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Translation as the Mirror Image of Hermeneutics

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Abstract The aim of this paper is to question if, in the field of translation and hermeneutics, we are now facing new challenges. In fact, after the renewal of studies on Schleiermacher and the different methods of translating, and after A. Berman's research on the role of translation in the *Bildung* and H.-G. Gadamer's and P. Ricoeur's work, the relationship between hermeneutics and translation is getting to know a new development. We will identify this new development by exploring a question that emerges from the above work, the question of the untranslatable. Outlined by Ricoeur, by Jacques Derrida and by Walter Benjamin, this concept of the untranslatable is revealed, in the wake of Luigi Pareyson's hermeneutics, to be positive: rather than expressing the impossibility of translation, it points to the inexhaustible nature of truth.

Keywords Truth. Untranslatable. Hermeneutics. Luigi Pareyson. Mirror Image.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Open Questions. – 3 Hermeneutics, the Untranslatable, and Truth.

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1 Introduction

The title of this article refers to a long history which, beginning in the modern period, unfolds across the 19th and 20th centuries. That history could be traced from Friedrich Schleiermacher and his different methods of translation to Antoine Berman and his studies devoted to the role of translation in *Bildung* – alternately, one could begin with Walter Benjamin and proceed to the studies concerning the relation between translation and culture in the work of Laurence Venuti, as well as to the proximity between translation and hermeneutics that is found in Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur. The main ideas of these philosophers are well-known and there is no need to summarise them here.[1]

Our task here is to probe these potentialities in light of several questions that characterise translation 'as such', as it were, in order to see how hermeneutics responds to them. It is this alone that the title "Translation as the Mirror Image of Hermeneutics" is meant to indicate an investigation into the potentialities of hermeneutics: seeing in what measure and how it innovatively addresses questions concerning translation that remain unresolved, doubtful, and open – questions whose destiny is perhaps to never be completely resolved. The "Mirror Image of Hermeneutics" is thus less an indication of method than it is a question; namely, how does hermeneutics deal with the questions that translation poses? How does it respond to them? The aim here is not to explain the meaning of a relation which already exists between the two, but rather to see what hermeneutics can explain or offer for understanding given that the questions that translation must face have changed.

2 Open Questions

Are there questions that characterise translation as such and which, having still not found an answer, constitute a provocation to hermeneutics? It seems to us that the question of 'equivalence' obligates us to answer in the affirmative. When passing from an original text to its translation, is the same thing said or 'almost' the same thing?

* Translated from French by Marco Dozzi.

1 See Cercel 2009. Cf. also Siever 2010. Another monograph that poses the question of translation and interpretation is Lenk 1993. Recently, there has also been a quite interesting renaissance of studies on translation in Italy. We will limit ourselves to citing two monographs that take up the question of the link between translation and interpretation: Nardelli 2021 and Hrniez's 2022. Finally, I have also elaborated upon the issue that is discussed in this essay in Canullo 2017. This book contains a more articulated exposition of my theses.

This question opens a wide field concerning the choice of translation methods, as Schleiermacher well understood. To the list of different methods of translation, one can now add the indispensable investigations in philosophy of language and in analytic philosophy, for whom the question of equivalence (linguistic as well as textual) is essential.

What is (or what must be) the criterion of equivalence? And how should we pose the question concerning this criterion? In the 18th century, Johann Breitinger said that the best translation would be one that is totally faithful to the original text:[2] one that would be carried out by substituting each word with an equivalent word in the target language, which was possible due to the (presupposed) existence of a community of human languages and thoughts. Arthur Schopenhauer opposed this thesis, affirming in his *Parerga et Paralipomena* that a language cannot be wholly interchangeable with another, and hence that equivalence was impossible.[3] Moving beyond this opposition, Francesca Ervas in Italy has recently proposed another equivalence that she calls "semantic".[4] On this view, the translator instead has the difficult task of discerning the intentions of the author and to be a mediator between him or her and the linguistic system of the community that receives the text. Using an approach grounded in analytic philosophy, Ervas analyses the theses of Davidson and Quine and explains the critical remarks that Davidson addresses to the philosopher of "radical translation".[5]

