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After Translation

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Preface

  In this essay, I am going to trace the question of the meaning of words and examine whether or not it can remain intact after a process of translation. I will divide the essay in three chapters each of which will discuss a different process of translation and its philosophical significance. The tripartite structure of this work as well as the terminology used in the titles of my chapters is inspired by Roman Jakobson's proposal that a linguistic sign can be interpreted in three different ways. The first one is the interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language, namely interlingual translation or translation proper. The second one is referred to as intralingual translation or rewording and it describes the interpretation of linguistic signs by means of other signs of the same language. Lastly, the third process of translation which Jakobson introduces and which I will thoroughly discuss in my third chapter is intersemiotic translation or transmutation; the interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems or of nonverbal and verbal signs combined (Jakobson 145).

  Having examined these three ways of translating a linguistic sign to another sign of the same kind or of different kinds, I will argue that a word cannot have an *identical* meaning to its original after undergoing any process of translation. Firstly, in my chapter on interlingual translation, I will examine the three methods of translation that Schleiermacher delineates on the basis of where a translator chooses to position himself on the spectrum of fidelity and originality. To empower my argument about the ineffability of each of these methods in leaving word meaning intact, I will include Jacques Derrida's discussion on the way that translation is being imposed on the foreigner or the xenos. In my second chapter, I will look into *metaphor* and

synonymy as two cases of intralingual translation to argue that their nature is far more mystical that usually acknowledged as well as to elucidate that *similarity* in language should not be confused with *identity* — Ted Cohen's book *Thinking of Others; On the Talent for Metaphor* will be particularly useful to this section of my essay .Thirdly, in my discussion of intersemiotic translation, I will include Hegel's notion of dialectics and looking particularly at the dialectic pair of Form and Content, I will argue that the meaning of a linguistic sign can only be found in the absolute and inseparable totality of its form as well as content. If a linguistic symbol is translated to another symbol of a different form, then the original totality is disrupted and new meaning is created that is divergent to the original. Lastly, my exploration of film adaptation in the film *Adaptation*, will enlighten the potentiality of translation to create meaning that is not only new and existent on its own, but also expanded and magnified.

Introduction

What is the Meaning of a Word?

     My exploration of translation and transferable -or rather not so transferable- linguistic meaning across different contexts and linguistic as well as semiotic systems can start from no better place than the following question;

<div align="center">What is the meaning of a word?</div>

This is a *spurious* question as J.L. Austin denotes. Austin's essay "The meaning of a Word" will be the beginning of my philosophical investigation here as well as serve as the basis for my understanding of linguistic meaning; my employment of the term 'linguistic meaning' throughout this essay will always refer back to Austin's delineation of it. In his revolutionary paper mentioned above, he makes the case that there is no such thing as 'the meaning of a word' and urges us to rethink our conception of it. Austin writes that "the phrase 'the meaning of a word' is in general, if not always, a dangerous nonsense-phrase" (*Philosophical Papers* 56) and does so as he holds that there is no simple, practical or convenient appendage of a word called 'the meaning of (the word) "x"'; there exists far more complexity inscribed in that phrase.

     He begins unfolding those complications by stating that "it appears that the sense in which a word or a phrase 'has a meaning' is derivative from the sense in which the sentence 'has a meaning'" (56). What follows is that 1) when we are using the term 'the meaning of a word', what we are saying is that there are sentences in which this word occurs and from which it acquires meaning and 2) in order for us to know what that meaning is, we need to know the

meanings of the sentences in which the word occurs. Austin, firstly, examines the question "What is the meaning of the word *racy*?"; a question which he considers to be sensical in comparison to "What is the meaning of a word?" which he has already denounced to be a specimen of nonsense. He sees two ways in responding to it: 1) he could explain the *syntactics* of the word "racy" in English -he could try to explicate what raciness is and what it is not and give examples of how it should be used in sentences and how it should not, and 2) he could demonstrate the *semantics* of the word — that could be done by encouraging the questioner to imagine or even experience situations that could be described by sentences including the word "racy" and again situations to which "racy" does not apply. Austin admits that this case is a simple one, yet he argues that this bipole could be applied to most ordinary words in the search of their respective meaning.

Before further discussing the bigger question of his essay, he mentions two fallacies that are associated with our apprehension of 'the meaning of the word' and give rise to our desire to provide a strict definitional and operative description of it. Austin argues that the first act of error is that of approaching words as names, i.e in effect proper names such as for example 'Aristotle', or 'the man in black', or 'Athens', and, therefore, expecting them to denote something in the same way that proper names do. However, proper names and general names have a very different range of connotations and, thus, associating these two can only lead to falsity. The second malady that Austin recognizes, which is yet more common than the first one, is the following: "When we have given an analysis of a certain sentence, containing a word or phrase 'x, we often feel inclined to ask of our analysis to 'What in it, is "x"?'" (61). He looks at the particular case of the sentence 'The State owns this land'. In analysing this sentence, we consider various

individual men and their transactions and, most of the time, feel inclined to ask 'What in, all that, is the State?'; we might answer that the state is the collection of the individual men mentioned above and we have,in that way, committed the second act of error in terms of understanding 'the meaning of a word' as we have oversimplified it and ignored the contextuality of the term.

Austin continues with part II of his essay by arguing that since 'the meaning of a word' is a complex and multifaceted concept, *'part* of the meaning of the word ''x''' can only be of a similar and rather enigmatic nature. He writes; "if 'explaining the meaning' of a word' is really the complicated sort of affair that we have seen in to be, and if there is really nothing to call 'the meaning of a word' -then phrases like 'part of the meaning of the word x' are completely undefined." (*Philosophical Papers* 62-63). He holds that the concept of 'part of the meaning" is rather hard to approach as we have no knowledge at all about what it *means*; the *working-model* we are using has failed us by being insufficient in describing what it is that we really want to talk about. The distinction of a judgement as either analytic or synthetic, which is perceived by some philosophers to be the solution to the above problem as well as a very effective epistemological tool, only further complicates the picture here.

By overlooking a variety of semantical, syntactic, and contextual distinctions among words, phrases, and sentences, this kind of philosophical thinking, if applied here, can very possible trap us into falling back to the old *working-model* referenced above. The difficulty is found in the fact that "ordinary language breaks down in extraordinary cases" (68). The cause of this *breaking down* is, for Austin, semantical and what it means is that *words fail us*. He holds that if we talk considering *ordinary* language to be an *ideal* language, we cannot but misrepresent the facts that we intend to talk about. Therefore, he recommends that in our search

of what 'the meaning of a word' is we abandon this dual consideration of statements and consider the actual complexity of the facts we are talking about while also looking at the different ways we use words in different *situations*.

Moving on to the third argument that Austin makes in "The Meaning of a Word", we are acquainted with the question "why do we call different things by the same name?" (69). He examines the concept of 'sameness of meaning' to reveal the erroneous conceptions and questionable reasons that we quite possibly have for calling different things by the same name. The main theory he chooses to object to is "that *it is not in the least true* that all the things which I 'call by the same (general) name' *are* in general 'similar', in any ordinary sense of that much abused word" (70). He argues that the peculiarities of the word 'similar' are not to be ignored for the sake of the development of a concrete philosophical theory about 'sameness of meaning' and nor is the fact that *similarity* is precisely not partial *identity* — in parallel to partial meaning as such being an undefined entity. Austin proceeds with providing a variety of cunning examples that depict that our particular reasons for 'calling different things by the same name' are not to be lightly dismissed as *similarity*. The one I choose to mention here is number two; namely, Aristotle's 'analogous' terms (71-72). Such terms are understood in a way that when A : B :: X : Y, then A and X are often called by the same name. Let us consider the 'foot of a mountain' and the 'foot of a list'. What becomes evident, is that even though there is good reason for both of these terms to be referred to as 'feet', there is no reason for us to say that they are *similar* in any ordinary sense.

Conclusively, Austin has provided three very important arguments here that will be referred back to throughout the essay as the ground for our discussion on translation.. Firstly, he

has urged us to view "the meaning of a word' as a *spurious* phrase which cannot be accessed through any generic schema — a Wittgensteinian case-by-case exploration of 'the meaning of word "x"' in different sentences and contexts is what he calls for. Secondly, he has proven the 'part of the meaning of a word' to be an equally undefined concept to which no overarching definition can apply; attention to different situations is of great necessity here as well. Thirdly, Austin accounts for a re-examination of what 'having the same meaning' holds; one that depicts how essential it is to recognize the different reasons why we call things by the same name. Therefore, in this essay, even though we will at certain places look into atomistic arguments on language, we are not going to adopt such views that regard words as simple particulars consisting of one or multiple properties. We will always approach 'the meaning of a word' as a complex entity that cannot (for the most part) be reduced to isolated definitions, definite descriptions or particular properties; its nature is more mysterious and can only be accessed and understood if we look at the unique contextual elements that are present in each case. The Austinian question that follows from that on the scheme of this essay is the following. *What does this mean for translation?*

We know that the meaning of a word' is a very complicated entity and so is 'the meaning of the word "x"' — the latter is arguably less so but is still quite complex due to the fact that it cannot be but contextual. Can then this *context* be recreated for 'x' to have the *same* meaning when put in a different sentence in another language or when expressed in a more poetic or metaphorical way in the same language or when expressed in a different semiotic system, let us say that of musical notes? This endeavour becomes already very labyrinthine and its success almost impossible keeping in mind 1) that every *context* or *situation* is unique and can hardly be

broken down to constitutive elements, 2) a capturing of "partial meaning" (in the case that the capturing of "the meaning of word "x" is not possible) is also rather demanding, and 3) "having the same meaning' inevitably comes with the obligation to apprehend the peculiarities that are always involved in the concept of sameness.

Chapter One: Interlingual Translation

Introduction

Interlingual translation or translation proper, as already mentioned, is the interpretation of linguistic signs by means of some other language; in other words, it is what is commonly understood by the use of the word 'translation'. The act of translation, which begun taking place in the Western world as a result of the need to access ancient Greek and Latin texts, has been essential to the evolution of literature, philosophy and science and has also significantly facilitated verbal communication among speakers of different languages. There have certainly been philosophers and linguistic theorists that support the translatability of linguistic entities. One such thinker is I.A. Richards, who delineated his theory of translation in a series of reading workshops at Harvard in the late 1920's. He maintained, as De Pedro remarks, that "the literary scholar could develop rules of solving a communication problem, arrive at a perfect understanding, and correctly reformulate that particular message" (De Pedro 549) In other words, Richards held that there exists a 'right' way of comprehending a linguistic entity and then replicating it in a different language. However, such an idea seems to be arising from a conception of 'the meaning of a word' that seems quite questionable.

What Richards is arguing could only be plausible if language could be reduced to atomism (i.e "the view that the analysis of every proposition terminates in a proposition all of whose genuine components are names" (Proops)). Thus, if we hold that there exists one 'proper' way of understanding 'the meaning of a word' and transferring it to a different word of a different language, then we are agreeing to the presupposition that the 'meaning of a word' is

particular and reducible to atomic elements. However, this cannot be the case as word meaning, as we already saw, is a spurious entity subject to acquire new denotations and connotations depending on the context it is to be found in. This delineation of linguistic meaning does not cancel translatability; it only expands the limitations of our understanding of it. Even though it can very well be possible for us to translate a linguistic entity to a different one belonging to a different linguistic code, it is not the case that linguistic meaning can remain *intact* after any such process as there is neither a concrete 'meaning of a word' nor a set of rules that we can access it through. In this essay, while valuing the process of translation and its significance in bringing us closer to material that would otherwise be inaccessible, I will attempt to show the reasons why translating any verbal or written set of words without altering the original *meaning* of those words is an impossible task. Every translation, interlingual, intralingual, or intersemiotic, gives rise to a different creation with new meaning and implications.

I. *Three Methods to Translation*

I will begin my exploration of interlingual translation with discussing the three approaches that Schleiermacher recognizes to it and articulating the complications involved in each one. The first method is *metaphrase* or the word-to word translation whose purpose is to replicate the original text to another language with a faithfulness to the original as absolute as possible. The second is *paraphrase*; the middle, moderated way of approaching a translation that aims at achieving a balance between faithfulness to the original and the creation of a text that operates finely in the target language. The third approach is that of *imitation*; namely, the

transposition of a source text to a new one in another language that attempts to achieve a substantial result even if that requires disregarding some peculiarities and characteristics of the original. What already becomes evident, and will be elucidated throughout our study of the above three methods, is the struggle between fidelity and originality; a struggle that the translator is constantly battling with and one which does not seem to have a clearly delineated solution.

i. Metaphrase

Metaphrase is the literal, word to word approach to translation. Many questions are risen about its efficacy in creating a final product (whether that is a text, a poem, a verbal utterance or any other linguistic entity) that allows the meaning of the original to shine through. The first and simplest problem that metaphrase faces is the lack of some words in some languages. In Schopenhauer's "On Language and Words" we read; "Not every word in one language has an exact equivalent in another. Thus, not all concepts that are expressed through the words of one language are exactly the same as the ones that are expressed through the words of another…" (Schopenhauer 32). It is likely that some languages lack some particular words and in that case a metaphrastic approach would be impossible.

