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## THE MANIFESTATION OF TRANSLATION

The domain of translation has always been the site of a curious contradiction. On the one hand, translation is considered to be a purely intuitive practice—in part technical, in part literary—which, at bottom, does not require any specific theory or form of reflection. On the other hand, there has been—at least since Cicero, Horace, and Saint Jerome—an abundance of writings on translation of a religious, philosophical, literary, methodological or, more recently, scientific nature. Now, though numerous translators have written on their discipline, it is undeniable that until recently the bulk of these writings has come from non-translators. The definition of the “problems” of translation has been undertaken by theologians, philosophers, linguists, or critics. This has had at least three consequences. First, translation has remained an underground, hidden activity because it did not express itself independently. Second, translation as such has largely remained “unthought,” because those who dealt with it tended to assimilate it to something else: (sub-)literature, (sub-)criticism, “applied linguistics.” Finally, the analyses produced almost exclusively by non-translators, whatever their qualities may be, inevitably contain numerous “blind spots” and irrelevancies.

Our century has witnessed the gradual transformation of this situation and the constitution of a vast corpus of texts by translators. In addition, the reflection on translation has become an *internal necessity* of translation itself, as was in part the case in classical and romantic Germany. This reflection does not quite take the form of a “theory,” as can be seen from Valéry Larbaud’s *Sous l’invocation de saint Jérôme*. But in any case, it indicates the will of translation to become an autonomous practice, capable of defining and situating itself, and consequently to be communicated, shared, and taught.

### *History of Translation*

The construction of a history of translation is the first task of a *modern* theory of translation. What characterizes modernity is not an infatuation

with the past, but a movement of retrospection which is an infatuation with itself. Thus the poet-critic-translator Pound meditated simultaneously on the history of poetry, of criticism, and of translation. Thus the great *re-translations* of our century (Dante, the Bible, Shakespeare, the Greeks, etc.) are necessarily accompanied by a reflection on previous translations.<sup>1</sup> This reflection must be extended and deepened. We can no longer be satisfied with the uncertain periodizations concerning the Western history of translation edified by George Steiner in *After Babel*.

It is impossible to separate the history of translation from the history of languages, of cultures, and of literatures—even of religions and of nations. To be sure, this is not a question of mixing everything up, but of showing how in each period or in each given historical setting the practice of translation is articulated in relation to the practice of literature, of languages, of the several intercultural and interlinguistic exchanges. To take an example, Leonard Forster has shown that European poets at the end of the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance were often multilingual.<sup>2</sup> They wrote in several languages for an audience which was itself polyglot. No less frequently did they translate themselves. Such is the moving case of the Dutch poet Hooft who, on the occasion of the death of his beloved wife, composed a whole series of epitaphs, at first in Dutch, then in Latin, then in Italian, then—somewhat later—again in Dutch. As if he needed to pass through a whole series of languages and self-translations in order to arrive at the right expression of his grief in his mother tongue. Reading Forster, it seems clear that the poets of that period worked—be it in cultivated or popular spheres—in an infinitely more multilingual environment than our own period (which is also multilingual, but in a different way). There were the learned languages—the “queen” languages, as Cervantes put it: Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; there were different written national languages (French, English, Spanish, Italian), and a mass of regional languages and dialects, etc. A person walking along the streets of Paris or Antwerp must have heard more languages than are heard today in New York City: His language was only one among many, which relativized the meaning of the mother tongue. In such an environment writing tended to be, at least in part, multilingual, and the medieval rule that assigned certain poetic genres to certain languages—for example, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, among the troubadours in the north of Italy, lyrical poetry was assigned to Provençal while epic, or narrative, poetry was assigned to French—was in part prolonged. Thus Milton wrote his love poems in Italian because, as he explained in one of them to the Italian lady to whom they were addressed, “*questa è lingua di cui si vanta Amore*.” It goes without saying that the said lady also knew English, but that was not the language of love. For men like Hooft and Milton, the

conception of translation must have been different from ours, as was their conception of literature. For us, self-translations are exceptions, as are the cases where a writer chooses a language other than his own—think of Conrad or Beckett. We even think that multilingualism or diglossia make translation difficult. In short, the entire relation to the mother tongue, toward foreign languages, toward literature, toward expression and translation is structured differently today.

To write the history of translation is to patiently rediscover the infinitely complex and devious network in which translation is caught up in each period or in different settings. And it is to turn the historical knowledge acquired from this activity into an opening of our *present*.

### An Ancillary Condition

In the final instance, the issue is to know what translation must mean in our cultural setting today. This problem is accompanied by another one, of an almost painful intensity. I am referring here to something that cannot not be mentioned—the obscured, repressed, reprieved, and ancillary condition of translation, which reflects upon the condition of the translator to such an extent that it is hardly possible these days to make an autonomous discipline of this practice.

The condition of translation is not only ancillary; it is, in the eyes of the public as well as in the eyes of the translators themselves, suspect. After so many successful accomplishments, masterpieces, the overcoming of so many alleged impossibilities, how could the Italian adage *traduttore traditore* still remain in place as the last judgment on translation? And yet, it is true that in this domain, *fidelity* and *treason* are incessantly at issue. Translating, as Franz Rosenzweig wrote, “is to serve two masters”; this is the ancillary metaphor. The work, the author, the foreign language (first master) have to be served, as well as the public and one’s own language (second master). Here emerges what may be called the drama of the translator.

If the translator chooses the author, the work, and the foreign language as exclusive masters, aiming to impose them on his own cultural realm in their pure foreign form, he runs the risk of appearing to be a foreigner, a traitor in the eyes of his kin. And the translator cannot be sure that this radical attempt—in Schleiermacher’s words, “to lead the reader to the author”—will not turn against him and produce a text leaning toward the unintelligible. But if the attempt is successful and the accomplishment perhaps recognized, the translator cannot be sure that the other culture will not feel “robbed,” deprived of a work it considered irreducibly its own. Here we touch upon the hyperdelicate domain of the relations between the translator and “his” authors.

On the other hand, if the translator settles for a conventional adaptation of the foreign work—in Schleiermacher's words, "leading the author to the reader"—he will have satisfied the least demanding part of the public, sure enough, but he will have irrevocably betrayed the foreign work as well as, of course, the very essence of translation.

Nevertheless, this impossible situation is not the inescapable reality of translation: It is, rather, based on a number of ideological presuppositions. The lettered public of the sixteenth century, mentioned by Forster, rejoiced in reading a work in its different linguistic variants; it ignored the issue of fidelity and treason because it did not hold its mother tongue sacred. Perhaps this very sacralization is the source of the Italian adage and of all the "problems" of translation. Our lettered public, for its part, demands that translation be imprisoned in a dimension in which it must be suspect. Hence—though this is by no means the only reason—the effacement of the translator who seeks "to make himself very small," to be a humble mediator of foreign works, and always a traitor even as he portrays himself as fidelity incarnate.

