"Conclusions" Walter Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator" Messenger Lecture, Cornell University, March 4, 1983
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"Conclusions" Walter Benjamin's
"The Task of the Translator"
Messenger Lecture, Cornell University,
March 4, 1983

Editorial Note

What appears here is an edited transcript of the last of six Messenger Lectures delivered at Cornell in February and March of 1983. The text is based on a collation of three sets of tape recordings, supplemented with eight pages of manuscript notes. Aside from differences in detail, formulation, and emphasis, the notes diverge significantly from the tapes only on the last sheet, where de Man wrote: "Im Anfang war das Wort und das Wort war bei Gott/Dasselbe war bei Gott/ohne Dasselbe" (the last two words lined out)—the beginning of Luther's translation of St. John's gospel, which Benjamin quotes in Greek and to which de Man made reference in the question session following the Cornell lecture. This text retains traces of the context in which the lecture was delivered, notably in references to the three preceding lectures.*

Though the task of the transcriber—to give to an unwritten text the after life of canonicity—may be undertaken only by suspending the ideal of fidelity that underwrites it, I have tried wherever possible to resist the necessity of fixing or immobilizing passages which appeared to be still underway toward formulation. De Man's sometimes unnaturalized English has been preserved, with the exception of a few modifications attempted for the sake of coherence. Some sentences, and a few paragraphs, had to be rearranged. Solçisms and redundancies have been retained, however, where the possibility of foregrounding a gap between oral performance and printed text seemed to outweigh the likelihood of inconvenience; in this way I have tried to transmit some of the burden and risk of reconstruction on to the reader. Omissions and emendations are intended to conform to this principle. I have punctuated less with an eye to correct usage than with the aim of remaining faithful to the tentative nature of the act of transcription. Here it was my intention to reproduce the pace of oral delivery and to close off as few readings as possible, even when leaving ambiguities open may have been less true to de Man's intent than to a certain reluctance to compromise the instability of this


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artifact. Paragraphing generally follows de Man's oral pauses and the repetitions of thesis statements with which he seemed to demarcate articulations in his argument; such breaks are to an extent reflected in the manuscript outline. Except for a few passages in which de Man adopts Harry Zohn's translation, quotations in this text reproduce de Man's own impromptu translations, which sometimes bear little resemblance to the available English translations cited in my notes.

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William D. Jewett

I at first thought of leaving this last session open for conclusions and discussion; I still hope for the discussion, but I have given up on the conclusions. It seemed to me best, rather than trying to conclude (which is always a terrible anticlimax), just to repeat once more what I have been saying since the beginning, using another text in order to have still another version, another formulation of some of the questions with which we have been concerned throughout this series. It seemed to me that this text by Benjamin on "The Task of the Translator" is a text that is very well known, both in the sense that it is very widely circulated, and in the sense that in the profession you are nobody unless you have said something about this text. Since probably most of us have tried to say something about it, let me see what I can do, and since some of you may be well ahead of me, I look forward to the questions or suggestions you may have. So, far from concluding or from making very general statements, I want to stay pretty close to this particular text, and see what comes out. If I say stay close to the text, since it is a text on translation, I will need [and that is why I have all these books] translations of this text; because if you have a text which says it is impossible to translate, it is very nice to see what happens when that text gets translated. And the translations confirm, brilliantly, beyond any expectations which I may have had, that it is impossible to translate, as you will see in a moment.

Nevertheless, I have placed this within a kind of framework, a framework which is historical. Since the problems of history have come up frequently, I though it would be good to situate it within a historical or pseudohistorical framework, and then to move on from there. Therefore I start out with a recurrent problem in history and historiography, which is the problem of modernity. I use as an introduction into this a little essay by the German philosopher Gadamer, who in a collection called Aspekte der Modernität wrote, many years ago, interesting articles called "Die philosophischen Grundlagen des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts" ["The Philosophical Foundations of the Twentieth Century"]. Gadamer asks the somewhat naive but certainly relevant question, whether what is being done in philosophy in the twentieth century differs essentially from what was being done before, and if it then makes sense to speak of a modernity in philosophical speculation in the twentieth century. He
finds as the general theme, the general enterprise of contemporary philosophy, a critical concern with the concept of the subject. Perhaps one wouldn’t say this now, which perhaps dates this piece a little, but it is still relevant. His question then is whether the way in which the critique of the concept of the subject is being addressed by present-day philosophy, differs essentially from the way it had been addressed by the predecessors of contemporary philosophy, in German Idealist philosophy—in some of the authors with whom we have been concerned, such as Kant, Hegel, and others. He writes the following sentence, which is our starting point:

\[\text{Is the critique of the concept of the subject which is being attempted in our century something else, something different from a mere repetition of what had been accomplished by German Idealist philosophy—and, must we not admit, with, in our case, incomparably less power of abstraction, and without the conceptual strength that characterized the earlier movement?}\]

Is what we are doing just a repetition? And he answers, surprise: “There is not the case.” What we are doing really is something new, something different, and we can lay claim to being modern philosophers. He finds three rubrics in which we—contemporary philosophers—he, Gadamer—is ahead of his predecessors, and he characterizes these three progressions in terms of a decreased naiveté. To us now it seems, if we look back on Hegel or Kant, that there is a certain naiveté there which we have now grown beyond. He distinguishes between three types of naiveté, which he calls Naivität des Setzens [naiveté of positing], Naivität der Reflexion [naiveté of reflection], and Navität des Begriffs [naiveté of the concept].

Very briefly, what is meant by the first, by a certain naiveté of position, is a critique which we have been able to develop of pure perception and of pure declarative discourse, in relation to the problem of the subject. We are now ahead of Hegel in that we know better that the subject does not dominate its own utterances; we are more aware that it is naive to assume that the subject really controls its own discourse; we know this is not the case. Yet he qualifies this one bit: nevertheless, understanding is available to us to some extent, by a hermeneutic process in which understanding, by a historical process, can catch up with the presuppositions it had made about itself. We get a development of Gadamer, disciple of Heidegger, of the notion of a hermeneutic circle, where the subject is blind to its own utterance, but where nevertheless the reader who is aware of the historicity of that blindness can recover the meaning, can recover a certain amount of control over the text by means of this particular hermeneutic pattern. This model of understanding is ahead of the

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Hegelian model exactly to the same extent that one could say that the hermeneutics of Heidegger are ahead of the hermeneutics of Hegel, in Gadamer’s sense.

