Preface

Philosophy in Translation

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 *Encylopédie* (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.

Working with assembled teams of scholars from multiple countries and languages, and drawing on the expertise of more than 150 contributors, Cassin coordinated and supervised the *Dictionary* project over a period of eleven years. Published by Éditions du Seuil in 2004, this curious and immensely ambitious book, weighing in at a million and a half words, was a surprise hit with the public. 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.

Despite the redoubtable scale of its erudition and the range of its philosophical ambition, the French edition of the *Dictionary* resonated with a heterogeneous readership: philosophers, scholars in all fields of the humanities, and everyone interested in the cartography of languages or the impact of translation history on the course of philosophy. The work's international reception was then enlarged by its translations (some still 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 reviewing the history of philosophy with translation problems in mind.

A group of three editors supervised and edited the English version: Emily Apter (a specialist in French, comparative literature, translation studies, Continental philosophy, and political theory); Jacques Lezra (a literary comparatist with special strengths in Spanish, early modern literature and philosophy, contemporary theory, and Anglo-American philosophy); and Michael Wood (a British comparatist, distinguished as a critic of literary modernism and contemporary cinema with professional expertise as a staff writer for the *London Review of Books*). Cassin and her close associate, the

philosopher Étienne Balibar, were de facto coeditors, because the U.S. editors consulted with them at every stage. The collective affiliated with the U.K.-based journal *Radical Philosophy* was also integral to the project's gestation. The journal published a special issue devoted to the book in 2006, including English translations of selected entries by the late David Macey. We have included Macey's translation of the entry SUBJECT in this volume both because it is a strong translation and because it allowed us to acknowledge, albeit only indirectly, *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. The translators—of which there were five (Christian Hubert, Jeffrey Mehlman, Steven Rendall, Nathanael Stein, and Michael Syrotinski)—became contributors on every level. Their queries and suggestions, along with those of the copy editors, each of whom had special language proficiencies, proved crucial to the editing process and served as a constant reminder that to translate is an act of rewriting, and, in this particular instance, of assisting words in their becoming philosophical. A broad network of colleagues and specialists generously provided corrections and revisions, and yet another layer of collaboration was provided by graduate student assistants who checked citations and compiled new bibliographies.

The bibliographical revisions were by no means a minor part of remodeling the French edition for an Anglophone audience. In addition to English translations of canonical philosophical texts and standard reference works in English on concepts and philosophers, we added selections from a critical literature that contributed to the *Dictionary*'s acknowledgment of what is referred to in the Anglophone world as theory. "Theory" is an imprecise catchall for a welter of postwar movements in the human sciences—existentialism, structural anthropology, sociolinguistics, semiotics, history of *mentalités*, post-Freudian psychoanalysis, deconstruction, post-structuralism, critical theory, identity politics, postcolonialism, biopolitics, nonphilosophy, speculative materialism—that has no equivalent in European languages. What is often referred to as "theory" in an Anglophone context would simply be called "philosophy" in Europe. The *Dictionary of Untranslatables* acknowledges this divergence between "theory" and "philosophy" not at the expense of how the editors of the French edition defined philosophy (which, it must be said, was already noncanonical in the choice of terms deemed philosophical), but as a condition of the work's reception by Anglophone readers accustomed to an eclectic "theory" bibliography that not infrequently places G.W.F. Hegel, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Walter Benjamin, Theodore Adorno, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Gilles Deleuze, Julia Kristeva, Jean-Luc Nancy, Antonio Negri, Hélène Cixous, Kojin Karatani, Alain Badiou, Giorgio Agamben, Jacques Rancière, Bruno Latour, and Slavoj Žižek in the same rubric with Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, Donna Haraway, Henry Louis Gates, Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Friedrich Kittler, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Edward Said, Fredric Jameson, and Paul Gilroy.