Secondly, the grammar of one language can be different from the grammar of another language to such a degree that the aspects of experience that are conveyed in each case language also differ. For example, the phrase 'I called a friend' in English, gives us three precise pieces of information: firstly, we have a subject, namely 'I', secondly, this subject performed and completed an action in the past, and thirdly, this action was directed to a 'friend'. However, if we attempt to translate this phrase, for instance, in Greek, literally, we are faced with a struggle

since we need additional information that is not provided[1]. To be more precise, the Greek

equivalent would need to specify whether we are referring to a female or male friend since the

noun 'friend' in Greek is always gendered. Another obstacle that metaphrase faces is that of

syntax and more precisely the different syntactic laws and structures that are found in different

languages bearing different layers of meaning. In English, syntax is built on the

subject-verb-object order which is present in almost every sentence or phrase and is very rarely

violated. This is clearly not true for every language. For instance, in Greek, this order is not so

important; what is essential to syntax is the morphology of the noun. Is the noun masculine or

feminine? Is it plural or singular? Is it found in the nominative case, the genitive, the accusative,

of the vocative? These are the questions that should be asked before constructing a sentence in

Greek and if we are translating from English in a metaphrastic way, it is very likely that the

meaning or the original will be simplified or altered.

A very important objection that we can raise about the metaphrastic approach to

translation is inspired by Bertrand Russell's idea that an individual can come to an understanding

of the word 'cheese' only if she has a prior nonlinguistic acquaintance with it (Jakobson 144).

Jakobson proposes that if we follow Russell's thinking and place our "emphasis upon the

linguistic aspects of traditional philosophical problems" then what necessarily follows is that the

only way that allows someone to understand 'cheese' would be to be familiar with the linguistic

meaning assigned to this word in English (144). 'Cheese' is understood differently by a speaker

of English than it would be by a speaker of Greek (for instance, for many Greek natives, the

word cheese is used to refer to a particular kind of cheese, i.e. feta cheese) or by a speaker of a

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[1] In this essay, I will often refer to Greek as it is the language that I'm most proficient in.

different language who is used to a culinary culture that does not include cheese. Therefore, the meaning of 'cheese' could very well be misinterpreted or lost if translated literally with one word in a language whose speakers have a different nonlinguistic acquaintance with it or no acquaintance at all. We would need an array of linguistic signs to even allow for the possibility of meaning to remain intact.

Metaphrase appears inadequate in keeping the meaning of a word intact for yet another reason; namely, a word- to -word translation, even if it manages to capture the *explicit* meaning of the word, it often fails at capturing the *implicit* one. By *explicit* meaning, I'm referencing the first layer of the message that is conveyed by language (which is many of the times quite complex itself) and by *implicit*, I'm referencing the second layer of meaning understood by speakers of a language through their comprehension of the *context* of a word[2]. We can come to such a comprehension through understanding literary as well as figurative language, idioms, humor, tone of voice or narration, cultural background etc; namely the complicated network of elements of understanding that native speakers of a language share. Let us consider the following two phrases: (a) 'I congratulate you'

(b) 'I am glad for you'

Let us now consider a scenario (a) where person 'x' is talking with person 'y' and utters (a) referring to 'y's success in doing 'z'. Then, we have scenario 'b', where everything remains the same except for the fact that person 'x' utters (b). Most English speakers would agree on the

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[2] This distinction is by no means absolute nor are 'explicit' and 'implicit' meaning mutually exclusive. They are, for the most part, intertwined yet it is helpful for us to be able to discern those two layers of understanding so that we better grasp the 'meaning of a word'. Since 'the meaning of a word 'x'' is of such enigmatic nature we can come closer to understanding it if we think firstly of the linguistic elements of 'x' and then of all the linguistic, contextual, and cultural implications that come with it. Therefore, this distinction is presented as a schema to facilitate our comprehension of 'the meaning of a word'.

following two positions; i) that both (a) and (b) are sentences bearing a congratulatory message and ii) that in uttering (a), the speaker communicates the message in a *warmer* way than an utterance of (b) would. The first remark can be understood as the explicit meaning of the sentence (a) or (b) whereas the second is relevant to the implicit meaning.

Metaphrase presents itself as an adequate method of transferring the meaning of a word intact. What follows is that it ought to be able to capture both the explicit and the implicit meaning of a word or a phrase; a statement that already seems questionable. Let us go back to the above example and consider remark ii) about it. We held that the implied content of (a) is that the speaker *warmly* congratulates 'y' whereas in (b) we have a more typical and and less expressive-of-emotion manner of congratulating. However, there is no guarantee that the implications of (a) and (b) that the English speaker is able to discern are identical if we translate the two sentences to other languages. In fact, in the case of Greek, even though the explicit content of the translated (a') and (b') statements would be the same congratulatory message that we understand from the English too, the implicit meaning would be reversed. Precisely, a native Greek speaker would perceive the translated form of 'I congratulate you' to be bearing a *colder* import than that of 'I am glad for you'. Thus, a word-to-word translation of (a) and (b) would in this case be misleading as it is not able to carry the implicit content of the two phrases. It may be that (a) should not be translated as (a') - (a) in Greek- but (b') -(b) in Greek- if we want to have a chance at keeping the meaning of the word intact.

The process of metaphrase cannot be but inefficient in transferring linguistic meaning as it is based on the false assumption that there exists full or absolute equivalency between different code-units on the level of words as that of sentences. Instead, what is the case is that i) the

'meaning of a word "x"' in language A cannot be the same in any other language (we are in fact not talking about word 'x' anymore if 'x' has been translated; a new word 'y' has arised with a new meaning), ii) grammatical and syntactic rules often vary between different languages, iii) there is great difference to be found in the historical and cultural background that speakers of different languages have which influence their respective linguistic codes and iv) the 'meaning of a word' has explicit and implicit layers which can be linguistic or not. Thus, a strict model of word-to-word translation cannot *mirror* any linguistic experience as both 'the meaning of a word' and language as such are mysterious entities that can be approached and understood only through a case-by-case exploration of their particularities.

ii. Paraphrase

Paraphrase is a process of translation that allows the translator to have an additional amount of freedom than the metaphrastic translator has. If the translator needs to add some words to explain a concept or to alter the syntactic structure of a sentence to make it more efficient in the language that it is being translated to, she can do accordingly. Schleiermacher writes: "Paraphrase seeks to overcome the irrationality of languages, but only in a mechanical way. It says to itself "Even if I do not find a word in my language that corresponds to that in the original language, I still want to retain its value by the addition of limiting or expanding definitions." (40)   We understand that the aim of this approach is the creation of a final product that after undergoing slight alterations, it can carry the same meaning as the original.

The major risk that comes with this approach has to do with its mechanical character. The original text is viewed in a mathematical way and its words or phrases are viewed as symbols or symbolic statements respectively. This reducement of words to symbols and the search of equivalent symbols in the target language can not only potentially be harmful to the spirit of the original or the target language but also to the meaning of the original text. The process of symbolization, in certain cases where the translator might have to deal with complex structures, bears the risks of oversimplifying or altering the *meaning* of the original on the name of clarity in the target language. Let us take the example of the following sentence;

Halloween candy which is good should be enjoyed.

Let us now use the variables, formulas and connectors that Terrence Parson introduced to assist us in symbolizing the above sentence (Parson) and let us suppose that:

Fx : something is Halloween candy
Gx: something is good
Hx: something should be enjoyed

These three are the atomic sentences that the above statement includes. Now let us figure out how these sentences are connected to one another. The general connector that we would use would be the universal quantifier sign - $\forall$x- that means that something is true in every case. The sentence would appear close to this:

$$\forall x \text{ (Fx and Gx then Hx)}$$

If we substitute 'and' and "then" with the symbolic connectors for them, our symbolic sentence would be the following:

$$\forall x \text{ (Fx} \wedge \text{Gx)} \rightarrow \text{Hx)}$$

This sentence would be read as 'Everything in the world which is Halloween candy and is good should be enjoyed'. Even though for symbolic logic proponents this is an equivalent sentence in English, it is in fact not exactly that; its meaning is *similar* to the meaning of the original sentence and yet it is far from being *identical* to it[3].Moreover, even though the purpose of this symbolization is to assist the translator with understanding components of the sentence, it in fact misdirects her; what this particular sentence is in need of, if translated, is not a change in syntax (or not primarily that). By regarding words as atomic elements and being focused on manipulating their syntactic role so that they better fit the syntax of the target language, the translator, in this case, fails to see that 'Halloween candy' calls for more attention. It is a culture-dependent term which means that the translator should be in a position to recognize that it requires further explication for speakers who are not familiar with English or Anglo-American culture.

Therefore, we understand that the syntactic structure that the symbolic sentence suggested would have to be altered once again to include such an explication and, also, to fit the syntactic rules of the language it is being translated to. There is a circularity to the paraphrastic approach which not only seems unnecessary but could potentially be harmful to the original linguistic meaning in the sense that it is not a translation of it but rather an *interpretation*. There emerges, then, the risk that the translator — instead of explicating words that need further explication (in this case 'Halloween candy') — ends up offering a personal commentary that can do nothing but *alter* the original meaning. This is the risk that comes with *imitation* as well and will be further explained in the following sub-chapter.

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[3] The notions of *similarity* and *identity* are going to be thoroughly examined in Chapter 2 on Intralingual Translation.

iii. Imitation

The method of imitation allows the translator to approach the original with a great sense of freedom; precisely, he can depart from it in any way of his choosing as long as he judges that this is efficient in rendering the original work more accessible to the reader of the translated piece. I will here argue that due to the great amount of freedom that the imitator has in altering the original text, it is a dangerous misconception to view imitation as *translation*; approaching it as a personalized interpretation of the original piece seems to be a better alternative. Before unfolding this argument, I will look at how Schleiermacher introduces imitation. First of all, he differentiates it from paraphrase by stating that imitation submits to the irrationality of languages whereas paraphrase, as it was mentioned earlier, aims at overcoming this irrationality. What he means by this is that imitation recognizes the fact that there can be no exact equivalent of a written or verbal work in another language. He writes: "It (<imitation) concedes that no replica of a work can be produced in another language that could correspond exactly in its individual parts to the individual parts of the original." (Schleiermacher 40-41) Therefore, since all languages are very different to one another on multiple levels, imitation attempts to create a final product which comes as close to its effect to the original as possible, even though its individual parts might be very different from the individual parts of the original. There is nothing wrong with this conception so far. In fact, it is aligned with Austin's idea that was discussed in the introduction that "ordinary language breaks into extraordinary cases" (*Philosophical Papers* 68). The *imitator* appears to be aware of the peculiarities of each language that can hardly be replicated in a different one yet his therapeutic approach to the problem does not seem to be

efficient; he is attempting to solve the linguistic problems that arise in a more personalized

manner than it would be productive.

What this means is that imitation, gives the imitator the freedom to take the *meaning* of

the original in his hands and choose to transform it in a way that he chooses to in order for the

work to be less foreign or at least more accessible to the reader of the target language.

Schleiermacher writes: "the imitator has not the slightest intention of bringing the two together

— the writer of the original and the reader of the imitation— because he does not believe that an

immediate relationship between them is possible; he only wants to give the latter an impression

similar to that which the contemporaries of the original received from it" (41). In other words,

the aim of imitation is to take into account the difference in language, morals, customs and

culture to offer to the reader an experience close to that of the individual who is reading the work

in the original. This does not seem to be a bad idea at all yet it is extremely hard to be achieved

in practice as the imitator is *one* observer standing between two languages — and unavoidably

not a very objective one. In other words, the imitator is taking into account *his* understanding of

the original language along with *his* understanding of the target language and tries to create the

best ties among them so that the original *meaning* can shine through in the translated work.

Therefore, what he is offering is an *interpretation*; his interpretation could be a good or bad one

(depending on a variety of factors that extend the scope of this essay) yet what matters is that we

approach it as such and not expect of it to carry word meaning intact.

Let us look at the following sentence from *Antigone*:

"A city is not a property of one" (Sophocles 94)

To elucidate my point here, I will only focus on the word 'city'. In ancient Greece, 'city' (< 'polis') was used to denote 'polis-kratos'; 'polis-kratos' was at the time understood as 'city-state' since a Greek city was then functioning as an autonomous state both politico-economically as well as socially. What I want to make clear, is that the imitative translator of *Antigone* had to make a *choice* about whether to translate 'polis' as 'city' or 'state' or 'city-state' since the Greek word allows for all those understandings. This choice cannot be but a matter of personal interpretation; the cautious translator asks himself what aspect of 'polis' he wants to emphasize and translates accordingly. He does so on the name of replicating for the English reader an experience similar to that of the ancient Greek spectator of the play but that process is more complicated as well as subjective than it might be regarded to. Thus, the 'meaning of the word 'polis'' has been redefined according to the imitator's judgement and inevitably acquired new associations.