He then speaks of the naïveté of reflection, and develops further what is already posited in the first; namely, he asserts the possibility now of a historicity of understanding, in a way that is not accessible to individual self-reflection. It is said that Hegel, in a sense, was not historical enough, that in Hegel it is still too much the subject itself which originates its own understanding, whereas now one is more aware of the difficulty of the relationship between the self and its discourse. Where in the first progression he refers to Heidegger’s contribution, here he refers very much to his own contribution: historicizing the notion of understanding, by seeing understanding (as the later Rezeptionsästhetik, which comes from Gadamer to a large extent, will develop it) as a process between author and reader in which the reader acquires an understanding of the text by becoming aware of the historicity of the movement that occurs between the text and himself. Here Gadamer also makes a claim that something new is going on nowadays, and indeed, the stress on reception, the stress on reading, are characteristics of contemporary theory, and can be claimed to be new.

Finally, he speaks of the naïveté of the concept, in which the problem of the relationship between philosophical discourse and rhetorical and other devices which pertain more to the realm of ordinary discourse or common language were not, with Kant and Hegel, being examined critically. We alluded to an example of that yesterday when Kant raises the problem of hypotyposis and invites us to become aware of the use of metaphors in our own philosophical discourse. That type of question, which at least was mentioned by Kant, and was mentioned by Hegel much less, is now much more developed. Gadamer’s allusion is to Wittgenstein, and also indirectly to Nietzsche. We no longer think, says Gadamer, that conceptual and ordinary language are separable; we now have a concept of the problematics of language which is less naive in that it sees to what extent conceptual philosophical language is still dependent on ordinary language, and how close it is to it. This is the modernity which he suggests, and which he details by these three indications.

Now although this is Kantian to some extent in its critical outlook, it is still very much a Hegelian model. The scheme or concept of modernity, as the overcoming of a certain nonawareness or naïveté by means of a critical negation, by means of a critical examination which implies the negation of certain positive relationships and the achieving of a new consciousness, allows for the establishment of a new discourse which claims to overcome or to renew a certain problematic. This pattern is very traditionally Hegelian, in the sense that the development of consciousness is always shown as a kind of overcoming of a certain naïveté and a rise of consciousness to another level. It is traditionally Hegelian, which does not mean that it is in Hegel, but it is in Hegel the
way Hegel is being taught in the schools. Indeed, Gadamer ends his piece with a reference to Hegel:

The concept of spirit, which Hegel borrowed from the Christian spiritual tradition, is still the ground of the critique of the subject and of the subjective spirit that appears as the main task of the post-Hegelian, that is to say modern, period. This concept of spirit (Geist), which transcends the subjectivity of the ego, finds its true abode in the phenomenon of language, which stands more and more as the center of contemporary philosophy.2

Contemporary philosophy is a matter of getting beyond Hegel in Hegelian terms, by focusing the Hegelian démarche, the Hegelian dialectic more specifically on the question of language. That is how modernity is here defined, as a Hegelianism which has concentrated more on linguistic dimensions.

If we compare the critical, dialectical, nonessentialist (because pragmatic to some extent, since an allowance is made for common language) concept of modernity which Gadamer here advances, with Benjamin’s text on language in “The Task of the Translator,” then at first sight, Benjamin would appear as highly regressive. He would appear as messianic, prophetic, religiously messianic, in a way that may well appear to be a relapse into the naïveté denounced by Gadamer; indeed, he has been criticized for this. Such a relapse would actually return to a much earlier stage even than that of Kant, Hegel, and idealist philosophy. The first impression you receive of Benjamin’s text is that of a messianic, prophetic pronouncement, which would be very remote from the cold critical spirit which, from Hegel to Gadamer, is held up as the spirit of modernity. Indeed, as you read this text, you will have been struck by the messianic tone, by a figure of the poet as an almost sacred figure, as a figure which echoes sacred language. All references to particular poets in the text put this much in evidence. The poets who are being mentioned are poets one associates with a sacerdotal, an almost priestlike, spiritual function of poetry: this is true of Hölderlin, of George, and of Mallarmé, all of whom are very much present in the essay.

(Since I mention George, one is aware of the presence of George—a name which has now lost much of its significance, but which at that time in Germany was still considered the most important, central poet, although in 1923 or 1924 when this was written this was already getting toward its end. For example, Benjamin quotes Pannwitz, a disciple of George, at the end of the text. And he refers to George in a relevant way; in George there was a claim made for the poet again as some kind of prophet, as a kind of messianic figure—George doesn’t kid around with that, he sees himself at least as Virgil and Dante combined into one, with still quite a bit added to it if necessary—therefore he has a highly exalted notion of the role of the poet, and incidentally

of himself, and of the benefits that go with it. But this tone hangs over the German academic discourse, and over a certain concept of poetry, which were then current. There are many echoes of it in the way Benjamin approaches the problem, at least seen superficially. The same is true of references to Hölderlin, who at that time was a discovery of George and of his group, where you find a certain messianic, spiritual concept of Hölderlin. Many echoes of this are still to be found in Heidegger, who after all dedicated his commentaries on Hölderlin to Norbert von Hellingrath, who was a disciple of George and a member of the George circle, and who was, as you know, the first editor of Hölderlin. I sketch in this little piece of background—it may be familiar to you, it may be entirely redundant—to show that the mood, the atmosphere in which this essay was written is one in which the notion of the poetic as the sacred, as the language of the sacred, the figure of the poet as somehow a sacred figure, is common, and is frequent.

It is not just in the form of echoes that this is present in Benjamin, it almost seems to have been part of the statement itself. This notion of poetry as the sacred, ineffable language finds perhaps its extreme form already from the beginning, in the categorical way in which Benjamin dismisses any notion of poetry as being oriented in any sense, toward an audience or a reader. This passage has provoked the ire of the defenders of Rezeptionsästhetik, who analyze the problem of poetic interpretation from the perspective of the reader—Stanley Fish or Riffaterre in this country follow that line to some extent, but it is of course Jauss and his disciples who do this the most. For them, a sentence like the one which begins this essay is absolutely scandalous. Benjamin begins the essay by saying:

In the appreciation of a work of art or an art form, consideration of the receiver never proves fruitful. Not only is any reference to a certain public or its representatives misleading, but even the concept of an "ideal" receiver is detrimental in the theoretical consideration of art, since all it posits is the existence and nature of man as such. Art, in the same way, posits man's physical and spiritual existence, but in none of its works is it concerned with his response. No poem is intended for the reader, no picture for the beholder, no symphony for the listener.  