Despite these efforts, however, the question of equivalence is still haunted by the opposition between the partisans of its necessity and those of its impossibility. Paul Ricoeur has taken up this question by reformulating it in terms of the pair 'translatable/untranslatable'. If total equivalence between the original and its translation is impossible, this is owed to the fact some things are untranslatable. And yet, given that "in spite of everything, we translate", another kind of equivalence must be thought: an "equivalence without identity".[6] As a corollary to this formulation, the pair 'translatable/untranslatable' is replaced by 'faithful/unfaithful'. Since we are always in a situation of translating languages, texts, and cultures, ensuring that understanding and cohabitation are possible despite such cultural differences requires testing the limits of the faithfulness of a translation to its source. Noting that translation is inscribed within the "long litany of items which are 'in spite of everything'"[7] and approaching what

2 See Breitinger [1740] 1966.

3 See Schopenhauer [1815] 1891.

4 See Ervas 2009.

5 For Quine's "radical translation", see Quine 1959, 148-72; 1969.

6 Ricoeur 2006, 22 [2004, 40].

7 Ricoeur 2006, 33.

Antoine Berman called the "desire to translate",[8] Ricoeur notes the heuristic role that translation plays in relation to the target language; that is, the translator's own language. In other words, the goal of the "desire to translate" is "the enlargement of the horizon of one's own language" as well as education, *Bildung*, and "the discovery […] of resources in one's own language that have been left uncultivated".[9] Of course, this enlargement that is brought about by the translation does not eliminate the dilemma of 'faithful/unfaithful', to which Ricoeur replies that the alternative is nourished by the fact that

> […] there is no absolute criterion for good translation; for such a criterion to be available, we would have to be able to compare the source and target texts with a third text which would bear the identical meaning that is supposed to be passed from the first to the second. […] Hence the paradox of the following dilemma: a good translation can only aim at a presumed equivalence, one that is not founded in a demonstratable identity of meaning. It is an equivalence without identity.[10]

Thus, for Ricoeur, the pair 'faithful/unfaithful' replaces the pair 'translatable/untranslatable' as an answer to the problem of equivalence. The untranslatable refers to the term or the concept that is lacking in the target language. We propose referring to this idea of the untranslatable as 'negative'. It is negative not only in terms of the formulation of the term ('untranslatable' insofar as 'not translatable'), but also because it is conceived by contrast and opposition to a hypothetical positive which would be its equivalent – and this applies even to Ricoeur's 'equivalence without identity'. From an analytic perspective, Ervas also notes that her 'semantic equivalence' has the explicit purpose of defending translation from the snares of the untranslatable.[11] Thus, it is by posing the question of equivalence that translation discovers the untranslatable: its 'stumbling block'. As Marc de Launay has noted, this obliges the translator to re-write the text.[12] Of course, this is a hermeneutical task because, as De Launay writes,

> […] instead of a third text, and in its place, translators have only a hermeneutic at their disposal; that is, the reconstruction of an original that must, in the best of cases, show which aspects of

8 See Berman 1984.

9 Ricoeur 2006, 21 (translation modified) [2004, 39].

10 Ricoeur 2006, 22 (translation modified) [2004, 40].

11 Ervas 2009, 25-9.

12 De Launay 2006, 40-52.

> this original are innovations relative to the discourse it was contemporaneous with, whereby the discourse served as a foundation for such innovation. It would thus also show which aspects are reprises of the discursive and – more generally – cultural tradition which was its context.[13]

That said, the task and power of hermeneutics is the search for an equivalent – even without identity. This is because, despite the difficulties that spring from cultural and linguistic differences, or despite an effective untranslatability, one translates 'in spite of everything'.

