the *Vocabulaire* represents a unique experiment in plurilingual analysis. Though, ideally, it would have had a companion volume covering Asian, African, Indian and Middle Eastern languages, →→→ the *Vocabulaire* succeeds within its terms as a **latter-day version of the humanist *translatio studii*** ←←←. Each entry is cued to a multilingual complement: The subject pronoun “I,” for example, is keyed to the French *je, moi; and soi*, to the Greek *egô*; and to the Latin *ego*. *Ipse* is keyed to German *Ich; Selbst* to the English *me, self, and myself*; and to the Italian *io, se, si* and *si-mismo*. Right away, the alterity of signifiers is made visible, preparing the way for a more systematic presentation of concepts labeled in their native tongues and alphabets. Peter Osborne characterizes **the Untranslatable as that which refers to “the conceptual differences carried by the differences between languages, not in a pure form, but via the fractured histories of translation through which European philosophies have been constituted.” Cassin, more geopolitically attuned, speaks of a “cartography of philosophical differences.”** [NOTE 3 to p. 32: Peter Osborne, introducing a dossier dedicated to the *Vocabulaire* in *Radical Philosophy* 138, July / August 2006, 9; Barbara Cassin, *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2004, xxi].

The Untranslatable yields a revisionary history of ideas that gives full weight to mistranslation” (Apter 2013 pp. 31-2)

Apter on Bourdieu's interesting proposal for 'denationalizing' "the dissemination of ideas and information" and how this can play very well with Habermas's "discursive public sphere" – an "ideal of linguistic *civitas*" founded upon a **common language**. Here **Europe** appears as a constellation of linguistic and cultural communities that irradiates from within its geographical boundaries as it dissolves into its borderlands, where it engages with other linguistic communities, creating a multitude of third spaces.

Pierre Bourdieu recognized the power of language names as incontrovertible cognates, through he worked politically toward a linguistic International. In a 1995 issue of *Liber*, he **called for a language of the "collective intellectual" that would denationalize the dissemination of ideas and information'** (Apter 2013 p. 37)

Bourdieu displaces language from its habitus by freeing it "from the idolatry of cultural idioms." He imagines a neutral zone of print literacy and media dissemination capable of transcribing the political in a pure state, "outside the national universe." →→→ **Bourdieu treats the Untranslatable as a critical unit conscripted for a media commons perhaps not so distant from Habermas's discursive public sphere**. Like Cassin, Bourdieu would pose →→→ **an ideal of linguistic *civitas* over and against ethnic and nation-based language cartographies ←←←**. What emerges is a translation zone constructed off the power grid of dominant world languages and potentially mobilized around what Jacques Rancière characterizes as *la mésentente*, an extended notion of diplomatic disagreement [NOTE 7 to p. 38: Pierre Bourdieu, "Declaration of Intent," *Liber*, in Pierre Bourdieu, *Political Interventions: Social Science and Political Action*, ed. Thierry Discepolo, trans. David Fernbach, London: Verso, 2008, 233; Jacques Rancière, *La mésentente: Politique et philosophie*, Paris: Galilée, 1995.], or what Christopher Prendergast describes as "**negotiation**": "**the minimalist presupposition of some common language in and over which to negotiate, although without in any way papering over the many cognitive misfits and value clashes that might and do arise in the conduct of negotiations.**" [NOTE 8 to p. 38: Christopher Prendergast, "The World Republic of Letters," in *Debating World Literature*, ed. C. Prendergast, London: Verso, 2004, 14. In the same footnote, →→→ Prendergast takes aim at the "incommensurability hypothesis' according to which different cultural systems are mutually unintelligible to one another and thus non-translatable." Jean-François Lyotard's *La condition postmoderne* and *Le différend* are representative, Prendergast argues, of the argument that "Western *grand récits* have not merely dominated but effectively annihilated alternative narratives by the simple gesture of refusing their terms" (14)] (Apter 2013 p. 38)

Cassin's *Vocabulaire* thus stands out as →→→ **an approach to globality that fully activates the Untranslatable ←←←**. Though its first order of commitment is to a translational approach to doing philosophy, →→→ **it lends itself to the making of worldscapes contoured by mistranslation, neologism, and semantic dissonance ←←←**. It gives rise to →→→ **an idea of comparative literature as a discipline that derives its raison d'être from the constant updating and revision of vocabularies of cultural reference; the better to serve as a kind of self-translating machine of the humanities. The book lends itself to a linguistic cartography that allows literary comparatism to be more responsive to the geopolitics of literary world as they occur in real time ←←←**.

Ideally, one could redesign the teaching of literature to respond critically and in real time to cartographies of emergent world-systems.' (Apter 2013 p. 39)

World systems analysis: Immanuel Wallerstein, the importance of networks and the relevant role of translation and translators as the vehicle and agents that interconnect all these hubs

If world-systems theory has gained traction in literary studies over the last twenty years (propelled along by Franco Moretti, Fredric Jameson, Perry Anderson, Pascale Casanova, Joseph Slaughter, and Alexander Beecroft, among others), it would not have been possible without the work of **Immanuel Wallerstein**. A sociologist by training, Wallerstein was himself indebted to a host of thinkers, among them: **William McNeill**, a “world” historian of human history’s systolic and diastolic rhythms; Nikolai Kondratieff, an economic theorist who wrote in the 1920s on “long wave production cycles”; **Ferdinand Braudel**, the *Annales* school historian who analyzed large, complex swaths of geopolitical territory such as the Mediterranean region; **Marian Malowist**, the Marxist economic historian of **early European money markets**; **Gregory Bateson**, author of the epistemologically synthetic work *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*; **Giovanni Arrighi**, whose notion of “long centuries” stretched historical continua beyond the bounds of periodizing convention; and **Ilya Prigogine**, a theorist of “dissipative structures,” or the laws of self-organizing systems as defined by temporality, chaos, and uncertainty. →→→ Specifying that the hyphen in “world-system” was “intended to underscore that we are talking not about systems, economies, empires *of the* (whole) world, but about systems, economies, empires *that are a world*,” →→→ **Wallerstein analyzed interstate markets in early capitalism as a causal condition (rather than a symptom) of world-making. He demonstrated how war, transportation networks, technological know how, capital accumulation, the size of bureaucracies, and the organization of empire enabled cities in early modern Europe to gain ascendancy as “core” centers of power, around which “peripheral” nations orbited.** (Apter 2013, pp. 46-47)

Translation as a lingua franca of political mediation. ‘Oneworldedness’, ‘planetary’, ‘transnationalism’. As far as Europe is concerned in early modernity it would be more appropriate to talk about a constellation or a network of heterogeneous communities that overlapped with each other. ‘Nation’ or national communities were part of a larger and heterogeneous constellation of communities, each of which would elicit different types of loyalties. For instance, in the case of certain religious exiles, their allegiance to their religious community was far stronger than the pull they felt from their national community. Some individuals could fluctuate in their allegiance in different moments of their lives, and also in different contexts.

Apter’s concept of ‘oneworldedness’: paranoia as world-system vs planetary communicative utopianism and Habermas’s rationalist model of universal communicative reason

“‘Oneworldedness’ is an Untranslatable that I have coined to refer to planetary paranoia marked by cyber-surveillance, cartographies of cartels, and webs of international relationality within and outside the nation and on the edges of legality. **In its curvilinear unboundedness, the contemporary world-system resembles a one-size, supranational entity that recognizes the dominance of super-states, while training its eye on the hidden relationalism among corporate conglomerates, NGOs, underground economies, and clandestine insurgent groups. Oneworldedness is distinct from planetary, cast by Wai Chee Dimock as a**

transchronological continuum of poesis that takes ‘the entire planet as a unit of analysis’ and by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak as a precapitalist territorial commons respectful of alterity. It is also different from transnationalism, assigned by Étienne Balibar to new forms of citizenship that engender open rather than closed social polities. →→→ In Balibar’s work on transnational citizenship, borders become transitional objects rather than *cordons sanitaires* of exclusion. World diaspora is affirmed within and not just outside national borders (Balibar draws here on Habermas’s notion of *Weltinnenpolitik*). The hackneyed expression ‘citizen of the world’ is granted a new life, referring to ‘netizens’ and anti-globalist, *altermondialiste* activists. And →→→ translation—treated as a lingua franca of political mediation—revokes nationalist essentialism. Building on Balibar, I have also ascribed transnationalism to a ‘trans to trans’ comparatism that bypasses the metropole while privileging translation between ‘minor,’ or micro-minority, languages and literature” (Apter 2013 pp. 70-71)

Paranoia, I am suggesting, underwrites a one-worldist paradigm that differs from transnational or global ascriptions of world-systems theory in its full realization of the psychotic dimension of planetarity. Unlike Jürgen Habermas’s rationalist and decidedly unpsychotic model of universal communicative reason, or Peter Singer’s pragmatic, utilitarian idea of “one world” as the basic unit for ethics—built on morally enlightened calculations of how to fairly distribute the earth’s common property and global environmental, economic, legal and social responsibility—paranoia as a world-system signals the dark side of planetary utopianism. Planetary utopianism views the globe as an ecology of *potentia* and aims to enhance rather than ransack human languages, natural reserves, and institutions of socioeconomic justice [NOTE 8 to p. 77: Peter Singer: *One World: The Ethics of Globalization*, New Haven, CT: Yale U.P., 2002. Singer does not think nations should have a major role in ethical calculations of what is owed to others. Posing “one atmosphere,” “one economy,” “one law,” and “one community,” Singer would like to see a reinforced United Nations, or some international body that recognizes the rights of extra-national as well as national subjects, become the arbiter of universal standards of fairness and decency with respect to wealth distribution and environmental and labor conditions]. **Oneworldedness, by contrast, adheres to an ethics of remote responsibility that refuses acknowledgment of the ‘butterfly effect’** (the chaos theory principle that tracks how desire for a product in one part of the world may be linked to a damaged ecology in another part of the world). **Onewordedness imagines the planet as subject to “the system”** and wants to disable plans of escape. It fails the optimists (left or right) by endorsing the idea that there are legitimate reasons to be paranoid in a world bent on civilizational self-destruction. More important still, **it matches the circular form of the globe—imagined as a smooth surface allowing the unimpeded flow of capital, information and language—with the tautological truism that theory *is* paranoia; an intellectual entrapment in logic that is mimetic of the object of analysis.**’ (Apter 2013 pp. 77-8)

Literary transnationalism (‘the plurilingual dissemination of codes, genres, styles or ideas across the borders of time and territorial sovereignty’) vs **onewordedness** (‘a relatively intractable literary monoculture that travels throughout the world absorbing difference’)

‘ **In contrast to literary transnationalism—identified by Wai Chee Dimock with the plurilingual dissemination of codes, genres, styles or ideas across the borders of time and territorial sovereignty—one-worldedness might be described as a relatively intractable literary monoculture that travels throughout the world absorbing difference.**’ (Apter 2013 p. 83)

Balibar's transnational citizenship and international law (and more information about the political background of Apter's concept of 'oneworldedness')

'What I have tried to suggest is that the world-system mapped by Pynchon and DeLillo's psychogeographical 'out there' coincides with an American paradigm of oneworldedness hatched in the 1960s at the zenith of Cold War paranoia. It is this American-style pattern of delusional democracy (given new impetus by the second Bush Administration and the Obama-era Republican congressional majority's consistent derailment of efforts to reduce poverty, pollution, disease, economic equality, and global standards of justice) **that, in the view of philosopher Peter Singer, obstructs the possibility of an ethical one-world.** Sincer's world citizens, abstracted from history and nation, would be bound together by a common dedication to distributive justice on a planetary scale.' (Apter 2013 p. 97)

'In a complementary view, **Étienne Balibar seeks to redeem oneworldedness through an ethic of transnational citizenship that would bolster international law, soften borders as zones of hospitality, and pluralize politics by wresting the right to representation from the class of elites.** In Balibar's framework, 'transnationalize' is an active verb connoting munificent planetarity. It would apportion (within actually existing nations) the right to citizenship and economic welfare in equal measure to all humans. To transnationalize American culture in these terms means using paranoia politically to weaken the system of delusional democracy that aligns American monoculturalism, unipolar thought and unilateralist politics.' (Apter 2013 pp. 97-8)

Apter's concept of 'translation zone'. Thoughts on translation and war, borders, and sovereignty. Translation and diplomacy; the Encyclopedia and Enlightenment; peace and the 'liberal security community'. Habermas on international communities 'based on the presumption of common interest' and 'universal principles of political right'.

Apter here embarks (p. 131 ff) on a complex and rich exercise of what she calls 'radical philology', i.e. tracing the meanings and the shifts in several texts dealing with peace, to wit:

- Kant's 'Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Project', 1795 – in Kant we find a sort of millenarian, teleological utopia in which the end of humanity is to reach a universal peace within a perfect global political constitution, i.e. a World Republic, or World Federation that could be interpreted as the extension, evolution or continuation of the earlier ideal of the Universal Christian Monarchy
- The Abbé de Saint-Pierre's *A Project for Settling on Everlasting Peace in Europe* (1712)
- Spinoza's *Political Treatise* (1677), where the stand-off between equal factions 'produces equilibrium or, in political terms, peace'

See, for instance, Apter's etymological analysis of the word peace in English and what its history entails – i.e. this is a case of locating the history of ideas, and philosophy, in the etymological avatars of words.