He couldn't be more categorical than in this assertion at the beginning of the essay. You can see how this would have thrown them into a slight panic in Konstanz, a panic with which they deal by saying that this is an essentialist theory of art, that this stress on the author at the expense of the reader is pre-

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Kantian, since already Kant had given the reader, the receptor, the beholder an important role, more important than the author's. This then is held up as an example of the regression to a messianic conception of poetry which would be religious in the wrong sense, and it is very much attacked for that reason.

But on the other hand, Benjamin is also frequently praised as the one who has returned the dimension of the sacred to literary language, and who has thus overcome, or at least considerably refined, the secular historicity of literature on which the notion of modernity depends. If one can think of modernity as it is described by Gadamer as a loss of the sacred, as a loss of a certain type of poetic experience, as its replacement by a secular historicism which loses contact with what was originally essential, then one can praise Benjamin for having re-established the contact with what had there been forgotten. Even in Habermas there are statements in that direction. But closer to home, an example of somebody who reads Benjamin with a great deal of subtlety, who is aware of the complications, and who praises him precisely for the way in which he combines a complex historical pattern with a sense of the sacred, is Geoffrey Hartman, who writes in one of his latest books as follows:

This chiasmus of hope and catastrophe is what saves hope from being unmasked as only catastrophe: as an illusion or unsatisfied movement of desire that wrecks everything. The foundation of hope becomes remembrance, which confirms the function, even the duty of historian and critic. To recall the past is a political act: a "recherche" that involves us with images of peculiar power, images that may constrain us to identify with them, that claim the "weak Messianic power" in use (Thesis 2). These images, split off from their fixed location in history, undo concept of homogeneous time, flash up into or reconstitute the present. "To Robespierre," Benjamin writes, continuing Marx's reflections in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, "ancient Rome was a past charged with the time of now [Jetzeit] which he blasted out of the continuum of history. The French revolution viewed itself as Rome incarnate" (Thesis 14).4

The reference here is to historical remembrance, to a historical concept which then dovetails, which injects itself into an apocalyptic, religious, spiritual concept, thus marrying history with the sacred in a way which is highly seductive, highly attractive. It is certainly highly attractive to Hartman, and one can understand why, since it gives one both the language of despair, the language of nihilism, with the particular rigor that goes with that; but, at the same time, hope! So you have it all: you have the critical perception, you have the possibility of carrying on in apocalyptic tones, you have the particular eloquence that comes with that (because one can only really get excited if one writes in an apocalyptic mode), but you can still talk in terms of hope, and Benjamin would be an example of this combination of nihilistic rigor with sacred revelation. A

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man who likes a judicious, balanced perspective on those things, like Hartman, has reason to quote and to admire this possibility in Benjamin. The problem of the reception of Benjamin centers on this problem of the messianic, and very frequently it is this text on “The Task of the Translator” that is quoted as one of the most characteristic indicators in that direction.

We now then ask the simplest, the most naive, the most literal of possible questions in relation to Benjamin’s text, and we will not get beyond that: what does Benjamin say? What does he say, in the most immediate sense possible? It seems absurd to ask a question that is so simple, that seems to be so unnecessary, because we can certainly admit that among literate people we would at least have some minimal agreement about what is being said here, allowing us then to embroider upon this statement, to take positions, discuss, interpret, and so on. But it seems that, in the case of this text, this is very difficult to establish. Even the translators, who certainly are close to the text, who had to read it closely to some extent, don’t seem to have the slightest idea of what Benjamin is saying, so much so that when Benjamin says certain things rather simply in one way—for example he says that something is not—the translators, who at least know German well enough to know the difference between something is and something is not, don’t see it! and put absolutely and literally the opposite of what Benjamin has said. This is remarkable, because the two translators I have—Harry Zohn, who translated the text in English, and Maurice de Gandillac, who translated the text in French—are very good translators, and know German very well. Harry Zohn, you may know; Maurice de Gandillac is an eminent professor of philosophy at the University of Paris, a very learned man who knows German very well, and who should be able to tell the difference between, for example, “Ich gehe nach Paris” and “Ich gehe nicht nach Paris”. It is not more difficult than that, but somehow he doesn’t get it.

An example which has become famous and has an anecdote is the passage near the end of Benjamin’s essay, where Benjamin says the following: “Wo der Text unmittelbar, ohne vermittelnden Sinn,” and so on, “der Wahrheit oder der Lehre angehört, ist er übersetzbar schlechtthin” (62). “Where the text pertains directly, without mediation, to the realm of the truth and of dogma, it is, without further ado, translatable”—the text can be translated, schlechtthin, so there is no problem about translating it. Gandillac?—I won’t comment on this—translates this relatively simple, enunciatory sentence: “Là où le texte, immédiatement, sans l’entremise d’un sens . . . relève de la vérité ou de la doctrine, il est purement et simplement intraduisible” (275)—untranslatable. What adds some comedy to this particular instance is that Jacques Derrida was doing a seminar with this particular text in Paris, using the French—Derrida’s German is pretty good, but he prefers to use the French, and when you are a philosopher in France you take Gandillac more or less seriously. So Derrida was basing part of his reading on the “intraduisible,” on the untranslatability, until somebody in his seminar (so I’m told) pointed out to him that the correct word was “translatable.” I’m sure Derrida could explain that it was the same—
and I mean that in a positive sense, it is the same, but still, it is not the same without some additional explanation. This is an example, and we will soon see some other examples which are more germane to the questions which we will bring up about this text.