In this context, there is a merging of translation and hermeneutics in Gadamer's famous proclamation:

> The situation of the translator and that of the interpreter are fundamentally the same. In bridging the gulf between languages, the translator clearly exemplifies the reciprocal relationship that exists between interpreter and text, and that corresponds to the reciprocity involved in reaching an understanding in conversation. For every translator is an interpreter […] The translator's task of re-creation differs only in degree, not in kind, from the general hermeneutical task that any text presents.[14]

Thus, the 'power of hermeneutics' would consist in making translatability possible despite the difficulties posed by the difference between languages.

Is this solution to the question satisfying to such a degree that we recognise that, in the end, it is the only possible reading of the untranslatable? This does not seem to us to be the case, and it suffices to read (even quickly) the theses of Walter Benjamin and of Jacques Derrida to hear different echoes, ones that call for innumerable commentaries and new investigations.[15] Here, it seems to us, we are dealing with what we call the 'untranslatable' in a positive sense: an untranslatable that is not in opposition to the 'in spite of everything' of translation. To the contrary, we would say – paraphrasing Benjamin – that this is an untranslatable that forms the task of translation.

Regarding Benjamin's text *The Task of the Translator*, we can say today what Ricoeur said a long time ago about phenomenology: that is, that it was "the sum total of Husserl's work and the heresies that came from Husserl himself".[16] Benjamin's text has indeed had the

13 De Launay 2006, 51.

14 Gadamer 1975, 405.

15 See Saraniti 2009.

16 Ricoeur 1986, 9.

same fate, being expanded by numerous and original commentaries, sometimes heretical, of which Benjamin himself has been a source of inspiration. This occurred, we suggest, because it was a study which had an authentic heuristic power capable of bringing to light the creative and revelatory core of translation itself. And by that very power, this text has never ceased to grow, to expand, as Benjamin said of the target language, whose destiny is to change and to discover its truth thanks to the new possibilities opened up by the translation.[17]

This growth is constituted by those commentaries which, not being limited to a re-writing of the text, achieve progress in the reflection on translation. Here we will cite two well-known commentaries: Derrida's texts *Des tours de Babel*[18] and *What is a Relevant Translation?*,[19] as well as Antoine Berman's book *The Age of Translation. A Commentary on Walter Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator"*.[20] It is no coincidence that these commentaries insistently question not only the meaning and messianic character of the untranslatable, but also its capacity to renew and to discover other possibilities in language – just as Benjamin suggested and Berman has also noted:

> […] for Benjamin, translation has no meaning for the original text. We might add that via translation the text has reaffirmed and corroborated its base untranslatability […] Just as translatability structures the text, just as the desire to be translated is inscribed within the original, like the original's desire to be torn away from itself and its language, untranslatability structures the text too; we might even say that it is its most intimate source of pride […]. The text finds its deepest core in its untranslatability – it is the very thing that allows us to attribute a 'core' to the text […] The more translation, in its radicalness, tries to exhaust the untranslatability of a text, the more this untranslatability reveals new layers of untranslatability, *ad infinitum*.[21]

Even Derrida has insisted on untranslatability in his reading of Benjamin. In his commentary, the positive sense of the untranslatable makes its appearance after the study on the untranslatability of the proper noun 'Babel' and, in particular, after the remarks on translation that arise from the original text conceived of as a 'core':

17 Benjamin 2000, 75-83.

18 Derrida 1985, 165-207 [1998, 203-35].

19 Derrida 2000, 365-88 [2005, 174-200].

20 Berman 2018 [2006]. In addition to the texts just cited, one could add Robinson 2022.

21 Berman 2018, 79-80 (translation modified) [2006, 68-9].

> One recognises a core (the original as such) by the fact that it can bear further translating and retranslating. A translation, *as such*, cannot. Only a core, because it resists the translation it attracts, can offer itself to further translating operations without letting itself be exhausted.[22]

It is this core which we propose to call the 'positive untranslatable': an irreducible core that can only be discovered on its own basis.