Time has come to meditate on this repression of translation and on the "resistances" that underlie it. We may formulate the issue as follows: Every culture resists translation, even if it has an essential need for it. The very aim of translation—to open up in writing a certain relation with the Other, to fertilize what is one's Own through the mediation of what is Foreign—is diametrically opposed to the ethnocentric structure of every culture, that species of narcissism by which every society wants to be a pure and unadulterated Whole. There is a tinge of the violence of cross-breeding in translation. Herder was well aware of this when he compared a language that has not yet been translated to a young virgin. It is another matter that in reality a virgin language or culture is as fictitious as a pure race. We are dealing here with unconscious wishes. Every culture wants to be self-sufficient and use this imaginary self-sufficiency in order to shine forth on the others and appropriate their patrimony. Ancient Roman culture, classical French culture, and modern North-American culture are striking examples of this.

Here, translation occupies an ambiguous position. On the one hand, it heeds this appropriatory and reductionary injunction, and constitutes itself as one of its agents. This results in ethnocentric translations, or what we may call "bad" translations. But, on the other hand, the *ethical aim* of translating is by its very nature opposed to this injunction: The essence of translation is to be an opening, a dialogue, a cross-breeding, a decentering. Translation is "a putting in touch with," or it is *nothing*.

The contradiction between the reductionist aim of culture and the ethical aim of translating can be found on all levels—on the level of

theories and methods of translation (as, for example, in the perennial opposition between the champions of the "letter" and the champions of the "spirit"), as well as on the level of the translating practice and the psychic being of the translator. At this point, in order for translation to gain access to its own being, an *ethics* and an *analytic* are required.

### *Ethics of Translation*

On the theoretical level, the *ethics of translation* consists of bringing out, affirming, and defending the pure aim of translation as such. It consists of defining what "fidelity" is. Translation cannot be defined solely in terms of communication, of the transmission of messages, or of extended *rewording*. Nor is translation a purely literary/esthetical activity, even when it is intimately connected with the literary practice of a given cultural realm. To be sure, translation is writing and transmitting. But this writing and this transmission get their true sense only from the ethical aim by which they are governed. In this sense, translation is closer to science than to art—at least to those who maintain that art is ethically irresponsible.

Defining this ethical aim more precisely, and thereby liberating translation from its ideological ghetto, is one of the tasks of a theory of translation.

But this positive ethics in turn supposes two things: first, a *negative ethics*, that is, a theory of those ideological and literary values that tend to turn translation away from its pure aim. The theory of non-ethnocentric translation is also a theory of ethnocentric translation, which is to say of *bad translation*. A bad translation I call the translation which, generally under the guise of transmissibility, carries out a systematic negation of the strangeness of the foreign work.

### *Analytic of Translation*

Second, this negative ethics must be complemented by an *analytic of translation and of translating*. Cultural resistance produces a systematics of deformations that operates on the linguistic and literary levels, and that conditions the translator, whether he wants it or not, whether he knows it or not. The reversible dialectic of fidelity and treason is present in the translator, even in his position as a writer: The pure translator is the one who needs to write starting from a foreign work, a foreign language, and a foreign author—a notable detour. On the psychic level, the translator is ambivalent, wanting to force two things: to force his own language to adorn itself with strangeness, and to force the other language to transport itself into his mother tongue.<sup>3</sup> He presents

himself as a writer, but is only a re-writer. He is an author, but never The Author. The translated work is a work, but it is not The Work. This network of ambivalences tends to deform the pure aim of translation and to graft itself onto the ideological deformation discussed above. And to strengthen it.

If the pure aim of translation is to be more than a pious wish or a "categorical imperative," an analytic of translation should be added to the ethics of translation. The translator has to "subject himself to analysis," to localize the systems of deformation that threaten his practice and operate unconsciously on the level of his linguistic and literary choices—systems that depend simultaneously on the registers of language, of ideology, of literature, and of the translator's mental make-up. One could almost call this a *psychoanalysis of translation*, similar to Bachelard's *psychoanalysis of the scientific spirit*: it involves the same ascetic, the same self-scrutinizing operation. This analytic can be verified, carried out by global and restricted analyses. Dealing with a novel, for instance, one might study the system of translation that has been used. In the case of an ethnocentric translation, this system tends to destroy the system of the original. Every translator can observe within himself the redoubtable reality of this unconscious system. By its nature, like every analytic procedure, this analytic should be plural. Thus one would be on the way toward an open, no longer solitary, practice of translation. And toward the establishment of a *criticism of translation*, parallel and complementary to the criticism of texts. Furthermore, a textual analysis, carried out against the background of translation, should be added to this analytic of the translating practice: Every text to be translated presents its own systematicity, encountered, confronted, and revealed by the translation. In this sense, it was possible for Pound to say that translation is a *sui generis* form of criticism in that it lays bare the hidden structures of a text. This system-of-the-work presents the fiercest resistance to translation, while simultaneously making it possible and giving it meaning.

### The Other Side of the Text

In this framework there will also be room to analyze the system of "gains" and "losses" manifested in all translations, even successful ones—what is called the "approximating" character of translation. Affirming, at least implicitly, that the translation "potentiates" the original, Novalis has contributed to our understanding that gains and losses are not situated on the same level. That is to say, in a translation there is not only a certain percentage of gains and losses; alongside this—

undeniable—level, there is another level where something of the original appears that does not appear in the source language. The translation turns the original around, reveals another side of it. What is the other side? This is what needs to be discerned more clearly. In that sense, the analytic of translation should teach us something about the work, about its relation to its language and to language in general. Something that neither a mere reading nor criticism can unveil. By reproducing the system-of-the-work into its language, the translation tilts it, which is, unquestionably, again a "potentiation." Goethe had the same intuition when he talked about "regeneration." The translated work is sometimes "regenerated"; not only on the cultural or social level, but in its own speaking. To this, in addition, corresponds an awakening in the target language of still latent possibilities by the translation, which it alone, in a different way than literature, has the power to awaken. The poet Hölderlin opens up the possibilities of the German language, homologous but not identical to those he opened up as a translator.

Not identical  
It depends on  
how one sees  
what it is.