Peace as 'negative liberty', whose etymology reveals its consensual nature

'... translation theory has used 'border crossing' as a prime metaphor of general equivalence, ready meaning-exchange, and interdisciplinarity. My own delineations of a 'translation zone' implied an emphasis-shift in literary studies from discrete languages contained within perimeters of standardized usage to plurilingual process; that is to say, languages-in-translation, pidgins, creoles, idiomatic sampling, loan-words, calques, code-switching, and the burgeoning ciphers of finance capitalism, which notably include 'translatese' and 'netlish.' The politics of borders was fully activated in my book *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*, published in 2006, especially where I analyzed ways in which language becomes weaponized during situations of war and conflictual cultural nationalism. And yet, in the intervening time, I have noticed that 'border-crossing' has become such an all-purpose, ubiquitous way of talking about translation that its purchase on the politics of actual borders—whether linguistic or territorial—has been attenuated. Prompted by recent work focusing on how sovereign legitimacy is tested by the architecture of walls, checkpoints, transit stations, and virtual barricades of surveillance—Jeremy Harding's *The Uninvited: Refugees at the Rich Man's Gate*, Eyal Weizman's *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation and The Least of All Possible Evils*, Wendy Brown's *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*—I want to recall the *force de frappe* of the state in translation theory, and, with that, the physical borders of sovereignty more generally. Work by a number of artists has proved crucial to understanding how a translational checkpoint may be mobilized as a kind of 'antiborder border.' (Apter 2013 pp. 99-100)

'The encyclopedic episteme in Enlightenment Europe treated →→→ translation as both a fulcrum of knowledge production and as a constitutive component of diplomacy. This Enlightenment legacy remains palpable. Translation is a given in Kantian conceptions of what contemporary policy experts call the "liberal security community" and its Habermasian correlative, the communicative utopia ←←← [Michael C. Williams, *Culture and Security: Symbolic Power and the Politics of International Security*, London: Routledge, 2007]. This is international community based on the presumption of common interest; mutual recognition; democratic freedom; agreed-upon rules of political right. In this world picture, untranslatability poses a threat to the liberal security community insofar as it may be identified with inaccessible, unsecurable knowledge. Though all knowledge, like all language, is ultimately unsecurable, international diplomacy is, notwithstanding, predicated on a rationalist assumption of high levels of securability' (Apter 2013 p. 128)

→→→ 'Comparative literature has often functioned as the humanities arm of Enlightenment diplomacy. It has been dedicated to producing complexly cultured, linguistically proficient citizens of the world who foster global understanding and the pragmatic conviction that universal consensus—or what Kant called "pacific federation"—is achievable through an enhanced linguistic commons. While there is much to commend this vision, I would argue that it promotes not only a false sense of security, but, more problematically still, a rationalist, realist ideology of securitization. Realist securitism is invoked to justify excessive management of the Untranslatable; from wiretapping and internet censorship to the use of information intercepts and other cyber-defense strategies. These techniques belong to larger institutional systems that ostensibly protect the democratic peace through information regulation, including the supervision of "aliens" through border protocols, satellite surveillance, and GPS tracking and the calculation of economic, political and actuarial risk' (Apter 2013 pp. 129-30)

“The English word “peace” comes from the Latin *pax*, and while the Latin term builds on a post-classical semantic reserve encompassing welfare and prosperity, **English usage historically privileges the notions of diplomacy inherent in the Latin *pax*, which is the nominalized form of the verb *pacisci* (to strike a bargain, to enter into a contract or covenant).** Indebted to the Anglo-Norman and Old French *paix*, →→→ **the Latin underscores civic relations and freedom from civil unrest. A semantic trail starts to emerge, wending its way through amity, concord, pact or settlement; the enforcement of public order; *securitas*, defined as the protection to a nation or people guaranteed by a monarch; and peaceful relations among citizens. As in Kant’s notion of cosmopolitan right, peace is valued as a form of negative liberty—a freedom from conflict, a mode of stasis.** Cosmopolitan right is that which settles for a “negative surrogate”—“an enduring, ever expanding *federation* that prevents war and curbs the tendency of that hostile inclination to defy the law” in lieu of an **unattainably “positive idea of a world republic”?** (Apter 2013 135-6)

Peace is related theoretically to the problem of *stasis*, which in Greek paradoxically enough denotes not the absence of war but rather faction, civil war, political standing... Concentrating on the Greek word “stasis” in its root signification *sta-* (from *hístānai*, or to make stand), we can begin to grasp how stasis underscores the *stand-off* between equal factions that produces equilibrium or, in political terms, peace. Spinoza’s *Political Treatise* (1677) stipulated the necessity of having two equilibrated commonwealths (or “contracting powers”) as a precondition to the right to a lasting peace.’ (Apter 2013 pp. 136-7)

Translation as a trope / metaphor and its political dimensions. Border cultures and third spaces – “spaces of flow”. The concept of the soft border and literary cartography – *droit de cité*. Interestingly, Apter again resorts to Habermas: ‘an entity closer to a municipality or network, something resembling a Habermasian global civil society or postnational constellation’ (Apter 2013 p. 104). Again, political concepts and the vocabulary of international law and international administration (the different terms used to refer to different types of communities and their relations to each other) are used to describe translation. Wai Chee Dimock’s description of ‘American’ cultural and literary heterogeneity is applicable to a description of Europe too. Dimock also resorts to the language of fractals (mathematics). Walter Dignolo’s notion of “border gnosis”, whose purpose is to rectify “the erasure of difference wrought by unidirectional colonial translation” → “a way of thinking about knowledge conflicts typical of borderlands, be they epistemological, ethical, secular or religious”

In its foregrounding of the checkpoint, **Jarrar’s work raises the issue of how legal, territorial markers are used figuratively in translation theory, just as the keyword ‘translation’ is broadly applied as a metaphor for non- or extra-linguistic transference, migration, and the traffic in information, things, and commodities. Generally, I find it worrisome when translation is used so loosely.** That said, its philology—inclusive of the Greek words *hermēnein* and *metapherein*; the Latin words *transferre*, *convertere*, *traducere*; and the German words *übertragen*, *übersetzen*, *überlieferung*, all **freighted with associations of transport, passage and transmission—lends itself to border-crossing scenarios.** Such scenarios have been crucial to the great standard bearers of cultural translation, from Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987) to **Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s *Debt of a Discipline* (2004) and *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization* (2012).** This last book invokes →→→ ‘border cultures’ in relation to structures

of internal colonization (applicable in Spivak's examples to First Nation peoples, Chicanos, and African-Americans living within US borders) and as a wedge against the "easy traffic in ethnicity" characteristic of the American 'dream of interculturalism' (Apter 2013 pp. 102-103)

'Border-speaking spilled into the parlance of literary studies as actual national borders were increasingly weaponized and surveilled post 9/11 yet rendered fungible by the economic instruments and institutions of global finance capital. In the world of super-states, 'borderlessness' became an operator, sometimes yoked theoretically to **Deleuzian / Guattarian 'spaces of flow'** (often strangely detoured from nomadology to become the perfect watchword for information and currency trading), or dignified as a term for the cosmopolitical polity; **a model that Étienne Balibar has qualified as the 'European triple point (of heresy)'—a Europe of the East, West and South made up of overlapping territorial sheets and cultural and linguistic layers (*nappes qui se recouvrent*)** [NOTE 9 to p. 103: Étienne Balibar, "The Borders of Europe", in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*, ed. Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota P., 1998, 225]. **For Balibar, the triple-point implies highly politicized instances of non-compliance with the old cultural nationalisms of nation-states.'** (Apter 2013 pp. 103-104)

'Balibar is the last political theorist that one would readily affiliate with symptomatic "border-think". This said, his revival of the medieval *droit de cité*—roughly speaking, a primordial right of access to the city-state—was taken into critical **discourses of "hospitality" and "open borders"** in ways that only implicitly referred to the administrative entities regulating ports of call at official checkpoints. **So here is one of my main arguments. This idea of fluid borders—concretized by NAFTA, Shengen, the Eurozone—"forgets" the checkpoint in promoting the border. And it is this soft, hospitable border that made its way most frequently into literary cartography.** Wai Chee Dimock, for example, would make the case for casting American literature no longer as a self-governing, autonomous, sovereign domain but **→→→ as an entity closer to a municipality or network, something resembling a Habermasian global civil society or postnational constellation ←←←.** "American" is thus defined by **diverse languages and literary forms organized into sets or aggregates of sets.** In place of territorial limitrophes, there are **shapes and configurations, environments equipped with porous semiotic skins.** These are articulated ecologically and abstractly: as **"nesting" recursive structures, reversible landscapes, convex or concave patterns, bulges and burrows.** **Dimock uses the term "heterarchy" to designate reversible hierarchy, divergent but coexistent patterns of relation, feedback loops, and complex systems that break out of predetermined patterns.** Her paradigm of "deep time" is characterized by telescoped time and nonspecific space. Dimock opts for wildly transtemporal and transcontinental genres, discernible as fractals or comparison.' (Apter 2013 p. 104)

'Dimock's epic is an omnivorous, translational fractal: **"a linguistic sponge, springing up in contact zones, it is super-responsive to its environment, picking up all those non-Greek words..."** Generally speaking, **Dimock's fractals**, as enlisted for comparative work in *Through Other Continents*, seem impervious to national borders. In *Shades of the Planet*, a collective volume edited by Dimock that also forms part of her bid to transnationalize American literature, she and fellow contributor Rachel Adams have recourse to **Walter Mignolo's notion of "border gnosis"**. Mignolo, for his part, coins the expression **with the express purpose of rectifying the erasure of difference wrought by unidirectional colonial translation.** Mignolo grafts the expression from Valentin Y. Mudimbe's concept of "African gnosis" as developed in his 1988 touchstone *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge*. It designates **a way of thinking about knowledge conflicts typical of borderlands, be they epistemological, ethical, secular or religious.** But Mignolo never focuses on the material structures of the state when enjoining the powerful metaphors of the border. As the danger of "crossing" supersedes the violence of "grounding" in his elaboration of border gnosis, Mignolo adumbrates not an area to be studied but **"a kind of thinking beyond the social sciences and positivistic philosophy, a kind of thinking that moves along the diversity of the historical process itself"** [NOTE 10 to p. 105: Wai Chee Dimock, *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton U.P., 2006, 76, 82; Walter Mignolo, *Local Histories / Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges and Border Thinking*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000, 3, 68, 69]. Historical process is acknowledged epistemologically in his larger scheme of "de-colonialism," but

translation as a practice engaged in by border police at checkpoint stations or relied upon in court cases adjudicating immigration and deportation is nowhere referenced' (Apter 2013 p. 105)

Apter on Cassin's *Dictionnaire*: **untranslatability, lexicography and the encyclopaedia**, a history of mistranslation, a map of misreading (but then, mistranslations and misreadings do the history of canons make). Translation, common language and the universalist aspirations of Enlightened Europe (note the title: *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles*). As it aspires to distabilize it (**disestablishes** is the term that Apter uses), then, Cassin's work belongs in the tradition or genealogy of French encyclopedism. 'The *Vocabulaire*' says Apter 'can in key respects be seen as a continuation of the *Encyclopédie*' (which '**began its life as a translation**').⁵ The *Vocabulaire* and the *Encyclopédie* differ in that the latter embraces universalism and views the diversity of languages as an obstacle (hence the role of translation as a strategy to connect and bridge the gaps), whereas the former embraces fragmentation and untranslatability, rejoices in the lack of a common principle of intelligibility and the inherent instability of the shifting networks that make up the philosophical / linguistic landscape. In the long quotation from Diderot's entry on the word "Encyclopédie" there are interesting thoughts on the aporias found in the notion of common language, common usage, and common sense (much in the way in which, *La Celestina* exposes the shortcomings of self-interest as the foundation for a life in common⁶). This quotation deserves further scrutiny. On the one hand, as Apter's expression reveals "usage" is the only (or one of the few) anchors which we can use to arrest the constant shift and the instability of meaning and communication ("**one of the best definitions of untranslatability in line with Cassin's usage...**"), and therefore common usage, common sense, and communication, provide a flash of quietude or at least a moment of common / mutual intelligibility, before the differences and the fragments reappear. Note that in Apter's reformulation of Diderot's formula, the encyclopedia is founded upon the principles of a 'meaning' in which 'all users universally concur'. Valla's critique of Aristotelian universals / abstractions would apply here as well, because Diderot acknowledges the difficulty / aporias involved in abstracting a series of features that can provide a 'fixed meaning' by listing 'the essential attributes of the thing designated by the word'. But this universalizing ambition is extremely difficult, for **→→→ 'Our most frequent judgments fall on specific objects, and the general usage of the language and experience suffices to guide us' ←←←. →→→** 'Nos jugements les plus fréquents

⁵ There are several precedent of dictionaries which were translated, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (see Pérez Fernández and Wilson-Lee, "Introduction" to *Translation and the Book Trade in Early Modern Europe*, CUP, 2004, pp. 1-21)

⁶ See Pérez Fernández's "Introduction" to *The Spanish Bard* (MHRA, 2013, pp. 1-66)

tombent sur des **objets particuliers, & le grand usage de la langue & du monde suffit pour nous diriger**’ ←←← The reification of particulars and use into universals is an act of grammatical imposture, for only common usage and particulars exist (again, compare with Valla).

‘Both a history of philosophy and a massive translation exercise, Barbara Cassin’s *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies* stems the tide of unilateralist, one-world literary practice. It offers an instrument for “philosophizing in languages,” which, though relying on nominalist entry terms, **derails the sedimentation of meanings that congeal within the names of concepts. By revealing the history of mistranslation and misfired speech acts in the history of philosophical terms, it disestablishes verbal monoliths and idea myths.** In its attention to **the historically shifting ideologies embedded in words and emphasis on linguistic encounters in actual situations,** the *Vocabulaire* invites comparison with Raymond Williams’s *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*.’ [New York: OUP, 1983, 11, 17] (Apter 2013 p. 117)

‘Sparked by his recognition that since World War II the word “culture” had gyred wildly between its “teashop” use (as a word for social superiority as defined by money, class, position and behavior) and its “way of life” use, as both a synonym for intellectual and artistic production and an anthropological attitude toward everyday practices, **Williams was especially sensitive to →→→ untranslatability within a common language,** so much so that **I have borrowed his examples of “keywords” in selecting case studies of Untranslatables in subsequent chapters.**

Cassin’s *Vocabulaire* problematizes the concern of what to call the keyword as itself a genre. It exhibits affinities at different points with William’s keywords and Reinhart Koselleck’s *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, a dictionary of political and social Concept-History. As a work coming out of France, **it harks back to Bayle’s *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1702) and to Diderot and D’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie, our dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (1751-66);** in the latter case not because it models the *Encyclopédie*’s wildly eclectic topical juxtapositions—electricity, Africans, Machiavellianism, sex, monarchy, man, stocking manufacture—or embellishes its concept entries with *planches* and extended discussions of science, craft and technology. **Rather, like its predecessor, the *Vocabulaire* is interested in using translation to extend what philosophy does.** For Howard Caygill, **the *Encyclopédie* and the *Vocabulaire* share the endeavor of radical philosophy:**

In his study of the dissemination of Spinozist ideas—*Radical Enlightenment*—Jonathan Israel described the early Enlightenment dictionary as a vector for radical philosophy, “a philosophical engine of war which massively invaded the libraries, public and private, of the whole continent. [Howard Caygill, ‘From Abstraction to Wunch: The *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies*,” *Radical Philosophy*, 138, July/August 2006, 10]”

(Apter 2013 p. 118)

‘Diderot and D’Alembert’s project was vast in scale (thirty-two volumes, seventy thousand articles), but →→→ the *Vocabulaire* can in key respects be seen as a continuation of the *Encyclopédie*. The *Encyclopédie* began its life as a translation (a French rendering of Ephraim Chambers’s *Cyclopaedia: or, An Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* [1728], itself heavily based on translations of French dictionaries and treatises), and the *Vocabulaire* was similarly built up out of translated material ←←←. Both projects were →→→ Europe-centered ←←← despite a worldly purview. Both were imbued with Frenchness though nationally unbounded in their production and reception. Both jostled competitively with British philosophical traditions, narrating (though not always intentionally) a story about the dueling prospects both of idealism and materialism and of metaphysics and pragmatism. **Both projects confronted the burden of the past in the guises of Greek philosophy, Roman law, and Biblical theology.** Both created conditions favorable to the conceptual unexpected. Both functioned as **advocacy documents in favor of conscripting philosophy in the struggle against fanaticism, intolerance, censorship, dogmatism, arbitrary sovereignty, enslavement, coercion, injustice**

and inequality. Both flaunted their programmed obsolescence in pointing ahead to future knowledge platforms, interactive formats, and modes of dissemination. And both imagined themselves as self-correcting research engines revising their way, Wiki-style, into relevance for generations to come.’ (Apter 2013 p. 119)

‘Cassin and her editorial *équipe* acknowledged that they had the *Encyclopédie* in mind as a counter-model when they initially charted the *Vocabulaire*. →→→ **Where D’Alembert had cast the plurality of languages as an obstacle to a universalist, philosophic history, Cassin (in the sophistic vein) and her colleagues embraced the messiness of linguistic multiplicity and conceptual pluralism. “What really suits us philosophers is the plural,”** she wrote,

The *Dictionary of Untranslatable Terms* does not pretend to offer “the” perfect translation to any untranslatable, rather, it clarifies the contradictions and places them face-to-face in reflection; it is a pluralist and comparative work in its non-enclosing gesture, rather more Borgesian or Oulipian—“the modern form of fantasy is erudition” Borges tells us—than destinal and Heideggerian [Barbara Cassin, “Philosophising in Languages,” trans. Yves Gilonne, *Nottingham French Studies* 49 No. 2 (Summer 2010): 18]

(Apter 2013 pp. 119-20)

‘Interestingly, **one of the best definitions of untranslatability in line with Cassin’s usage crops up in Diderot’s entry for the word “Encyclopédie”.** Diderot allows that, while →→→ **the aim of an encyclopedia is to deliver a precise definition on whose meaning all users universally concur ←←←, the reality is otherwise.** Assigning attributes and qualities, he admits, is no common skill:

A universal dictionary is an opus which proposes to fix the meaning of the terms of a language, by defining those which can be defined, through a short, meticulous, clear, and precise enumeration or the qualities of ideas attached to them. The only good definitions are those that group the essential attributes of the thing designated by the word. But is just anyone capable of knowing and exposing these attributes? Is the art of defining as common as that? Are we not all, more or less, in the same situation as children who apply, with the greatest precision, innumerable terms in the place of which they would be utterly incapable of substituting the correct collection of qualities of ideas they represent? Whence, how many unforeseen difficulties, when it comes to setting down the meaning of the commonest expressions? We constantly experience the fact that the ones we least understand are also those we use the most. What is the reason for this strange phenomenon? It is that we are forever in the situation of pronouncing that a thing is *such*; almost never in the necessity of determining what it is to *be such*. →→→ **Our most frequent judgments fall on specific objects, and the general usage of the language and experience suffices to guide us ←←←.** We merely repeat what we have heard all our lives.’