Bearing in mind, then, that the word "philosophy" in the original French title was already an untranslatable insofar as it defaulted to "philosophies" that might line up more easily with "theory" in an Anglophone (and especially U.S. American) context, one of our initial debates focused on how to translate the book's title. There was a doubling of genre announced in the French. Is it a "vocabulary" or a "dictionary"? For Cassin (following Benveniste's *Le Vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes*), "vocabulary" underscored a non-exhaustive ensemble of terms chosen for their common linguistic "symptoms," while "dictionary," designating an aspiration to impossible completeness, was meant to stand alongside "vocabulary" as an ironic complement. Together, in Cassin's view, they posed the problem of the form of the work as an oxymoron. Such subtle distinctions could, however, easily be missed. Broadly speaking, a dictionary contains an alphabetical list of words with information about them, whereas a vocabulary, the generic term for sets of words that persons are familiar with in a language, is similarly used to describe alphabetized and explained word ensembles, usually for a pedagogical purpose relating to a special field. In France, the long tradition of dictionaries could be bracketed by Pierre Bayle's seminal *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1697), which privileged biographies and historical events, and the Presses Universitaires de France dictionaries covering such diverse fields as cinema, psychoanalysis, work, sociology, violence, and the human sciences. Given, then, the relative interchangeability of "vocabulary" and "dictionary,"

we replaced the former with the latter in the main title, and added "lexicon" to the subtitle in the spirit of the expression "terms entering the lexicon," which captures (in a manner that brings out the original work's underlying intention) how live languages incorporate new or non-native elements.

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.

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."

In promoting revivified 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. The Russian term *pravda*, for instance, is arrayed alongside the Greek *dikaiosunê*; the Latin *justitia*; and the English "righteousness," "justice," "truth," and "law"—as well as *vérité, droit, istina, mir, postupok, praxis, sobornost'*, and *svet*. The article speculates that *pravda*'s absence in the Russian *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* is attributable to its being too ideologically marked as the name of the USSR's official government-controlled newspaper. *Pravda* thus comes into its own as that which is philosophically off limits in its home country. The article also locates *pravda* in an extremely complex semantic field, in the "hiatus" between legality and legitimacy, justice and truth, ethics and praxis. It is traced to the short-circuiting of pardon by vengeance, and vice versa. The word's geo-philosophical trajectory unfurls into a narrative marked by the themes of exile, solidarity with persecuted minorities and refugees, Russian Saint-Simonianism, and Russophilic worldviews.

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. Using the *Dictionary* as a tool to teach Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (*Jenseits des Lustprinzips*), for example, reveals how important the German term *Lust* was to the specificities of Freud's theory, better enabling comprehension of how Freud derived from the word constructs of the death-drive,

sublimation, and thought as such. From the *Dictionary*'s entry PLEASURE one gleans a whole new appreciation of the disparate meanings acquired by Freud's fundamental psychoanalytic concepts, depending on their languages of translation:

> The initial meaning of the German word *Lust* does not seem to have been "pleasure." Like the English "lust," it derives from the Indo-European *lutan*, which means "to submit," "to bend" and is supposed to have originally designated only a more or less resistible inclination. But whereas English "lust" has retained the restricted meaning of "unbridled desire," "cupidity," or "craving," the semantic range of the German term extends from "appetite," "sexual desire" . . . or "fantasy" to all the forms of satisfaction. In short, the semantic field of *Lust* extends beyond the sensible affect of pleasure to designate the desire that is *Lust*'s origin and effect.

If the *Dictionary* enhances attunement to linguistic difference in the reading of psychoanalysis or philosophy, it also facilitates a philosophical orientation within literary analysis. While working as an editor on the *Dictionary*, for example, Michael Wood found himself sensitized to the way Proust used the word "justice" when writing about the Dreyfus affair. The *Dictionary* entry RIGHT/JUST/GOOD focuses on semantic discrepancies between English and French. Two French words for good, *bien* and *bon*, have similar meanings; in English, however, *bien* can be translated as either "right" or "good," with distinct meanings. And while French clearly distinguishes between "the good" and "the just," with the former designating individual interest or collective good and the latter universal moral law, English is fuzzier on the difference between these terms.

Bearing this in mind, Wood found the difference between French *justice* and English "justice" all the more striking, because the word looks the same in both languages. Reading Proust, reading Proust scholars, testing words in varying contexts, and questioning native speakers, he began to sense that *justice*, in French, unless otherwise qualified, very often has the primary meaning of fitting the punishment to the crime, as in "to do justice," or "to see that justice is done." Although *justice* in French, as in English, has three main meanings—conformity with the law, the practice of justice (the judiciary branch of government), and justice in the sense of equitableness (justice in the moral sense)—the question is which of these meanings is in play at any given time.