### Metaphysical Aim and the Drive of Translating

Presently, I should like to examine briefly how the pure ethical aim of translation is articulated along with another aim—the *metaphysical aim of translation* and, correlatively, with what may be called the *drive of translating*. By the latter I mean that *desire* for translating that constitutes the translator as translator, which can be designated by the Freudian term *drive* since it has, as Valéry Larbaud emphasized, something "sexual" in the broad sense of the term.

What is the metaphysical aim of translation? In a text that has become almost canonical, Walter Benjamin speaks of the *task of the translator*. This would consist of a search, beyond the buzz of empirical languages, for the "pure language" which each language carries within itself as its messianic echo. Such an aim, which has nothing to do with the ethical aim, is rigorously metaphysical in the sense that it platonically searches a "truth" beyond natural languages. The German Romantics, whom Benjamin mentions in his essay, and most notably Novalis, have been the purest incarnation of this aim. It is the translation *against Babel*, against the reign of differences, against the empirical. Curiously, this is also looked for, in its wild state as it were, by the pure drive of translating such as it is manifested, for instance, in A.W. Schlegel or Armand Robin. The desire to translate everything, to be a poly- or omnitranslator, is accompanied in Schlegel and Robin by a problematic, even antagonistic, relation to their mother tongue. For Schlegel, German is clumsy, stiff; capable, to be sure, of being put to "work," but not

to "play." For him, the aim of polytranslation is precisely to make the "mother tongue" play. In one instance, this aim merges with the ethical aim, as it is expressed by someone like Humboldt, for whom translation should "expand" the German language. In reality, however, the translating drive leaves any humanist project far behind. Polytranslation becomes an end in itself, the essence of which is to radically *denaturalize* the mother tongue. The translating drive always starts off with a refusal of what Schleiermacher has called *das heimische Wohlbefinden der Sprache*—the indigenous well-being of language. The translating drive always posits an *other* language as ontologically *superior* to the translator's own language. Indeed, is it not among the first experiences of any translator to find his language deprived, as it were, poor in the face of the linguistic wealth of the foreign work? The difference among languages—other languages and one's own language—is *hierarchized* here. Thus, for example, English or Spanish would be more "flexible," more "concrete," "richer" than French! This hierarchization has nothing to do with an objective statement of fact: The translator takes off from it, hits upon it in his practice, reaffirms it incessantly. Armand Robin's case clearly proves this "hatred" of the mother tongue, which sets in motion the translating drive. Robin had, as it were, two native languages: Fissel, a Breton dialect, and French. His polytranslational activity obviously springs from the hatred of his "second" mother tongue, which he considers to be severely deficient:

All the more I loved foreign languages, to me pure, at such a distance:  
in my French language (my second language) there had been all  
forms of treason.

In it, one could say yes to infamy!

It is obvious that, in this case, the metaphysical purpose of surpassing the finitude of empirical languages and of one's own language in a messianic momentum towards pure speech—in Robin's words, "to be the Word, not words"—is linked to the pure translational drive which seeks to transform the native language through a confrontation with non-native, and therefore superior, languages—more "flexible," more "playful," or more "pure."

One might say that the metaphysical purpose of translation is a bad sublimation of the translational drive, whereas the ethical purpose is the surpassing of it. Indeed, the translational drive is the psychic foundation of the ethical aim; without it, the latter would be nothing but an impotent imperative. The translational mimesis is necessarily of the nature of a drive. At the same time, however, it surpasses the drive, precisely because it no longer seeks this secret destruction/transformation of the native language which is wished for by the translational drive

and the metaphysical aim. Through the surpassing represented by the metaphysical aim, another desire is manifested: the desire to establish a *dialogic relation* between foreign language and native language.

*History of Translation*

*Ethics of Translation*

*Analytic of Translation*

These, then, are the three axes along which we can define a *modern* reflection on translation and translating.

### Translation and Transtextuality

A fourth axis should be added, dealing with the domain of literary theory and of transtextuality. A truly literary work is always developed against the background of translation. *Don Quixote* is the most striking example of this. In his novel, Cervantes explains that the manuscript containing his hero's adventures was allegedly written by a Moor, Cid Hamet Bengeli. This is not all: several times Don Quixote and the priest engage in scholarly discussions concerning the translation, and most of the novels that have upset the hero's spirit are also translations. There is a fabulous irony in the fact that the greatest Spanish novel should have been presented by its author as a translation from the Arabic, which had been the dominant language in the Peninsula for centuries. To be sure, this could teach us something about the Spanish cultural consciousness. But also about the connection between literature and translation. This connection can be witnessed throughout the centuries: from the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century poets through Hölderlin, Nerval, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, George, Rilke, Benjamin, Pound, Joyce, Beckett.

This is a fruitful field of research for the theory of translation, provided it goes beyond the narrow framework of transtextuality, and is connected to research on languages and cultures in general—a multidisciplinary field within which translators could collaborate fruitfully with writers, literary theorists, psychoanalysts, and linguists.

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tion would be a matter of "intuition," different from work to work, not allowing for any theorization, etc.), is great. What remains is that Hölderlin was the first, by the radicality of his undertaking, to expose us to the necessity of a global and thorough reflection on the act of translation in the baffling multiplicity of its registers.<sup>56</sup>

## CONCLUSION

### *I. The Archeology of Translation*

Every conclusion is a rereading attempting to retrace the path opened, staked out, and articulated by the introduction, but whose course has partially turned out to be different than was initially envisioned. The present study attempted to analyze the German Romantics' theory of translation by, on the one hand, situating it within their theories and programs as a whole and, on the other hand, confronting it with other, contemporary reflections: those of Herder, Goethe, Schleiermacher, and Humboldt, which are theories of *Bildung*, and that of Hölderlin, which extends beyond the framework of the former, and beyond its entire epoch. We also attempted to show how the tradition of translation in Germany, which starts with Luther, defined itself in opposition to a culture—that of French classicism—in whose unfolding translation did not play a decisive role.

Next, it appeared that all the theories of translation developed in the Romantic and classical period in Germany constitute the foundation for the principal currents of modern Western translation, be it *poetic* translation—as it is manifested in a Nerval, a Baudelaire, a Mallarmé, an S. George, or a Benjamin, whose origins are obviously to be found in German Romanticism—or the great re-translations carried out in Germany in the twentieth century, which can claim Humboldt or Schleiermacher as their precursors. Hölderlin's translations, for their part, inaugurated a new epoch in the history of Western translation that is still in its initial stages.