(Apter 2013 p. 120)

The following is from Emily Apter's 'Preface' to Cassin 2014 (pp. 7-16), by its English editors and translators. They start by situating the dictionary within a well-established tradition that starts in the Enlightenment. This is an essentially **European legacy**—note that in its original French title, the emphasis was on its European nature (Franco-centric, mostly): *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies* – only in the subtitle did Cassin introduce the term 'untranslatable' (*Dictionnaire des intraduisibles*). Its English translators and editors turn this title and subtitle upside down, and eliminate this European focus. They are very much aware of this, and they justify this decision in the preface to the Princeton U.P. edition. The following is a most revealing paragraph on several counts: in the first place it illustrates what some scholars today understand as 'Europe', or what they think the term and its adjective evokes (e.g. Christendom, humanism, Enlightenment, etc.). By eliminating the word 'European' from the title the American scholars who curated the English edition appropriate the project by universalizing, or rather globalizing it (which from a French perspective is even worse). This is a rather interesting paradox: American scholars siding or practicing the type of continental philosophy that opposes Anglo-American cultural imperialism (in the terms discussed for instance by Apter 2006 and 2013) do translate and appropriate the original French / European project from American cultural and academic institutions (Princeton, New York University). So they feel the need to explain why they use (somewhat apologetically) English 'global hegemony' to spread the sort of vocabulary and register used by *continental philosophy* or *theory* (as this is called in American academia), with its idiosyncratic and controversial rhetoric—'theoritese' / 'theorish' vs 'Globish' or 'translatese'. This global hegemonic language, tainted by the imperialism of the linguistic communities and the policies that drove their universal expansion, will serve to promote a new type of linguistic diversity, in the words of the translators, a 'renewed emphasis on the particularities of idiom'. This good message should lead to 'advance experimental forms in research, data-mining, and pedagogy, as well as models of comparativism that place renewed emphasis on the particularities of idiom' (p. ix)

"Although some of us worried about a certain awkwardness in the use of the adjective 'untranslatable' as a noun, by foregrounding it in the English title we signaled its important role as an organizing principle of the entire project. **We also decided to eliminate the reference to Europe. This was a difficult call, as the European focus of the book is undeniable. Removing the emphasis on 'European philosophies' would leave us open to criticism that the *Dictionary* now laid claim to being a work of world philosophy, a tall order that it patently did not fill. Our justification on this score was twofold: so that future editions of the *Dictionary of Untranslatables* might incorporate new entries on philosophy hailing from countries and languages cartographically zoned outside of Europe; and because, philologically speaking, conventional distinctions between European and non-European languages make little or no sense. Moreover, it was our sense that the adjective 'European,' often assumed to refer to a common legacy of Christendom, humanism, and Enlightenment principles, actually misrepresents the complexity of identifying 'Europe' culturally and geopolitically at any given moment in history.**" (Apter's "Preface" in Cassin, 2014 p. ix)

“Notwithstanding concerns about the global hegemony of English (and more pointedly still, about those forms of standardized, Internet-inflected, business English commonly dubbed ‘Globish’ that are frequently associated with financial ‘outcomes’ and ‘deliverables’), we assume that the book, by dint of being in English, will disseminate broadly and reach new communities of readers. The book’s diffusion in Asia, South Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America will lead, we hope, not only to more translations in other languages, but also to spin-off versions appropriate to different cultural sites and medial forms. We hope that the English edition, in its current and future iterations, will help to advance experimental formats in research, data-mining, and pedagogy, as well as models of comparativism that place renewed emphasis on the particularities of idiom. Philosophical importance, in this case, is accorded to how a term ‘is’ in its native tongue, and how it ‘is’ or ‘is not’ when relocated or translated in another language. →→→Idiomatic and demotic nuance←←← are fully recognized as constitutive of philosophy, prompting a shift from concept-driven philosophical analysis to a new kind of process philosophy, what Cassin calls ‘philosophizing in languages’” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 p. ix)

In the opinion of its editors, its global diffusion through translation into English will be a sort of antidote to the flattening effects of the expanding use of English as the universal *lingua franca* of science and knowledge. This aim is part of a larger, more ambitious programme which seeks to redefine *curricula* in search of novel and innovative, experimental ways of redefining, remapping knowledge and its diffusion – a new cartography of knowledge through translation (just as the humanist programme did about five centuries ago)

“In promoting revived connections among philosophy, translation, linguistics, and philology, the *Dictionary* encourages curricular initiatives in the form of courses, colloquia, and cross-institutional degree programs. The *Dictionary* proves useful for teaching in myriad ways, especially at advanced undergraduate and graduate levels. In an era in which countries all over the world are adopting policies—often in line with the European Union’s endorsement of English as its *lingua franca*—that would make English the official language of instruction in scientific and technical fields (if not the social sciences, area studies, and the humanities as well), students increasingly naturalize English as the singular language of universal knowledge, thereby erasing translation-effects and etymological histories, the trajectories of words in exile and in the wake of political and ecological catastrophes. In the *Dictionary* there is a consistent effort to communicate the political, aesthetic, and translational histories of philosophical keywords.” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 p. ix)

“Though it is not set up as a concept-history, →→→ the *Dictionary* lends itself to pedagogical approaches that explicate how concepts come into existence in, through, and across languages ←←←.” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 p. ix)

Its English editors and translators have also intervened in a number of ways in the new edition, adding and altering the original—another form of appropriation—sometimes to (in their own words) ‘enhance the *Dictionary*’s relevance to literary theory and comparative literature’ (p. xi), *inter alia*. They also intervened by eliminating some of the entries, on the grounds that they had ‘insufficient traction on this score for English speakers’ (which contradicts their declared intention to make it global, and appealing to English speaking audiences beyond the US?)

“Topical additions on language, translation, and humanism included supplements on “glossolalia” (by Daniel Heller-Roazen), in the entry LOGOS; **Leonardo Bruni’s practice of translation (by Jane Tylus) in TO TRANSLATE; and “the humanities” (by Michael Wood) in BILDUNG. These highlights were intended to enhance the *Dictionary’s* relevance to literary theory and comparative literature.** In response to a raft of recent interdisciplinary debates around surveillance, security, care, and cure, we solicited an entry on the wildly ramified cognates of SECURITAS by John T. Hamilton. What began as a new supplement by Kenneth Reinhard to MITMENSCH grew into a separate entry, NEIGHBOR. We also felt compelled to do more with the cluster of semes associated with “sex” and “gender”. While both terms were represented in the original, and entered into dynamic relation with *genre* and *Geschlecht* (and thus to related concepts discussed in those entries, such as ‘species’, ‘kind’, ‘race’, and ‘people’), we were able to turn this word grouping into a site of critical cross-examination. In this case, Judith Butler on ‘gender trouble’ and Stella Sandford on the French de-sexing of ‘sexual difference’ in English, invite being read in colloquy with Monique David-Ménars and Penelope Deutscher on GENDER and Geneviève Fraisse on SEX.” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 p. xi)

“Other additions include media theory... deconstructive architectural theory and practice... postcolonial theory... and central keywords in Arabic... Though each of these examples could have been supplemented by countless others, we were restricted by page limitation, deadline, and expediency to make certain choices, albeit somewhat arbitrary ones, given certain obvious candidates that we hope will make their way into **a future revised and expanded edition**. Inevitably, the *Dictionary* lends itself to the parlor game of identifying terms underservedly left out. But as Cassin has often remarked, if one were to be rigorously inclusive, Greek philosophical terms alone would overflow the entire volume” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 pp. xi-xii)

“If the selection of additional entry topics had a lot to do with the heat of a conversation among the editors or a casual encounter, there was less contingency governing what to delete. We occasionally found ourselves questioning the French editors’ choice of untranslatables, some of which struck us as nonphilosophical or whimsically highlighted. Such terms as ‘multiculturalism’, ‘happening’, ‘judicial review’, and ‘welfare’ were interesting samples of what European thinkers might regard as untranslatable, but they struck us as having insufficient traction on this score for English speakers. A term such as *Syntagorem*—important though it was as a conceptual prong of medieval Scholasticism—was sacrificed because it was densely technical and ultimately uneditable. For the most part, however, we preserved original entries even when they were highly resistant to translation” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 p. xii)

“Though we were dealing with a French text, **the extent of our translation task became clear only when we realized that a straightforward conversion of the French edition into English simply would not work.** Almost every aspect of the translation had to be rethought, starting with the entry terms themselves. Which ones should remain in their original language? Which should be rendered in English? *Bien-être* was retained in French, but *bonheur*—which also carries French Enlightenment freight—was converted to ‘happiness.’ It is difficult to reconstruct the rationale for all these decisions: suffice it to say, we had our reasons, even if they fell short of being airtight justifications. **Another extremely thorny issue concerned how to revise entries to reflect an Anglophone orientation without reverting to rank Anglocentricity.**” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 p. xii)

One of the remarkable general features of the encyclopedia is its multilingual nature—and its emphasis on rewriting the history of philosophy, i.e. in its French original edition, on rewriting the history of European philosophy, or the Western tradition, from the standpoint of the ‘untranslatable’ – i.e. from the

study and analysis of those travelling words which have populated the polyglot and multicultural constellation which are the texts that come together to form the corpus of Western philosophy. The epistemological foundation, in other words, for the variety of disciplines that constitute what we call European culture. What its American translators and editors appear to pursue is to globalize this Eurocentric approach. This is a book which, as its American editors declare flaunts its “stake in what it means ‘to philosophize in translation’ over and beyond rewriting the history of philosophy with translation problems in mind” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 p. vii)

As regards its Euro-centric approach, this volume, produced originally from the centres of French intelligentsia, must be read alongside recent volumes such as Denis Guénoun’s *About Europe. Philosophical Hypotheses* (Trans. Christine Irizarry, Stanford, CA: Stanford U.P. originally published as *Hypothèses sur l’Europe: Un essai de philosophie*, Strasbourg: Éditions Circé, 2000)

“A massive translation exercise with encyclopedic reach, the *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*—first published in French under the title **Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles**—belongs in a genealogy that includes **Diderot and d’Alembert’s Encyclopédie (1751-66)**, André Lalande’s *Vocabulaire technique et critique de philosophie* (1902-23), Émile Benveniste’s *Le Vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes*, Laplanche and Pontalis’s *The Language of Psycho-Analysis* (1967, classified as a dictionary), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (an online resource inaugurated in 1995), and Reinhart Koselleck’s *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (a dictionary of political and social-concept history, 2004). Along another axis, it recalls Raymond Williams’s short compendium of political and aesthetic terms, *Keywords*, informed by British Marxism of the 1960s and 70s. Unlike these works, however, **the Dictionary fully mobilizes a multilingual rubric**. Accordingly, entries compare and meditate on the specific differences furnished to concepts by the Arabic, Basque, Catalan, Danish, English, French, German, Greek (classical and modern), Hebrew, Hungarian, Latin, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, and Spanish languages.

The book was the brainchild of its French editor, **Barbara Cassin**, herself **a specialist of classical philosophy**. In 1998, in the introduction to her translation of Parmenides’s poem *On Nature*, Cassin had already ascribed the ‘untranslatable’ to the **interminability of translating: the idea that one can never have done with translation**. In her writings on the pre-Socratics and the Sophists, she **tethered the untranslatable to the instability of meaning and sense-making, the performative dimension of sophistic effects, and the condition of temporality in translation**. Translation’s ‘time’, in Cassin’s usage, was associated with the **principle of infinite regress and the vertiginous apprehension of infinitude**.” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 p. vii)

Cassin puts great emphasis on the fact that, far from being ‘stand-ins for national subjects’, languages actually show very diffuse outlines, beyond the constructs of national identity or linguistic communities, and how easily they transmute into polyglot worlds.