It is worthwhile to attempt to look at the above sentence from the point of view of the other two approaches to translation that we have examined — still our focus will be only on 'city'. Aftering reading 'polis' in the Greek text, the metaphrastic translator would quite possibly proceed with translating it as 'city' and then moving on to the next word without paying enough attention to the particularities of 'polis' in the context of the Greek tragedy. The paraphrastic translator, on the other hand, would probably also translate 'polis' as 'city' but he would also attempt to show the particularities of the word in a parenthetical notation or a footnote. In both cases, 'the meaning of 'polis'' is redefined along with the meaning of the whole sentence. The metaphrastic approach is ignoring the distinctiveness of the word whereas the second is mechanistically explaining it though an isolated definition. Yet *explaining* a word is not the same

as *saying* the word. The force of the utterance, which is part of its meaning, is harmed if the translator proceeds with defining it. We can understand this better if we think of a joke that is said and a joke that is explained. The two utterances differ as the first is quite evidently more powerful and effective in transferring the meaning of the words that the second.

Having examined all three approaches, my goal is not to prioritize one over the other. I do not intend to recommend neither using one as a canon nor banning the others. Instead, my hope is that we understand that all of them come with a number of complications and that each case calls for a different approach or even a combination of the three. For example, simple utterances such as 'He is sleeping' can be effectively translated metaphrastically. A sentence such as 'Happy Easter' might be calling for a paraphrastic approach if it is to be translated to a language whose speakers are unfamiliar with 'Easter' and need a further explication of the term. Imitation is a more peculiar case as it is more personalized than the other two and, thus, bears the risk of being an interpretation instead of a translation. It could be the more applicable method though in sentences such as the following 'It is raining cats and dogs'; such a sentence requires that the translator finds a way to replicate its meaning by finding a similar idiom in the target language. What is important is that we are aware of the fact that in all cases, no matter which approach of translation we are following or coming across with, the 'meaning of a word' has changed. The more complicated entities of speech we are examining, the more complex the alterations and new implications that we encounter. A very particular case of speech that is worth examining through the lens of translation is poetry.

II. On the Subject of Poetry

     A new aspect of 'the meaning of a word' that becomes apparent in our discussion of poetry is the phonemic identity of a particular text. It is clear that the phonetic aspects of a set of words in one language can ever hardly resemble the phonetic character of the same words in another language. It is usually a necessary and unimportant sacrifice that comes with translation of most kind of texts. However, I will argue that when it comes to poetry, this sacrifice becomes more significant no matter the approach that the translator chooses to take. Metaphrase, paraphrase, and imitation are all unable to transport the meaning of a poem without replicating its phonemic character. Jakobson writes that poetry is by definition untranslatable as it is impossible for a translator to keep both the phonemic as well as the contextual aspects of the original poem. In his words, "Syntactic and morphological categories, roots, and affixes, phonemes, and their components (distinctive features) — in short, any constituents of the verbal— are confronted, juxtaposed, brought into contiguous relation according to the principle of similarity and contrast and carry their own autonomous significations." (Jakobson 151).

     Let us briefly look at the first two lines in Homer's Odyssey in Greek;

<div align="center">

"Ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα
πολλὰ
πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσεν: " (Homer 3)

</div>

which would be read in English as

<div align="center">

ándra moi énnepe, moûsa, polýtropon, hòs mála

pollà

plánchthē, epeì Troíēs hieròn ptolíethron épersen

</div>

One of its most well known translations to English is the following done by Richmond Lattimore;

"Tell me, Muse, of the man of many ways, who was driven
far journeys, after he had sacked Troy's sacred citadel." (Lattimore 27)

We can see that the phonetic identity of the English translation is not only missing the rhythm and musicality but also the alliteration of p that is present in the Greek. Taking into consideration that the Odyssey was meant to be sung along with the lyre, the epos is severely altered after any process of translation as it would be impossible for the text to have the same phonetic and rhythmical elements — that are so essential to it— in any other language.

To better explicate the impossibility of an interlingual translation of a poem, I will look at one original poem and three of its English translations each of which follows the process of metaphrase, paraphrase, and imitation respectively. The poem I will discuss is *The City (H Πόλις)* which was written by Constantine Cavafy in 1894 and published in 1910. *The City* is a poem of despair. The poet is attempting without much success to escape the place where he is trapped, the place of "black ruins", and then comes to realize the inescapability of it. I want to clarify that I am not arguing here that the original poem has one *meaning* (in that case that of being a poem of despair) or that I know what that meaning is. Yet I believe that having access to the original work in the language that it was written, unlocks aspects of it that a translation cannot quite do for speaker of the target language. A native speaker is given a privilege that the reader of a translated piece rarely enjoys; that privilege comes from an awareness of the socio-cultural implications of words and phrases. In poetry, we are dealing many of the times

with cases of figurative language where the import of a word or a phrase is very rich in implications. Thus, it is often very hard for a translator to replicate this complex network of associations and then for the reader to be able to grasp those. From the conception of the 'meaning of a word' that we have adopted in this essay, it follows that this meaning is contextual. Then, a native speaker who reads the poem cautiously, is privileged in comprehending the *context* of the poem. In my discussion of the three translations, I will attempt to use this privilege in articulating the distinct features of the three translated poems in close relation to the original. However, this does not mean that my interpretation is by any means objective; it still remains a personalized attempt at understanding the original and examining the translations while gazing back to it.

The first translation I will look at was written by Rae Dalven in 1976 in a manner that follows the metaphrastic method, the second by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard in 1975 (paraphrase), and the third by Daniel Mendelsohn in 2009 (imitation). My focus will be on the second stanza of the poem. Let us take a look at the original and begin with Dalven's metaphrastic approach. The second stanza of the original poem is the following:

> Καινούριους τόπους δεν θα βρεις, δεν θάβρεις άλλες θάλασσες.
> Η πόλις θα σε ακολουθεί. Στους δρόμους θα γυρνάς
> τους ίδιους. Και στες γειτονιές τες ίδιες θα γερνάς·
> και μες στα ίδια σπίτια αυτά θ' ασπρίζεις.
> Πάντα στην πόλι αυτή θα φθάνεις. Για τα αλλού — μη ελπίζεις—
> δεν έχει πλοίο για σε, δεν έχει οδό.
> Έτσι που τη ζωή σου ρήμαξες εδώ
> στην κώχη τούτη την μικρή, σ' όλην την γη την χάλασες. (Καβάφης)

> New lands you will not find, you will not find other seas.
> The city will follow you. You will roam the same
> streets. And you will age in the same neighborhoods;
> in these same houses you will grow gray.

Always you will arrive in this city. To another land-do not hope-
there is no ship for you, there is no road.
As you have ruined your life here
in this little corner, you have destroyed it in the whole world. (Dalven 27)

Dalven chooses to remain as close to the original and translate as much metaphrastically as possible. Surprisingly, in this case, there are places in the poem where this works *quite* well for him and gets him *quite* close to the original. Such a place, is found in line one where Dalven chooses to begin with 'new lands' and end with 'other seas'. This linguistic choice, even though it presents an odd syntactical order in English, is quite effective in creating this feeling of inescapability that Cavafy is experiencing; the poet appears to be trapped in the hope of finding a new land or a new sea that doesn't exist and this is mirrored in the syntactic structure of the line where the subject ('you') and the verb ('find') seem to be trapped between 'new lands' and 'other seas'. This seems to be more of a lucky coincidence than a success of metaphrase as the rest of the poem exhibits many word choices that seem quite unfortunate. One such place of a failure of metaphrase is found in line three; Dalven chooses to translate 'θα γερνάς' as 'you will age'- a linguistic choice that doesn't fully capture the continuity of the greek word or its emphasis on reaching a state of oldness - 'you will grow old' might be a more accurate translation. The metaphrastic approach does not allow for the meaning of the original to shine through as no matter how accurate the equivalences that a translator finds for particular words are, the translated poem's *meaning* -following the delineation of 'the meaning of a word'- will be a new entity exhibiting new cultural or social implications and a very different phonetic identity.

Let us now look at Keeley and Sherrard's paraphrastic approach;

You won't find a new country, won't find another shore.
This city will always pursue you. You will walk

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the same streets, grow old in the same neighborhoods,
will turn gray in these same houses.
You will always end up in this city. Don't hope for things elsewhere:
there is no ship for you, there is no road.
As you've wasted your life here, in this small corner,
you've destroyed it everywhere else in the world. (Keeley, Sherrard 28)

In line two, we observe that Keeley and Sherrard decided to move 'the same streets' to the following line creating a structure different from that of the original. This choice does not seem very efficient as it draws more focus to the word 'walk' which is the last one in the line whereas the focus in the greek is on the sense of sameness that the 'same streets' create. Another place in the poem that seems peculiar and not in sync with the feeling that the original conveys is found in line five where the translators translate 'Για τα αλλού — μη ελπίζεις—' as 'Don't hope for things elsewhere:'. Their choice of the word 'things' to describe what the poet *would want to hope for and cannot* is quite misleading: Cavafy does not seem to be limiting his hopes to things, his hopes are not tangible. He's hoping for an escape that he cannot even grasp and the word 'things' limits this broad sense of hope. My last observation on this translation is related to Keeley and Sherrard's choice to bring the 'small corner' phrase a line up instead of keeping it in the last line of the poem as it is in the original. The reasoning behind this choice seems unclear since the result of their choice is the weakening of the antithesis created between this 'small corner' and the entire world which seems crucial to the original; when these two places are put in the same line, the reader experiences the sense of inescapability of Cavafy more immediately. What follows from the analysis of this poem in relation to the other two examined here, is that there seems to be no way of reducing poetic language to symbols due to its richness (in most cases) in figurative features or its force in creating obscure imaginative leaps. Therefore, it

appears to be that paraphrase in poetry cannot really be paraphrase; it can either lie close to

metaphrase or to imitation. In Keeley and Sherrard's case, the freedom they took over the

original lies closer to imitation and the problems that come with it will be further explained after

we look at Mendelsohn's translation.

Mendelsohn's second stanza of *The City* is the following:

> You'll find no new places, you won't find other shores.
> The city will follow you. The streets in which you pace
> will be the same, you'll haunt the same familiar places,
> and inside those same houses you'll grow old.
> You'll always end up in this city. Don't bother to hope
> for a ship, a route, to take you somewhere else; they don't exist.
> Just as you've destroyed your life here, here in this
> small corner, so you've wasted it through all the world. (Mendelsohn 5)

In this translation, the translator takes much more freedom over the original text than

both previous translators. This is evident, for instance, in line three where Mendelsohn translates

'you'll haunt the same familiar places'. This translation does captures the atmosphere of

inescapability but it is not accurate (or *faithful* enough) since it misses the aspect of aging that is

very clearly stated in the original. He chooses to include 'grow old' in the next line, in place of

what the previous translators translated as 'turn gray', but again misses the pictorial element of

turning gray but also the associations that the word gray can inspire and the numerous feelings it

could cause such as stagnation, impurity, and despair. In the next line, we are faced with another

questionable choice of Mendelsohn; namely that of translating 'don't hope' as 'don't bother to

hope' -a choice that harms the absoluteness and urgency of Cavafy's voice. What we can infer

from this examination of this translated poem, is that the process of imitation significantly alters

the original poem. 'The meaning of words' seems to be in the hands of the imitator to such an extent that the translated work is more of a personal interpretation than a translation — this is the case with paraphrase too if it is leaning towards the end of imitation.

Through the above discussion of the various problems that arise from translating poetry, I wished to show that what is common in all those attempts is that the created poems are *new* poems. The translator is called to solve linguistic and non-linguistic issues amd does so by offering his own interpretation no matter where he chooses to position himself in the spectrum of fidelity and originality. This is the case in most kinds of translation attempts — whether we are talking about fiction or nonfiction— yet it does not automatically cancel translatability. Poetry is an exceptional case for the following reasons; i) the phonemic identity of a poem which can hardly be replicated in a different language is many of the times essential to the meaning of the poem, ii) poetic language often uses,for instance, word 'x' in ways that 'x' is usually not used at; in other words, the poet introduces a new way of thinking about 'x' in a new *context* that can rarely be efficiently reproduced in another language, iii) poetic language is many of the times full of embellishments whose beauty and role in the poem is found in the balance created between the linguistic and nonlinguistic experience of those words which is unique in each case, iv) the voice, tone or feeling of the poet emerges from the complex network of linguistic choices that he makes and even a slight linguistic change can deconstruct this network and alter the general *feeling* of the poem and v) the use of words in poetic language, many of the times, is extremely rich in implications and *implicit* meaning which renders the poem hard to be accessed or understood by any reader or translator let alone be translated. What follows from the above remarks is that poetry is not a case of language that can be translated.