In that sense, our study may appear to be an *archaeology of European translation*, centered on its key phase at the dawn of the nineteenth century. An archaeology which belongs to that reflection of translation on itself—at once historical, theoretical, and cultural—which is henceforth inseparable from the practice of translation. That translation should become a “science” and an “art,” as the Jena Romantics demanded of criticism, that is in effect its *modern* destiny. But for translation, this means first of all: to appear, to manifest itself. For two centuries, literature has had its manifestos. Translation, on the other hand, has always inhabited the non-manifest: “Effacement be the splendor of my being,” as the poet-translator Philippe Jacottet once said.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, since time immemorial translation has been a practice obscured and repressed by those who carried it out as well as by those who benefited from it. In this respect, classical and Romantic Germany is an exception that is well worth meditating upon. But whatever the immediate intensity of its relation to translation has been, it is no less undeniable that it has only been able to offer *fragments* of a genuine theory of translation. That Goethe, Hölderlin, the Romantics, and Humboldt, from different angles, provide us with invaluable “materials” for such a theory has been keenly felt in the twentieth century by such thinkers as W. Benjamin, W. Schadewaldt, and F. Rosenzweig. But those “materials,” dealing primarily with the poetic and cultural dimension of translation, must be rethought in the light of our twentieth-century experience, and replaced into a domain of our own.

Indeed, the twentieth century has seen the manifestation of the problematic of translation (together with that of language and languages) from different perspectives.

Above all, we must mention the question of the *re-translation* of works fundamental to our Western culture: primarily the Bible, but also Greek poetry and philosophy, Latin poetry, and the great texts that presided over the birth of modern literature (Dante, Shakespeare, Rabelais, Cervantes, etc.). To be sure, any translation is bound to age, and it is the destiny of all translations of the “classics” of universal literature to be retranslated sooner or later. But retranslation in the twentieth century has a more specific historical and cultural meaning: to *reopen the access* to works whose unsettling and questioning power ended up being threatened at once by their “glory” (too much clarity obscures, too great radiance exhausts) and by translations belonging to a phase of Western conscience that is no longer ours. Thus, as we have seen, our view of the Greeks, the Old Testament, or even Shakespeare, is fundamentally different from the classicist, humanist, or Romantic views. This will to reopen the access to great texts of our historical tradition extends to the field of translation, hermeneutics, and philoso-

phy at the same time. This is obvious in the case of the Bible: Think of Buber, Rosenzweig, or Meschonnic. But it suffices to think of the great rereadings of Greek philosophy attempted by Heidegger, to see that here as well the task of thinking has *become* a task of translation. In the same way the hermeneutic of the sacred texts is unthinkable without a retranslation of them, the rereading of the Greeks cannot be conceived by Heidegger and his disciples without a translation from the Greeks toward ourselves and from ourselves toward the Greeks, a translation that claims to be (in Heidegger's vocabulary) “listening to the Greek words.” And it is evident that this operation of translation, henceforth immanent to philosophy, has had enormous cultural reverberations (in Germany, but also elsewhere). What should be emphasized here is *how, in the twentieth century, translation becomes a concern of thinking itself in its attempt to reread the Western religious and philosophical tradition*. It is in this light that the act of translation is finally being recognized in its historical essence. In “The Principle of Reason,” speaking about the great translations of the history of philosophy, Heidegger writes:

By this we mean those translations that, in a period when their time has come, transpose (*übertragen*) a work of thinking or poetry. . . . In such cases, the translation is not only interpretation (*Auslegung*) but also tradition (*Überlieferung*). As tradition, it belongs to the innermost movement of history.<sup>2</sup>

But this concern with translation, in our century, does not only deal with philosophy and religious thinking. It can also be found in the field of the “humanities” or, more precisely, in psychoanalysis, ethnology, and linguistics.

The relations of psychoanalysis to translation are highly complex, and we do not pretend to measure their entire magnitude. It is well known that Freud arrived in France through translations that tended to distort the essential aspect of his conceptual and terminological inventiveness. It was necessary for Lacan, with the same patience of a Heidegger reading the Greek texts, to interrogate Freud's writing in an attempt of rereading/translation in order to open for us Freud's *Grundwörter* (basic words) on the one hand (*Trieb, Anlehnung, Verneinung, Verwerfung*, etc.), and the infinite complexity of the weave of his language and his images on the other. We see here how (re)translation also becomes one of the major concerns of a reflection, and a path that reopens the authentic access of a thinking. But psychoanalysis undoubtedly stands in an even more profound relation to translation, to the extent that it questions man's relation to language, languages, and the so called “mother” tongue in a way fundamentally different from that of the

tradition—a questioning accompanied by a reflection on the work and on writing, destined to gradually upset our view of them and, undoubtedly, to contribute to a turning-point in literature. The few, and still sparse, remarks on translation found in Lacan, O. Mannoni, Abraham, and Torok could perhaps, when they are further developed, also change a certain awareness of the act of translation and the processes at work in it—certainly on the level of the translator himself (in his *drive* for translation, the translator is that individual who represents an entire community in its relation to another community and its works), but also on the level of what we have called the *translatability* of the work. Renan said:

A work not translated is only half published.<sup>3</sup>

What is—at bottom—this *lack* translation intends to supplant? What hidden face of the work, what reverse side of the text should appear through it? If we want to go beyond the Romantic notion of “potentiation,” to deepen Goethe’s perception of the rejuvenating “mirroring,” perhaps we need a theory of the work and of translation that calls upon psychoanalytic thinking.

In its own way, *ethnology* also encounters the problem of languages, cultures, and translation. If it were only because it, too, as a discourse on the *foreign* (and on what is supposed to be *the most foreign*: the “savage”), constitutes a kind of translation, exposed to the same alternatives as Schleiermacher’s translator: to lead the reader to the foreign, or to lead the foreign to the reader. Obviously, a modern translator concerned about struggling against ethnocentrism can learn much from the reflections of a Clastres or a Jaulin, for instance. It is no less obvious that the ethnological writing should at times (and essentially) become a translation: think of Clastres’s *Le Grand Parler*<sup>4</sup> or of the Peruvian writer-ethnologist J.-M. Arguedas’s translations of Quecha poetry.