“Though the original language of the *Dictionary* was French, and the orientation was toward the Hellenic, Scholastic, Enlightenment, and German European tradition, Cassin was interested in what she called a “metaphysics of particles.” She referred here to **the shape-shifting capacities of**

linguistic particulates within a particular language (as in the way German prefixes and suffixes become operative as building blocks of new words). Each language, she maintained, “contains within itself the rules of its own invention and transgression.” →→→ **The book emphasizes the singular philosophical nuances of discrete languages not because Cassin was committed to resurrecting fixtures of “ontological nationalism” (whereby languages are erected as stand-ins for national subjects), but rather because she wanted to emphasize the mobile outlines of languages assuming a national silhouette or subsiding into diffuse, polyglot worlds ←←←.**” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 pp. xii-xiii)

“Opposed to the model of the dictionary as a concept mausoleum, Cassin treated words as free radicals, as *parole in libertà*. She devised the construct of *lemmes* (directionals, or signposts) as navigating mechanisms. The directionals would prompt readers to pursue philological links, logical arguments, and conceptual lines of flight revealed by a term’s history of translation that would not be apparent in a cross-referencing index. Sometimes these directionals resemble miniature articles unto themselves. **Signaling where terms congregate, form star clusters, or proliferate in multiple languages, they contour preponderant overarching ideas and recurrent story lines.** These include (but are not obviously limited to) the logic of classical orders; theologies of the law; metaphysical transcendence; aesthetic and domestic economy; sense and signification; human versus nonhuman; gender and species; materialism (both realist and speculative) and phenomenological experience; orders of sovereignty in the naming of polity and political institutions; utopian theories; dialectical thinking; *Dasein*, self-consciousness, and intersubjectivity; temporality and history; memory, cognition, and the intuition of intelligence; creative originality; free will and moral autonomy; rational self-interest and analytic reason; possessive individualism; and the emergence of the modern liberal subject.” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 p. xiii)

“What the dictionary does best, perhaps, is produce a **cartography (Caygill called it a “geophilosophy”)** of linguistic diaspora, migration, and contested global checkpoints from early empires to the technologically patrolled and surveyed post-9/11 era. →→→ **National languages are profiled not as static, reified monuments of culture, nor as technologies of signification stripped of political consequence, but as internally transnational units, heterodox micro-worlds ←←←.**

This said, the *Dictionary* is not without its nationalist hauntings. Nowhere are such hauntings more evident than in the entries devoted to languages themselves. Despite the editors’ express intention to undercut national language ontologies, there is recidivism in these entries.” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 p. xiii)

“**Even the term ‘translation’, which signifies language in a state of non-belonging, turns out to be nationally marked.** The entry TO TRANSLATE notes that *dolmetschen*, an anachronistic verb whose origins go back to Martin Luther’s translation of the Bible into German, renders ‘to translate’ as, literally, ‘to render ad German’ or ‘to Germanize’. Schleiermacher was instrumental in replacing *dolmetschen* with *übersetzung* on the grounds that *dolmetschen* referred to the functional work of the interpreter, whereas *übersetzung* referred to the loftier challenge of rendering thought. From this perspective *übersetzung* is the name of a disavowed Germanocentrism that clings to the history of the word ‘translation’” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 pp. xiii-xiv)

There is an interesting dimension, with great heuristic potential, in this activity of ‘philosophizing through translation’, which leads to the question of →→→ **community – and common – or, as Apter puts it, of ‘languages together’ and ‘philosophy cast as a political theory of community’ ←←←**

“If there is one thing we have come away with, however, it is a deep excitement about →→→ **using philosophical translation as a way of doing philosophy or ‘theory’, or literary criticism**

←←←. We see the book as a major contribution to a renewed philosophical turn in translation theory and practice. It occasions reflection on how ‘untranslatable’ carries within it a philosophy of ‘languages together’. What we find in this book, in a sense, is philosophy cast as a political theory of community, built up through the transference and distribution of irreducible, exceptional, semantic units. →→→ The places where languages touch reveal the limits of discrete national languages and traditions←←←. We obtain glimpses of languages in paradoxically shared zones of non-national belonging, at the edge of mutual unintelligibility. Such zones encompass opacities at the edges of the spoken and written, a bilingualism that own up to the condition of un-ownable, unclaimable language property, and perverse grammatology. →→→ Untranslatables signify not because they are essentialist predicates of nation or *ethnos* with no ready equivalent in another language, but because they mark singularities of expression that contour a worldscape according to mistranslation, neologism, and semantic dissonance ←←←.” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 p. xv)

Cassin emphasises that ‘the space of Europe was our framework from the beginning’, which bears an interesting contrast with the declared intention of the English translators and editors to appropriate the original ‘mission’ of the French version through an English translation with universal, global aims.

“Notwithstanding concerns about the global hegemony of English (and more pointedly still, about those forms of standardized, Internet-inflected, business English commonly dubbed ‘Globish’ that are frequently associated with financial ‘outcomes’ and ‘deliverables’), we assume that the book, by dint of being in English, will disseminate broadly and reach new communities of readers. The book’s diffusion in Asia, South Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America will lead, we hope, not only to more translations in other languages, but also to spin-off versions appropriate to different cultural sites and medial forms. We hope that the English edition, in its current and future iterations, will help to advance experimental formats in research, data-mining, and pedagogy, as well as models of comparativism that place renewed emphasis on the particularities of idiom. Philosophical importance, in this case, is accorded to how a term ‘is’ in its native tongue, and how it ‘is’ or ‘is not’ when relocated or translated in another language. →→→Idiomatic and demotic nuance←←← are fully recognized as constitutive of philosophy, prompting a shift from concept-driven philosophical analysis to a new kind of process philosophy, what Cassin calls ‘philosophizing in languages’” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 p. ix)

Cassin also mentions that this European space which is their focus and starting point, their framework, is defined by the languages of Europe – this philosophizing in the languages of Europe, of defining the Western tradition in terms of its polyglot networks and the maps of mistranslations, the cartography of difference, is the epistemological, speculative counterpart to the pragmatic processes of translation and interpreting currently taking place in the political and administrative centers of the European Union—as they are described, for instance, by David Belos (*Is That a Fish in Your Ear? The Amazing Adventure of Translation*, London: Penguin, 2012). A combination of these two approaches, philosophical and speculative, on the one hand, and pragmatic and down to earth, on the other, should produce a good description of the situation of Europe, politically, linguistically, and naturally in cultural terms too.

This struggle Cassin situates within the competition between Continental philosophy and the Anglo-American tradition of analytic philosophy – i.e. ordinary language, common sense and the shared experience—including the shared experience of language.

Within this vision of Continental Philosophy as the foundation for the networks that make up the European tradition there lurks the ‘specter’ of nationalism and exclusivism—as it does in the political project of Europe too—in this case, illustrated by Cassin’s concerns on German philosophical nationalism, represented in the passage below by Herder and Heidegger. **Against this exclusivism of domestic European nationalisms, and against the universalism of the Anglo-American tradition of analytical philosophy riding on the back of English as the global lingua franca, Cassin proposes Deleuze’s notion of “deterritorialization” – again coupled to the network format.** Which in turn leads again to diversity, difference, and multilingualism.

‘The universality of concepts is absorbed by the singularity of languages’ – the quotations from Wilhelm von Humboldt, and above all from Schleiermacher, below brings together German translation philosophy (‘even universals... are illumined and colored by the particular’) with Valla’s *repastinatio* and his linguistic deconstruction of Aristotelian abstract concepts (i.e. Aristotelian universals)

“One of the most urgent problems posed by the existence of Europe is that of languages. We may envisage two kinds of solution. We could choose a dominant language in which exchanges will take place from now on, a globalized Anglo-American. Or we could gamble on the retention of many languages, making clear on every occasion the meaning and the interest of the differences—the only way of really facilitating communication between languages and cultures. The *Dictionary of Untranslatables* belongs to this second perspective. But it looks to the future rather than to the past. It is not tied to a retrospective and reified Europe (which Europe would that be, in any case?), defined by an accumulation and juxtaposition of legacies that would only reinforce particularities, but to a Europe in progress, fully active, *energeia* rather than *ergon*, which explores divisions, tensions, transfers, appropriations, contradictions, in order to construct better versions of itself.

Our point of departure is **a reflection on the difficulty of translating in philosophy.** We have tried to think of philosophy within languages, to treat philosophies as they are spoken, and to see what then changes in our ways of philosophizing. This is why **we have not created yet another encyclopedia of philosophy, treating concepts, authors, currents, and systems for their own sakes, but a *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, which starts from words situated within the measurable differences among languages, or at least among the principal languages in which philosophy has been written in Europe—since Babel.** From this point of view, Émile Benveniste’s pluralist and comparatist *Vocabulary of Indo-European Institutions* has been our model. **In order to find the meaning of a word in one language, this book explores the networks to which the word belong and seeks to understand how a network functions in one language by relating it to the networks of other languages.**” (Cassin’s “Introduction” to Cassin, ed. 2014, p. xvii)

“The space of Europe was our framework from the beginning. →→→ The *Dictionary* has, in fact, a political ambition: to ensure that the languages of Europe are taken into account ←←←, and not only from a preservationist point of view, as one seeks to save threatened species. In this respect, there are two positions from which we clearly distinguish our own. The first is the all-English one, or rather the all-into-English one—that official English of the European Community and of scientific conferences, which certainly has a practical use but is scarcely a language (‘real’ English speakers are those that one has the most difficulty in understanding). English has imposed itself today as an ‘auxiliary international language’, as Umberto Eco puts it. It has assumed its place in the chronological sequence of instrumental languages (Greek, Latin, French): it is at once the universal language of the cultured technocracy and the language of the market; we need it, for better or for worse. But the philosophical situation of English as a language deserves a slightly different examination. In this case, English is rather the line of the *characteristica universalis* that Leibniz dreamed of. Not that English can ever be reduced to conceptual calculus on the model of mathematics: it is, like any other, a natural language, that is to say the language of a culture, magnificent in the strength of its idiosyncrasies. However, for a certain tendency in ‘analytic philosophy’ (it is true that no terminological precaution will ever suffice here, because the label applies, via the ‘linguistic turn’, even to those who teach us again to question the language, from Wittgenstein to Austin, Quine, or Cavell), philosophy relates only to a universal logic, identical in all times and places—for Aristotle, for my colleague at Oxford. Consequently, the language in which the concept finds its expression, in this case English, matters little. This first universalist assumption meets up with another. The whole Anglo-Saxon tradition has devoted itself to the exclusion of jargon, of esoteric language, to the puncturing of the windbags of metaphysics. English presents itself, this time in its particularity as a language, as that of common sense and shared experience, including the shared experience of language. The presumption of a rationality that belongs to angels rather than humans and a militant insistence on ordinary language combine to support a prevalence of English that becomes, in the worst of cases, a refusal of the status of philosophy to Continental philosophy, which is mired in the contingencies of history and individual languages.” (Cassin’s “Introduction” to Cassin, ed. 2014, p. xviii)

“The other position from which we wish to distinguish our own is the one that has led philosophy from the idea of the spirit of language, with all its clichés, to an ‘ontological nationalism’ (the expression is that of Jean-Pierre Lefebvre). The position finds its image in Herder, at the moment when he determines that translation, as imitation and transplantation, is the true vocation of the German language: “If in Italy the muse converses in song, if in France she narrates and reasons politely, if in Spain she imagines chivalrously, in England thinks sharply and deeply, what does she do in Germany? She imitates. To imitate would thus be her character.... To this end we have in our power an admirable means, *our language*; it can be for us what the *band* is for the person who imitates art” (Herder, *Briefe*). The position is also represented by a certain Heideggerian tradition of ‘philosophical language’, that is to say, the language best suited to speak faithfully for being, which occupies a predominant place in the history of this so Continental Western philosophy. Martin Heidegger thinks that Western thought is born less in Greece than in Greek and that only the German language rises to the level of Greek in the hierarchy of philosophical languages, so that ‘untranslatability finally becomes the criterion of truth’ (Lefebvre, ‘Philosophie at philologie’). ‘The Greek language is philosophical, i.e., ... it philosophizes in its basic structure and formation. The same applies to every genuine language, in a different degree, to be sure. The extent to which this is so depends on the depth and power of the existence of the people and race who speak the language and exist within it. Only our German language has a deep and creative philosophical character to compare with the Greek’ (Heidegger, *Essence of Human Freedom*). Even if it is ‘true’ in one sense (Greek and German words and forms are obligatory places of passage for many articles in the *Dictionary*), this is not the truth we need. Our work is as far as could be from such a sacralization of the untranslatable, based on the idea of an absolute incommensurability of languages and linked to the near-sanctity of certain languages. This is why, marking our distance from a teleological history organized according to a register of gain and loss, we have not conferred a special status on any language, dead or alive.” (Cassin’s “Introduction” to Cassin, ed. 2014, p. xviii)

“**→→→** Neither a logical universalism indifferent to languages nor an ontological nationalism essentializing the spirit of languages: what is our position in relation to these alternatives? If I had to characterize it, I would speak Deleuzian and use the word ‘deterritorialization’ **←←←**. This term plays off geography against history, **→→→** the semantic network against the isolated concept **←←←**. We began with the many (our plural form indicates this: ‘dictionary of untranslatables’), and we remain with the many: we have addressed the question of the untranslatable without aiming at unity, whether it is placed at the origin (source language, tributary words, fidelity to what is ontologically given) or at the end (Messianic language, rational community).

Many languages first of all. As **Wilhelm von Humboldt stresses, ‘language appears in reality solely as multiplicity’** (*Über die Verschiedenheiten des menschlichen Sprachbaues*). Babel is an opportunity, as long as we understand that ‘different languages are not so many designations of a thing: they are different perspectives on that same thing, and when the thing is not an object for the external senses, those perspectives become so many things themselves, differently formed by each person’ (*Fragments der Monographie über die Basken*)

The perspectives constitute the thing; each language is a vision of the world that catches another world in its net, that performs a world; and the shared world is less a point of departure than a regulatory principle. **Schleiermacher throws an exemplary light on the tension that exists between a concept, with its claim to universality, and its linguistic expression**, when he asserts that in philosophy, more than in any other domain, ‘any language... encompasses within itself a single system of concepts which, precisely because they are contiguous, linking and complementing one another within this language, form a single whole—whose several parts, however, do not correspond to those to be found in comparable systems in other languages, and this is scarcely excluding “God” and “to be”, the noun of nouns and the verb of verbs. For **even universals, which lie outside the realm of particularity, are illumined and colored by the particular**’ (‘On Different Methods of Translating’). **It is that ‘scarcely excluding’ we must underline: even God and Being are illumined and colored by language; the universality of concepts is absorbed by the singularity of languages.**’ (Cassin’s “Introduction” to Cassin, ed. 2014, p. xix)

“Multiplicity is to be found not only among languages but within each language. A language, as we have considered it, is not a fact of nature, an object, but **an effect caught up in history and culture, and that ceaselessly invents itself**—again, *energeia* rather than *ergon*. So the *Dictionary*’s concern is constituted by **languages in their works, and by the translations of these works into different languages, at different times.** The **networks of words and senses** that we have sought to think through are networks of datable philosophical idioms, placed by specific authors in particular writings; they are **unique, time-bound networks, linked to their address (exoteric or asoteric), to their level of language, to their style, or their relation to tradition** (models, references, palimpsests, breaks, innovations). **Every author, and the philosopher is an author, simultaneously writes in a language and creates his or her language**—as Schleiermacher says of the relation between author and language: ‘He is its organ and it is his’ (‘General Hermeneutics’). **The untranslatable therefore is also a question of case.**’

Finally, there is multiplicity in the meanings of a word in a given language. As Jacques Lacan says in *L’écroulé*, “A language is, among other possibilities, nothing but the sum of the ambiguities that its history has allowed to persist”... Variation from one language to another allows us to perceive these distortions and semantic fluxes; it permits us to register the ambiguities each language carries, their meaning, their history, their intersection with those of other languages.” (Cassin’s “Introduction” to Cassin, ed. 2014, p. xix)

“I hope it [i.e. the *Dictionary*] will make perceptible another way of doing philosophy, which does not think of the concept without thinking of the word, for there is no concept without a word” (Cassin’s “Introduction” to Cassin, ed. 2014, p. xx)