Why, in this text, to begin with, is the translator the exemplary figure? Why is the translator held up in relation to the very general questions about the nature of poetic language which the text asks? The text is a poetics, a theory of poetic language, so why does Benjamin not go to the poets? or to the reader, possibly; or the pair poet-reader, as in the model of reception? And since his is so negative about the notion of reception anyway, what makes the essential difference between the pair author-reader and the pair author-translator—since one's first, simple impression would be that the translator is a reader of the original text? There are, to some extent, obvious empirical answers one can give. The essay was written, as you know, as an introduction to Benjamin's own translation of the Tableaux parisiens of Baudelaire; it might just be out of megalomania that he selects the figure of the translator. But this is not the case. One of the reasons why he takes the translator rather than the poet is that the translator, per definition, fails. The translator can never do what the original text did. Any translation is always second in relation to the original, and the translator as such is lost from the very beginning. He is per definition underpaid, he is per definition overworked, he is per definition the one history will not really retain as an equal, unless he also happens to be a poet, but that is not always the case. If the text is called "Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers," we have to read this title more or less as a tautology: Aufgabe, task, can also mean the one who has to give up. If you enter the Tour de France and you give up, that is the Aufgabe—"er hat aufgegeben," he doesn't continue in the race anymore. It is in that sense also the defeat, the giving up, of the translator. The translator has to give up in relation to the task of refining what was there in the original.

The question then becomes why this failure with regard to an original text, to an original poet, is for Benjamin exemplary. The question also becomes how the translator differs from the poet; and here Benjamin is categorical in asserting that the translator is radically unlike, differs essentially from the poet and from the artist. This is a curious thing to say, a thing that goes against common sense, because one assumes [and obviously it is the case] that some of the qualities necessary for a good translator are similar to the qualities necessary for a good poet. This does not mean therefore that they are doing the same thing. The assertion is so striking, so shocking in a way, that here again the translator [Maurice de Gandilliac] does not see it. Benjamin says [in Zohn's translation], "Although translation, unlike art, cannot claim permanence for its products . . ." [75], Gandilliac, the same passage: "Ainsi la traduction, encore qu'elle ne puisse élever une prétention à la durée de ses ouvrages, et en cela elle n'est pas sans ressemblance avec l'art . . ." [267]. The original is absolutely unambiguous "Übersetzung also, wiewohl sie auf Dauer ihrer Gebilde nicht Anspruch erheben kann und hierin unähnlich der Kunst . . ." [55]. As
you come upon it in a text, the statement is so surprising, goes so much against common sense, that an intelligent, learned, and careful translator cannot see it, cannot see what Benjamin says. It is remarkable. Zohn saw it—don't get the impression that Zohn gets it all right and Gandillac gets it all wrong—basically Gandillac is a little ahead of Zohn, I think, in the final analysis.

At any rate, for Benjamin there is a sharp distinction between them. It is not necessary for good translators to be good poets. Some of the best translators—he mentions Voss (translator of Homer), Luther, and Schlegel—are very poor poets. There are some poets who are also translators: he mentions Hölderlin, who translated Sophocles and others, and George, who translated Baudelaire—Dante also, but primarily Baudelaire, so Benjamin is close to George. But then, he says, it is not because they are great poets that they are great translators, they are great poets and they are great translators. They are not purely, as Heidegger will say of Hölderlin, Dichter der Dichter, but they are Übersetzer der Dichter, they are beyond the poets because they are also translators.

A number of the most eminent ones, such as Luther, Voss, and Schlegel, are incomparably more important as translators than as creative writers; some of the great among them, such as Hölderlin and Stefan George, cannot be simply subsumed as poets, and quite particularly not if we consider them as translators. As translation is a mode of its own, the task of the translator, too, may be regarded as distinct and clearly differentiated from the task of the poet. [76]

Of the differences between the situation of the translator and that of the poet, the first that comes to mind is that the poet has some relationship to meaning, to a statement that is not purely within the realm of language. That is the naïveté of the poet, that he has to say something, that he has to convey a meaning which does not necessarily relate to language. The relationship of the translator to the original is the relationship between language and language, wherein the problem of meaning or the desire to say something, the need to make a statement, is entirely absent. Translation is a relation from language to language, not a relation to an extralinguistic meaning that could be copied, paraphrased, or imitated. That is not the case for the poet; poetry is certainly not paraphrase, clarification, or interpretation, a copy in that sense, and that is already the first difference.

If it is in some fundamental way unlike poetry, what, in Benjamin's text, does translation resemble? One of the things it resembles would be philosophy, in that it is critical, in the same way that philosophy is critical, of a simple notion of imitation, of philosophical discourse as an Abbild (imitation, paraphrase, reproduction) of the real situation. Philosophy is not an imitation of the world as we know it, but it has another relationship to that world. Critical philosophy, and the reference would be specifically to Kant again, will be critical in the same way of the notion of the imitative concept of the world.
Um das echte Verhältnis zwischen Original und Übersetzung zu erfassen, ist eine Erwägung anzustellen, deren Absicht durchaus den Gedankengängen analog ist, in denen die Erkenntniskritik die Unmöglichkeit einer Abbildstheorie zu erweisen hat. [53]

In order to seize upon the real relationship between the original and its translation, we must start reflection of which the intent is in general similar to the modes of thought by means of which a critical epistemology—there's Kant, Erkenntniskritik—demonstrates the impossibility of a theory or simple imitation.

Kant indeed would be critical of a notion of art as imitation; this would be true of Hegel to some extent too, because there is precisely a critical element that intervenes here and which takes this image, this model, away, which destroys, undoes this concept of imitation.

Translation is also, says Benjamin, more like criticism or like the theory of literature, than like poetry itself. It is by defining himself in relation to Friedrich Schlegel and to German Romanticism in general that Benjamin establishes this similarity between literary criticism (in the sense of literary theory) and translation; and this historical reference to the Jena Romanticism here gives to the notion of criticism and literary theory a dignity which it does not necessarily normally have. Both criticism and translation are caught in the gesture which Benjamin calls ironic, a gesture which undoes the stability of the original by giving it a definitive, canonical form in the translation or in the theorization. In a curious way, translation canonizes its own version more than the original was canonical. That the original was not purely canonical is clear from the fact that it demands translation; it cannot be definitive since it can be translated. But you cannot, says Benjamin, translate the translation; once you have a translation you cannot translate it any more. You can translate only an original. The translation canonizes, freezes, an original and shows in the original a mobility, an instability, which at first one did not notice. The act of critical, theoretical reading performed by a critic like Friedrich Schlegel and performed by literary theory in general—by means of which the original work is not imitated or reproduced but is to some extent put in motion, de-canonicalized, questioned in a way which undoes its claim to canonical authority—is similar to what a translator performs.