This is another place where Jakobson's vocabulary is very relevant. When talking about poetry and acknowledging the impossibility of it being translated interlingually, Jakobson suggests that the word that should be used instead of 'translation' is 'transposition' whether that is interlingual transposition, intralingual (from one poetic shape to another), or intersemiotic (from a poem to a song for example) (151). This term — transposition— is more appropriate in the context of poetry since it captures the fact that the *meaning* of the poem cannot remain intact after being transposed to another language; we are talking about a new poem which has its own meaning that is *inspired* by the meaning of the original as its creator comprehended and interpreted it — it is precisely not a direct product of it no matter how faithful the translator attempts to be.

III. The Question of the Xenos

Interlingual translation, no matter in which way it is performed, has always a common purpose; namely, to make the foreign accessible. Metaphrase, paraphrase and imitation — with their respective stances on the spectrum of fidelity and originality— all have the same common denominator and that is to bring the foreign closer. So far in this chapter, we have been examining the effectiveness or rather the lack of one of translation in keeping the 'meaning of the word' intact but in this subchapter, we will look at the matter from a different perspective. Having examined the ways that interlingual translation functions in written works, I will now discuss how it is applied to verbal communication and I will focus on the way that the foreigner is experiencing linguistic meaning. A very useful text in my analysis will be Derrida's *Of*

Hospitality; a collection of two of the lectures he gave - "Foreigner Question*"* and "Step of Hospitality/No Hospitality"- in a series of seminars on hospitality in 1996 in Paris. In this subchapter, I will examine whether or not the foreigner can access 'the meaning of a word' in a language that he doesn't adequately speak.

For Derrida, the first problem that the foreigner is experiencing is what he calls 'the paternal authority of the logos'; in other words, the power of the dogmatic speech that views the foreigner as blind or mad and treats him as such. To make his point more clear, he goes back to ancient Greece and quotes the following part from a Platonic dialogue between the Xenos and Theaetetus. Xenos says the following: "I am fearful that what I have said may give you the opportunity of looking at me as someone who is deranged (literally, mad, *manikos*, a nutter, a maniac) who is upside down all over (*para poda metaballon emauton ano kai kato*), a crazy person who reverses everything from head to toe, from top to bottom, who puts all his feet on his head, inside out, who walks on his head"(Derrida 10-11). Even though this quotation belongs to an older time and a very different society, it brings about a very important problem; namely that the foreigner, before even being able to access the new language and its meaning, has to overcome the barrier of being viewed as not-normal. In other words, before even learning to speak the language and while performing constant internal translations to be able to understand and communicate, his experience is shaped by his attempt to prove his normality and sanity.

The foreigner is put in a position to ask for hospitality and understanding in a language that is not his own but is rather imposed on him by the people he is living with and their customs. Translation is being imposed on him and this is what Derrida calls the first act of violence (15); we ask of the foreigner to understand us and speak to us in our language as soon as he is found in

our country or sphere of influence. The language that is being imposed on the xenos is not solely a linguistic operation in the strict sense. It is a matter of ethos; it includes the culture, morals, values, customs, and norms that inhabit language and severely influence the 'meaning of a word'. Derrida notes: "without speaking the same national language, someone can be less "foreign" to me if he shares a culture with me, for example, a way of life linked to a degree of wealth, etc, than some fellow citizen or compatriot who belongs to what used to be called (but this language shouldn't be abandoned too quickly, even if it does demand critical vigilance) another social "class" (133). Therefore, the xenos's effort to access the linguistic meaning of a language foreign to him can only be rendered harder by social factors unknown to him that further differentiate him from the norm.

In addition to all the words, customs, and references that the foreigner is struggling to grasp and relate to, another hardship he experiences is that of possibly having to get used to another name. Derrida explicates that the translation of proper names (just as any other translation in his view) is impossible. He rightfully argues that "Peter is not the translation of Pierre"; Peter is a completely different name (Derrida 137). The paronomasia of the xenos is yet another way of alienating him more from the linguistic meaning of the language that is foreign to him. The act of changing the name of a foreigner under the purpose of including him more in the language and culture that is new to him is in fact not an act of inclusion but one of exclusion. It imposes the xenos a different name implying that his name and — it would not be irrational to say— his identity are not welcomed or viewed as normal in that particular culture.

In conclusion, going back to the Austinian delineation of it, 'the meaning of a word' is a spurious question; spurious enough that even amongst native speakers there can be confusion,

uncertainty, or disagreement about what one means. The web of linguistic and nonlinguistic implications is so complex and a knowledge of the historical, social, and cultural context that a word is put into so urgent at times, that the xenos is often far from capturing 'the meaning of a word'. There are of course words and entities of speech that the xenos comprehends and responds to yet, many of the times, he struggles to comprehend the *context* in which words are uttered due to his lack of experience with the culture and customs behind the language he is learning. For example, let us consider the following two contexts of utterance of the same sentence; namely 'I'm crying'.

Context (a): Christos is saying that to Yiouli while being very upset

Context (b): Christos is saying that to Yiouli after she has told him a funny joke

In context (a) the phrase is used literally to indicate that Christos is crying whereas in context (b) it is used metaphorically to denote that Christos is laughing. It is very likely that the foreigner would be aware of the words 'I'm crying' and, thus, understand the import of context (a) yet it is not so likely that he has come across a context such (b) where the words are used in a different manner. Thus, he might not be able to understand the import of the words in case (b), even if he is familiar with their most common usage. We understand, then, that language cannot be disassociated and examined separately from the culture behind it; they are intertwined to the degree that a knowledge of the second is crucial to the understanding of the first. The stronger this knowledge becomes, the more the xenos will be able to think in associations and the closer he will be gradually getting to 'the meaning of a word'.

Chapter Two: Intralingual Translation

Introduction

The second mode of translation that will be discussed in this essay is what Jakobson calls intralingual translation or rewording; the interpretation of linguistic signs by means of other signs of the same language. Intralingual translation involves any transferring of linguistic meaning that happens within one language through the use of different words or phrases. It can refer to processes such as a transmutation from literal language to figurative and vice versa (for example turning prose into poetry), or paraphrase or summary. Looking at it microscopically, it is the replacement of linguistic signs (words) and entities (phrases or sentences) by other ones that are viewed as having *similar* meanings. Going back to the Austinian delineation of the idea of "sameness of meaning" (which is present in the introduction of the essay), we are acquainted once again with his position that 1) the peculiarities of the word 'similar' don't allow for a definitional approach to it, 2) *similarity* is a mystical concept that should always be approached contextually, and 3) *similarity* is precisely not partial *identity*. In this chapter of the essay, and from Austin's lens, I will examine the concept of *similarity* as it manifests itself in attempts of searching for a similar word in processes of intralingual translation and articulate the reasons why such processes cannot be efficient in transferring linguistic meaning as it is to be found in the original or source text or linguistic sign or entity.

I will begin by discussing intralingual translation as such and by looking at it in close relation to interlingual translation. I will then thoroughly examine metaphor as a mechanism of intralingual translation that elucidates the complexity inherent to such linguistic moves. An

important philosophical work in this part of my argumentation will be Ted Cohen's *Thinking of Others; On the Talent for Metaphor;* a book that calls for an appreciation of metaphor as an enigmatic concept whose richness and complexity is a direct result of the complexity apparent in mutual human understanding. Having discussed metaphor, I will look at the linguistic practice of synonymy as another example of intralingual translation and explore the idea of *similarity* in comparison with that of *identity*. The authors whose ideas I plan to include and analyze in this section of my chapter are going to be J.L. Austin and Gottlob Frege.

I. *Intralingual Translation as Translation*

Intralingual translation is not unanimously regarded to be a process of translation. There are thinkers that refuse to qualify it as translation on the basis that a necessary condition for something to be considered such a process is that the transferring of meaning happens between two different languages. Such thinking is not going to be espoused in this essay; instead, we are going to approach the meaning of 'translation' in accordance with Austin's delineation of the meaning of the word 'x' as something spurious, complex, and contextual. Our approach to understanding 'translation' is not aligned with determining a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for something to be considered as such and then, on that basis, denouncing intralingual translation to be either a member of this category or not. Our tool is instead going to be Wittgenstein's idea of *family resemblances* that holds that we can come to an understanding of the various usages of a word by paying attention to and comprehending what are the common characteristics that these usages share. Wittgenstein, in his *Philosophical Investigations*, writes

that we should come to understand the " complicated network of similarities overlapping and crisscrossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail" that is present in any word whose meaning we are attempting to grasp (Wittgenstein 32e). Therefore, before moving to the main part of this chapter on metaphor and synonymy, I will articulate the similarities or family resemblances found between interlingual and intralingual translation that call for an understanding of the latter as a process of translation.[4]

Firstly, it is helpful to consider the etymology of the word 'translation'; it comes from the Latin 'translatus' (<carried over) which is the past participle of 'transferre' (<to carry over, to bring over) - 'trans' (<across) + lātus ('carried'). Thus, it is evident that 'translation's etymology also allows for an understanding of the word as not solely denoting a transferring of meaning across different languages; this 'carrying across' that characterizes the process of 'translation' can manifest itself in different mediums , manners and contexts . It can be the 'carrying' of meaning from language to music (i.e. intersemiotic translation) and it can certainly be the 'carrying' of linguistic meaning from a word to another or a phrase to another (i.e intralingual translation).

Moreover, it is important to be aware of that in these two processes there are (at least) four shared stages; i) we have a linguistic entity as a beginning point, ii) there emerges the need or desire to understand and communicate this linguistic entity in another manner, iii) then the process of transmutation happens (vital to which is the struggle between fidelity and the creation of a new product that is meaningful on its own) and iv) we have the creation of a new entity. The strategies used in the process of transmutation are also similar between these two cases to a great

[4] The family resemblances between interlingual and intralingual translation that will be discussed here also apply to intersemiotic translation. Therefore, this section also answers the question of why intersemiotic transferrings of meaning should be viewed as translation processes.

extent; for instance, the close work with the original, the restructuring, the further explication needed at times or the omission of elements that cannot possibly come across are moves that are present in both attempts of transferring linguistic meaning from one language to another and within the same language. Undoubtedly, there are differences to be discerned between interlingual and intralingual translation yet those differences certainly do not account for them to be different *kinds* of processes. Thus, the meaning of 'translation' cannot be approached as a singular entity denoting only interlingual translation. Interlingual (and likewise intersemiotic) transferrings of meaning are also processes of translation due to the family resemblances present between those and interlingual translation.

II. On Metaphor

i. The mystery of metaphorical import

The first case of intralingual translation that will be discussed in this essay is that of metaphor. Metaphor can be approached as a case of intralingual translation as it is precisely a move from literal language to figurative (happens within the same linguistic code) which invites us to think of one thing as another on the level of family resemblances that was discussed above. Ted Cohen, begins his book *Thinking of Others; On the Talent for Metaphor*, by declaring that "There is a mystery at the heart of metaphor" (1). Throughout his work, he attempts and achieves to elucidate the expressive richness inherent to metaphorical language and makes the argument that our capacity for metaphor is closely related to our capacity to understand each other. Metaphor, in parallel to mutual human understanding, presents itself in astounding

complexity and Cohen proceeds with examining what it is that makes metaphor such a complex linguistic practice. He begins by discussing metaphorical import as something that is open to the understanding of what he calls the *competent audience* (Cohen 2). He explains that if we are to regard the import of a metaphor as a *meaning*, then the metaphorical sentence has two meanings, one literal and one metaphorical. If we don't comprehend metaphorical import as a *meaning*, then there only exists literal meaning and we are left in a state of aporia about how we should understand the import of a metaphor (2). Cohen does not argue in favor of either of these two approaches; he only declares the enigmatic nature of the case of metaphor and then articulates the particularities involved.

Cohen proceeds with closely examining the import of a metaphor that has the form 'A is B' and argues that it is not equivalent with 'A is like B'. He uses the example of 'Aristotle is like Plato' which is true in the sense that both were Ancient Greek philosophers but the truth of that statement does not imply the truth of 'Aristotle is Plato' - a clearly false statement. Even if the import of 'A is B' is a metaphorical one, Cohen argues that there is still no compelling reason to understand this statement as 'A is like B'. He recognizes an exception to the above thesis which regards metaphorical 'A is B' statements that are to be understood as similes. For instance, 'he is a lion' is understood as 'he is as brave as a lion'. Cohen, then, proceeds to explicate the falsity of the idea that "the 'A is like B' associated with the metaphor 'A is B' is not itself metaphorical but is literal" (2) and does so by discussing the Shakespearean example of 'Juliet is the sun'. It can not be the case that the comparison that Romeo draws between Juliet and the sun is a literal one; Juliet cannot be literally sharing the same properties with the sun. What Romeo wants to

communicate is that 'Juliet is like the sun' in the sense that she illuminates his world and warms his heart; the comparison is drawn between the sun's literal and Juliet's metaphorical properties.