For its part, *linguistics* (and it is appropriate to add to this the research of Anglo-Saxon *analytic philosophy*, itself oriented to linguistic questions) also encounters translation as an immanent reality. Think of Jakobson’s famous text, “Linguistic Aspects of Translation:”

Equivalence in difference is the cardinal problem of language and the pivotal concern of linguistics. Like any receiver of verbal messages, the linguist acts as their interpreter. No linguistic specimen may be interpreted by the science of language without a translation of its signs into other signs of the same system or into signs of another system. Any comparison of two languages implies an examination of their mutual translatability; the widespread practice of interlingual communication, particularly translating activities, must be kept under constant scrutiny by linguistic science.<sup>5</sup>

It is remarkable that in this text, Jakobson should simultaneously define the *object* of linguistics (language and its process of “equivalence in difference”) and the *practice* of this science in terms of translation. To be sure, this is another case of generalized translation:

For us, both as linguists and as ordinary word-users, the meaning of any linguistic sign is its translation into some further, alternative sign, especially by a sign “in which it is more fully developed,” as Peirce insistently stated. . . . We distinguish three ways of interpreting a verbal sign: it may be translated into other signs of the same language, into another language, or into another, non-verbal system of symbols.<sup>6</sup>

This generalized translation, within which Jakobson, in an effort to dominate the unmasterable concept of translation, situates “reformulation,” “translation properly speaking,” and “transmutation,” is itself connected to what we have called, with regard to the Romantics, the reflexive structure of language:

An ability to speak a given language implies an ability to talk *about* this language.<sup>7</sup>

Again, as for Novalis (but in a rewording that has no longer anything speculative), we see *reflexivity* and *translatability* connected.

Without a doubt, linguistics is not only a discipline that claims to be “scientific” and whose knowledge would be as foreign to our experience as that of mathematical physics. It is a certain perception of language and man’s relation to language, even if it is not, like translation, an *experience*. In that sense, it must be asserted that translation can never constitute a mere branch of linguistics, philology, criticism (as the Romantics believed), or hermeneutics: Whether it be of philosophy, religion, literature, poetry, etc., translation constitutes a dimension *sui generis*. A dimension which produces a certain *knowledge*. But this experience (and the knowledge it provides) may in return be illumined and partially transformed by other experiences, other practices, a different knowledge. And it is obvious that linguistics, in the twentieth century, can enrich the translating consciousness; and vice versa, for that matter. Jakobson’s linguistics interrogates poets; it might also interrogate translators. And this is, in effect, the reciprocal game proposed by Haroldo de Campos in Brasil.<sup>8</sup>

Ezra Pound’s translations, and his reflection on poetry, criticism, and translation, are of a fundamental importance here, and it would be interesting to confront the theory of *criticism by translation* with the Romantic theories of translation by criticism. Pound’s reflections, like those of Meschonnic, *Po&sie*, and *Change*, attempt to define what may be, in the twentieth century, a theory and a practice of *poetic translation*.



We did not intend here to present a panorama (necessarily sketchy and partial) of the contemporary efforts in the theory of translation, but above all to emphasize this: The field of translation, which has become practically decentralized and structured on the international level,<sup>9</sup> is slowly, very slowly, beginning to become less obscure and to assert itself as a field of its own, as the several domains in which the "problems" of translation are posed are gradually beginning to question themselves (often for the first time) on translation and its different registers. For translation is not a mere mediation: It is a process in which our entire relation to the Other is played out. Now this consciousness, already present in Romantic and classical Germany, is reemerging with a force that is all the greater in proportion as all the certainties of our intellectual tradition and even our "modernity" are shaken up. That much needs to be retranslated; that we must go through the experience [*épreuve*] of translation, incessantly; that in this experience [*épreuve*] we must struggle relentlessly against our fundamental reductionism, but also remain open to that which, in all translation, remains mysterious and unmasterable, properly speaking in-visible (we do not know the nature of the face of the foreign work that will appear in our language, regardless of our efforts to make the voice of that work speak in our language at all cost); that we must expect much from this undertaking of "eccentric" translation, perhaps an enriching of our language, perhaps even an inflection of our literary creativity; that we have to question the act of translation in all its registers, and to open it to other contemporary interrogations,<sup>10</sup> reflect on its nature, but also on its history as well as on its obscuring—this seems to us to characterize the present age of translation.

When we read what the German classical and Romantic age managed to write on the act of translating and its meaning (cultural, linguistic, speculative, etc.), we find not only a number of theories that, in some form or other, still determine our present, for better or for worse. We also find a consciousness, and above all an inhabiting of language that is essentially *less threatened than ours*.

Let us take, for instance, the case of the expansion of our language that we expect from non-ethnocentric translation. Clearly, the Germany of Goethe and Schleiermacher expected the same gains from its translation enterprises, even though their perspective seems too limited to us *today*. But in the meantime, something happened that has been denounced by numerous authors of our century, and that has to do with the destruction of the *Sprachlichkeit* (the speaking power of the great modern languages) to the benefit of a system-language of communication becoming more and more emptied of its own density and significance. One may think here of the impoverishment of oral creativity, the

death of dialects, the receding of literature in an increasingly closed space in which it is no longer capable to "figure" the world. The degradation of language (natural language) is certainly a commonplace. *Our* common place. At the end of *After Babel*, Steiner mentions the dangers threatening planetary English. In fact, these dangers concern all languages, and all the dimensions of our existence. Henceforth, they place the task of translating in a new, or at least infinitely more crude light: The issue is to defend language and the relations among languages against the increasing homogenization of communication systems—because they endanger the entire realm of belonging and difference. Annihilation of dialects and local speech; trivialization of national languages; leveling of the differences among them for the benefit of a model of non-language for which English served as guinea pig (and as victim), a model by virtue of which automatic translation would become thinkable; cancerous proliferation of specialized languages at the bosom of the common language<sup>11</sup>—this is a process that thoroughly attacks language and the *natural* relation of human beings to language. To reopen the paths of the tradition; to open a relation, finally accurate (not dominating or narcissistic), to other cultures, and notably those of what has now become the "Third World"; to mobilize the resources of our language to bring it up to the level of those several openings—all of this, obviously, is to struggle against that destructive phenomenon, even if there are other ways to avert it. And that is, perhaps, what is essential to the modern translating consciousness: a maximal demand of "knowledge" at the service of a certain realimentation of the speaking force of language, to *inhabit and defend Babel* with a certain lucidity at the time when the Tower-of-Manifold-Languages (i.e., that of Differences) is threatened by the expansion of an uprooting jargon which is not even Esperanto, that naive humanist dream that now reveals its nightmarish face.

The history of Western translation has not yet been written. The modern translating consciousness is unthinkable without a knowledge of its history: its origins, its epochs, its wanderings. May the present work constitute at least the beginning of the writing of one of the most captivating chapters of that history.

## II. Translation as a New Object of Knowledge

Translation as a new object of knowledge: This means two things. First of all, as experience and as operation, it is the carrier of a knowledge *sui generis* on languages, literatures, cultures, movements of exchange and contact, etc. The issue is to manifest and articulate his knowledge *sui*

*generis*, to confront it with other modes of knowledge and experience concerning these domains. In this sense, translation must be considered rather as *subject* of knowledge, as origin and source of knowledge.