Finally, translation is like history, and that will be the most difficult thing to understand. In what is the most difficult passage in this text, Benjamin says that it is like history to the extent that history is not to be understood by analogy with any kind of natural process. We are not supposed to think of history as ripening, as organic growth, or even as a dialectic, as anything that resembles a natural process of growth and of movement. We are to think of history rather in the reverse way; we are to understand natural changes from the perspective of history, rather than understand history from the perspective of natural changes. If we want to understand what ripening is, we should
understand it from the perspective of historical change. In the same way, the relationship between the translation and the original is not to be understood by analogy with natural processes such as resemblance or derivation by formal analogy; rather we are to understand the original from the perspective of the translation. To understand this historical pattern would be the burden of any reading of this particular text.

All these activities that have been mentioned—philosophy as critical epistemology, criticism and literary theory (the way Friedrich Schlegel does it), or history understood as a nonorganic process—are themselves derived from original activities. Philosophy derives from perception, but it is unlike perception because it is the critical examination of the truth-claims of perception. Criticism derives from poetry because it is inconceivable without the poetry that precedes it. History derives from pure action, since it follows necessarily upon acts which have already taken place. Because all these activities are derived from original activities, they are singularly inconclusive, are failed, are aborted in a sense from the start because they are derived and secondary. Yet Benjamin insists that the model of their derivation is not that of resemblance or of imitation. It is not natural process: the translation does not resemble the original the way the child resembles the parent, nor is it an imitation, a copy, or a paraphrase of the original. In that sense, since they are not resemblances, since they are not imitations, one would be tempted to say they are not metaphors. The translation is not the metaphor of the original; nevertheless, the German word for translation, übersetzen, means metaphor. Übersetzen translates exactly the Greek meta-phorein, to move over, übersetzen, to put across. Übersetzen, I should say, translates metaphor—which, asserts Benjamin, is not at all the same. They are not metaphors, yet the word means metaphor. The metaphor is not a metaphor, Benjamin is saying. No wonder that translators have difficulty. It is a curious assumption to say übersetzen is not metaphorical, übersetzen is not based on resemblance, there is no resemblance between the translation and the original. Amazingly paradoxical statement, metaphor is not metaphor.

All these activities—critical philosophy, literary theory, history—resemble each other in the fact that they do not resemble that from which they derive. But they are all interlinguistic: they relate to what in the original belongs to language, and not to meaning as an extralinguistic correlate susceptible of paraphrase and imitation. They disarticulate, they undo the original, they reveal that the original was always already disarticulated. They reveal that their failure, which seems to be due to the fact that they are secondary in relation to the original, reveals an essential failure, an essential disarticulation which was already there in the original. They kill the original, by discovering that the original was already dead. They read the original from the perspective of a pure language (reine Sprache), a language that would be entirely freed of the illusion of meaning—pure form if you want; and in doing so they bring to light a dismemberment, a de-canonicalization which was already there in the original.
from the beginning. In the process of translation, as Benjamin understands it—which has little to do with the empirical act of translating, as all of us practice it on a daily basis—there is an inherent and particularly threatening danger. The emblem of that danger is Hölderlin’s translations of Sophocles:

Confirmation of this as well as of every other important aspect is supplied by Hölderlin’s translations, particularly those of the two tragedies by Sophocles. In them the harmony of the languages is so profound that sense is touched by language only the way an aeolian harp is touched by the wind. . . . Hölderlin’s translations in particular are subject to the enormous danger inherent in all translations: the gates of a language thus expanded and modified may slam shut and enclose the translator with silence. Hölderlin’s translations from Sophocles were his last work, in them meaning plunges from abyss to abyss until it threatens to become lost in the bottomless depths of language. [81–82]

Translation, to the extent that it disarticulates the original, to the extent that it is pure language and is only concerned with language, gets drawn into what he calls the bottomless depth, something essentially destructive, which is in language itself.

What translation does, by reference to the fiction or hypothesis of a pure language devoid of the burden of meaning, is that it implies, in bringing to light what Benjamin calls “die Wehen des eigenen”—the suffering of what one thinks of as one’s own—the suffering of the original language. We think we are at ease in our own language, we feel a coziness, a familiarity, a shelter in the language we call our own, in which we think that we are not alienated. What the translation reveals is that this alienation is at its strongest in our relation to our own original language, that the original language within which we are engaged is disarticulated in a way which imposes upon us a particular alienation, a particular suffering. Here too the translators, with considerable unanimity, cannot see this statement. Benjamin’s text is, “. . . dass gerade unter allen Formen ihr als Eigenstes es zufällt, auf jene Nachreife des fremden Wortes, auf die Wehen des eigenen zu merken” [54]. The two translators—I guess they didn’t correspond with each other, they did this d’un commun accord—translate Wehen, pains, as “birth pangs,” as being particularly the pains of childbirth. Gandillac is very explicit about it, he calls it “les douleurs obstétricales” [266] in the most literal, clinical way; Zohn says “birth pangs” [73]. Why they do this is a mystery. Wehen can mean birth pangs, but it does mean any kind of suffering, without necessarily the connotation of birth and rebirth, of resurrection, which would be associated with the notion of birth pangs because you suffer in producing something,—and this is a magnificent moment, you’d be willing to suffer [especially easy for us to say]. Benjamin has just been speaking of the “Nachreife des fremden Wortes,” translated by Zohn as “maturing process,” which again is wrong. Nachreife is like the German word Spätles [a particularly good wine made from the late, rotten grape], it is like Stifter’s novel Nachsommer (“Indian Summer”—it has the melancholy, the
feeling of slight exhaustion, of life to which you are not entitled, happiness to which you are not entitled, time has passed, and so on. It is associated with another word that Benjamin constantly uses, the word überleben, to live beyond your own death in a sense. The translation belongs not to the life of the original, the original is already dead, but the translation belongs to the afterlife of the original, thus assuming and confirming the death of the original. Nachreife is of the same order, or has to do with the same; it is by no means a maturing process, it is a looking back on a process of maturity that is finished, and that is no longer taking place. So if you translate Wehen by “birth pangs,” you would have to translate it by “death pangs” as much as by “birth pangs,” and the stress is perhaps more on death than on life.