What Cohen emphasizes on, is that a metaphor in the form of 'A is B' prompts one to think of A as B and this gives rise to new thought about A. He writes 'How this happens is a wonderful mystery, and the ability to do it, to "see" A as B, is an indispensable human ability I am calling the talent for metaphor"(Cohen 3). His delineation of *the talent for metaphor* is not limited to producing or grasping a metaphor; it extends to the ability to *seize*, *enlarge*, and *alter* metaphors. For Cohen, the metaphorical import is never wholly contained within the sentence it is to be found in. He writes that a metaphor suggests other metaphors and does so by implication. To clarify the above position, let us consider, for instance the metaphor 'Jack's home is a prison'; what we understand from this phrase is not only that that particular house has properties that allow for it to be figuratively compared to a prison but also that Jack is a prisoner and it even has us wonder whether there is someone in that house that is keeping him hostage. Therefore, the metaphorical import transcends the limitations of the linguistic entity it is to be found in and through implication, it invites us to comprehend its content and imagine its implications in broader terms. The second important comment that Cohen makes on *the talent for metaphor* is that one may resist a metaphor or some part of it. Let us suppose we have the metaphor that 'Jack's home is a prison and his mother is his guard'. This metaphor (as every other) is open to the interpretation of the *competent audience*; one may accept that 'Jack's home is a prison' but not that 'his mother is his guard' or vice versa or one can reject the entirety of the metaphor.

A very interesting example that Cohen employs that elucidates three important things about metaphor is the 'Mussolini is a utensil' one. He writes "There is nothing whatever negative

in calling a fork or a knife or a screwdriver a utensil, but something happens when Mussolini is seen as a utensil" (Cohen 5). Churchill could have chosen to call Mussolini a wolf or a parasite or something similarly insulting but none of those descriptive associations have the same import as calling him a utensil. That particular metaphor, is not only indulging a degrading way of thinking about Mussolini as an executory machine but it also prompts us to think of him at the same time in connection to Hitler and describes the relationship between the two men as one of a man and his tool. Cohen writes that "whether or not metaphors have new meanings, and whether or not the principal use of a metaphor is to communicate the speaker's feeling about his subject, it remains true that different choices of predicates give different imports"(5). Metaphor, thus, has the power to induce to its receiver very particular feelings about its subject informed by the word-choice that has been made for its predicate.

What Cohen also makes apparent with that example is that "the mystery of metaphor is even more enigmatic than one might have expected" (6). He explains that when one compares Mussolini to a utensil, she undoubtedly paints a negative picture of him but not because of any negative association with utensils. What is offensive is *Mussolini-seen-as-a-utensil*. It is evident then that not anything seen in that way would be insulting or disagreeable, -for example, mathematics can be a utensil to economics, and there is no negative content in that metaphor. The overall statement that Cohen makes in that section is that "a leading aim of many metaphor-makers is the communication of some feelings they have about the subjects of their metaphors, and the often hoped-for inducement of similar feelings in those who grasp their metaphors" (6). The metaphor-maker is choosing metaphor when he judges it to be a more powerful and effective linguistic practice -than literal language or other figurative tools- in

transferring his mental content to his audience and creating in them a similar emotional reaction

to his own. Metaphorical language and its thoughtful use can, then, be of huge assistance to the

individual who wants to make a claim that induces particular feelings and "says" more than it

appears to. What the metaphor implies by association on the grounds of some mutually

understood similarity (in terms of family resemblance), provides human communication with an

opportunity to enrich its content and extend its limitations. Such metaphorical language with

similar purposes to the ones discussed above is present in verbal and written speech throughout

a plethora of contexts of mutual human understanding.

ii. Metaphorical Identity

Cohen continues to examine 'A is B' formed metaphors and pays closer attention to those

in which the 'is' is of identity. (He also examines 'A is B' metaphors where the 'is' functions as

predication but we are here only focusing on metaphorical identity.) He writes "When the 'is' is

of identity, then the form may be 'I am N' where 'N' is a singular term, proper name, or definite

description, something referring to a specific person" (Cohen 8). (In cases when the 'is' is of

predication, we would have metaphors of the form 'I am a G' where 'G' would be a general

term). Metaphors of personal identification present a person as either another person or an

individual of a different kind. For example, 'Juliet is the sun' would be such a metaphor or 'Jim

is an angel'. Cohen makes the argument that even though the terms 'I' and 'N' are posited in a

relationship of identity, we cannot grasp them as I=N. Metaphorical identity is more enigmatic

than standard identity which is a clear and symmetrical relation in which X=Y if and only if

Y=X. Cohen writes, "The reason why this is not true of metaphorical identifications is this: to grasp a metaphor is to see one thing as another, and it is not, in general, the same to see X as Y, as it is to see Y as X" (8). The linguistic move to identify 'Juliet' to be 'the sun' is one that transcends the limitations of those two linguistic signs. Seeing 'Juliet' as 'the sun' implies that there is a network of family resemblances between these two terms that allows us to *imagine* 'Juliet' as 'the sun'. However, it is mutually understood that it does not follow from that metaphor that we *imagine* 'the sun' as 'Juliet'. It is not impossible to do so; it is simply not part of the import or implications of that particular metaphorical identification.

Metaphor is not solely a linguistic leap from literal language to figurative; it is an imaginative act that goes above and beyond the limits of the linguistic signs that it is made up from and facilitates as well as enriches mutual human understanding. For Cohen, "the creation, expression, and comprehension of metaphors must involve speaking and thinking of one thing as another" (9). Metaphorical identity, even though it does not directly transfer the same meaning as a literal wording choice would, it provides an opportunity for a 'magnified' meaning to arise and new associations to come to place in the minds of the individuals that create or grasp it. 'Juliet is the sun' allows for such a rich understanding of some properties of 'Juliet' whereas literal phrases such as 'Juliet is bright' or 'Juliet is warm-hearted' provide a more limited understanding. As discussed above, metaphors have no literal equivalents and thus; similarly, to interlingual translation attempts, they don't replicate some already existing linguistic meaning, they create new meaning with new implications. Metaphor is such an interesting linguistic practice as it can be the case that either A and B share some properties (family resemblances) or that B has some properties that A can be thought of having, or imagined to have -when in fact

they may not be literal properties of A. In the first case, *similarity* is more easily accessible

perhaps because A and B are more commonly thought in relation to one another whereas in the

second *similarity* is introduced as a new way of thinking about A. In both cases, the construction

and comprehension of metaphors is providing an opportunity for 'the meaning of a word' as it

was discussed in the introduction of the essay to be extended and at the same time it also

enhances our human capacity for understanding one another.

III. Synonymity

i. Is 'the evening star' 'the morning star'?

Having articulated some of the particularities of *the mystery of metaphor* and proved that

metaphorical identity is not to be understood as standard identity, I will now turn to synonymity

as a different mechanism of intralingual translation and a linguistic practice commonly thought

of as a case of standard identity. Synonymity will be approached as a case of intralingual

translation as it is a linguistic move that happens within the same language and its purpose is to

recreate the *same* linguistic meaning through a different word choice. In this section of the

chapter, I will argue that synonymy is not to be thought of as standard identity where X=Y if and

only if Y=X. Similarly to metaphorical import, synonymical import is more nuanced and

complex and transcends the limitations of the linguistic signs it is expressed through. Therefore,

an absolute relationship of mutual substitutivity of terms such as the one presented above fails to

capture the enigmatic nature of synonymity since a change in language, even if it is determined

upon the criterion of *similarity*, cannot bring about identical meaning.

Firstly, I will discuss an example of terms found in Frege's "On Sinn and Bedeutung" to depict how a *sameness* in naming (even in cases of synonymous terms posited in a A=B relationship) does not generate a *sameness* in meaning in such absolute terms. Frege's philosophy as a whole is for the most part antithetical to the stance of this essay since his view on language holds that it is reducible to mathematics and formal logic; a view that disregards complexities and nuances inherent to questions of linguistic meaning. In his "On Sinn and Bedeutung", he examines proper names (for example 'The man with the umbrella', 'my sister, 'Evan', 'the red car') and makes the argument that all such linguistic signs have a sense (*sinn*) and a reference (*bedeutung*). The reference of a sign is the definite object that it describes whereas the sense is the language through which this object is denoted. For example, in the above example of 'the man with the umbrella', the reference is that particular man whereas the sense is the phrase used to refer to this man. What is relevant to our discussion here, is Frege's example regarding 'the evening star' and 'the morning star', a pair of terms that are posited in a synonymical relationship. Frege writes that "The Bedeutung of the 'Evening Star' would be the same of the 'Morning Star', but not the sense" (Frege 152). In other words, the reference (<the referred object) is in both cases the Planet Venus; what changes is the sense in which the reference is expressed.

For Frege, these two terms are posited in an a=b relationship since they name the same thing. However, a relationship of identity needs to fulfil a criterion of interchangeability that in this case is not fulfilled. 'The evening star' and 'the morning star' are terms that even though they name the same thing, they are different linguistic entities and thus their meaning cannot be identical. To be more precise, the fact that these two terms have the same referent (object of

denotation) and in that way are synonymous, does not mean that they function in an identical

manner when they occur in sentences. They are different linguistic entities and as such they have

different histories of usage, implications, and nuances that an a=b relationship cancels. They do

have *similar* meanings but *similarity* is not to be confused with *identity*.

ii. Investigating 'look', 'seem', 'appear'

Austin, in his fourth lecture in *Sense and Sensibilia*, is critiquing the above assumption

and through his close examination of 'seem', 'look', 'appear' makes the argument that there are

contexts where these terms cannot be used interchangeably and thus, challenges the idea that the

criterion of interchangeability necessarily applies to synonyms. He argues that "the expressions

in question actually have *quite* different uses, and it often makes a *great* difference which one

you use" (*Sense and Sensibilia* 33). He recognizes that there are cases when these words can

function interchangeably but from that it doesn't follow neither that they bring about the exact

meaning in those different contexts nor that they can be used interchangeably in every context.

Austin says that this linguistic issue deserves more philosophical attention that it is receiving;

for him, every context is distinct and only through understanding its particularities can we grasp

the meaning of it more holistically. For instance, he discusses the case of 'It appears to be a

forgery' (35);'seems' can be used in place of 'appears' and this sentence would still be sensical

yet 'looks', even though a synonym of 'appears' and 'seems', cannot function in that context.

It is very interesting to unpack an example that Austin is using that emphasizes the

contextuality in play that alters *something* about the meaning of a word -that *something* is not

always easily distinguishable but it is still present and usually commonly understood. Let us, then, consider;

<div align="center">

(1) He looks guilty.

(2) He appears guilty

(3) He seems guilty (Sense and Sensibilia 36)

</div>

This is an example of three sentences that create three contexts that are all specimens of sense in Austinian terminology -none of them are confusing or nonsensical. The three synonyms can be used interchangeably yet the meaning created is not identical in the three contexts. This is the case because each word comes with different *implications* which cannot be ignored. To be more precise, 'looks' carries an implication of vision that the other two words don't imply, whereas 'appears' and 'seems' bring about a struggle between appearance and reality and an uncertainty about what 'is' possibly due to a lack of knowledge or evidence (a problematic that 'looks' does not give rise to). Thus, in cases of synonyms 'a', 'b', and 'c', it can be the case that 'b' and 'c' can be used interchangeably in more contexts than with 'a' due to the implications that the words come with which alter *something* about their meaning when they occur in sentences.

iii. *An Analysis of the Fallacy of Interchangeability*

To elucidate i) that synonyms operate differently when placed in the context of a phrase or sentence, ii) that synonymity is not standard identity in terms of 2=1+1 and iii) that the criterion of substitutivity does not *necessarily* apply to synonymous terms, I will point to the following example. Let us consider the following pair of synonyms; 'intelligent', 'sharp'. Let us

also consider the following phrases; (1) 'an intelligent printer', (2) 'a sharp woman'. What

becomes apparent is that i) so much of the meaning of 'intelligent', and 'sharp' has been

redefined due to and by its context (i.e 'intelligent' is now not understood as an attribute of an

individual with a strong mental capacity but instead as a characteristic of an efficient machine) ,

and ii) a possible interchangeability of the synonymous terms in those two different phrases

would be nonsensical. Let us now consider the following two sentences; (1) 'Dimitris is

intelligent', (2) 'Zoe is sharp'. Even though interchangeability here does not seem as confusing

as in the above case, does that necessarily mean that it can occur without altering *something*

about the sentences? Even though it is the most likely scenario that someone who is intelligent is

also sharp, the meaning of a word 'x', as a mysterious and spurious entity in Austinian terms,

cannot be identical to the meaning of a word 'y' and this is because the implications that each

linguistic sign carries are unique. For instance, is intelligence valued in equal terms with

sharpness or are they understood to be hierarchically different in significance? They definitely

are of the same *kind* but are they also of the same *degree*?