In the second place, this knowledge, in order to become a "knowledge" in the strict sense, should take on a definite, quasi-institutional and established form, suited to further its development in a field of research and teachability. This has sometimes been called traductology (other, less fortunate names have also been suggested).<sup>12</sup> But that does not mean, at least not in the first place, that translation should become the object of a specific "discipline" concerning a separate "region" or "domain," precisely because it is not anything separate itself. In fact, traductology, as a form or field of knowledge, could primarily be compared to Michel Foucault's "archaeology," Jacques Derrida's "grammatology," or the "poetology" developed in Germany by Beda Allemann. Rather than being "regional" disciplines, these types of reflection bear upon dimensions already intersected by other, established disciplines, but intersected in such a way that the immanent wealth of their content can no longer fully appear.

Translation constitutes such a dimension. Carrying its own knowledge, it can only become the subject of this knowledge if it opens itself to a traductology in the sense outlined here.

The issue, then, will be to found—or to radicalize already existing and often decisive attempts at foundation—a space of reflection, and thus of research. As we indicated at the beginning of this study, this space will cover the field of translation within other fields of interlinguistic, interliterary, and intercultural communication, as well as the history of translation and the theory of literary translation—"literature" encompassing literature in the strict sense as well as philosophy, the humanities, and religious texts. The knowledge which will take this space as its theme will be autonomous: In itself, it will neither depend on applied linguistics, nor comparative literature, nor poetics, nor the study of foreign languages and literatures, etc., even though all these established disciplines, in their own way, claim the field of translation. Yet, to the extent that this field, by its very nature, intersects a multiplicity of domains, and chiefly those of the disciplines mentioned above, there will necessarily be some interaction between these and traductology. No reflection on translation can do without the contributions of linguistics and literary theory. Traductology is interdisciplinary *par excellence*, precisely because it is situated *between* several disciplines, often far apart.

Its starting point rests on a few fundamental hypotheses. The first one is this: Even as it is a particular case of interlingual, intercultural,

and interliterary communication, translation is also the *model* for any process of this kind. Goethe has taught us this. This does not mean that all the problems that may be posed by this communication appear decoded and, as it were, in a condensed form in the operation of translation, and that it would then be possible to understand and analyze the other modes of intercommunication from the perspective of translation. It may be said that translation occupies an analogous place to that of language within other sign systems. As Benveniste said, in one sense language is only a sign system among others; but in another, it is the system of systems, the one that makes possible the interpretation of all others. This fact will be confirmed by the relation of mutual envelopment between the generalized theory of translation and the restricted theory. From Novalis to George Steiner and Michel Serres, we have witnessed the edification of theories in which any type of "change" (of "trans-lation") is interpreted as a translation, not only in the aesthetic domain, but also in that of the sciences and, finally, in human experience in general. A trace of this peculiar extension of the concept of translation is also found in Roman Jakobson's classic text on translation. This generalized theory of translation or, as Michel Serres says, of "duction,"<sup>13</sup> has recently been criticized by Henri Meschonnic. The extension of this concept would result in depriving it of all content, whereas, on the contrary, much would be gained in the development of a restricted theory of translation. Still, it remains a fact that the concept of translation continues to overflow any limited definition it can be given. This semantic—and epistemological—overflowing seems inevitable and, for that matter, it corresponds to the common perception that translation is always much more than translation. It will be better, then, to articulate a restricted and a generalized theory of translation, without dissolving (as is the case for the German Romantics) the former in the latter. Which amounts to saying that the restricted theory should function as the archetype of any theory of "changes" or of "trans-lations." The position of this archetype is characterized by a paradox: *its uniqueness*. The relation that links a translation to its original is unique in its kind. No other relation—from one text to another, from one language to another, from one culture to another—is comparable to it. And it is precisely this uniqueness that makes for the *significant density* of translation; to interpret the other exchanges in terms of translation is to want (rightly or wrongly) to give them the same significant density.

Traductology's second hypothesis is that translation, be it literature or philosophy or even humanities, plays a role that is not merely one of transmission: On the contrary, this role is tendentially *constitutive* of all literature, all philosophy, and all human science. Giordano Bruno expressed this with all the lyricism belonging to his epoch:

From translation comes all science.

The hyperbolic character of this sentence should not mask the truth of its content. We will briefly explicate here in what respect translation plays this constitutive role and in what respect—and this is a decisive corollary—it remained obscured and denied as a constitutive moment, so as to appear only as a simple operation of mediation (of meaning). If translation had not been obscured as the constitutive (and hence historical) factor of literature and knowledge, something like “traductology” would long since have been in existence, with the same right as “criticism.”

But, as we have seen, when translation is being interfered with, we approach a repressed domain, filled with resistances.

In the area of literature, modern poetics, and even comparative literature<sup>14</sup> have shown that the relation of works (first writing) and translations (second writing) is characterized by a reciprocal engendering. Far from being only the mere “derivation” of an original supposed to be absolute, as the Law still defines it, the translation is *a priori* present in any original: Any work, as far as one can go back, is already to several degrees a fabric of translations or a creation that has something to do with the translating operation, inasmuch as it posits itself as “translatable,” which means simultaneously “worthy of being translated,” “capable of translation,” and “having to be translated” in order to reach its plenitude as work. The possibility and the injunction of translation do not define a text after the fact: They constitute the work *as work* and, in fact, must lead to a new definition of its structure. This may easily be verified by analyzing Latin literature or medieval works.<sup>15</sup>

This is not without consequences for disciplines like poetics, comparative literature, or the study of foreign languages and literatures. The analysis of transtextualities, undertaken methodically by poetics, implies, in addition to research concerning hypertextuality, intertextuality, paratextuality, and metatextuality, a reflection on that specific transtextuality constituted by translation, following the lead J. L. Borges intuitively indicated:

No problem is as concordant with literature and with the modest mystery of literature as is the problem posed by a translation.<sup>16</sup>

Novalis and A. W. Schlegel, but also Baudelaire, Proust, and Valéry, intuited this “concordant” relation between “literature” and translation. They even went so far as to assert that the writer’s operation and the translator’s are identical.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, it is necessary to mark the limits of this identification that is so typically Romantic: These limits are defined by the irreducibility of the relation between original and trans-

lation. No translation has meaning other than as translation of an original. For its part, literature does not know any relation of this kind, even if it has a nostalgia for it.<sup>18</sup>

Similarly, comparative literature presupposes “traductology” as a partially integratable complement. The comparative study of different literatures is obviously based on their interaction. Now, interaction has translations as the condition for its possibility. No “influence” without translation, even if (we encounter again the reciprocal envelopment) the converse can be stated as well.