“The *Dictionary* aims to constitute a cartography of European and some other philosophical differences by capitalizing on the knowledge and experience of translators, and of those translators (historians, exegetes, critics, interpreters) that we are as philosophers. It is a working implement of a new kind, indispensable to the larger scientific community in the process of constituting itself and

also a guide to philosophy for students, teachers, researchers, those who are curious about their language and that of others.” (Cassin’s “Introduction” to Cassin, ed. 2014, p. xx)

With regards to the use of ‘untranslatability’ within the realm of age-old aporias in Western thought—infinite regress, the instability of meaning, *difference* and so on—the preface resorts to Derrida to attempt a definition (paradoxical, contradictory, as ever) of what ‘untranslatability’ means – the resort to the trope of **networks is very useful here, because a description or a cartography of knowledge in terms of networks facilitates the display of difference.**

“In this picture, **what is lost in translation is often the best that can be found, as readers find their way to a *Denkraum*—a space of thinking, inventing, and translating, in which words no longer have a distinct definition proper to any one language.**

This said, **it is by no means self-evident what “untranslatability” means.** This is how Jacques Derrida’s *Monolingualism of the Other* approaches the term (in Patrick Mensah’s translation):

Not that I am cultivating the untranslatable. **Nothing is untranslatable**, however little time is given to the expenditure or expansion of a competent discourse that measures itself against the power of the original. But the ‘untranslatable’ remains—should remain, as my law tells me the poetic economy of the idiom, the one that is important to me, for I would die even more quickly without it, and which is important to me, myself to myself, where **a given formal ‘quantity’ always fails to restore the singular event of the original**, that is to let it be forgotten once recorded, to carry away its number, the prosodic shadow of its quantum... **In a sense, nothing is untranslatable; but *in another sense*, everything is untranslatable;** translation is another name for the impossible. In another sense of the word “translation”, of course, and from one sense to the other—**it is easy for me always to hold firm between these two hyperboles which are fundamentally the same, and always translate each other.**

As Jacques Lezra notes, **one sense of the term “translatable”, then, is signaled by the articulation between geometry and rhetoric provided by the concept of hyperbole.** Here, tendentially, **“to translate” means to map one point or quantum onto another according to an algorithm: translation is understood as mechanics, as a function, as measure or common measure.** This sort of “translation” requires us **to understand natural languages as if they were mapped onto a mathematical, or mathematizable, or quantifiable space: what one might call the monadic or mapping or isomorphic definition of translation.** Both word-for-word translation and sense-for-sense translation, those archaic Cain-and-Abel brothers of the translational pantheon, can be imagined according to this sort of mathematical, functional paradigm. **But what happens when we “translate” this sort of functional translation from the domain of quanta to the domain of rhetoric, even of philosophical rhetoric, where hyperbole has a quite different sort of standing? Here nothing like a smooth, mathematizable space prevails** outside of the fantasy of a certain Neoplatonist.” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 pp. x-xi)

“Over and over, as editors, we confronted the task of ‘translating the untranslatable’. This involved at once a plunge into the Benjaminian problematic of translatability as such, qualified by Samuel Weber in terms of Walter Benjamin’s activation of translation’s ‘-abilities’ (the *‘barkeit’* part of *Übersetzbarkeit*), and a trial (*épreuve*, endurance test) requiring **the conversion of translation failure into something of value and interest. We became increasingly drawn to the paradoxical premise of the book, namely, that of the untranslatable as the interminably (not) translated.**

One of the risks of the casual use of ‘untranslatable’ is the suggestion of an always absent perfect equivalence. Nothing is exactly the same in one language as in another, so the failure of translation is always necessary and absolute. Apart from its neglect of the fact that some pretty good equivalencies are available, this proposition rests on a mystification, on a dream of perfection we cannot even what, let alone have. If there were a perfect equivalence from language to language, the result would not be translation; it would be a replica. And if such replicas were possible on a regular basis, there would not be any languages, just one vast, blurred international jargon, a sort of late cancellation of the story of Babel. The untranslatable as a construct makes a place for the private anguish that we as translators experience when confronted with material that we don’t *want* to translate or see translated. A certain density or richness or color or tone in the source language seems so completely to defy rendering into another language that we would just as soon not try: the poverty of the result is too distressing, makes us miss the first language as we miss a friend or a child. This may be true at times, but we can make a virtue out of seeing differences, and the constant recourse to the metaphor of loss in translation is finally too easy. We can, in any case, be helped to see what we are missing, and that is what much of this book is about.” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 p. xiv)

“We have not explored all the words there are, or all languages with regard to a particular word, and still less all the philosophies there are. **We have taken as our object *symptoms of difference*, the ‘untranslatables’, among a certain number of contemporary European languages, returning to ancient languages (Greek, Latin) and referring to Hebrew and Arabic whenever it was necessary in order to understand these differences. To speak of *untranslatables* in no way implies that the terms in question, or the expressions, the syntactical or grammatical turns, are not and cannot be translated: the untranslatable is rather what one keeps on (not) translating. But this indicates that their translation, into one language or another, creates a problem, to the extent of sometimes generating a neologism or imposing a new meaning on an old word. It is a sign of the way in which, from one language to another, neither the words nor the conceptual networks can simply be superimposed.** Does one understand that same thing by ‘mind’ as by *Geist* or *esprit*, is *pravda* ‘justice’ or ‘truth’, and what happens when we render *mimesis* as ‘representation’ rather than ‘imitation’? **Each entry thus starts from a nexus of untranslatability and proceeds to a comparison of terminological networks, whose distortion creates the history and geography of languages and cultures. The *Dictionary of Untranslatables* makes explicit in its own domain the principal symptoms of difference in languages.**” (Cassin’s “Introduction” to Cassin, ed. 2014, p. xvii)

“What made it unique was its attempt to rewrite the history of philosophy through the lens of the “untranslatable”, defined loosely as a term that is left untranslated as it is transferred from language to language (as in the examples of *polis*, *Begriff*, *praxis*, *Aufheben*, *mimesis*, “feeling”, *lieu commun*, *logos*, “matter of fact”), or that is typically subject to mistranslation and retranslation.” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 p. vii)

“The work’s international reception was... enlarged by its translations (some of them under way) into Arabic, Farsi, Romanian, Russian, and Ukrainian. When Princeton University Press committed to publish an English edition, the editors confronted a daunting and very particular set of challenges: how to render a work, published in French, yet layered through and through with the world’s languages, into something intelligible to Anglophone readers; how to translate the untranslatable; how to communicate the book’s performative aspect, its stake in what it means “to philosophize in translation” over and beyond rewriting the history of philosophy with translation problems in mind” (Apter’s “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 p. vii)

Emily Apter worked closely with Etienne Balibar in the American edition of Cassin's dictionary. A team of scholars affiliated with the UK journal *Radical Philosophy* also collaborated in the project. As its French original, this is also a militant project, imbued with the spirit and the epistemology of *Continental philosophy*, and as such, directly confronting the Anglo-American tradition of analytical philosophy. In being a case of multiauthored translation, its nature also overlaps with recent studies on this unexplored phenomenon, its history and its current relevance (see Belén Bistué's *Collaborative Translation and Multi-Version Texts in Early Modern Europe*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2013)

“The collective affiliated with the U.K.-based journal *Radical Philosophy* was also integral to the project's gestation. ... *Radical Philosophy*'s abiding commitment to a practice of philosophical translation that would shake up the teaching of philosophy in departments dominated by the normative strictures of the Anglo-analytic philosophical tradition.

The *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, like its French predecessor, and like the editions published or under way in other languages, was a labor of many” (Apter's “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 p. viii)

“Cassin's dictionary was equipped from its inception to do battle with the ontological nationalism of German theories of the subject even while providing wide berth to entries for terms such as *Aufhebung* or *Dasein*. More pointedly, it offered a direct challenge to the preeminence of Anglo-analytic philosophical traditions. In her introduction, Cassin notes analytic philosophy's inveterate hostility to its Continental counterpart, its zeal (to borrow Cassin's vivid expression) “the puncturing of the windbags of metaphysics” (dégonfler les baudruches de la métaphysique). **One way to approach the *Dictionary* is as an attempt to combat analytic philosophy's dismissiveness toward Continental philosophy.** Ordinary language philosophy, along with the names of its avatars—Wittgenstein, Russell, Austin, Quine, and Cavell—was represented in the French edition, to be sure, but in general, the imperium of English thought was strategically curtailed. This was especially evident with respect to the tradition of British empiricism, which has no dedicated entry. ‘Sensation’ or ‘sensationalism’—bulwarks of British empiricism normally accorded substantial amounts of space in standard histories or encyclopedias of philosophy—were subsumed under entries on SENSE (*sens*), CONSCIOUSNESS (*conscience*), and FEELING. Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume received scant attention, especially in contrast to Kant, Hegel, and Husserl. As editors, we decided to preserve this skewed distribution of emphasis because it was clearly an important part of the polemical *raison d'être* of the French original.” (Apter's “Preface” in Cassin, 2014 p. xiv)

The following is from the entry TO TRANSLATE in Cassin, ed. 2014, pp. 1139-1155. See the basic definition of translation in the first two paragraphs of the article, which surveys, *inter alia*, the proximity between translation and interpretation through *hermèneuein* at the all-important moment when the Old Testament was translated into Greek, i.e. the *Septuagint Bible*; the proximity too between translation and metaphor (cf. about this Matthew Reynold's *The Poetry of Translation*); and the origins in German Romanticism (Schleiermacher) of the concepts of domestication and alienation / estrangement through translation (picked up recently by Lawrence Venuti)

“‘To translate,’ in the generally accepted sense of ‘passing from one language to another,’ derives from a relatively late French adaptation of the Latin verb *traducere*, which means literally ‘to lead across’ and whose application is both more general and vaguer than translation itself. We do well to keep in mind this initial, indefinite vagueness attached to the verbs we translate as the verb ‘to translate’, verbs that always also designate something additional or something other than the passage from one language to another. We should keep in mind as well the determining role of Latin culture as it appropriated and adapted Greek culture in the construction of the Latin languages. It takes at least two languages for any translation, but the Greeks, even when they spoke other languages, were willing to recognize only the *logos* [λόγος], their *logos*, the Greek language. Yet **the lexicon of translation is partly Greek as well, since it derives from another foundational moment, the commission in Alexandria of a translation into Greek of the Old Testament, the Septuagint Bible, which joins together both interpretation and translation within *hermêneuein* [ἑρμηνεύειν] and in the hermeneutic gesture.**

In different languages, particularly in Latin and German, a skein of recurring and varying tension runs through this lexicon of translation: **between the precise and exact relations from one word to another (the *verbum e verbo* of the *interpretes*) and the literary image (the *sensum* and *sensu* of the orator). The close proximity between translation, metaphor, and equivocation (the medieval *translatio*) is troubling for us. As a result, translation can both be appreciated as ‘treason’, treachery, or betrayal, according to the Italian saying ‘*traduttore, traditore*’, and on the other hand, as the very essence of tradition (starting with that *translatio studii* that applies to the displacement of Greek, then Latin, then Christian knowledge right through to the *Überlieferung*, or transmission, that enabled Heidegger access to an authentic *Übersetzung*, or ‘translation’). But as Schleiermacher explains, there are basically two, and only two, manners of translation: the exchange of supposedly equivalent linguistic values in the passage from one language to another according to the methods of an interpreting agency (*dolmetschen*) that ‘leaves the reader in peace as much as possible’; and the displacement of the reader in relation to his native language by virtue of the translation (*übersetzen*) such that they become foreign to each another, which is perhaps the best method for presenting it.” (TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, p. 1139)**

Cassin on Greek monolingualism (vs multilingualism), and the identification of *logos* as reason, discourse, language (as proper to man). The interesting concept of *hellênizein* = the arts of rhetoric, speaking correctly, freedom, civilization, individualism – communities, and the life in the city. There are echoes of this in Juan Luis Vives’s use of the expression and concept of language as the *flow of reason (rheuma logou)*. See in this respect the Greek concepts of *hellênizein* and *ὁμιλία*⁷ –

⁷ See the meaning of *ὁμιλία* in the Liddell and Scott online:

[http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0057%3Aentry%3Do\(mili%2Fa](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0057%3Aentry%3Do(mili%2Fa)
(accessed on 28/09/2014, 11:38)

A. intercourse, company, “ἔσθ’ ὁμιλίας κακῆς κάκιον οὐδέν” **A.Th.599**;
“τὸ ζυγγενές τοι δεινὸν ἢ θ’ ὄ.” **Id.Pr.39**, etc. ; ὁ. τινός *communio* or *intercourse with one*, **Hdt.4.174** ;
“πρὸς τινα” **S.Ph.70**, **Pl.Smp.203a**, al. ; τοὺς ἀξίους δὲ τῆς ἐμῆς ὄ. of my *society*, **Ar.Pl.776** ;
“ἢ σὴ ὄ.” **Pl.Hp.Ma.283d** ; ὄ. χθονός *intercourse with a country*, **E.Ph.1408** ; ἔχειν ἐν θεοῖς ὄ. live
among them, **Id.IA[1622]** ; “ἦρκειν εἰς ὄ. τι” **S.OT1489** ; ἢ καθ’ ὑμᾶς αὐτοῦς πολιτεία καὶ ὄ. public
and *private life*, **Th.1.68** ; ἐξ ὁμιλίας by *persuasion*, opp. βία, **D.Ep.1.12** : also in pl., “ἀνθρώπων κακῶν-
ται” **Hdt.7.16.α**, cf. **Epict.Ench.33.14**, etc. ; “φθειροῦσιν ἡθῆν χροῖσθ’ ὄ.κακαί” **E.Fr. 1024** (= *Men.218*)
; Ἑλληνικαὶ ὄ. *association with Greeks*, **Hdt.4.77** ; “ἐνδίκους ὄ.” **A.Eu.966** (lyr.) ; αἱ .
. συγγενεῖς ὄ. *intercourse with kinsfolk*, **E.Tr.51** ; “ὄ. κακαῖς χρῆσθαι” **Pl.R.550b** ;
“αἱ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὄ. καὶ αἱ τῶν πραγμάτων” **Arist.Pol.1336b32**, etc.

conversation – community – usage of a word – (Sextus Empiricus’ *Adversus mathematicos* 1.10.176-79)

“One needs at least two languages in order to translate. But the Greeks, in A. Momigliano’s expression (*Sagesse barbares*), were “proudly monolingualistic.” Instead of speaking their language, they let their language speak for them. In this way, **the polysemic value of the term *logos*** [λόγος] allowed them to dispense with distinguishing between discourse and reason, between the language they speak and the language proper to man (see LANGUAGE, LOGOS, and GREEK, box 4).” (TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, p. 1139)

“In a more definitive manner, ***hellénizein*** [‘ελληνίζειν] (after the adjective *hellén* [‘ελλην], ‘Greek’) **fixes under the same term the meanings of ‘speaking Greek’ and ‘speaking correctly’, or even, insofar as the corpus of rhetoric and the historico-political corpus are bound together here as one, to ‘behave as a free, civilized, and cultivated individual’—in short, as a person. To speak, to speak well, to think well, and to live well—these goals all nest together.** Two occurrences in Plato reveal their interrelatedness. In the *Meno* (82b), the only criterion that Socrates applies to the young slave in order for him to come to understand the idea of the square root is that he ‘Hellenize’: ‘*Hellén men esti kay hellénizei?* (He is Greek and speaks our language?) Answer: Yes, he is ‘born to the household’ (*oikogenês*). **In the *Protagoras*, the apprenticeship into political competence and the practice of *isêgoria*** [ἰσηγορία], **that equality of speech that is a characteristic of Athenian democracy.** (3273: In the city, all are teachers of virtue, just as everyone in the home teaches the child to speak Greek. ‘In the same way, if you asked who teaches *hellénizein*, you would not find anyone’. See VIRTÙ, Box 1; cf. B. Cassin, *L’Effet sophistique*, pt. 2. chap. 2)”) (TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, pp. 1139-40)

“Beginning with Aristotle, *hellénizein* or *hellénismos* [Ἑλληνισμός] serves as a chapter heading in treatises on rhetoric (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 3.5: ‘On correction’) or on grammar (Sextus Empiricus: ‘Is there an art of the Greek? [*Esti d’archê tês lexêôs to hellénizein*, *Adversus mathematicos*, 1.10). **One has the choice of rendering the first sentence of the Aristotelian description as ‘The basis of expression is to express oneself in Greek,’ or as ‘The principle of style is in speaking correctly’** (*Rhetoric*, 3.51407a20-21; on *lexis*, see WORD, II.B and SIGNIFIER/SIGNIFIED).