Another interesting complication that our exploration of the synonymical pair of

'intelligent' and 'sharp' reveals is the following; 'sharp' is an adjective that is used not solely as

a descriptive quality of a smart individual. It can also be used as a quality of an object that has an

end or point that is able to cut or pierce something (e.g 'a sharp knife') or something that can

produce a sudden, piercing physical sensation (e.g 'a sharp pain'). Thus, if we were absolutely

relying our usage of the terms on the interchangeability criterion of identity and we had the

following two phrases (1) 'an intelligent man', (2) 'a sharp knife' where X: 'intelligent' and Y:

'sharp', an X=Y and Y=X understanding of those words could very well create nonsensical

specimens of language. 'A sharp man' could stand as such but 'an intelligent knife' would cause confusion. Therefore, in a synonymical pair where each term has a variety of distinct understandings, a substitution of one with the other could not be sensical in certain contexts. Undoubtedly, 'intelligent' and 'sharp' are words whose meanings are very *similar* in the sense that there are cases were the first could imply the second and vice versa. Yet there is an enormous difference between similarity and identity that cannot be ignored for the sake of a unified (or simplified) understanding of meaning or for the construction of a theory of substitutivity of coreferential terms since reference in Fregean terms is not to be confused with the meaning of a word.

Synonymity, as well as metaphor, are linguistic practices whose scope and understanding extend the limitations of language. They both are enigmatic in nature and an X=Y identical relationship does not capture such mystery.They are processes of the same kind, not only because they are intralingual moves of expressing one thing in terms of another but also because they present themselves as an opportunity of enrichment of mutual understanding. They only differ in degree since metaphor engages us in a more significant imaginative leap than synonymity does. They both are translation mechanisms and as such they create new meaning with new implications that even though it is different in every case and not replicable in different contexts, it has a value on its own. Thus, any translation move from X to Y and Y to X, whether it is a move from literal language to figurative and vice versa or from literal to literal or even from figurative to figurative, should be approached as a unique case with particularities that cannot be explained by any generic rule or set of necessary and sufficient conditions. Every linguistic sign or entity has a meaning of its own that can be similar to the meaning of other signs

and entities to a larger or smaller degree but as argued in this chapter such a similarity should not

understood as identity.

Chapter Three: Intersemiotic Translation

Introduction

Having discussed interlingual and intralingual translation and examined the reasons why a word cannot have an identical meaning to its original after undergoing a process of either of these two methods of translation, I will now approach intersemiotic translation and examine its function and limitations from a similar point of view. Intersemiotic translation or transmutation is for Jakobson the interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems or by means of verbal and nonverbal signs combined. It is helpful at this point to look at the etymology of the word; the first part of it is the prefix *inter-* which stands for between, or amid and the second is semiotic which stands for something that is a sign (<semeion, greek for sign). Therefore, intersemiotic translation is an interchanging of signs; the translation of signs that belong to one semiotic system to signs that belong to a different one or multiple other ones -possibly including the initial semiotic system. Such a mechanism of translation is very common in the arts; let us think, for example, of books that became movies - a case where we observe a transferring of meaning from a semiotic system that only includes words to a combination of other ones including that of words, sounds, musical notes, pictorial elements etc. It is also present in everyday life in the form of road signs such as the red light or the green light or the non-smoking area signs in cafés and restaurants that communicate a verbal message in non-verbal or verbal and non-verbal means.

In this chapter, I will thoroughly examine Hegel's notion of dialectics and, looking particularly at the dialectic pair of Form and Content, I will argue that the meaning of a sign can

only be found in the absolute and inseparable totality of its form as well as content. If a sign is translated to another one of a different semiotic system, then it acquires a new form. Consequently, the original totality of form and content is disrupted and new meaning is created that is divergent to the original. Then, I will provide Russell's argument on the existence of contentless words that exist solely in virtue of their form that challenges Hegel's above position and attempt to prove why it is fallible. Lastly, broadening the scope of Hegel's terminology of form and content, I will closely look at Jonze's film *Adaptation* to examine how the intersemiotic mechanism of translation works in the case of adapting a novel to a movie and articulate the particularities found in that process of adaptation.

I.   *The Hegelian Dialectic of Form and Content*

In his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, in "Shorter Logic", Hegel examines the notion of Logic through the method of dialectics. Before dealing with the dialectic of Content and Form, I will attempt to clarify the Hegelian method of dialectics. Then, I will briefly discuss Hegel's definition of Essence, his conception of Appearance, and their relatedness. After that, I will examine what Hegel names "the absolute relation of Content and Form" in §133 as part of his argument on Essence and Appearance and I will discuss the reasons why I find it particularly relevant in my argument about intersemiotic translation.

i. Hegelian Dialectics

Hegel utilizes dialectics to describe physical as well as mental objects or concepts of thought. Dialectics is, for him, an approach of considering an object in relation to other objects, to the entirety of its environment or *context*, and, most importantly, to its negative expression. At first, there is an object of thought which is immediate. Then, its antithetical object — or what is it not which is not always strictly determined— appears and what we are left with is a new single unity comprised of these two conflicting ideas. For example, let us suppose that we have an ice cube on a metallic surface in a warm and sunny room. This ice cube is, at the moment, an object of a solid nature. If we look at the surface after two hours, we will not see the ice cube but a small pool of water. For Hegel, the solid nature of the ice cube, has inscribed within it its negation which is in this case an "object" of a liquid nature and both of these elements make the ice cube what it is.

ii. Essence and Appearance

Moving forward and closer to the text, in his "Shorter Logic", Hegel thoroughly examines the Doctrine of Essence. For him, Essence should be thought of as a conflict between the existing knowledge about a thing or an object of thought and the contradictory unfolding of the gradual understanding of its "within itself" through the negation of itself. Hegel writes that Essence is characterized by reflection since, for him, the object finds its identity when it it recognized through self-reflection and it is this knowledge that makes it possible for the

differences of it -its different aspects- to be seen and understood gradually as this process of negation continues. In his own words, "the Essence is Being that has gone into itself, that is to say, its simple relation to itself is this relation, posited as the negation of the negative, as mediation of itself in itself with itself." (Hegel 173). Therefore, reflection as a process of light being thrown into itself, is the distinctive characteristic of Hegelian Essence.

What follows in Hegel's discussion of Essence, is the introduction of the notion of Appearance. Hegel states that Essence must appear [erscheinen]. He writes that "Its shining within itself [sein Scheinen in ihm] is the sublating itself and becoming an immediacy which, as reflection-in-itself, is as much a subsisting [Bestehen] (matter) as it is form, reflection-in-another, subsisting in the process of sublating itself" (Hegel 197). In other words, the shining of Appearance is its suspension and the translation of it to immediacy while this immediacy -as a reflection in itself - is a matter of subsistence and form. As Hegel has already explicated in his precedent analysis of Essence, this shining is what determines it and distinguishes it from being but at this moment, he builds on his theory to say that when the shining is developed, it shows itself and it is Appearance.

iii. *Form and Content*

The movement from Essence to Appearance - or from what something is to what it seems to be- is a movement of dialectic nature and one that facilitates the explanation of the relation between Content and Form. In section 132, Hegel writes that what appears exists in such a manner that its subsistence is suspended and is only one stage in the Form itself. For him,

appearance "has its ground in the Form as its Essence, its reflection in-itself as opposed to its immediacy, but thereby has it only in another determinacy of the Form" (Hegel 199). This ground is also appearing and, thus, Appearance goes on to an endless mediation of subsistence by means of Form. Evidently, Appearance does not get away from the doctrine of Essence, but contains Essence in it as a "show". Along those lines, Appearance is the second grade of Essence that moves from the recognition of the exoteric characteristics or the Form of a thing to its esoteric virtues or Content.

To get to Hegel's analysis of the Content and Form dialectic, I will begin by saying that for him "The relation of the Appearance to itself is thus completely determined, has the Form in itself and because [it is] in this identity, has that Form as its essential subsistence" (Hegel 200). The Form is the Content of Appearance and the Content is the Form. Therefore, the dialectic of Content and Form is the idea that Content is not formless -it has the Form within itself as much as it is external to it. What comes right after this thought, is the absolute relation among them; namely in Hegel's words " their turning over [Umschlagen] and into one another, so that the Content is nothing but the Form turning into Content and the Form nothing other than the Content turning into the Form" (200). For Hegel, this turning over of Form into Content and vice versa is posited in an absolute relationship.

The absoluteness of this relationship also means that both Content and Form are equally essential. Form, in Hegelian terms, should be conceived as a dynamic and determined principle in the same manner that the Content is conceived of. Appearance is what the virtue of its inner characteristics designates. For example, what makes a tree what it is is the totality of its characteristic exoteric as well as biological properties; its leaves, its stem, its roots, as well as

photosynthesis. The tree's leaves are green because of chlorophyll which is found in the chloroplasts and is essential to photosynthesis. Therefore, the inner and outer elements of the tree's identity are intertwined to such a level that their separation is unconceivable. We can not grasp the idea of the a tree that doesn't have leaves (altered Form) and yet photosynthesizes or of one that doesn't photosynthesize but has leaves (altered Content). For Hegel, Form and Content are identical and cannot be separated. In the case of their separation, he recognizes two possibilities: the first one is that they both lose their significance and become empty -whereas a formless Content cannot even be grasped as an object of thought- and the second one is that new meaning is created. If one alters the form, the content changes too and so does their unity; a new unity is created that has entirely new properties that might only resemble the previous unity.This is going to be further discussed later on in the essay when we will look at particular examples of translation that follows the intersemiotic method; in other words, we will discuss particular signs or entities of signs whose form undergoes an alteration -by a process of transmutation to another semiotic system- and we will examine what effect this alteration bears on their content and the Form/Content dialectical pair.

iv. Hegel's Iliad example

Hegel supports the above idea by discussing the example of the Iliad to argue that this work has no content without its particular form and that if the form is altered, the content changes too and new meaning is created. His exact words are the following: "One can say of the Iliad that its content is the Trojan war or, more specifically, Achilles' wrath; in this way we have

everything and yet only very little since what makes the Iliad the Iliad is the poetic form that that content has been shaped into." (Hegel 201). In other words, poetic content cannot be separated from its form because both of them are inscribed in one another and their division would alter both sides. An *Iliad* that is not written as a poem that would be sung along with the lyre with all the particularities of Homeric language inscribed into it, but is, for example, written as a historical essay that narrates the story of Achilles in Troy is a very different creation with new meaning and implications.

Hegel's example of the *Iliad* brings us closer to understanding the relevance of the Form and Content dialectic to our discussion on intersemiotic translation because it exhibits a transmutation from one linguistic system of signs -an epos- to a different one - a hypothetical historical essay. It should be noted that one could argue that this translation is in fact intralingual since we are moving within the realm of one language; one could say that we are simply translating a poem into an essay so we are operating within the bipole of literal and metaphorical usage of words. My argument here is that Hegel's example falls in the category of intersemiotic translation since Homer's work, is an epos which is precisely not a poem; according to historians, it was written to be sung along with the lyre and it is this intentionality of its creator for the poem to be harmonious with a particular kind of music and rhythm that gives it characteristics that fall outside of the limitations of poetic language. Even though this might seem like an anachronistic stretch, for the sake of the argument, we could understand the *Iliad* as an epic song like, for example, the Akritic songs; songs that emerged in the Byzantine empire and celebrated the courage and exploits of Akritai, the guards that were defending the borders of the Empire. Therefore, what Hegel discusses and judges to be problematic is a transmutation

from a semiotic system that includes music and words to a different system that only operates within words.

v. Intersemiotic Translation from the lens of the Form/Content Dialectic

Having analysed the Hegelian argument of Form and Content and discussed *The Iliad* as an example of the reason why these two are posited in an absolute relationship, I will now explain how this idea applies to the notion of intersemiotic translation. In the beginning of the chapter, we defined intersemiotic translation as the transmutation of signs that belong to one semiotic system to those that belong to another. I should note that, in this chapter, I am only referring to processes of translation that involve linguistic semiotic systems; I will look at cases in which either the piece that is being translated - the *original* piece- operates within words or the final product of translation does likewise.

To understand any such process, we inevitably go back to the question "*what is the meaning of a word"* and acknowledge that as ambiguous and complicated as that concept is, there seems to be something that is common among all linguistic signs; they appear in a particular form and have a — particular or, at most cases, not so particular— content which is their denotation. The form of a word is determined by its phonological and orthographic features; namely, the letters and the syllables it has and in some cases the grammar that justifies the previous two. The content of a word is a rather complicated question but it can be interpreted as what the word denotes (the one or multiple denotations) which is understood by everyone who is familiar with that particular linguistic sign and respectively, system and could be an object, an

action, a feeling, a concept, and anything in between and across all of these depending on context. The content of a word has the form within it as much as it is external to it and vice versa which is what Hegel argued when delineating the dialectic pair of Form and Content. Words fit in this categorization as their meaning is contained in the absolute relatedness of the way the appear (<form) and their denotation (<content). This does not always mean that the form of the word is tautological to its content as in the case of the word 'polysyllabic'. 'Polysyllabic' happens to be a polysyllabic word -its form describes itself and its content. It also applies to words such as 'monosyllabic' which is not a monosyllabic word so its content is not tautological to its form. However, its form still determines its content; 'monosyllabic' is a word made up from 'monos' (<one, only) and 'syllabus'. Therefore, even though its form and content are not tautological, they are still related in an absolute manner which contains their meaning.