In the philosophical domain, translation also plays an essential role. Historically, from the Greeks to the Romans, from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance and beyond, philosophy developed through a series of translations that have been much more than a mere “transfer of content.” As Heidegger has shown concerning the translation of Aristotelian concepts or of “the principle of reason,” the principal *Grundwörter* (fundamental words) that articulate philosophical discourse have been translated every time by a process in which interpretation and neology, borrowing and reformulation, coexisted or alternated. And every translation of a *Grundwort* has entailed a new perception of past or present philosophies: think of Hegel’s *Aufhebung* that became *relève* in Jacques Derrida. The history of philosophical translation “errors” constitutes one of the most captivating chapters of this process—because these “errors” are never insignificant.<sup>19</sup> In the twentieth century, translation has entered the philosophical horizon as an explicit and crucial *question* with thinkers as different as Wittgenstein, Karl Popper, Quine, Heidegger, Gadamer and, most recently, Michel Serres and, above all Jacques Derrida.

In the modern human sciences the same “circle” is found, the same essential interweaving between translation and the constitution of a discipline. As we have seen, psychoanalysis first encountered translation as one of the problems of its own renovation. But this led it to question itself more and more about the essence of translation and—this is important for us—to rediscover the place the concept of translation held as an operational concept *within Freud’s own thinking*. This is shown by a letter from Freud to Fließ shortly before the appearance of *Die Traumdeutung*:

I explain the particularity of psychoneuroses to myself by the fact that *translation*, for certain materials, *has not been carried out*, which has certain consequences. . . . *The failing of translation* is called *repression* in clinical terms. The motive of the latter is always a *disconnecting of displeasure* that would happen by *translation*, as if displeasure would provoke a disturbance of thinking that would not allow the *labor of translation*.<sup>20</sup>

(Orientalism) also presupposes the problematic of translation. On the one hand, research itself is accompanied by translation, whether it is of works, of quotations, or of *Grundwörter*. On the other hand, the very essence of its project, as Massignon indicated, supposes a certain "de-centering" that is itself an essential moment of the operation of translation: to translate oneself toward. . . .

In order to understand the other, one should not annex it, but become its host. . . . To understand something other is not to *annex* the thing, but to transfer oneself by a decentering to the very center of the other.<sup>21</sup>

Edward Saïd, in *Orientalism*—a very controversial work, for that matter—has shown that, historically, Orientalism found itself badly armed to confront the problematic of its necessary decentering, inasmuch as a certain ideological surcharge, in the nineteenth century, led it to "ethnocentric" translations. This "failing of translation," to take up Freud's term, signals an organic "absence" of this discipline, with which it is gradually parting. But it also signals the point where a traductology could collaborate with it. In fact, one of the axes of traductology is to elaborate a theory of *non-ethnocentric translation* with a generalized field of application. This theory is both *descriptive* and *normative*.

It is descriptive in that it analyzes the systems of deformation that weigh upon any operation of translation and is able to propose a counter-system on the basis of that analysis.<sup>22</sup> It is normative in that the alternatives it defines concerning the direction of translation are mandatory. These alternatives go far beyond the traditional divisions of translation theory into "supporters of the letter" and "supporters of the spirit." Thus, starting from this framework, every domain can elaborate its own methodology of translation. For instance, traductology is not supposed to settle the problems of the translation of *Chinese poetry* for, if it descended to that level, its task would obviously be empirically infinite. But there is a level where the problems are the same for the *sinologist*, the specialist of Serbian literature, or of Greek tragedy. This level concerns the problematic of translation itself and the systems of constraints that French (and any great "national" language) poses for translation. This level is that of pure translating competence. And it is the one lacking in most specialists of a given domain, which taints their attempts at translation with epistemological naïveté. This is the case because, even as they recognize that the problematic of translation is essential for them (it concerns, in part, the becoming of their discipline), they end up degrading this problematic to the level of a simple technical procedure. At this stage, we are once again confronted with the obscured, denied status of translation, and the violent resistances it arouses.

These resistances constitute an essential chapter of traductology. Originally, they seem to be of a religious and cultural order. At a first level, they are ordered around *untranslatability as a value*. What is essential in a text is not translatable or, supposing it is, should not be translated. In the case of the Bible, the Jewish translation represents this extreme position. Just as the "Law" should not be "translated" from the oral to the written, the sacred text should not be translated into other languages, lest it lose its "sacred" character. This double refusal indicates in reverse the essential connection between the written and translation, in order to be able to question both of them better. The rejection of translation traverses the whole history of the West, with the dogma, never made explicit and continually refuted practically, of the untranslatability of poetry, without mentioning the famous "prejudicial objection" against translation in general.<sup>23</sup> A very recent example will show the deaf persistence of this rejection. In an article devoted to the necessity of the diffusion of the French language and literature, Bernard Catry mentions the possibility of stimulating, on the official level, "the translation into foreign languages of French works." This, the author believes, might lead foreign readers to subsequently read those same works in the original language, and thus to learn French. And he adds in passing:

To be sure, Sartre in English is no longer Sartre.<sup>24</sup>

The "to be sure" that opens this short sentence indicates that Catry considers translation a makeshift and a total treason. It contains a devalorization that is never made explicit. Obviously, it is an entire culture (in this case, French culture) defending itself against the "exile" of its "sacred monsters."

One easily understands from this that translation is considered suspect and, in the end, culturally negative. At the other end of the spectrum, it is rather its significant density that is denied, by the opposite axiom of *universal translatability*. Essential to translation would be the transmission of "meaning," that is, the universal content of any text. As soon as this is postulated, translation acquires the shallowness of a humble mediation of meaning. In his *Aesthetics*, Hegel stated that poetry could be translated from one language into another (and even into prose) without any loss, because spiritual content prevails in it. But when one states, more modestly, that "not words, but ideas are translated,"<sup>25</sup> one only repeats, at a non-speculative level, what Hegel said. Every time translation rebels against the narrowing of this operation and pretends to be a transmission of *forms*, of *signifiers*, resistances proliferate. These resistances are well known by every translator: The issue would be to provide a translation that "does not smack of transla-

tion," to propose a text "the way the author would have written it if he were French," or, more trivially, to produce a translation in "clear and elegant French." The result is that translation appears either as the modest transmission of meaning, or as the suspect activity of injecting the language with "strangeness."<sup>26</sup> In both cases, translation is denied and obscured.