The process of translation, if we can call it a process, is one of change and of motion that has the appearance of life, but of life as an afterlife, because translation also reveals the death of the original. Why is this? What are those death pangs, possibly birth pangs, of the original? It is easy to say to some extent what this suffering is not. It is certainly not subjective pains, some kind of pathos of a self, a kind of manifestation of a self-pathos which the poet would have expressed as his sufferings. This is certainly not the case, because, says Benjamin, the sufferings that are here being mentioned are not in any sense human. They would certainly not be the sufferings of an individual, or of a subject. That also is very hard to see, for the translators. Zohn, confronted with that passage [I will stop this game of showing up the translators, but it is always of some interest], translates: “if they are referred exclusively to man” [70]. Benjamin very clearly says, “wenn sie nicht . . . auf den Menschen bezogen werden” [51], if you do not relate them to man. The stress is precisely that the suffering that is mentioned, the failure, is not a human failure, it does not refer therefore to any subjective experience. The original is unambiguous in that respect. This suffering is also not a kind of historical pathos, the pathos that you heard in Hartman’s reference to Benjamin as the one who had discovered the pathos of history; it is not this pathos of remembrance, or this pathetic mixture of hope and catastrophe and apocalypse which Hartman captures, which is present certainly in Benjamin’s tone, but not so much in what he says. It is not the pathos of a history, it is not the pathos of what in Hölderlin is called the “dürftige Zeit” between the disappearance of the gods and the possible return of the gods. It is not this kind of sacrificial, dialectical, and elegiac gesture, by means of which one looks back on the past as a period that is lost, which then gives you the hope of another future that may occur.

The reasons for this pathos, for this Wehen, for this suffering, are specifically linguistic. They are stated by Benjamin with considerable linguistic structural precision; so much so that if you come to a word like “abyss” in the passage about Hölderlin, where it is said that Hölderlin tumbles in the abyss of language, you should understand the word “abyss” in the non-
pathetic, technical sense in which we speak of a *mise en abyme* structure, the kind of structure by means of which it is clear that the text itself becomes an example of what it exemplifies. The text about translation is itself a translation, and the untranslatability which it mentions about itself inhabits its own texture and will inhabit anybody who in his turn will try to translate it, as I am now trying, and failing, to do. The text is untranslatable, it was untranslatable for the translators who tried to do it, it is untranslatable for the commentators who talk about it, it is an example of what it states, it is a *mise an abyme* in the technical sense, a story within the story of what is its own statement.

What are the linguistic reasons which allow Benjamin to speak of a suffering, of a disarticulation, of a falling apart of any original work, or of any work to the extent that that work is a work of language? On this Benjamin is very precise, and offers us what amounts in very few lines to an inclusive theory of language. The disjunction is first of all between what he calls "das Gemeinte," what is meant, and the "Art des Meinens," the way in which language means; between logos and lexis, if you want—what a certain statement means, and the way in which the statement is meant to mean. Here the difficulties of the translators are a little more interesting, because they involve philosophical concepts that are of some importance. Gandillac, a philosopher who knows phenomenology and who writes in a period when phenomenology is the overriding philosophical pressure in France, translates by "visée intentionelle" (272). The way we would now translate in French "das Gemeinte" and "Art des Meinens" would be by the distinction between *vouloir dire* and *dire*: "to mean," "to say." Zohn translates by "the intended object" and the "mode of intention" (74). There is a phenomenological assumption here, and Gandillac has a footnote which refers to Husserl: both assume that the meaning and the way in which meaning is produced are intentional acts. But the problem is precisely that, whereas the meaning-function is certainly intentional, it is not a priori certain at all that the mode of meaning, the way in which I mean, is intentional in any way. The way in which I can try to mean is dependent upon linguistic properties that are not only [not] made by me, because I depend on the language as it exists for the devices which I will be using, it is as such not made by us as historical beings, it is perhaps not even made by humans at all. Benjamin says, from the beginning, that is not at all certain that language is in any sense human. To equate language with humanity—as Schiller did, as we saw yesterday—is in question. If language is not necessarily human—if we obey the law, if we function within language, and purely in terms of language—there can be no intent; there may be an intent of meaning, but there is no tent in the purely formal way in which we will use language independently of the sense or the meaning. The translation, which puts intentionality on both sides, both in the act of meaning and in the way in which one means, misses a philosophically
interesting point—for what is at stake is the possibility of a phenomenology of language, or of poetic language, the possibility of establishing a poetics which would in any sense be a phenomenology of language.

How are we to understand this discrepancy between “das Gemeinte” and “Art des Meinens,” between dire and vouloir dire? Benjamin’s example is the German word Brot and the French word pain. To mean “bread,” when I need to name bread, I have the word Brot, so that the way in which I mean is by using the word Brot. The translation will reveal a fundamental discrepancy between the intent to name Brot and the word Brot itself, in its materiality, as a device of meaning. If you hear Brot in this context of Hölderlin, who is so often mentioned in this text, I hear Brot und Wein necessarily, which is the great Hölderlin text that is very much present in this—which in French becomes Pain et vin. “Pain et vin” is what you get for free in a restaurant, in a cheap restaurant where it is still included, so pain et vin has very different connotations than Brot und Wein. It brings to mind the pain français, baguette, ficelle, bâtard, all those things—I now hear in Brot “bastard”. This upsets the stability of the quotation. I was very happy with the word Brot, which I hear as a native because my native language is Flemish and we say brood, just as in German, but if I have to think that Brot [brood] and pain are the same thing, I get very upset. It is all right in English because “bread” is close enough to Brot [brood], despite the idiom “bread” for money, which has its problems. But the stability of my quotation, of my daily bread, the reassuring quotidian aspects of the word “bread,” daily bread, is upset by the French word pain. What I mean is upset by the way in which I mean—the way in which it is pain, the phoneme, the term pain, which has its set of connotations which take you in a completely different direction.

This disjunction is best understood (to take it to a more familiar theoretical problem) in terms of the difficult relationship between the hermeneutics and the poetics of literature. When you do hermeneutics, you are concerned with the meaning of the work; when you do poetics, you are concerned with the stylistics or with the description of the way in which a work means. The question is whether these two are complementary, whether you can cover the full work by doing hermeneutics and poetics at the same time. The experience of trying to do this shows that it is not the case. When one tries to achieve this complementarity, the poetics always drops out, and what one always does is hermeneutics. One is so attracted by problems of meaning that it is impossible to do hermeneutics and poetics at the same time. From the moment you start to get involved with problems of meaning, as I unfortunately tend to do, forget about the poetics. The two are not complementary, the two may be mutually exclusive in a certain way, and that is part of the problem which Benjamin states, a purely linguistic problem.