To explicate my position that the meaning of a sign can only be found in this inseparable totality of its form as well as content, I will look at two examples that show how the original meaning of a sign is disrupted by undergoing changes either in its form or its content. Firstly, let us look at an example of a sign (Figure 1) that is partly linguistic and partly visual and through its particular form, it exhibits a particular content. One such sign would be the *School STOP* road sign.

Figure 1. School Stop Sign Example (Google Images).

The *form* of that sign is made up from the word *stop* (<the imperative of the verb 'to stop')

which is written in black capital letters inside a circle that is painted yellow and has a red

perigram. Underneath the word stop, we see a thick straight black line and two figures of people

walking while holding hands — one of the them is presented as wearing a skirt and the second

figure is significantly shorter than the first, so it is implied that what these depict is a mother

holding the hand of her son. The *content* of that sign is to inform the drivers that they should stop

at that particular point because they are at a school road or a road close to a school, check for

students and parents crossing, and if the road is empty, they should continue with caution, if it is

not, they should wait.

The first implication that this sign comes with is found in the absoluteness and strictness

of its message. It is clear to us that the meaning of that sign — determined by the relatedness of

its form and content— is the above and only that; we are all certain that it cannot mean 'stop

your vehicle at that particular point, get off from it, and then start walking' or anything even

slightly different from what was described above. That is a remotely different content that would

need a different kind of form for it to be expressed. Even though this sign is characterized by a narrowness of meaning which is certainly not the case for most linguistic and nonlinguistic signs that can bear multiple meanings depending on context and other factors, it is useful here as it shows us not only that form and content are equally essential to meaning but also that this meaning cannot be accessed if this duality is disrupted. For example, let us suppose that we alter the linguistic part of the form of this sign and instead of *STOP,* we now have 'You should STOP here' and, also, our new sign is a white circle with black letters in it and the same figures. The content that arises from this change in words and colors would be distinctively different from the original; this new phrase 1) lacks the immediacy and the urgency of the original one (which was created by the coloring, the figures and the imperative of *STOP*), 2) with the use of 'should stop' instead of the imperative, it provides the driver with a choice that the original did not do, and 3) it changes the temporal relation between the actions that a driver should perform to a) examine the situation, b) stop if necessary whereas before it was a) stop -necessarily, b) examine the situation. These are only a few possible alterations that could happen with such a change in the sign. What becomes clear, and is the second Hegelian idea that arises from this example, is that alterations in the form of the sign, can only bring alterations to its content which in their turn can only result in the creation of new meaning that is divergent to the original.

Having looked at an example of a sign that underwent an alteration in its form, I will now examine how the properties of the Hegelian dialectic of form and content apply to linguistic signs that undergo a change in their content and prove how that change does not leave the original meaning intact. Let us think of the phrase 'The four-legged table'. Its form is found in its phonological, orthographic, and grammatical character and its content is found precisely-in this

case- in the object that it denotes. Suppose now that one of these four legs breaks so the same table that we were referring to before as a four-legged one is no more that; its content — in this case the denoted object— has changed so the form of the phrase 'the four-legged table' does not describe it accurately anymore even though we are referring to the same object. We need a new *formed* phrase that would incorporate this new *content*; that phrase could be 'The three-legged table' or something along these lines. What this example shows, is that after a change in the content of the linguistic sign the initial duality of meaning made up from form and content is disrupted and in order for the sign to still bear meaning, its form needs to change to include the new properties of its content. Thus, even though particular cases of linguistic signs can bring to light different complications in our understanding of linguistic meaning, it is reasonable to argue that form and content are never operating separately from one another. What follows, is that intersemiotic translation can only be inadequate in transferring meaning from one semiotic system to a different one since it can never capture the same duality of form and content; it can only make respectful -or less so- attempts to create new dualities that in their turn create meaning that is as close to the original as possible.

II. Russell's Theory of Denoting

Bertrand Russell, in his essay "On Denoting", discusses what he calls *denoting phrases* in a manner that is antithetical to the Hegelian view that form and content are posited in an absolute relationship and meaning is to be found within it. Before getting into his argumentation, he explains what he means by denoting phrases. He writes: "By a 'denoting phrase', I mean a

phrase such as any of the following: a man, some man, any man, every man, all men, the present King of England, the present King of France, the centre of mass of the solar system at the first instant of the twentieth century, the revolution of the earth around the sun, the revolution of the sun around the earth". (Russell 41). Thus, for Russell, denoting phrases could belong to either of the following three categories; 1) phrases that, for him, do not denote anything, i.e. the present King of France , 2) phrases that denote a definite object, i.e. the Present King of England (present at Russell's time), 3) phrases that denote something in an ambiguous manner, i.e. a man.

What he sees that all these have in common is found in their form which is exhibited as their syntactic and grammatical role as the subject of a sentence. In his words, "a phrase is denoting solely in virtue of its form" (Russell 41). Russell's argument that there exist in language definite descriptions that are precisely *contentless* is what differentiates him from the Hegelian thinking of dialectics which is espoused in this chapter as the basis of thinking about linguistic signs and their possible translation to signs of other semiotic systems. He writes: "This is the principle of the theory of denoting I wish to advocate: that denoting phrases never have any meaning in themselves, but that every proposition in whose verbal expression they occur, has a meaning" (Russell 43). Therefore, what he argues is that there are linguistic signs under the name of denoting phrases that: 1) only stand in virtue of their form, 2) their form is precisely the syntactic and grammatical role they have in a sentence, 3) they are meaningless (and contentless if we are to employ Hegelian terminology) and 4) they only acquire meaning when put in combination with other linguistic signs and, thus, their meaning is determined solely by the meaning of the verbal expressions in which they are to be found.

Russell's theory seems to be in trouble if we grant cases like the following one. Let us suppose that we have two sentences that have the exact same form; namely that of 'Sophocles is mortal'. The first 'Sophocles is mortal' phrase refers to Sophocles, the great ancient Greek tragedian whereas the second one denotes 'Sophocles', a supposed friend of ours. What becomes evident is that Russell's argument on the contentless form of a denoting phrase fails to capture what is happening here. If the meaning of a denoting phrase were to be found wholly in the sentence that it is put in and no content were to be derived from the linguistic sign of 'Sophocles' itself, it would follow that two identical denoting phrases found in sentences that have identical forms would have to have identical meanings. However, the referred object or content of 'Sophocles' in the first sentence is very different from that of "Sophocles" in the second so the meaning that the first sentence designates is not to be confused with that of the second sentence. This seems to be the case and it can only be so if the linguistic sign of 'Sophocles' has not only form but also content inscribed to it that is partly inherent (historical, etymological) and partly contextual. There is a variety of objections that have been risen to Russell's theory of denoting but the one mentioned above is the only one relevant to this essay and solved by Hegel's idea that there is no form that is contentless which is crucial to our discussion of intersemiotic translation.

III. Adaptation in *Adaptation*

In the beginning of the chapter, we delineated intersemiotic translation to be a transmutation from signs that belong to one semiotic system to signs that belong to a different

one or multiple other ones including the initially referenced one. At this place in the chapter, we will take a step further from the dialectic of form and content that applies to particular linguistic signs and broaden our scope to include larger entities of linguistic and other signs. We will do so by closely examining the adaptation of a book of literature to a film. This move is understood as a case of intersemiotic translation precisely because what we are acquainted with here is the abandonment of a semiotic system that solely includes words and the entrance to a different system that includes a variety of signs (verbal, pictorial, acoustic, musical) while the responsibility of transferring the *meaning* of the original is still present and important. Adaptation, similarly to all other kinds of translation, is faced with the tension present between the two ideals of fidelity and originality. In my discussion of Jonze's movie *Adaptation*, I will not attempt to dissolve this struggle but instead I will focus on articulating the structure of this translation process while prioritizing the creation of a context similar to the context of the original work as the most vital step in it.

Firstly, we cannot not take into consideration the indeterminacy of such a translation; an indeterminacy present in most translation attempts through all different translation mechanisms which has already been established and will be further discussed later on. Thus, the first step in the process of *translating* a literature book to a movie is the adaptor's awareness of the ineffability of a *perfect* translation; 'perfect' in the sense that it fully captures the meaning of the original work. Such a realization from the side of the adaptor is not in any way cancelling the purpose, harming the value or limiting the scope of his work; it is instead creating space for originality to arise and at the same it reevaluates and reestablishes the criteria of faithfulness. Faithfulness is now not judged upon a detailed analysis of particulars (words, phrases,

sentences); it is determined through an examination of the picture of the whole. When accepting the fact that alterations are inevitable in the adaptation of a book to a movie, the adaptor is in a more advantageous place to make the *right* ones. He does not find himself struck by the lack of equivalents and, thus, becomes forced to make changes in particular places that might not operate well in the entirety of the piece; he is aware of the fact that changes are inevitable and becomes concerned with making them function in the most efficient manner towards creating a piece that is faithful to the holistic picture of the original and at the same time a new creative product.

The holistic picture of the original can also be understood as its *context* in Austinian terms. As mentioned in the introduction, Austin accounts for linguistic meaning that cannot be but contextual and argues that different contexts cannot be broken down to parts. They should be understood holistically and so does the context of a literary book. What does a holistic understanding of such book entail though? My tentative answer to this question would be that such an understanding includes the comprehension of the constitutive elements of the literary work (its plot, its characters, its settings) and — equally importantly— its spirit. In his essay "Adaptation, Translation, and Philosophical Investigation in *Adaptation*", Garry Hagberg writes "To look at the original is thus not to passively gaze upon it and then turn to the creative work within the sphere of the adaptation; rather, the creative work begins within that work *itself*." (5) Thus, the translator's careful look to the original is the beginning of the work of the adaptation and this "look back" that is not a "gaze upon" can be understood as the capturing of the holistic picture of the novel or its context.

Hagberg writes that such capturing can be achieved through "i) selective attention, ii) highlighting and backlighting, iii) foregrounding and backgrounding, iv) discernment of lines of plot-connections and developments of character, v) perceptions -or projections- of backstory and the imagined past behind what we see as witnesses to the narrative in play, and vi) decisions concerning what is explicit, what is implicit, and the often large and variable gray area between" (5). The adaptor or translator should be aware of all those details of the book-which could be present on the pages or not. What is important is that this awareness does not mean that the adaptor should continue with trying to translate all those details; he should be able to combine the ones he judges to be constitutive of the holistic picture of the work and take out the ones that could be of secondary importance to create a new entity similar to the holistic picture of the original. In other words, the adaptor should have a clear understanding of the context of the book since this is what brings him into a position to create a context that is as similar to that of the original as possible which is vital to the process of adaptation.

It is important to note that in the process of replicating such a similar context, the adaptor should pay particular attention to the characters of the story as they often are one of the most indelible parts of the experience of reading a literary work. Authors might spend more or less time on delineating the idiosyncrasy of a character but what is present in most of the cases is that the careful reader can discern an ethical judgement from the side of the author about a character (or the lack of one) ; such a judgement could be *good* (it shows that the author is in favor of that particular character), *bad* (depicting that the writer is in opposition with that character's morality or activity), or a *neutral* one (the author is painting a character without assigning -even implicitly- any moral judgement to him or her). The adaptor should be able to grasp the moral

stance that the author is adopting about each character in the book — or at least the most important ones if he chooses to omit some characters— and include it in the movie in an equally explicit or implicit manner. Characters can also be a helpful place for the adaptation to begin since, while reading a literary work, one very quickly creates mental images of its characters based on their actions and the descriptive voice of the author. Such mental images of characters from the side of the adaptor, can be of great assistance to the creation of the real images that the film will contain.

Therefore, among the many, complex and most of the time not easily distinguishable details of an adaptation process, there are three important steps that should not be absent from any such process; i) the adaptor should be aware of the indeterminacy of the translation he is working on, ii) he should go back to the original and comprehend its holistic picture or its context and iii) he should replicate a new context that is as similar to the book's one as possible and create within it a film that is faithful and yet a meaningful work or art on its own. Having established the above preliminary criteria, I will now examine how they come to play in the film *Adaptation* — a movie about a screenwriter's journey and hardships in his attempt to adapt a book — while also closely looking at particular details that present themselves in the process of adaptation that the film narrates.

Adaptation is a 2002 American film directed by Spike Jonze and written by Charlie Kaufman. The primary narrative of the movie follows Kaufman's struggles in adapting Susan Orlean's book *The Orchid Thief* while going through a midlife crisis which is only worsened by the presence of his twin brother Donald. Donald, who is also working on writing a screenplay, is presented to be less talented or intelligent than Charlie yet more joyful, optimistic, and

determined. In parallel, the movie narrates the story of Susan Orlean's research for her book, her encounter with John Laroche, a orchid hunter with a peculiar yet charming character, and their falling in love. All these events are masterfully intertwined in a screenplay that exhibits a variety of detailed philosophical problematiques on the subject of adaptation as translation as well as on other philosophical issues not so closely related to this essay.