Thus, there are indeed two forms of the untranslatable. But is there a link between the negative and the positive meaning? Do these meanings share something more than a name? The negative sense of 'untranslatable' results from the difficulties that we encounter when the translator's reference point is equivalence, whereas the positive sense emerges as a core that must be incessantly re-translated. However, this legitimate distinction risks becoming artificial if we understand it in an absolute sense. Indeed, the two senses present two different meanings of a single trait: that is, the impossibility of a reproduction of the original by the translation. In that case, however, are we still dealing with hermeneutics and its power?

Of course, the question always comes back to the meaning of comprehension and the interpretation of texts, but the discussion up to this point seems to lay greater emphasis on the strengths of hermeneutics rather than those of translation. We seem to be dealing with the passage from one age to another: from the age of reason which Jean Greisch has called "hermeneutics"[23] to the age of translation. Thus, the question becomes: is there still a task that characterises hermeneutics as such, one that demonstrates its own capacity to answer the questions opened by translation? One could object that, in view of the above, it would be preferable to invert the terms in the title of this article and speak of 'Hermeneutics as Mirror Image by Translation'. That would nevertheless not permit a heuristic internal to hermeneutics itself – a heuristic that we propose to introduce with the following question: given that the translative act is a 'hermeneutical matter', how can it change and transform itself all while responding to questions opened by an act that deploys its powers? In other words: how does answering the questions discussed so far have an impact on hermeneutics? What are the potentialities of hermeneutics that come to light in the very instant in which it responds to the questions that have been discussed so far?

The open question here is the problem of the untranslatable, and it is on that basis that hermeneutics will be questioned once again. But is this attempt legitimate? Is the untranslatable a hermeneutical mat-

22 Derrida 1985, 192 [1998, 225].

23 Greisch 1985.

ter as much as it is a matter of translatability? For us, this is a hermeneutical question, because what cannot be translated (because there is no equivalent to it or even because it evades translation) calls for an interpretation that responds to the desire to translate. Of course, there are other questions (the spirit/letter debate, the faithful/unfaithful dichotomy) that are hermeneutical matters, but the untranslatable leads to direct proximity with hermeneutics. When it comes to the untranslatable, a series of questions spontaneously arise that are decisive for hermeneutics and which converge around the question of truth. The following are two examples, borrowed from Derrida and Benjamin.

Commenting on Benjamin's affirmation that a translation's target language grows and expands under the influence of translation, Derrida writes:

> If the growth of language must also reconstitute without representing […] can translation lay claim to the truth? Truth – will that still be the name of what determines the laws of translation? Here we touch – at a point no doubt infinitely small – the limit of translation. The pure untranslatable and the pure transferable here pass one into the other – and it is the truth, "itself materially".[24]

And later on:

> Truth is apparently beyond every *Übertragung* ["transfer"] and every possible *Übersetzung* ["translation"]. It is not the representational correspondence between the original and the translation, nor even the primary adequation between the original and some object or signification exterior to it. Truth would be rather the *pure language* in which the meaning and the letter no longer dissociate.[25]

Yet how does Benjamin pose the question? What does he have in mind when he speaks of truth?

> The translator's task is to find the intention inherent in the language into which the work is to be translated, on the basis of which an echo of the original is awakened in it […] his work is animated by the great motive of integrating the plurality of languages into a single true language […] [a language in which] the languages themselves agree, complemented and reconciled with each other in their mode of meaning. If there is indeed a language of truth, in which the ultimate secrets toward which all thinking strives are peacefully and even silently contained, then this language of truth

24 Derrida 1985, 190 [1998, 223].

25 Derrida 1985, 195-6 [1998, 228].

> is the true language. In fact, this language is concealed intensively in translations, and the anticipation and description of this language is the only perfection the philosopher can hope to achieve.[26]