He states a further version of this when he speaks of a disjunction between the word and the sentence, Wort and Satz. Satz in German means not just sentence, in the grammatical sense, it means statement—Heidegger will speak
of Der Satz vom Grund; Satz is the statement, the most fundamental statement, meaning—the most meaningful word—whereas word is associated by Benjamin with Aussage, the way in which you state, as the apparent agent of the statement. Wort means not only the agent of the statement as a lexical unit, but also as syntax and as grammar. If you look at a sentence in terms of words, you look at it not just in terms of particular words but also in terms of the grammatical relationships between those words. So the question of the relationship between word and sentence becomes, for Benjamin, the question of the compatibility between grammar and meaning. What is being put in question is precisely that compatibility, which we take for granted in a whole series of linguistic investigations. Are grammar (word and syntax) on the one hand, and meaning (as it culminates in the Satz) on the other hand—are they compatible with each other? Does the one lead to the other, does the one support the other? Benjamin tells us that translation put that conviction in question because, he says, from the moment that a translation is really literal, wörtlich, word by word, the meaning completely disappears. The example is again Hölderlin’s translations of Sophocles, which are absolutely literal, word by word, and which are therefore totally unintelligible, what comes out is completely incomprehensible, completely undoes the sentence, the Satz of Sophocles, which is entirely gone. The meaning of the word slips away (as we saw, a word like Aufgabe, which means task, also means something completely different, so that the word escapes us), and there is no grammatical way to control this slippage. There is also a complete slippage of the meaning when the translator follows the syntax, when he writes literally, wörtlich. And to some extent, a translator has to be wörtlich, has to be literal. The problem is best compared to the relationship between the letter and the word; the relationship between word and sentence is like the relationship between letter and word, namely, the letter is without meaning in relation to the word, it is a-sémos, it is without meaning. When you spell a word you say a certain number of meaningless letters, which then come together in the word, but in each of the letters the word is not present. The two are absolutely independent of each other. What is being named here as the disjunction between grammar and meaning, Wort and Satz, is the materiality of the letter: the independence, or the way in which the letter can disrupt the ostensible stable meaning of a sentence and introduce in it a slippage by means of which that meaning disappears, evanescs, and by means of which all control over that meaning is lost.

So we have, first, a disjunction in language between the hermeneutic and the poetic, we have a second one between grammar and meaning, and finally, we will have a disjunction, says Benjamin, between the symbol and what is being symbolized, a disjunction on the level of tropes between the trope as such and the meaning as a totalizing power of tropological substitutions. There is a similar and equally radical disjunction, between what tropes (which always imply totalization) convey in terms of totalization and what the tropes accomplish taken by themselves. That seems to be the main difficulty of this particu-
lar text, because the text is full of tropes, and it selects tropes which convey the illusion of totality. It seems to relapse into the tropological errors that it denounces. The text constantly uses images of seed, of ripening, of harmony, it uses the image of seed and rind (l'écorce et le noyau)—which seem to be derived from analogies between nature and language, whereas the constant claim is constantly being made that there are no such analogies. In the same way that history is not to be understood in terms of an analogy with nature, tropes should not be based on resemblances with nature. But that is precisely the difficulty, and the challenge of this particular text. Whenever Benjamin uses a trope which seems to convey a picture of total meaning, of complete adequacy between figure and meaning, a figure of perfect synecdoche in which the partial trope expresses the totality of a meaning, he manipulates the allusive context within his work in such a way that the traditional symbol is displaced in a manner that acts out the discrepancy between symbol and meaning, rather than the acquiescence between both.

One striking example of that is the image of the amphora:

Fragments of a vessel which are to be glued together must match one another in the smallest details, although they need not be like one another. In the same way, a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of significatio, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel. For this very reason translation must in large measure refrain from wanting to communicate. . . . [78]

According to this image, there is an original, pure language, of which any particular work is only a fragment. That would be fine, provided we could, through that fragment, find access again to the original work. The image is that of a vessel, of which literary work would be a piece, and then the translation is a piece of that. It is admitted that the translation is a fragment, but if the translation relates to the original as a fragment relates, if the translation would reconstitute as such the original, then—although it does not resemble it, but matches it perfectly (as in the word symbolon, which states the matching of two pieces or two fragments)—then we can think of any particular work as being a fragment of the pure language, and then indeed Benjamin's statement would be a religious statement about the fundamental unity of language.

Benjamin has told us, however, that the symbol and what it symbolizes, the trope and what it seems to represent, do not correspond. How is this to be made compatible with a statement like the one made here? An article by Carol Jacobs called "The Monstrosity of Translation," which appeared in Modern Language Notes, treats this passage in a way which strikes me as exceedingly precise and correct. First, she is aware of the Kabbalistic meaning of the text, by referring to Gershom Scholem, who in writing about this text relates the figure of the angel to the history of the Tikkun of the Lurianic Kabbalah:

Yet at the same time Benjamin has in mind the Kabbalistic concept of the Tikkun, the messianic restoration and mending which patches together and
restores the original Being of things, shattered and corrupted in the "Breaking of Vessels," and also [the original being of] history.

Carol Jacobs comments,

Schollem might have turned to "Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers," where the image of the broken vessel plays a more direct role. . . . Yet whereas Zohn suggests that a totality of fragments are brought together, Benjamin insists that the final outcome is still "a broken part." 5

All you have to do, to see that, is translate correctly, instead of translating like Zohn—who made this difficult passage very clear—but who in the process of making it clear made it say something completely different. Zohn said, "fragments of a vessel which are to be glued together must match one another in the smallest detail." Benjamin said, translated by Carol Jacobs word by word: "fragments of a vessel, in order to be articulated together"—which is much better than glued together, which has a totally irrelevant concreteness—"must follow one another in the smallest detail"—which is not at all the same as match one another. What is already present in this difference is that we have folgen, not gleichen, not to match. We have a metonymic, a successive pattern, in which things follow, rather than a metaphorical unifying pattern in which things become one by resemblance. They do not match each other, they follow each other, they are already metonyms and not metaphors; as such they are certainly less working toward a convincing tropological totalization than if we use the term "match".

But things get even more involved, or more distorted, in what follows.

So, instead of making itself similar to the meaning, to the Sinn of the original, the translation must rather, lovingly and in detail, in its own language, form itself according to the manner of meaning (Art des Meinens) of the original, to make both recognizable as the broken parts of the greater language, just as fragments are the broken parts of a vessel.