Before discussing Charlie's struggle to write a screenplay for the film adaptation of *The Orchid Thief,* it is important to clarify that even though a screenplay is a linguistic entity, it does not stand alone as such. It is conceived of to be combined with other non-linguistic signs such as the music of the film or its settings and can only function when put in combination with those signs that belong to different semiotic systems. The adaptor is constantly thinking of his work as part of a project that incorporates a variety of semiotic systems and aims at making the best choices so that his creation works in harmony with all the other cinematographic elements that will be present in the film. Even though in this essay we will not focus on such cinematographic characteristics, the discussed process of adaptation is nonetheless one of intersemiotic translation (and not intralingual as one could argue), since a screenplay comes alive and fulfills its purpose only when put in relation with a multitude of other semiotic systems while its creation is also informed to a significant degree by such elements.

In the introduction of the essay, we looked at the Austinian question of 'What is the meaning of the word "x"'. If we substitute 'x' for 'adaptation', we have entered a very rich philosophical inquiry vital to the film. 'Adaptation' has a two-faced meaning in *Adaptation* which calls for a layered and complex understanding of the word. (By two-faced meaning, I'm referencing one that has two different — or seemingly different— usages that function together

as an entity and are not always easily distinguishable from one another). Kaufman is engaging in a cunning play with the word so that on the one side it denotes the process of adapting or translating a book to film and on the other, it references the process of living beings constantly renewing themselves and evolving in the struggle for existence.

As he is driving Susan around in Florida, John Laroche confesses "You know why I like plants? Because they are so mutable. Adaptation is a profound process. You figure out how to thrive in the world". At the same time, Charlie, in an exchange he had with his film producer — (Valerie) at a moment when he was particularly anxious and lost about the exelixis of his project, communicated to her that he has "arrived at an age where I want to think differently about the world in a different way". Valerie responded that "Adapting someone else's work is certainly an opportunity to think differently". Adaptation manifests itself as a new world devoid of opportunity; through creating a new work that stands on its own, the adaptor (Charlie) is given a chance to renew himself in the same way that Laroche narrates that plants constantly evolve to continue to exist. What unites these two variations in meaning is the fact in that both of them we recognize a beginning point of reference (in the first understanding that is the book, and in the second the current state of the living being), the intention, desire, or need to evolve from it and create or become something new and then the product of this creating or becoming which has new properties and exists on its own. Living organisms adapt to their environment by renewing themselves while in a film adaptation, we are acquainted with the birth of a new work. In a film adaptation, in particular, this idea and ideal of novelty can be put in practice as the creation of a new context which functions as a new world for the movie to be placed within and which allows

the creativity of the adaptor to emerge — this criterion has already been established as necessary in any process of translation.

In the same dialogue that Charlie has with Valerie, what also becomes evident is that he has dove deeply into Orlean's work (a move that connects to what has been previously written about the importance of the careful 'look back to the original'). He says "And Orlean makes orchids so fascinating. Plus her musings on Florida, orchid poaching. Great *New Yorker* stuff. I'd want to remain true to that, let the movie exist rather than be artificially plot driven". Charlie's intense *look back* to the original puzzles him as the book does not evolve around a linear plot — it rather evolves around orchids— and is written in a particular *New Yorker* style that is hard to replicate — and if the film were to replicate such a voice, maybe it would not be original. His encounter with this fundamental principle of adaptation, leaves him in a state of aporia about how to proceed; a state that even though chaotic, can function productively in the adaptation process. His realization that he cannot write in Orlean's distinct voice and that at the same time he should keep the central position that orchids have in the book, determines his next move which is vital to his adaptation attempt. He says "So I need to establish the themes" and, therefore, proceeds with attempting to capture what makes the book what it is, its most distinctive moments or its holistic picture. However, his language in that phrase demystifies another aspect of the adaptation process he follows; namely, he states that he is going to establish the themes of the film rather than solely locate the themes of the book. He takes responsibility over the thematology of his film since his aim is to create an original work that functions on its own and in order for that function to be fulfilled, he realizes that he might need to shift from the themes of the book.

In summary, Kaufman has provided an eloquent analysis of the creative process of adaptation that enlightens i) the struggle of the translator between faithfulness and originality, ii) the prioritization of the 'look back' to the original and the close working with it, and iii) the need of the replication of a new context for the film (in the form of the establishment of new themes). Most importantly, the film introduces a manner of thinking about film adaptation in parallel with the process of adaptation that living beings engage in to renew themselves in the struggle to exist. Hagberg writes "the film maintains an awareness of the relation between the Darwinian conception of adaptation -evolution as a function of responses to the environment in order to maximize survival values - and film adaptation, where content moves or migrates in order to maximize the lifespan of that content" (12). This relationality between the two understandings of the word 'adaptation' does not only suggest that the adapted film is a new, meaningful and alive work on its own but also that its content has been maximized.

To better understand this, it is useful to look back to the Hegelian terminology of form and content. In Hegel's example of the Iliad, we proved that an *Iliad* that is not written in the form of a poem that would be sung along with the lyre, but is, for example, written in the form of a historical essay that narrates the story of Achilles in Troy is a new creation that comes with a new content. What arises from our understanding of *Adaptation*, is that it is possible in attempts of intersemiotic translation that the creative process of moving between the original (which in this case has the form of a book) and the translated work (in the form of a film) as well as the translated work itself produce a content that is not only new but also magnified. Thus, even though, intersemiotic translation (as well as inter- or intra-lingual) does not succeed in transferring the meaning of the original as it is and does not capture the same duality of form and

content, it is possible that the new dualities that emerge do not only stand as meaningful works on their own but also enrich the respective content. It is exactly within that creative space that is delineated between the original work and its translation, where content and meaning have an opportunity to be redefined and possibly expanded; this potentiality of a magnification of content is possibly one of the biggest values of translation.

Conclusion

The Three Traps, The Pharmakon, and The Value of Translation

Throughout the essay, I have pointed to a multitude of problematiques that arise from a conception of translation as a tool in transferring the 'meaning of a word' *intact* throughout different languages, within the same language, and throughout different semiotic systems. Through articulating those complications, my hope was to elucidate that each translation category examined comes with a *trap*. Firstly, in my discussion of interlingual translation, I intended to reveal the risk that believing that there is a solution to the struggle between fidelity and originality bears. Metaphrase, paraphrase, and imitation are all methods of translation that, no matter where they stand in the spectrum of faithfulness and originality, are not faultless. Thinking that either is the canon or can resolve the above struggle is misleading. 'The meaning of a word' is such a complex entity that in order for us to comprehend it, let alone translate it to another language, we need to pay attention to its *context*. Such an understanding will guide the translator to the method of translation (or the combination of methods) that is more applicable to each particular case. The second trap that I intended to illustrate in my examination of intralingual translation is that of confusing *similarity* with *identity*. There is no such thing as an identical 'meaning of a word' or no 'x' and 'y' words posited in a x=y relationship. Yet there is *sameness* in meaning; the nature of this sameness is enigmatic and can be demystified through a case-by-case investigation. The third trap came forth in my discussion of intersemiotic translation and can be designated as the misconception that the same *content* can be exhibited in different *forms*. What is the case is that form and content (whether we are referring to those of a

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word, a phrase, an article, a book etc) are intertwined to such a degree that if one is altered, the other cannot remain unchanged and new *meaning* emerges.

Thus, we are faced with three traps or dangerous misconceptions. The fact that each of them was discussed in one of the three chapters does not mean that that trap applies solely to that particular kind of translation. Believing that a good translation can i) *perfectly* balance out fidelity and originality, ii) create meaning that is identical to the original and iii) exhibit the same original content in a different form can occur in all interlingual, intralingual, and intersemiotic attempts to translation. The question that emerges is the following; What is then a good translation? This could be a topic for a different essay yet the answer that I had in mind while writing this work, is that one such translation, firstly, needs to not fall in either of the above three traps. The pharmakon to those threatening misconceptions is no other than the awareness of the complexity and mysterious nature of linguistic meaning; the meaning of words is such that it extends the words that it is expressed in and manifests itself through a network of nonlinguistic associations and implications that cannot be reduced to constitutive elements and are always contextual. From such an awareness, it follows that a good translator will be i) aware of the indeterminacy of the translation he is working on, ii) attempting to replicate meaning that is similar to the original and not identical, iii) aiming at replicating a similar *context* for his translation that is as faithful to that of the original as possible as well as a meaningful work on its own. There are quite possibly many other steps that a good translator follows to produce a good translation that differ from case to case and cannot be easily delineated yet examining those goes beyond the scope of this essay.

Even though I focused on closely examining complications present to processes of translation that support the conclusion that 'the meaning of a word' cannot remain the same after any such process, I do not by any means intend to devalue translation as such. Except for the obvious contribution of translation to social and political studies, sciences, humanities, and the arts in bringing us closer to material that would otherwise be inaccessible as well as for the fact that it allowed intercultural communication to flourish, translation manifests itself as an opportunity for the 'meaning of the word' to get magnified. Every translation of a linguistic sign or entity, whether interlingual, intralingual or intersemiotic, constitutes a new *context* where that word is put and, thus, the network of associations that we have for this word only grows. It is exactly within the creative space outlined between the original and its translation that the 'meaning of the word' is given the chance to further enrich its content by including new contexts of usage.

Furthermore, and even more importantly, translation is saving us from the frightening possibility of a universal language; one that would be understood by all of the world's population and be able to capture all conceptual thought. Such a language would function in a manner similar to that of mathematics; precisely, it would have linguistic signs able to designate all objects of thought related to human beings (or so its components claim) and their surrounding in a way similar to that in which numbers and symbols are able to express all mathematical thought. Except for such signs, a universal language, as some philosophers and logicians conceive of it, would come with a precise set of rules that would guide us on how to manipulate its symbols. Yet such a manner of thinking appears to be beyond dangerous. Separating language from culture is a serious mistake that threatens to deprive the 'meaning of a word' from all its

particularities. A universal language would initiate a mode of thinking about words in terms of isolated definitions and not complex entities. With the demolition of national languages, it is not only these that are lost; figurative usage of words, idioms, aphorisms, dialects, slang, metonymies, sociolects would also be severely harmed if not absolutely abolished.

Dissociating 'the meaning of a word' from its cultural background, let alone that it is an act that is even hard to be conceived of as language and culture are strongly intertwined, would deplete it from so much of its content. Calling a thing by two names or using the same word to denote different things would not be present in a universal language whereas no attention would be given to the *context* of utterance. Translation is, thus, protecting us from the peril of a universal language that would manifest itself as a system of comprehending 'the meaning of the word' definitionally and rectangularly. Thinking in terms of words able to be translated, whether from language 'x' to language 'y', or from figurative language to literal and vice versa, or from language 'x' to semiotic system 'z', we are broadening our understanding of them and what follows is that we can *do* more things with them.

Austin, in his *How to Do Things with Words,* introduced a manner of thinking about words as *speech acts*. He focused on sentences such as 'I apologize' or 'I bet' and called these *performative utterances* as what they are doing is not describing reality; they are in fact altering it. He writes "to utter the sentence (in, of course, the appropriate circumstances) is not to describe my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I'm doing it: it is to do it" (*How to Do Things with Words* 6). Many sentences like the ones mentioned above don't have a constative import limited to the linguistic function of *saying* something; they have a function similar and a force equal to *doing* something. When one is saying 'I do' in a marriage

ceremony, he is not reporting on it; he is rather indulging in it. Similarly, when one is saying 'I love you', the import of the words transcends language; it is not a phrase that describes a social reality, it is one that determines it. A universal language would limit what the verb 'I love' does to literal usages similar to the one above yet, there are so many other *things* that one can *do* with such a word. 'X' might say 'I love ice-cream' and mean that he very much enjoys it, 'Y' might say 'I love Gary Oldman' and mean that she finds him to be a good actor, or 'Z' might say 'I love this' to suggest that she is actually in a situation that she strongly dislikes. If we limit ourselves to a universal language, we will inevitably lose a number of usages of words that might fall out of their strict definitional picture. If language gets simplified in such a manner, what happens is that we *do* less with our words, which in many cases might mean that we *do* less in general as language and external reality cannot be examined separately neither can language be seen as a sole tool to explicating the second.

Language, in the Austinian conception that we have espoused in this essay, has the force to alter reality. Translation manifests itself as a particularly useful device within language whose sphere of influence extends it and presents us with numerous ways of rethinking and broadening 'the meaning of a word' by using it in different contexts. Moving across different languages, or within figurative and literal language, or from words to other semiotic systems requires caution and can possibly harm linguistic meaning if it is a move that fails to avoid the three traps mentioned above. Yet if it does not fail to do so, such a move enriches that meaning while also protecting us from the destructive consequences that a universal language would bring to language, culture, and our external reality. If I am to leave the reader with anything concrete, it is that translation (interlingual, intralingual, and intersemiotic) is another wonderful *thing* that we

can *do* with *words yet* we ought to treat it with caution and an awareness of its inefficacy in transferring the 'meaning of a word' intact. Its value is instead to be looked for in its ability to extend 'the meaning of a word' as well as in the fact that it is protecting us from the dystopian reality of a universal language.

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