Do we know which? Does the speaker know which? The stakes are serious enough for a major French scholar to say, almost without surprise, that Proust does not believe in the rule of law. How can this be? Proust spent a good portion of his life worrying about the miscarriage of justice in the case of Alfred Dreyfus. Still, at one point he has the narrator of *In Search of Lost Time* say "the sense of justice was absent in me, to the point of complete moral idiocy. In the depths of my heart I was immediately on the side of the underdog, of whoever was unhappy."[1] We may want to say at once that he's obviously not talking about justice. But he is.

What is needed, to get a comparative sense of things, is not a firmer or clearer translation of difficult words, but a feeling for how relatively simple words chase each other around in context. Wood pictures the situation as something like a traffic system. Three or four vehicles carry whatever is needed in any language, but the vehicles circulate differently in different places, and divide their loads differently. Thus, to take a simple example, where (with respect to the Proust translation just cited) English uses the word "law" four times—law court, law school, rule of law, force of law—the original French uses *justice* once, *droit* twice, and *loi* once. The same ideas circulate in each case: law, justice, rights, rightness, fairness, and so on. But it's easy to follow the wrong vehicle.

Wood's example of how to read "justice" in Proust through the lens of the untranslatable (an untranslatability rendered more acute in this case because French *justice* and English "justice" are homonymic "false friends"), opens up a world of literature that is alive to the "abilities" of untranslatability. 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"

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[1] Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time: The Prisoner / The Fugitive*, trans. Carol Clark (London: Penguin, 2003), 268.

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.[2]

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.

Editorial Liberties

In shifting the *Dictionary*'s language of address, we felt compelled to plug specific gaps, especially those pertaining to "theory," understood in the Anglophone academic sense of that term. We added material by Kevin McLaughlin to clarify Walter Benjamin's distinction between *Erinnerung* and *Gedächtnis* in the entry MEMORY; by Leland de la Durantaye on Giorgio Agamben's marked use of the expressions *Homo sacer* and "bare life" in the entry ANIMAL; by Étienne Balibar on Jacques Lacan's fungible use of *instance* as a term for "moment," "instantiation," "agency," in the entry WILL; by Immanuel Wallerstein on Ferdinand Braudel's concept of *longue durée* in MOMENT; by Daniel Hoffman-Schwartz on Alain Badiou's reliance on the "forced" relationship between "forcing" and *forçage* in MACHT; and by Michael LeMahieu on Willard Quine's use of *quine/qualia* in OBJECT. Though the book included passages here and there on fancy, imagination, feeling, passion, emotion, sentiment, affection, senses, and sense, we reinforced these terms with dedicated discussions of "fancy" and "feeling" (both by Susan Wolfson) included in the entries FANCY and SENSE. Topical additions on language, translation, and humanism included supplements on "glossolalia" (by Daniel Heller-Roazen), in the entry LOGOS; Leonardo Bruni's humanist 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-Ménard and Penelope Deutscher on GENDER and Geneviève Fraisse on SEX.

Other additions include media theory (there is now an entry, MEDIA/MEDIUM, written by Ben Kafka, with an insert on *ordinateur*/"computer"/*numérique*/"digital" by Antoine Picon); CHÔRA in deconstructive architectural theory and practice (courtesy of Anthony Vidler); postcolonial theory (there are new inserts by Robert Young on *colonia* and *imperium*, and by Emilienne Baneth-Nouailhetas on "postcolonialism,"

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[2] Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other,* trans. Patrick Mensah (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 56–67.

in STATO; and by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak on "planetarity" in WELT); and central keywords in Arabic (Souleymane Bachir Diagne contributed pieces on *rabita*, in SEIN; *Qur'ān*, in TO TRANSLATE; and *ijtihad*, in BELIEF). 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 undeservedly left out. But as Cassin has often remarked, if one were to be rigorously inclusive, Greek philosophical terms alone would overflow the entire volume.

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.

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. To give one example, under the entry for the French term *mot*, we discovered that the English term "word" never appeared. We had to rectify this absence in the English

edition by re-framing the entry for WORD to emphasize why the word *mot* was a French untranslatable. The term *Willkür* presented another kind of problem. The entry focused on a tension, essentially grounded in Kant's reworking of a Cartesian legacy, between *libre arbitre* (a free and independent arbitrator, capable of introducing an outcome neither determined nor necessary) and (*freie*) *Willkür* ("free will," understood in terms of the highest exercise of reasoning; a "freedom" expressive of the highest autonomy of the will). According to the entry as written by Pierre Osmo, Kant's use of the term included additional connotations in German of "arbitrariness" and "caprice." Osmo argues that when Kant used the expression *freie Willkür* (often rendered in English as "free power of choice"), it retained its capricious potential. But this potential typically failed to register in French, in which, according to Osmo, the expression *libre arbitre*, routinely used to translate both *Willkür* and *freie Willkür*, flattened Kant's intentions and originality.