That is entirely different from saying, as Zohn says:

in the same way a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel.

"Just as fragments are part of a vessel" is a synecdoche; "just as fragments," says Benjamin, "are the broken parts of a vessel": as such he is not saying that the fragments constitute a totality, he says the fragments are fragments, and that they remain essentially fragmentary. They follow each other up, metonymically, and they will never constitute a totality. I'm reminded of an example I heard given by the French philosopher Michel Serres—that you find out about

fragments by doing the dishes: if you break a dish it breaks into fragments, but you can’t break the fragments any more. That’s an optimistic, a positive synecdochal view of the problem of fragments, because there the fragments can make up a whole, and you cannot break up the fragments. What we have here is an initial fragmentation; any work is totally fragmented in relation to this reine Sprache, with which it has nothing in common, and every translation is totally fragmented in relation to the original. The translation is the fragment of a fragment, is breaking the fragment—so the vessel keeps breaking, constantly—and never reconstitutes it; there was no vessel in the first place, or we have no knowledge of this vessel, or no awareness, no access to it, so for all intents and purposes there has never been one.

Therefore the distinction between symbol and symbolized, the nonadequation of symbol to a shattered symbolized, the nonsymbolic character of this adequation, is a version of the others, and indicates the unreliability of rhetoric as a system of tropes which would be productive of a meaning. Meaning is always displaced with regard to the meaning it ideally intended—that meaning is never reached. Benjamin approaches the question in terms of the aporia between freedom and faithfulness, the question which haunts the problem of translation. Does translation have to be faithful, or does it have to be free? For the sake of the idiomatic relevance of the target language, it has to be free; on the other hand, it has to be faithful to some extent to the original. The faithful translation, which is always literal, how can it also be free? It can only be free if it reveals the instability of the original, and if it reveals that instability as the linguistic tension between trope and meaning. Pure language is perhaps more present in the translation than in the original, but in the mode of trope. Benjamin, who is talking about the inability of trope to be adequate to meaning, constantly uses the very tropes which seem to postulate the adequation between meaning and trope; but he prevents them in a way, displaces them in such a way as to put the original in motion, to de-canonize the original, giving it a movement which is a movement of disintegration, of fragmentation. This movement of the original is a wandering, an errance, a kind of permanent exile if you wish, but it is not really an exile, for there is no homeland, nothing from which one has been exiled. Least of all is there something like a reine Sprache, a pure language, which does not exist except as a permanent disjunction which inhabits all languages as such, including and especially the language one calls one’s own. What is to be one’s own language is most displaced, the most alienated of all.

Now it is this motion, this errancy of language which never reaches the mark, which is always displaced in relation to what it meant to reach, it is this errancy of language, this illusion of a life that is only an afterlife, that Benjamin calls history. As such, history is not human, because it pertains strictly to the order of language; it is not natural, for the same reason; it is not phenomenal, in the sense that no cognition, no knowledge about man, can be deprived from a history which as such is purely a linguistic complication; and it is not really
temporal either, because the structure that animates it is not a temporal structure. Those disjunctions in language do get expressed by temporal metaphors, but they are only metaphors. The dimension of futurity, for example, which is present in it, is not temporal, but is the correlative of the figural pattern and the disjunctive power which Benjamin locates in the structure of language. History, as Benjamin conceives it, is certainly not messianic, since it consists in the rigorous separation and the acting out of the separation of the sacred from the poetic, the separation of the reine Sprache from poetic language. Reine Sprache, the sacred language, has nothing in common with poetic language; poetic language does not resemble it, poetic language does not depend on it, poetic language has nothing to do with it. It is within this negative knowledge of its relation to the language of the sacred that poetic language initiates. It is, if you want, a necessarily nihilistic moment that is necessary in any understanding of history.

Benjamin said this in the clearest of terms, not in this essay but in another text called "Theological and Political Fragment,"6 from which I will quote a short passage in conclusion. He said it with all possible clarity, it seemed to me, until I tried to translate that particular passage, and found that English happens to have a property which makes it impossible to translate. Here is the passage:

Only the messiah himself puts an end to history, in the sense that it frees, completely fulfills the relationship of history to the messianic. Therefore, nothing that is truly historical can want to relate by its own volition to the messianic. Therefore the kingdom of God is not the telos of the dynamics of history, it cannot be posited as its aim; seen historically it is not its aim but its end.

That is where I have a great deal of trouble with English, because the English word for "aim" can also be "end." You say "the end and the means," the aim and the means by which you achieve it. And the English word "end" can mean just as well Ziel as it can mean Ende. My end, my intention. So that if we want to use that idiom, the translation then becomes: "seen historically it is not its end but its end," its termination—it would be perfect English. But it would indicate that the separation which is here undertaken by Benjamin is hidden in this word "end" in English, which substitutes for "aim" the word "end," the two things which Benjamin asks us to keep rigorously apart.

It cannot be posited as its aim, seen historically it is not its aim but its end, its termination; therefore the order of the profane cannot be constructed in terms of the idea of the sacred. Therefore theocracy does not have a political but only a religious meaning.

And Benjamin adds:

To have denied the political significance of theocracy, to have denied the political significance of the religious, messianic view, to have denied this with all desirable intensity is the great merit of Bloch's book *The Spirit of Utopia*.

Since we saw that what is here called political and historical is due to purely linguistic reasons, we can in this passage replace "political" by "poetical," in the sense of a poetics. For we now see that the nonmessianic, nonsacred, that is the political aspect of history is the result of the poetical structure of language, so that political and poetical here are substituted, in opposition to the notion of the sacred. To the extent that such a poetics, such a history, is nonmessianic, not a theocracy but a rhetoric, it has no room for certain historical notions such as the notion of modernity, which is always a dialectical, that is to say an essentially theological notion. You will remember that we started out from Gadamer's claim to modernity, in terms of a dialectic which was explicitly associated with the word "Spirit," with the spirituality in the text of Hegel. We have seen, and it is for me gratifying to find, that Hegel himself—when, in the section of the *Aesthetics* on the sublime, he roots the sublime in this same separation between sacred and profane—is actually much closer to Benjamin in "The Task of the Translator" than he is to Gadamer. I will end on that note, and I will be glad to answer questions if you want. Thank you very much.