One of the fundamental tasks of traductology is to fight this obscurity, which is manifest additionally in the prejudicial objection against the *reflection of translation*. This reflection collides with a series of oppositions: the conflict between theorist and non-theorist translators, of translators and theorists of translation. In the first case, a majority of translators proclaim that translation is a purely intuitive activity, which can never really be conceptualized. In the second case, there is an opposition between theorists without practice and "practitioners" without theory. The result is a tenacious putting-into-question of the possibility of a traductology that would cover both the theoretical and the practical field and that would be developed on the basis of the *experience* of translation—more specifically, on the basis of *its very nature as experience*. Abstract theorists and empirical practitioners concur in the assertion that the experience of translation is not, should not and could not be theorizable. Now, this presupposition is a negation of the meaning of the act of translation: By definition, this act is a *second and reflexive* activity. Reflexivity is essential to it, and with it systematicity. In fact, the coherence of a translation is measured by the degree of its systematicity. And systematicity is unthinkable without reflexivity. This reflexivity goes from the interpretive reading of texts to the reasoned elaboration of an entire system of "choices" of translation. Of course, it is accompanied by a necessary intuitiveness. But this reciprocal play of reflexivity and intuitiveness, as we have seen, makes translation much more similar to a "science" than to an "art." In the same way that, in the case of a science, an entire system of deformation must be overcome before it can constitute a rigorous categorial horizon, translation likewise, must confront a field of linguistic, literary, and cultural deformation in order to be able to realize its pure aim. That this end is rarely attained only confirms the necessity of a traductology that would accomplish a "Copernican revolution" of translation.

To finish, let us clarify the position of traductology in relation to the *linguistic* approach to translation. We start from the presupposition that the two approaches are both distinct and complementary. In his *Problèmes théoriques de la traduction*, Georges Mounin poses the problem of the untranslatables: Morphologically, syntactically, lexically, etc., languages tend to make all translation impossible, except at a level of approximation where the "losses" are higher than the "gains." Thus,

Mounin says, the translation of the approximately fifty words for bread in the region of Aix-en-Provence would pose "insoluble problems" if "a French novel of some merit would have the world of baking in this region as its setting."<sup>27</sup> Examples of this kind may be multiplied infinitely and, of course, on other levels than that of the "semantic fields" of the author. This observation is indisputable, even if Mounin attempts to minimize its scope in the last part of his book. Linguistically speaking, we are facing a *band of untranslatability*. But if one puts oneself on the level of the *translation of a text*, the problem changes completely. To be sure, every text is written in a language; and in fact, the multiplicity of terms mentioned, whether it appears in an oral or a written sequence, remains in itself "untranslatable" in the sense that the other language will not have the corresponding terms. But at the level of a work, the problem is not to know whether or not there are equivalents for these terms. Because the level of translatability is different. Faced with a multiplicity of terms without equivalence in his own language, the translator will be confronted with different choices: gallicization (in *Captain Grant's Children* Jules Verne translates *pampas* as "the pampasian plains"), borrowing (*pampa* in contemporary French), or semi-gallicization (*porteño*, inhabitant of Buenos Aires, becomes *portègne*). The alleged untranslatability is dissolved in total translatability by simply having recourse to modes of relation that exist naturally and historically between languages, but adapted in this case to the demands of the translation of a text: borrowing and neologism for the lexical domain. It is the structure itself of the text that will dictate what must be "translated" or "not translated" (in the usual sense), the non-translation of a term counting as an eminent mode of translation. Other modalities complement this recourse to types of interlingual exchanges. For instance, a term or a structure *x* will be canceled at a point *X* in the text, possibly to be replaced by a term or a structure *y* at point *Y*: this is the procedure of *compensation*, recommended already by Du Bellay. Or the positing of a term or a structure *x* situated at point *X* in the text at another point *Y* of that text where the target language can accommodate it better: This is the procedure of *displacement*. Or again, *homologous replacement*: An element *x*, literally untranslatable, is replaced by an element *y* that is homologous to it in the text. These are not, as one tends to believe, makeshift procedures, but modalities that define the meaning itself of all literary translation, *inasmuch as it encounters what is linguistically (and sometimes culturally) untranslatable and dissolves it in actual literary translatability without, of course, slipping into paraphrase or an opaque literalness*. These modalities are based to a large extent on what Efim Etkind called the "potential language."<sup>28</sup> For any language, a rigorous correspondence with another language may



be postulated, but on a *virtual* level. To develop these potentialities (which vary from language to language) is the task of translation *which thereby proceeds toward the discovery of the "kinship" of languages*. This task could not be simply artistic; it supposes an extensive knowledge of the entire diachronic and synchronic space of the target language. Thus, the translation of Spanish diminutives requires a thorough study of French diminutives (their history, the mode of their formation and integration, etc.), without which one would believe oneself faced with "untranslatables." The abstract theorist of translation and the intuitive practitioner encounter the same limitation, which comes from the fact that they have no awareness of the "heterological" wealth of the target language.

The modalities mentioned above are usually no longer classified in the category of translation—for instance by Jakobson or Max Bense—but in that of "creative transposition," the definition of which for that matter, remains indeterminate. But in fact this "transposition" is the very essence of translation, and the former can only be opposed to the latter on the basis of a petty and imaginary (the perfect correspondence, the *adequatio*), even speculative concept of translation. On the contrary, translation must be defined on the basis of its actual operation, which does not at all mean that all modalities are equivalent, and that there would not exist modalities that amount to non-translations or bad translations. As we have seen, these phenomena of non-translations and bad translations must be taken into account by traductology for, as George Steiner said, without exaggerating too much:

It must be admitted that since Babel ninety percent of translations have been wrong and that it will remain that way.<sup>29</sup>

These remarks are aimed at making clear that the linguistic and the traductological approach are different and, at the same time, complementary, since translation can only realize its pure aim on the basis of linguistic knowledge, if at least it wants to go beyond an empiricity that destines 90 percent of its products to being "wrong." In other words, the "Copernican revolution" of the sciences of language must make possible the "Copernican revolution" of translation, without at all being the only foundation, and without translation ever becoming a branch of "applied linguistics." Traductology will only be constituted in collaboration with linguistics and poetics; it has much to learn from socio- and ethnolinguistics, as well as from psychoanalysis and philosophy.

From that point on, *science of translation* would have a double meaning: a science taking the knowledge of translation as its object, and the "scientification" of the practice of translation. In this respect, it must be noted that France has remained far behind other countries in

this domain, like Germany, the Anglo-Saxon countries, the Soviet Union, and the Eastern countries. This theoretical delay has as its corollary a delay on the practical level, both quantitative and qualitative. The opening of a domain of traductological reflection, then, will fill the void whose grave consequences are appearing little by little, and which contribute to a chronical crisis in France of both translation and culture.