It is important to note what Benjamin says here about pure language; i.e., *reine Sprache*, the language of truth. Combining Kant's sense of *rein* with Hölderlin's,[27] Berman writes: "*Rein* also means empty; transitive. Pure language is language that does not circulate content; language that reposes in itself and is not a means toward…".[28] And later on: "Pure language is the non-said *par excellence* of natural languages";[29] a language that is always to come. Here Berman is interpreting Benjamin's *reine Sprache*. However, no commentary limits itself to being a paraphrase: it expands the text. It is thus by this return to the text – making it expand and grow, as Benjamin said of language – that we propose to connect truth and pure language, thereby bringing these two commentaries (Derrida and Berman) together despite the different motivations which drive them and the different horizons within which they are situated. These commentaries constitute the growth of the original text. What has grown, what has increased, is the question of the untranslatable – a question that simultaneously stimulates the question of truth to mature within itself through a sort of internal dehiscence. For even if pure language is untranslatable, this language is nonetheless the language of truth: a question which comes to light in this in-between that constitutes the gap between pure translatability and pure untranslatability.

Through this growth of the text within its commentaries, at least two traits appear: the question of the untranslatable and the question of truth come into contact in the space that is generated by the fact that the text is translatable in theory (*de jure*), but untranslatable in practice (*de facto*). Yet the truth is also this *reine Sprache* which is "the non-said *par excellence*". Thus, we are dealing with a truth that is an interstice; a gap – a truth which is always to come; a truth that is always an inexhaustible 'task'. It is a truth that nourishes translation all while remaining unsayable; ineffable. It is no coincidence that Berman calls attention to precisely this characteristic of *reine Sprache*. We are faced with the paradox of the untranslatable in the positive sense: this is what makes truth accessible by negation (*per viam negationis*), which is to say that attains a true ineff-

26 Benjamin 2000, 80 (translation modified).

27 "'Pure', in Kant, signals everything that is not empirical (*a posteriori*), everything that is a priori in nature […] But Benjamin's *rein* has an additional source: Hölderlin […] *Rein*, for Hölderlin, is what connects us to the source" (Berman 2018, 129).

28 Berman 2018, 129.

29 Berman 2018, 129.

fable. Because we are dealing with the positive sense – which is to say, ineffable truth – how is it that it is not translation, but hermeneutics that can answer this question? How is it put to the test? Indeed, both translation and truth are wholly 'a hermeneutical matter'. Yet does this remain true even when truth becomes a matter of the untranslatable, or even an untranslatable question?

3 Hermeneutics, the Untranslatable, and Truth

Let us return to our question: how do the potentialities of hermeneutics reveal themselves in answering the questions that have been posed? Until now, the question that has been posed is: what truth is involved in the question of the untranslatable? We have offered an answer by deploying truth negatively, treating it as ineffable and as always to come – and we have done so paradoxically, by posing the question from the viewpoint of an untranslatable that is conceived positively. We propose grasping the meaning of this inversion (the positive untranslatable, negative truth) in the absence of a hermeneutics that poses the question of truth positively. The question thus becomes whether we have a non-negative meaning of truth at our disposal, one that conceives it as being neither ineffable nor as nonsense. Yet is this the only alternative? By no means: the question can be reformulated and truth can be conceived in a positive sense by hermeneutics rather than by translation.

Concerning the other approach to the untranslatable which we have called 'negative', the question of truth is less relevant than the question of equivalence. Is there something true in the 'positive' approach which is fated not only to be evasive (Benjamin, Derrida, Berman), but to offer itself to translation in a manner which, though inexhaustible from the point of view of the untranslatable, is nevertheless sayable? Might it be inexhaustible in its very sayability? Perhaps translation is not only the act of passing from one language to another, but rather the 'self-translation' of a content which has to be expressed because – despite the failures and the difficulties that it encounters – it translates itself, using the verb 'translate' here in its original sense: namely, 'to present' or 'to present itself'; to carry or to carry 'in front of'. To make something be, to make something happen before the translation is actually performed, we translate what translates itself; that is, in the sense of the French '*se traduire devant à*' ["to translate in front of…"]. From this viewpoint, the tendency to translate [*Neigung zum Übersetzen*] would no longer be a property of the text or of the translator, but rather a principal movement of translation itself. It is this principal movement that we propose to call 'the coming' of the truth in its 'having to be translated' in order to be interpreted and understood.