In order for what one writes to be easily read or spoken aloud, one must simply respect the ‘natural order’ (*pephukasi* [πεφύκασι]), the sequences set out by articles and conjunctions (that remain within the reach of memory in the same way as they are within hearing in the city) that respect semantic propriety (proper nouns, *idia*; see PROPERTY), propriety of reference (by avoiding ambiguities and circumlocutions; see COMPARISON, HOMONYM), and propriety of grammar (the internal consistencies of genre and number). →→→ Speaking

2. *sexual intercourse*, Hdt.1.182, X.Smp.8.22, Mem.3.11.14, etc. ;

“νομφικαὶ ὁ.” E.Hel. 1400 ;

“ὁ τῶν ἀφροδισίων” Arist.HA582a26 ; ἡ πρὸς τοὺς ἄρρενας οἱ τῶν ἀρρένων ὁ., Id.Pol.12 72a24,1269b29.

3. *instruction*, X. Mem.1.2.6 and 15 ; *lecture*, Ael.VH3.19 : in pl., title of work by Critias, Gal.18(2).656.

4. ὀμιλέειν ὀμιλίη to be versed in it by *practice*, opp.λόγῳ εἰδέναι, Hp.Art.10.

5. ἡ πλείστη ὁ. τοῦ ὀνόματος its commonest *usage*, Epicur.Ep.1p.22U. ;

so ὀμιλαὶ φωνῆς, αἱ τῶν λέξεων ὁ., Phld.Rh.1.288 S., Oec.p.59J. ; αἱ κοιναὶ ὁ. *commonusage*, S.E.M.1.1 ; τῶν ἰδιωτῶν -ιαὶ ib.64 ; “ἡ ἀνά χειρα-ία” A.D.Synt. 37.2 ;

“ἡ κοινὴ καλουμένη καὶ ἀνά χειρα-ία” Hermog.Id.2.7.

II. *association, company*, “ἀνδρῶν τῶν ἀρίστων ἐπιλέξαντες ὀμιλίην” Hdt.3.81, cf. A.Eu.57.

2. in collect. sense, τήνδ’ ὀμιλίαν χθονός these *fellow-sojourners* in the land,

ib.406 ; ναὸς κοινόπλους ὁ. *ship-mates*, S.Aj.872 ; “ἀδελφῶν ἡ παροῦσ’ ὁ.” E.Heracl.581, cf. Hipp.19 (dub. 1).

Henry George Liddell. Robert Scott. A Greek-English Lexicon. revised and augmented throughout by Sir Henry Stuart Jones. with the assistance of Roderick McKenzie. Oxford. Clarendon Press. 1940.

naturally, by following the accepted norms of clarity and precision—this remains the definition of Hellenism and of the classical ‘style’: ‘whoever Hellenizes... is able to present the idea of things in a clear and distinct manner, as in a conversation [*homilia* (ὁμιλία)] which signifies a band of warriors, companionship, society, commerce, relation—including sexual relation—the lessons of a master, discussion and the normal usage of a word’ (*Adversus mathematicos*, 1.10-176-79). This concept cannot but provide support for a claim to universal legitimacy.” (TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, p. 1140)

On Greek monolingualism and Greek terms for translation – interpretation – metaphor (compare with Matthew Reynold’s *The Poetry of Translation*) – translation and poetry (cf. Octavio Paz, among others)⁸

“If translation does not constitute a problem all unto itself, this is because the difference between languages is not taken into consideration as such. Instead, the place of translation is more of a gap or void. So it should not come as a surprise that there is no Greek verb that signifies ‘translating’ purely and simply, even if a certain number of them can be rendered that way.” (TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, p. 1140)

“The verb that Catherine Dalimier chose to render as ‘translation,’ *apodidōi* [ἀποδιδῶ], literally signifies ‘to render to someone by right,’ ‘to retribute,’ ‘to give in exchange,’ ‘to transmit’. It substitutes for the expression *tithenai eis ti* (389d, 390e), ‘to transpose, to impose’ (the name in itself) ‘in’ (syllables), as one imposes the form of a shuttle on a particular piece of wood: the terms definitely derive from another technical model. Most often, besides, the difference between languages is taken into account in the major philosophical texts only as a gap or void, as if by inadvertence. It is only implicit in the text or in a concept, and there is simply no term to specifically designate the operation of translation; thus, Aristotle’s *De interpretatione* simply mentions that ‘just as all men have not the same writing, so all men have not the same speech sounds’ (1.16a5-6; see SIGN, Box 1) and refers to the Stoics’ ‘signified’ as that which Sextus Empiricus defines as ‘what the barbarians don’t understand when they hear the sound’ (*Adversus mathematicos*, 8.11; see SIGNIFIED/SIGNIFIER, II.A)

The operation of translation is touched upon from many different points of view. Thus our verb *hellênizein*, when used transitively, can mean ‘learning Greek’ (Thucydides, 2.68), to ‘Hellenize’ a barbarian, or later—but **essentially only in relation to the translation of the Bible—to ‘express in Greek’, and thus to ‘translate’ words or a text** (in the second century CE, in Dion Cassius [55.3], in relation to what we would call the transliteration of ‘Noah’ or ‘Jacob’; see Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 1.6.1). **The same holds true for a number of composite verbs that incorporate meta, as indicating trans- port and trans- formation: metapherein** (to transport, transpose, employ metaphorically, or in report); *metaphrazein* (to paraphrase), and especially *metagraphein* (to change the text, to falsify, but also to transcribe, to copy). **These all designate literary operations of a poetic, rhetorical, or philological nature and only marginally take on the meaning of ‘translating’ in classical Greek.** (For *metaphrazein*, see Flavius Josephus, *ibid.* 9.14.2; for *metagraphein*, see Thucydides [‘On being translated’, 4.50.2] and Lucian, *How History Must Be Written*, 21, in which a purist claiming to be an inheritor of Thucydides purports to ‘transform Roman names [*metapoîēsai*]’ and ‘to translate them into Greek [*metagrapσαι es to hellênikon*] such as Chronion for Saturn’ or others even more ridiculous.” (TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, p. 1140)

⁸ See Pérez Fernández, “Traducción y Poética en Octavio Paz”, *Letral*, nos. 5 (2010) y 6 (2011). You can download the articles by clicking [here](#) and [here](#).

“The Aristotelian title *Peri hermêneias* is rendered as *De interpretatione*, as *Lehre vom Satz*, but never as ‘On Translation,’ and yet it is the phrase *hermêneuein*, meaning ‘interpreting, explaining, expressing,’ in the manner of one who puts his thoughts into words (Plato, *Laws*, 966b) as well as one who serves as the interpreter for the gods (the poet, the rhapsodist, the seer), that is the most likely candidate for the retroversion of ‘translating’ (starting with Xenophon, *Anabasis*, 5.44). At least this is what the future will hold (see below, II and III).” (TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, pp. 1140-41)

From Greece to Rome: first instance of *translatio imperii*. Classical ideas of translation (*vis*, compare with Bruni) vs. Jerome (*verba*). On the large variety of words used to refer to translation processes, and their implications – lexical and semantic fluidity. Again on the relation between hermeneusis – interpretation – imitation and translation.

“In the classical Latin authors, the translation from Greek into Latin very barely satisfies modern criteria, and the process of translation itself is not clearly defined in the Latin language: the verbs *vertere*, *convertere*, *exprimere*, *reddere*, *transferre*, *interpretari*, *imitari* can all refer to what we would call ‘literal translation’ as well as to looser adaptations of Greek models. The fact that we are unable to find a sharp distinction between literal translation and literary adaptation in these verbs rather clearly indicates that **the question of translation is posed differently in the classical period than it could subsequently be raised starting with Jerome and the translation of sacred texts, when faithful rendering *verbum pro verbo* will become the very principle of translation: for the classics, translation consists of adhering to a meaning (*vis*) and not to a word (*verba*), and it is primarily an occasion for reflection on the creative modalities of the Latin language. At play in ‘translation’ is the very reception of Greek culture in Rome, with all that entails.**” (TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, p. 1141)

“The uses of the verb *interpretari* in a single author reveal the fluidity of meanings that only contradistinctions can fix point by point. Thus Cicero has Varro say (*Academics*, 1.8) that he has imitated (*imitari*) rather than translated (*interpretari*) Mennipus. Cicero himself specifies that he followed (*sequi*) Panetius rather than **translating (*interpretari*)** him in his treatise *On Duties* (2.60). But **the same verb applies as much to the hermeneutic activities of the Stoics in relation to the mythic narratives (*On the Nature of the Gods*, 3.60) as to the interpretation of a philosophical doctrine (*On Moral Ends*, 2.34) or the adaptation of Greek works by the founders of Latin literature, such as Ennius did for *Sacred History* of Euhemerus (*On the Nature of the Gods*, 1.119).**” (TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, pp. 1141-2)

“None of the other verbs referred to above is sufficient to specifically designate the activity of translation: instead, each of them allows the Latin authors to define their work in relation to a Greek ‘model’. The lexicon of translation can thus be understood only in relation to the tensions of literary polemics and within the specific context of Latin literature.

When Plautus uses the verb *vertere* to refer to his translation / adaptation of a Greek play, his usage is not neutral but instead underscores the difficulties that underlie the development of the literary Latin language (*The Comedy of Asses*, v. 11). In Greek, this play is called *The Donkey Driver*. It was written by Demophilus, and Maccus [Plautus] translated it into the barbaric language (*vortit Barbare*). **‘To translate into the barbaric tongue,’ that is to say, into Latin, is a provocative expression** that Plautus also employs in *The Three Crowns* (v. 19), and it must be understood as a literary manifesto: that it is not a matter of submitting to the original language, the Greek, in relation to which everything else is the barbaric. On the contrary, in order to avoid the loss of meaning and end up with an incomprehensible language, one must

write in one's own language and create one's own language. This is why Terence can contrast his comic rival's ability to translate well as his inability to write well:

By translating well, but by writing poorly, he took good Greek comedies and made them into Latin ones that weren't.

([Q]ui bene vertendo et easdem scribendo male / ex graecis bonis latinas fecet non bonas.)

(*The Eunuch*, v.7-8)

(TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, p. 1142)

Very interesting: Cicero on philosophical translation (from Plato and Aristotle), and on translation as metaphor – and from here to translation as true creation. Rome's imperial appropriation through translation of Greek philosophy – see in this respect the quotation from Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*. Compare also with Lorenzo Valla's dedication of his Latin translation of the Greek historian Thucydides, where he describes himself as a soldier bringing into Latin (which stands as a symbol of the Roman Empire) the spoils of his conquest from the original Greek text. Cicero's *Brutus*, 274 and metaphors as *verba translata* (compare here with St Augustine and the *tumultus carnis*). Translation, immigration – Seneca on translation, domestication and citizenship Lucretius: poetry as translation from 'obscure subjects' to the luminous splendor provided by their translation into poetry (through metaphor and poetic devices). Compare with Shakespeare's 'airy nothings' which in poetry are given 'a local habitation and a name'

"The articulation between translating / adapting / creating sketched out by the Latin playwrights is explicitly taken up by Cicero, who defines his conception of philosophical translation in reference to the practices of the founders of Latin literature:

Even if I were to translate [*vertere*] Plato or Aristotle literally, as our poets did with the Greek plays, I hardly think I would deserve ill of my fellow citizens for bringing [*transferre*] those sublime geniuses to their attention... If I think fit, I will translate certain passages, particularly from those authors I just mentioned, when it happens to be appropriate, as Ennius often does with Homer and Afranius with Menander.

(*On Moral Ends*, 1.7)

What is at work in this 'transfer' from Greece to Rome is not some simple transport of booty, even if this dimension is always present in the background (see, e.g., *Tusculan Disputations*, 2.5: **where it is expressed that it is necessary to tear away [*eripere*] Greece's philosophical preeminence in philosophy and transfer it to Rome**): the verb *transferre* also describes the displacement of meaning that is at work in the deployment of metaphor. By using the same verb for the activity of translation and the creation of metaphors, Cicero establishes the link in language between translating and writing; one has only to apply to translation what he has to say about the development of metaphor, undoubtedly starting from the Aristotelian reflections on metaphor as a process of enrichment of language, to define translation as a true creation:

The third genre of ornament, the metaphorical use of a word, is born of necessity and constrained by need and inconvenience; it subsequently finds general application as a result of the pleasure and ease which it provides.

(*On the Ideal Orator*, 3.155)

(TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, p. 1142)

“But this *rapprochement* has a broader scope as it is inscribed in language itself. The Greeks, who have no need to ‘translate,’ do not take advantage of this potential usage of *metapherein* (Plato uses it once to designate the transcription of proper names: *Crito*, 113a), and when Plutarch invokes the philosophical works of Cicero (*Life of Cicero*, 40), he uses the verbs *metaballein* and *metaphrazein* to designate his ‘translations’ in general and employs the term ‘metaphor’ only in connection with isolated translations of terms that Cicero was unable to render through a word in its common form of usage. The work of polysemy that Cicero achieves through *transfere* is invisible to the Greek language because its referent is something only thought in Rome: to translate is to achieve a new splendor, a new brilliance that results from a use of language that is out of the ordinary, that results from borrowings instead of the familiar and proper usage: ‘these metaphors are a kind of borrowing [*mutationes*] which enable us to find elsewhere what we are lacking ourselves’ (*On the Ideal Orator*, 156). The language of the other can thus provide what is lacking, but borrowings are only acceptable and provide appropriate ornamentation if they are fully reappropriated. To put metaphors (*verba translata*) to good use, ‘rather than suddenly appearing in some place that does not belong to them [*alienum locum*], they must appear to take up residence [*immigrasse*] in their own surroundings’ (*Brutus*, 274). This none other than an integration, a borrowing that does not arrive as a foreigner but makes itself at home. Seneca will also say that the ‘Latin grammarians give the [*Greek*] word *analogia* the right to the city [*civitas*]’ (*Seneca’s Letters to Lucilius*, 120.4). This idea of the reception of the Greek language, described as the integration into the body of citizens, validates the link established between translation and the use of metaphors by the verb *transfere*. It does not consist of a change from one language to another. It takes place within a single language, as a result of the transfer from Greece to Rome, as displacements and borrowings that create splendor: ‘[T]he metaphors draw attention to the discourse and illuminate it like so many shining stars’ (*On the Ideal Orator*, 3.170). This is the sense in which Lucretius calls his poem a ‘translation’ of the doctrine of Epicurus: ‘bringing to light the obscure discoveries of the Greeks’ (1.136-137) and ‘composing sparkling verses on obscure subjects’ (1.933)—bringing new splendor and luminous intelligibility through translation by appeal to the senses. If ‘all metaphors are addressed directly to the senses, especially to the sense of vision, the most penetrating of them all’ (*On the Ideal Orator*, 3.160), one can see that what is at stake in the transference by translation is precisely to achieve a form of immediacy in the form of the ‘living’ language of Latin.”

(TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, pp. 1142-3)

Translation in the Middle Ages: translation as a trope → a transfer of meaning, a displacement of signification, or a change in signification for reasons of ornament or necessity → and from here to analogy and metaphor. →→→
‘The notion of *translatio* is truly at the confluence of the arts of language (grammar, logic, rhetoric) and of theology’

“The notion of *translatio* is truly at the confluence of the arts of language (grammar, logic, rhetoric) and of theology. In its widest accepted meaning, the term *translatio* designates a transfer of meaning, a displacement of signification, from a proper usage to an improper usage. In a narrower acceptance, which one can find in grammar or rhetoric (in Quintilian or Donatus, for example), *translatio* is equivalent to *tropus*, defined as a change in signification

for reasons of ornament or necessity (cf. Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*, 12.8-9). In an even narrower sense, *translatio* is equivalent to *metaphora*, which is one of the tropes; it entails using a word in some unusual and particular way, either because there is no proper word for this meaning or because this usage intensifies the meaning. The new use of the word is based on a perception of a resemblance between the thing that it properly signifies and the object to which it applies by transfer (e.g., when one says of some person: 'he or she is a lion' because of his or her strength). The two first meanings apply equally to a single word in isolation. The terms *translatio* and *transumptio*, which had been distinct from each other in antiquity (e.g. with Quintilian), were, according to some medievalists, used interchangeably in the Middle Ages.” (TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, p. 1146)

“In a very influential passage of his first chapter of the *Categories* of Aristotle, Boethius introduces the notion of *translatio*. He distinguishes two cases: (1) the transfer or meaning that occurs when one uses the name of one thing to designate another that has no name; this is done out of 'penury of names' and results in equivocation, since the same name now applies to two different things; (2) the transfer of meaning that occurs for reasons of ornamentation and that does not result in equivocation (e.g. using *aurigia* [cart driver] to refer to the pilot of a ship, although this has its own proper name: *gubernator*) 'Translation nullius proprietatis est' [transfer is a property that belongs to no thing],’ says Boethius, and this formula must be understood in relation to case (2): the transfer does not establish the property of a thing (since it does not receive its proper name by transfer) nor of a name (since the transferred usage does not constitute a stable or permanent property of the name). Abelard will also emphasize this latter point: the transfer occurs for some given length of time as part of a specific utterance and is to be understood in its context. He thus confirms that this does not lead to equivocation, since there is no new imposition of meaning, only an 'improper' usage. He adds that this kind of *translatio* is a form of *univocatio* because there is only a single imposition even if the term takes on an acceptance different from the original acceptance.” (TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, p. 1146)

Translation of the Bible. The Septuagint as a case of Greek monolingualism. The Greek translation of the Old Testament as the 'linguistic matrix for Christian doctrine'

“The translation of the Bible into Greek is not a counterexample to the monolingualism of the Greeks but rather an illustration of it. This translation is of Jewish inspiration rather than of Greek., born from the idea that Greek is de facto the language of culture par excellence, which enables it to render accessible the Book par excellence.

The body of literature that will be given the overarching title of *Biblia* in the 12th century of the Common Era was translated into Greek first, though only in part, in Alexandria starting in the third century before Christ. It was a great novelty in the world of culture. **These Greek 'writings' (*graphai*), which even today embody the Old Testament in the Greek Orthodox Church, served straightaway as the linguistic matrix for Christian doctrine, providing the concepts and expressions that course through the new phraseology.** These texts provided the basis for most of the older versions of the Bible, right up to the translations of Cyril and Methodius (middle of the eleventh century) into old Slavonic. Competing Greek versions of the text appeared in the course of the second century, including an extremely literal one, commissioned by the rabbis from the proselitizer Aquila. But this did not keep the former from serving as the exclusive source of the first Latin translations. **Saint Jerome first proposed a series of scientific and literary revisions before deciding to translate the Hebrew texts of Jewish writings directly into Latin. The end result of his work of revision and translation was the Latin Vulgate, the official Bible of Roman Catholicism until the middle of the 20th c.** Jerome remained the champion of what he would himself call *hebraica veritas*. This conception even served as a model for Luther's German Bible. But in actuality, and despite his intent, a reign of *latina veritas* was the result of Jerome's labors instead. For centuries the Latin Vulgate would provide the textual basis for most translations into the

so-called vernacular languages. Whatever the destiny of the Greek Bible itself, its appearance in classical antiquity signals an important moment in the very history of culture. Moses, in fact, lays down a challenge to Homer! And most of all, the objective foundations of the lexicon and of the discourse that have subsequently come to be known as ‘translation’ are put irreversibly in place.” (TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, p. 1143)

The Greek Jewish community – the *politeuma*, or ‘community within the city’ reinforced by the Greek translation of the Law of Moses – *nomos* or *nomothesia* (‘constitution’). The myth of the seventy-two translators. The *universalization* of the Bible through its translation into Greek – *the* language of learning par excellence.

“Thus, in the third century before Christ, the peoples of *Iouda*, or the *Ioudaioi*, took up the translation of their *hagiai graphai*, ‘holy writings’, into Greek, starting first and foremost with the Law of Moses, *nomos*—or as they would say, their *nomothesia*, or ‘constitution’. The *politeuma*, the ‘community within the city’ that they formed in Alexandria, protected their difference of nationality, and it would subsequently gain political recognition as well. Versions of the other books followed: spread out over two or even three centuries and probably completed by Christian writers. **This was an event without precedent. The idiom of the Greeks, the language of thought that aspired to universality, now became the language of the Bible.** Toward the end of the second century BCE, a widespread legend, first referred to in the *Letter of Aristeas*, would introduce ‘the book’ (*hē biblos*), as the law in question became Greek, as the extraordinary work of seventy-two scholars of *Iouda* at the request of the grand priest of Jerusalem. The order is said to have come from the royal librarian of Alexandria at the request of the second monarch of the Ptolemaic dynasty, Ptolemy Philadelphus (Ptolemy II). The latter wanted the books of the *Ioudaioi* included in the famous library of his sumptuous city. According to the same source, each of the translators translated the text in a rigorously consistent way, identical to the work of the other translators. **In the middle of the second century CE, Christian authors circulated or forged the letter and set in place the Latin word *septuaginta*, ‘seventy’. They made this into the general title of this collection of Greek writing that they had inherited and would henceforth be the only ones to use. The word is still in use today—although not without ambiguity, since the legendary role of the ‘seventy’ applied only to the five books of Moses—as the title of the Greek Old Testament.”**

(TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, p. 1143)

Most interesting: on how the translation of the Bible into Greek contributed to the lexical and semantic rearrangement in that language of the vocabulary used to refer to the activity of translation and all its associated processes. Translation and hermeneutics.

“The unprecedented event of the translation of the Law appealed immediately to the theoreticians of local Judaic community, which was entirely hellenophonic. **It was thus and at that moment that the conceptual field of translation became established in the Greek lexicon.** The verb *hermêmeueîn* and the nouns, *hermêneia* and *hermêneus* saw their respective meanings of ‘express’ or ‘signify’, ‘expression’, ‘signification’ or ‘interpretation’ and ‘interpreter’ become qualified to specifically signify ‘translate,’ ‘translation,’ and ‘translator.’ Other etymologically related and practically synonymous terms, such as *diermêneueîn* and *diermêneusis*, were subject to the same process. The word *metagraphê*, ‘copy’ or ‘transcription’, came itself to signify ‘translation’, and *metagraphêin*, ‘to transcribe’ or ‘to copy’, became equivalent to ‘translate’. **The verb *metageîn*, to ‘deport’, now applied to the text as ‘transferred into another language’; in other words, ‘translated’** (*Prologue* by the translator of the *Siracides* around BCE). Recourse was also taken to *metharmozeîn*, ‘to arrange

differently'. **Three great agents or Judaic witnesses of this semantic innovation succeeded one another between the second century BCE and the first century CE all of them convinced that the translation of the Law was in response to an external political will.** Around 180 CE, the philosopher **Aristobulus** claimed that the 'entire translation' (*hermêneia*) of the Law' was realized under Ptolemy Philadelphus, but he insisted that there had been previous attempts at translation, ones that were fragmentary or flawed, which is impossible to verify anyway. **His intention was to make more credible his own belief that Moses, the father or universal culture, was the original teacher of the Greek thinkers, especially of Plato and Pythagoreas, who would have learned directly from the Greek sources of 'the Law'** (text cited by Eusebius of Caesaria, *Praeparatio evangelica*, 13.12.1). Aristobolus was the first to demonstrate the use of *hermêneia* in the technical sense of 'translation.' A half-century later, and still in Alexandria, a lengthy piece of fiction appeared carried down in its entirety under the title *Letter of Aristeas*. This work decisively confirms the use of *hermêneia* as 'translation' a term it immediately distinguishes from *metagraphê*, 'transcription'. It also contains the formulaic expressions *ta tês hermêneias* and even *ta tês metagraphês*, the 'work of works of translation' that one 'executes' (*epitelein*), or that one 'achieves' (*telein*). As for the 'translators', it would seem that they are still designated only by a participle of the verb *dihermêneuin*."

(TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, pp. 1143-4)

Translation and prophecy. Translation as revelation → 'language (*logos*) as the interpreter (*hermêneus*) of thought or spirit (*nous*), whence his [Philo's] expression *ho hermêneus logos*, 'the speech which translates our thought'. Homer – epic as prophecy, etc. Cf. also the very interesting reference to Plato's *Ion*. Cf. also Vives' idea of language as *rheuma logou* → 'the semantic plenitude of the word *hermêneus* is thus assured'

"The decisive setting up of the complete lexicon of translation is both certified and commented upon by the Alexandrian exegete and philosopher Philo in the first decades of the first century. The relevance, if not the legitimacy, of the act of translating the *hierai bibloi* (the sacred books) or simply *graphai* (writings) is demonstrated within the framework of a theological reasoning in which the mythological figure Moses plays the central part. Here are two essential texts:

1. For any time that Chaldeans who know the Greek language, or Greeks who know Chaldean [i.e. Hebrew] were to come upon the two versions [*graphai*] simultaneously, namely the Chaldaic and the translated version [*hermêneustheisê*], they would look upon both of them with admiration and respect them as sisters, or rather as one and the same work in both substance and form, and **they would call their authors not translators [*hermêneustheisê*] but hierophants and prophets to whose pure minds it had been granted to go along with the purest spirit [*pneuma*] of Moses.**

(‘A Treatise on the Life of Moses’, 2.37)

2. For a prophet does not utter anything whatever of his own, but is only an interpreter [*hermeneus*] of another being who prompts and suggests to him all that he utters, at the very moment he is seized by inspiration [*enthousia*].

(‘The Special Laws’, 4.49)

For Philo, the Greek translation of the writings is equally as 'inspired' as the Hebrew original. The same holds true in his eyes for the interpretation of the sacred texts, which is limited to a small number of the elect, or the 'initiates.' **To add force to his argument, he resorts to the register of the mysteries in the same manner as the Alexandrian writers in their explications of Homer's works. →→→ The schema that underlies his propositions is that of language (*logos*) as the interpreter (*hermêneus*) of thought or spirit (*nous*), whence his expression *ho hermêneus logos*, 'the speech which translates our thought' (*De somniis*, 1.33). He uses the same schema in relation to the fact or process of divine revelation. **The science and God's word (*logos*) have their interpreter (*hermêneus*) in Moses.** Philo designates the latter as *ho theologos* (*De proemiis***

et poenis, 53; *De vita Mosis*, 2.115). Insofar as the divine *logos* expresses itself through the ‘holy laws [*nomoi hieroi*], Mose is their *hermêus*, or more precisely, *prophêtes*. Yet he himself needs interpreters in his own image and of his stature, whence Philo’s report of a chain of interpreters, ‘prophets’, in which the translator and commentator hold the same rank, each ‘inspired.’ (We can compare this with Plato’s *Ion*, in which the chain of enthusiasm goes from the muse or from the god to the poet and then to the rhapsodes, whose performances interpreted the interpreters [553c-535a]). Thus all the quantitative and qualitative divergences of the Greek version of the holy books are a priori justified and already fully recognized as authentic *graphai*. In some cases, the translator went to great lengths to repair the language of the works, occasionally going so far as to write what amounts to a new text. This is particularly evident for the book of Proverbs, entirely redrafted by a talented author or Greek wisdom. **This is indeed the case of a *hermêneus* who is not so much a ‘translator’ as an ‘interpreter’ with literary and even musical connotations, since the book also contains poetry. But if there is translation nevertheless, it is insofar as the biblical message remains constant through its potency and deep articulations in relation and opposition to everything else. The semantic plenitude of the word *hermêneus* is thus assured.”**

(TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, p. 1144)

Jerome (347-420, ‘trained at a high level of humanism in Rome) and the establishment of Christian Latin. Jerome also went *ad fontes*, for he shared the perplexity of Renaissance humanist translators at the profusion of different versions, and the shadow of falsehood or historicity that they cast upon the texts of Scripture. Thus, he went in search, through different phases and translations that took him ever closer to the original Hebrew versions, in search of the *hebraica veritas*.

“With Jerome (born in 347 CE near Emona, now Ljubljana in Slovenia, and died in Bethlehem in 420 CE), who was trained at a high level of humanism in Rome, the occidental destiny of the Christian Bible arrived at a decisive threshold. Very early on, **he undertook to revise the text of the Latin scriptures, which appeared first in Africa around the beginning of the third century CE, then in Spain and in southern Gaul, and finally in Rome.** Aside from the so-called Vulgate of Jerome, these writings are known as *Vetus Latina*, ‘old Latin,’ *Vetus editio*, *Antiqua translatio*, or *Vulgata editio*. Augustine called them *Italia*, ‘the Italian.’ Jerome considered all translations prior to his to be *vulgata editio*, or ‘commonly accepted editions,’ starting with the Septuagint (*Letters of St Jerome*, letter 57, to Pammachius, para. 6). The variants of this *editio*, and especially the recensions, seemed to reflect a very ancient model of Greek related to a Hebrew family of texts that were found among the scrolls of Qumran.”

(TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, p. 1144)

“This Bible made a significant contribution to the establishment of Christian Latin as distinct from classical Latin. **The vocabularies of occidental languages that derive from Latin are deeply influenced by it. Shocked by the profusion of variants and its general literary impoverishment (at one point a *sermo humilis* had been the rule), Jerome wanted the Bible to be worthy of a Roman society that was rediscovering its classics.** An extended stay in the East enabled him to perfect his knowledge of Greek and to properly learn Hebrew. He first used these skills with the encyclopedic accounts of **Eusebius of Caesarea**. Upon his return to Rome, he began to revise the Latin text of the Septuagint, limiting himself to stylistic corrections. In 386, he settled in Bethlehem permanently, where he discovered the *Hexapla of Origen*. His confrontation with this exhaustive synopsis in six columns raised **profound questions regarding the truth of the text and its language.** And he undertook the task of addressing them, limiting himself to the Hebrew canon of writings. He became increasingly open to **Greek versions of the text other than the Septuagint, such as those of Aquila, Symmachus ben Joseph, and Theodotion.** These were

much closer to the Hebrew text that was already the official Jewish version than was the Alexandrian translation, the classic text for the Christians. Jerome thus adopted the Hebrew text as the only basis for the ‘revealed’ truth what he called *hebraica veritas*. This would be the third and final phase of his work as a translator, which lasted from 390 to 405. In his Latin translation of the Hebrew corpus, he was returning *ad fontes*, ‘to the sources’. He put aside, although not completely, the other books contained in the Christian Bibles, generally known as deuterocanonic, which he called apochryphal. Beginning in the 13th century, the Latin Bible that derived from the work of Jerome was called the Vulgate. Its contents do not all come from Jerome. As in the case of most of the deuterocanonic books, it limits itself to adopting the older revision of the text of the *Vetus Latina*. The success of the long work of editing that the Vulgate embodies results from the fact that it answered the pressing need to have a standard text with a prestigious signator as well as being partly anonymous. It would thus remain the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church until the middle of the 20th century.”

(TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, pp. 1144-5)

Very interesting: Hebrew as the *matrix omnium linguarum* – Origen and Plato’s – *Cratylus* – ‘the indivisible link between ‘being’ (*on*) and the ‘name’ (*onoma*)... this union is most forcefully achieved in the Hebrew language, the primordial idiom and the most apt to express and guarantee the truth. See how Jerome differed in this from the views of Augustine of Hippo, in significant ways.

“As a firm proponent of the *hebraica*, or *hebraea veritas*, Jerome saw the Hebrew language as the ‘matrix of all languages’ (*matrix omnium linguarum*; *Book of Commentaries of the Prophet Sophonias*, 3.14-18), as the first language from which all others derive. As the originary language, Hebrew was thus at constant risk of having truth erode. Jerome was sympathetic to the pessimistic theory of history dear to Hesiod, which sees history as the progressive decay of humanity with perfect truth found only at its point of origin. So the Greek version of the Septuagint could only be a pale reflection of the Hebrew Bible. Nonetheless, Jerome believed himself qualified to translate the holy books because his interventions occurred after the coming of the Christ, the historical principle of all truth. In regard to the technical framework that he formulates, his competence is far greater than that of the Septuagint, whose version, he admits, had ‘prevailed with good cause in the churches because it had been the first one... and the apostles had made use of it’ (*Letters of St Jerome*, letter 67, para. 11). But he justifies his rule of the *hebraica veritas* through the philosophy of language, influenced by Origen and Plato’s *Cratylus*. Adopting the doctrine of the indivisible link between ‘being’ in Greek (*on*) and the ‘name’ (*onoma*) he shows that this union is most forcefully achieved in the Hebrew language, the primordial idiom and the most apt to express and guarantee the truth. He comments upon it in these terms:

Just as there are twenty-two letters in Hebrew with which to write everything that is said, and that the human language is captured through the elementary functions of the letters, so too are there twenty-two books of the Bible, through which, as by the letters and basic rudiments the tender childhood of the just man is instructed in the divine doctrine.

(Prologue to the Book of Samuel
in the Book of Kings)

[...]

The books translated by Jerome will not be ‘corrupted by the transfer into a third vase [*in tertium vas transfusa*]. ‘Stored in a very clean jug as soon as they leave the press, they will retain all their taste’ (Prologue to the books of Solomon)”

(TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, p. 1145)

The translator vs the orator – *interpres vs orator*. Augustine follows the Stoic philosophy of language—as opposed to Jerome.

“For profane works and in his youth, Jerome claims to have applied **the rules of Cicero or Horace, translating not ‘*verbum e verbo* but *sensum e sensu*,’ not ‘as a simple translator, but as a writer [*nec... ut interpres sed ut orator*]**. He specifies that ‘I have not translated the words, but rather the ideas [*non verba sed sententias transtulisse*]’ (*Letters of St Jerome*, letter 57, paras. 5 and 6). And he invokes those authors, starting with the Septuagint, who ‘translated according to the meaning [*ad sensum interpretati sunt*]’, or some others, like Saint Hillary of Potiers, who ‘captured the ideas in his own language by the law of the victor [*victoris juris transposuit*]’ (ibid.). **For the sacred texts Jerome requires *verbum e verbo*. But what this means is that he does not want to lose a single word, for each and everyone contains part of the divine ‘mystery’ (*mysterium* or *sacramentum*). He is thus a ‘translator’ and not a ‘prophet’: ‘It is,’ he states, ‘the erudition and richness of the words that translate what one understands [*eruditio et verborum copia ea quae intellegit transfert*]’ (Prologue to the Pentateuch). Even if he uses it, he rejects Aquila’s Greek translation, done by a ‘meticulous interpreter [*contentiosus interpres*] who translates not only the words but also the etymologies’ (*Letters of St Jerome*, letter 57, para. 11)—in other words, Jerome rejects the servile forms of literality that evacuate the ‘mystery’, the carrier of truth. In addition, he affirms that the *ad verbum*, or literal, version ‘sounds absurd’ (ibid.). **The hermeneutic way of putting them *verbum e verbo* to use allows the talent—or even the genius—of the translator, in this case Jerome, to come into play without affecting the meaning or *mysterium*. It is even possible sometimes to ‘keep the euphony and propriety of the terms [*euphonia et proprietates conservetur*]’ (ibid., letter 106, para. 55). This explains and justifies the literary qualities and even the audacities of Jerome’s translation, which is certainly exempt of all servility.”****

(TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, p. 1145)

“Jerome’s contemporary and correspondent Augustine rejected the rule of *hebraica veritas*. For him the Greek text of the Septuagint is ‘inspired by the holy Spirit’: it is the very best version in existence. This means that if there is an original truth, it is contained within this text. This Greek Bible had truly announced the Christ (e.g., by introducing the adjective *parthenos*, ‘virgin’, to translate ‘young woman’ in reference to the mother of the Emmanuel, in Isaiah 7:14), and the church made this translation its own. **Augustine believed in the progress of humanity through history, culminating, in its final stage, which the –Christ had ‘completed’.** In addition, his position is directed by a **concept of language that stems from the Stoic doctrine of the *res et signa*** (the things and the signs; *On Christian Teaching*, bks. 1 and 2, passim). **If *on* and *onoma* are fused, *res* and *signa* are separated. The unique and only *res* for Augustine is God, and *veritas* is just another way of saying God. Language, on the other hand, falls under *signa*, and writing is only a ‘sign’ of a ‘sign’: it cannot be identified with truth, which belongs to the order of the *res* (see SIGN, and below IV)”**

(TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, pp. 1145-6)

Translation and philosophy: translation and tradition. Heidegger, Gadamer and hermeneutics. Translation and ontology. Translation-interpretation as ‘part of a living dialogue’. Heidegger’s teleological view of translation (comparable to Benjamin, and of course, indebted to German Romanticism). Translation and *Bildung*. Translation as liberation and ‘unconcealment’ in the German philosophical tradition (from Luther to the Romantics, Benjamin and Heidegger) vs. the betrayal and infidelity ingrained in the French and Italian vocabularies of translation.

“In *Truth and Method* by Hans-Georg Gadamer “The Translator as Interpreter” (*Der Übersetzer als Dolmetsch*) designates the interpreter-translator as part of a living dialogue.” (TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, p. 1149)

“It is in this same sense that Heidegger took up the philosophical problem of translating: *übersetzen* is to pass from one shore to another, the translator being the ferryman (*paquebot*). *Übersetzen* signifies ‘translation’ in the Latin sense of *traducere*, ‘to lead across’. ‘To translate’ is to bring a discourse across from one language into another, that is to say, to insert it into a different milieu, a different culture. Translation is not to be understood as a simple ‘transfer’ or as a pure linguistic ‘version,’ but instead within the general development of the spirit. This idea, already present in Luther, would be taken up by Goethe, Herder, and Novalis, and in a general way by the first romantics that considered this exchange between languages as the condition of *Bildung* (Berman, *The Experience of the Foreign*). Schleiermacher’s theory of the methods of translation, which favors the reader’s encounter with the foreign, is likewise completely based on the analysis of this movement. ‘Translation’ is thus considered as a ‘transplantation’: to translate is ‘to transplant [*verpflanzen*] to a foreign soil the products of a language in the domains of the sciences and the arts of discourse, in order to enlarge the scope of action of these products of the mind’ (‘Über die verschiedenen Methoden’). F. Schlegel used similar formulas as early as 1798: ‘Each translation [*Übersetzung*] is either a *transplantation* [*Verpflanzung*] or a *transformation* [*Verwandlung*], or both at the same time’ (*Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel Ausgabe*, 18:204, fr. 87). The same metaphor allows Benjamin to talk of a *Nachreife*, that is to say, a ripening of words past the point of their usefulness (‘Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers’).

This is the classical perspective that Heidegger inherited when he affirmed that translation transposes the work of thought into the spirit of another language and thus transforms thought in a fruitful manner: this is why a translation ‘serves mutual comprehension in a higher sense. And each step in this direction is a blessing for the peoples’ (Heidegger, author’s prologue to Henri Corbin’s French translation of *What is Metaphysics?*). The ‘translation’ of *Über-setzung* (*Über-setzung*, with the accent on the penultimate syllable) is thus, ‘trans-lation’ (*Über-setzung*), **the transposition of a thought into another universe of thought** (Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*). The displacement of the stressed accent indicates the focus of the thought: **to lead to the other side, to another context that will reveal its truth**. Such a passage can be measured by what it passes over, ‘a bound over a trench,’ as ‘*Sprung über einen Graben*’ (*Off the Beaten Track*), which becomes in Gadamer an ‘abyss’ (*Kluft*; *Truth and Method*).

Thus translation is no longer a simple transfer, but an inscription into another relation to the world or global form of comprehension of the world, according to the general structure of understanding. *Übersetzen* is thus not a ‘replacing’ (*ersetzen*) but a ‘transposing’ (*es setzt über*): there is a true ‘transfer’, ‘transport’ (Heidegger, *Parmenides*).

If Heidegger’s analysis of the term ‘translation’ as ‘transmission’ remains within the classical perspective, he nonetheless inflects it by introducing the dimension of truth.

[...]

If ‘translation’ is ‘treason’ or ‘betrayal’ in French, it is because even a beautiful translation does not express the original text. The translation ‘abandons’ the original. But by underscoring the tie to tradition, Heidegger instead conveys the *Übersetzung* of fundamental concepts into the historical languages, that is to say, the translation of a culture, touching upon the essence of language, as an *Überlieferung* (*The Principle of Reason*): *Übersetzung* as *Überlieferung* ensures a reprise, a taking over (*Übernahme*), which is a reception or ‘collection’. In *Übersetzung / Überlieferung* the transposition is a reappropriation, a deliverance, a liberation:

[T]radition [*Überlieferung*] is what is proper to its name: a transmission, a handing over, a delivery [*ein Liefern*] in the Latin sense of *liberare*, a liberation. As a liberation

tradition opens up and brings to light hidden treasures of what has never ceased from being, even if this light is only a first tentative dawn.

(Heidegger, *Principle of Reason*)

There is thus an inflection despite the relation between *überliefern* and *tradere*, ‘to betray’, ‘to hand over’, ‘to reveal’ (German has kept *tradieren* and *Tradition* as synonyms of *überliefern*, *Überlieferung*). For the connotations are different in French: if *livrer* can be traced back to its origin in *liberare* by Heidegger, to link *traduire* to *trahir* is to place it under that sign of infidelity and falsehood. But in following Heidegger’s German, on the other hand, what translation reveals instead is the ‘truth’, the ‘unconcealment’. The French language seems less inclined to think of tradition as a revealing, whereas the German seems less inclined to think of tradition as treachery and betrayal.”

(TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, p. 1150)

See the important conclusion to the entire article on TO TRANSLATE, which orients the whole piece, within the context of this philosophical lexicon of untranslatables, bringing together the notions of translation, thinking, philosophy and tradition – translation, interpretation, cognition and knowledge.

→→→ translation as an interpretation of the world

“The importance attributed to translation in contemporary German thought, and especially in Gadamer’s hermeneutics (*Truth and Method*), is based on this approach. In effect, Gadamer sees ‘Heidegger’s genius’ in the analyses that lead back to the ‘natural meaning of words and to →→→the wisdom that can be discovered in language’ (*Philosophical Hermeneutics*). In this context, the rehabilitation of tradition is inseparable from the concept of translation. In *Truth and Method*, it is this notion that opens up the reflection on →→→the ‘ontological turn taken by hermeneutics with language as its guide’: →→→not only is tradition usually transmitted to us through translation (*Truth and Method*), but it is essentially ‘translation’. →→→Tradition-translation transmits interpretations, that is to say, the understanding of the world that constitutes the framework in which the world reveals itself to us and in which the existential dimensions of comprehension are inscribed (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, para. 31). So →→→ to understand is both to receive and to translate what we have received. But this translation is *trans*-lation, a form of passage ‘beyond’ that Gadamer calls the ‘fusion of horizons’ (*Truth and Method*). From this point on, inscribed within an encompassing comprehension, translation carries with it a passivity that refers back to the idea of a comprehension that is always other. In effect, if translation liberates by submitting to tradition, and this liberation is also a betrayal, then one can understand how ‘we understand in a different way, if we understand at all’ (*Truth and Method*). Heidegger made the same claim, although in a less radical fashion: explication does not yield a better understanding, but just another one ‘all the while still encountering the same’ (*Off the Beaten Track*). →→→Difference and identity are the gap that translation straddles and that becomes an abyss for Gadamer. Here, translation, in its inevitable infidelity, becomes the revealer of truth.

Thus →→→translation-tradition-treason loses the linguistic rigor on which it was based and becomes in Gadamer and later in Heidegger, →→→the very revelation of the essence of language as a dimension of human accomplishment (cf. Escoubas, “De la traduction”). ‘To translate’ becomes synonymous with ‘to think’. In this context, it is in the very term in German that we can read the passage of translation from simple transfer to →→→translation as an interpretation of the world (see WELTANSCHAUUNG)”

(TO TRANSLATE, in Cassin, ed. 2014, pp. 1150-1)