For the English translator of Osmo's article these points proved particularly difficult to convey. The standard English translation of Kant's *Willkür* was "choice" or "free choice," which deflects Osmo's philosophical point about the lost capriciousness of *Willkür* in French translations of Kant. The tensions articulated by Osmo between French and German philosophy (predating and postdating Kant), over conceptions of volition, freedom of the will, the arbitrary exercise of freedom of choice, and the morally, rationally authorized decision were thrown off course by English. Once English intervened at the level of translating a French translation of German, one could say that "meta" untranslatability reared its head, which is to say, an interference at the level of translating unforeseen by the article's author and at odds with her or his argument about a given term's untranslatability in a specific linguistic context.

Specters of National Subjects

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."[3] She referred here to the

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[3] Barbara Cassin used this expression in discussing the *Vocabulaire* at New York University's Humanities Initiative, February 11, 2010.

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."[4] 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.

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 obviously not 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. Notably underplayed, as Howard Caygill has pointed out, was the "divergence between philosophy and science in the modern period," and more specifically, the impact of natural philosophy, Darwinism, evolutionary theory, and genetics.[5]

What the *Dictionary* does best, perhaps, is produce a cartography (Caygill called it a "geo-philosophy") of linguistic diaspora, migration, and contested global checkpoints from early empires to the technologically patrolled and surveilled 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. PORTUGUESE becomes a hymn to the sensibility of the baroque, with *Fado* (fate, lassitude, melancholia) its emblematic figure. GERMAN hews to the language of Kant and Hegel. GREEK is pinioned by the Athenian efflorescence and Heidegger's homage to Greek as the *Ursprache* of philosophy. ITALIAN remains indebted to Machiavelli's notion of "the effective truth of things," Vico's philological historicism, and clichés of expressive *sprezzatura*. In tracing how French came to be globally identified as a preeminent language of philosophy, Alain Badiou both criticizes and mythifies the national language when he insists that for Descartes, Bergson, Sartre, Deleuze, and Lacan, to philosophize is merely to think openly and democratically. Obscurity itself results (or may result) from the need of French philosophers to be French *writers*. Unlike German, whose truth is attained through verbal and syntactic unraveling, French syntax is notionally transparent to truth. Close to being an Adamic language in Badiou's ascription, it lends itself to logical formalism, axioms, maxims, and universal principles. Above all, for Badiou, the French language is conducive to the politicization of expression, unseating predicates through the play of substitutions and the art of the imperious question (what Lacan called the "denunciatory enunciation"). Though national ontology is, strictly speaking, anathema to Badiou, one could say that because he does not historicize the myth, only playfully deploys it, he backhandedly returns it to linguistic nominalism. Such ontologies are, of course, impossible to purge entirely from language-names, for they lend coherence to the world map of languages; they triage and circumscribe the verbal grammatical protocols that qualify for naming as a discrete language.

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

[4] Barbara Cassin, *Plus d'une langue* (Paris: Bayard Editions, 2012), 43. Translation is my own.

[5] Howard Caygill, "From *Abstraction to Wunch*: The philosophies," *Radical Philosophy* 138 (July/August 2006): 13–14.

back to Martin Luther's translation of the Bible into German, renders "to translate" as, literally, "to render as 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."

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 for (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.

Tasks of the Translators

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 *Ubersetzbarkeit*), 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 want, 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.

Over the course of five years we found ourselves engaged in a hands-on way with an encyclopedic project: one that is built on translation and perforce prompts a rethinking of the relation between translation and knowledge-production at every turn. To work on anything encyclopedic is to encounter frustration and exhilaration. At every moment, we had to balance the temptation of disappearing down the rabbit hole of philosophy against the need to withdraw from content so as to concentrate on the material management of the text. Editing, triage, relaying the right version; such mundane tasks were much harder to master than writing or speaking about the project. At one point we mislaid the translated version of *inconscient*. The irony of "losing" the text's "unconscious" hardly needed comment, as it so closely paralleled the at times very

conscious wish to lose the albatross of this massive endeavor.

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 owns 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.

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