Here we need a figure of truth to confirm this thesis: a truth that translates itself in moving *from* the desire to translate of the translator and of the text *to* the tension of translating itself; that is, toward the 'having to translate' as the *Neigung* characterises the truth itself. In this sense, the untranslatable would no longer be what escapes translation, but is rather the core of the very act of 'self-translation' as 'translating itself'. In other words, the untranslatable is not what cannot be translated or what mystically escapes translation: it is the movement by which something is understood because it has to 'present itself in front of…'.

Have we achieved any progress on the questions posed above? And if so, toward what? We have undoubtedly progressed in our comprehension of the truth, which we propose to understand as the heart that moves 'self-translation'. We translate because the very movement of truth moves toward 'self-translation', to 'passing'. But to where? Why is this not a transition that is destined to remain an abstract hypothesis and something 'purely possible' – an empty game of mirrors set up exclusively to justify the fact that, 'in spite of everything', we translate? Where, then? In the 'self-giving' to interpret. Interpretation is a concrete form through which truth understands itself without becoming fixed in a single expression. In order to explain this thesis, we must look for a figure of truth that is close to what we have said up to this point and we must deploy its consequences for hermeneutics and for translation.

A figure of truth that is not in contradiction with the figure of the untranslatable is proposed by the Italian philosopher Luigi Pareyson in his work *Verità e interpretazione* (*Truth and Interpretation*). Distinguishing between thought that is exclusively expressive – limiting itself to expressing its own time – and revelatory thought, whose goal is to manifest the truth and is expressive at the same time, Pareyson writes:

> In revelatory thought, […] on the one hand, everyone says the same thing, and on the other hand, everyone says a single thing […] that is, the truth, which can only be one and the same… and each person says a single thing; that is, they say the truth in their own way, in the way that is theirs alone […]. There is thus a single, intemporal truth within the various and historical formulations of it that are given. Yet such a singularity […] can only be an infinity that is stimulated and nourished by all its formulations without allowing itself to be exhausted by any of them or by privileging any of them […] Only insofar as it is inexhaustible does truth entrust itself to the word that reveals it, conferring a profundity upon it that can never be completely explained nor entirely clarified.[30]

30 Pareyson 1971-82, 18 (transl. M. Dozzi).

According to Pareyson, there is another characteristic that belongs to truth beyond its inexhaustibility: non-objectifiability. He writes:

> If truth can only be grasped as inexhaustible, it will be less an object and a result than an origin and an impulse; thought: rather than speaking about truth as if it were a concluded whole, thought must contain it, move it, and feed upon it – finding within it the impetus of its own trajectory; the source of its own content; the measure of its own efficacy. A presence resides in thought that is all the more active and effective the less it is configurable and definable. […] Its non-objectifiability is original and profound: it manifests an arresting ulteriority whose truth is obtained in diverse perspectives only insofar as it does not identify itself with any of them, and it makes discourse possible only insofar as it does not resolve itself in discourse.[31]

A mode of thinking that is adapted to this venue of truth must be a mode of thinking that is hermeneutical and interpretative; one that does not reduce this alethic originality to objectivising formulas in which interpretation is both expressive and revelatory. Far from being subjective, Pareyson writes,

> […] the fundamental principle of hermeneutics is that the only knowledge adequate to truth is interpretation, which means that truth is accessible and attainable in many ways – and none of these ways, if it is to be worthy of being called 'interpretation', is privileged over the others in the sense of claiming to possess the truth in an exclusive way.[32]

Because truth is simultaneously both expressive and revelatory, even interpretation unites the revelatory moment and the moment that is expressive and historical within itself:

> […] truth is singular, but its formulation is multiple. And there is no contradiction between the singularity of truth and its formulations because, by virtue of interpretation – which is always both historical and revelatory – the singularity of truth is manifested only within the historical and singular formulations of it that are given. It is precisely interpretation that maintains truth as singular in the very act that incessantly multiplies its formulations. Interpretation is not, cannot be, and need not be singular: by definition, it is multiple. Yet its multiplicity consists of the ever new

31 Pareyson 1971-82, 26 (transl. M. Dozzi).

32 Pareyson 1971-82, 57 (transl. M. Dozzi).

> and diverse formulations of truth; that is, the multiplicity that, far from compromising and dispersing the singularity of truth, instead maintains it and at the same time feeds on it: it safeguards it while also drawing solicitation and inspiration from it.[33]

In order to respond to the objection of relativism, Pareyson gives the example of musical interpretation: here interpretation reveals the work, making it accessible without claiming to be the only possible interpretation.

This presentation of Pareyson's text does not convey its full richness. Nevertheless, the figure of truth that he proposes is in conformity with what we are looking for: an unobjectifiable, inexhaustible truth; one that is always postponed, lending itself to interpretation without being exhausted by it. Thus, interpretation is the effective mode by which truth lends itself to understanding without allowing itself to be reduced to singular expressions. Interpretation is our way of accessing truth, precisely insofar as it is interpretation of truth.[34]

Pareyson does not speak of translation in the terms that we have employed; that is, as 'placing oneself in front of…' or 'the self-translation of truth', even if the way in which he speaks about truth opens interpretation up to this feature: that is, translation as truth's own way of presenting itself to us and to our understanding, as well as hermeneutics as the effective act of truth's 'self-translation'. The potentialities of hermeneutics remain within this movement, which it is original; they are inscribed within this untranslatable and unobjectifiable. This untranslatable lies below the distinction between negative and positive discussed above: in translating itself, it 'has to come' by translating itself, by giving itself to interpretation in an interpretative act that is adequate to its inexhaustible being.

How then is translation configured to the challenge of this hermeneutic that interprets an untranslatable truth in its movement which 'brings it to translate itself'? This untranslatable is not untranslatable because of a lack of equivalence (even without identity) or because it is pure language, but because it is the very movement that brings itself to translation. It has to translate itself and to pass from one language to another in order to be understood and so as to not be an empty movement, being instead a movement that can always renew itself and regenerate itself. This cannot be an expressive translation (Benjamin would say a 'communicative' one), but a revelatory translation: that is, one that reveals the fact that 'passing from one language to another' – from one text to another, from one culture to another – is a gesture in which there is a translation of a truth of

33 Pareyson 1971-82, 67 (transl. M. Dozzi).

34 Cf. Pareyson 1971-82, 53.

texts and of cultures whose hermeneutical dimension of openness is not accidental. The untranslatable of the translation is the inexhaustible and unobjectifiable movement of the truth that presents itself.

This is a truth which is the 'how' of the communication of the meaning that lives in the respective texts and cultures. The untranslatable lies below its negative or positive formulation: it is the alethetic core which 'has to be translated'; that is, to pass from one language to another, to arrive by interpretations in which the meaning that is to be understood is given. It is the 'to come' of the translation because it is first and foremost what comes; what is given in being translated. And 'what comes' in the translation is a feature of the truth – its advance; its presentation in the interpretation that grasps it. Its original *trans-ducere* (the Latin for 'translation', which is composed of *trans* – across, beyond, through – and *ducere*; to lead or to command); its *trans-porting* is given by this untranslatable core not because it is ineffable, but is untranslatable insofar as it is what never stops 'translating itself'; it is the inexhaustible drive of this inclination to translate itself. This truth is given to understanding by first going 'to the front' in order to meet other languages and cultures in the efficacy of the translation. It is a movement from one beginning to another; a series of beginnings that will never end.

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