Warning Concerning Copyright Restrictions

The Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research. If electronic transmission of reserve material is used for purposes in excess of what constitutes "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement.
PSYCHE

Inventions of the Other, Volume I

Jacques Derrida
§ 8 Des tours de Babel

“Babel”: first a proper name, granted. But when we say “Babel” today, do we know what we are naming? Do we know whom? Consider the survival of a text that is a legacy, the narrative or the myth of the tower of Babel: it does not form just one figure among others. Telling at least of the inadequation of one tongue to another, of one place in the encyclopedia to another, of language to itself and to meaning, and so forth, it also tells of the need for figuration, for myth, for tropes, for twists and turns, for translation inadequate to supply that which multiplicity denies us. In this sense, it would be the myth of the origin of myth, the metaphor of metaphor, the narrative of narrative, the translation of translation. It would not be the only structure hollowing itself out like that, but it would do so in its own way (itself almost untranslatable, like a proper name), and its idiom would have to be saved.

The “tower of Babel” does not merely figure the irreducible multiplicity of tongues; it exhibits an incompletion, the impossibility of finishing, of totalizing, of saturating, of completing something on the order of edification, architectural construction, system, and architectonics. What the multiplicity of idioms comes to limit is not only a “true” translation, a transparent and adequate interexpression, it is also a structural order, a coherence of construct. There is then (let us translate) something like an internal limit to formalization, an incompleteness of the constructure. It


191
would be easy and up to a certain point justified to see there the translation of a system in deconstruction.

One should never pass over in silence the question of the tongue in which the question of the tongue is raised and into which a discourse on translation is translated.

First: in what tongue was the tower of Babel constructed and deconstructed? In a tongue within which the proper name of Babel could also, by confusion, be translated by “confusion.” The proper name Babel, as a proper name, should remain untranslatable, but, by a kind of associative confusion that a unique tongue rendered possible, one could have thought to translate it, in that very tongue, by a common noun signifying what we translate as confusion. Voltaire showed his astonishment in his *Dictionnaire philosophique*, in the article “Babel”:

I do not know why it is said in *Genesis* that Babel signifies confusion, for *Be* signifies father in Oriental tongues, and *Bel* signifies God; Babel signifies the city of God, the holy city. The Ancients gave this name to all their capitals. But it is incontestable that Babel means confusion, either because the architects were confounded after having raised their work up to eighty-one thousand Jewish feet, or because the tongues were then confounded; and it is obviously from that time on that the Germans no longer understand the Chinese; for it is clear, according to the scholar Bochart, that Chinese is originally the same tongue as High German.

The calm irony of Voltaire means to say that “Babel” means to say: it is not only a proper name, the reference of a pure signifier to a single being—and for this reason untranslatable—but a common noun related to the generality of a meaning. This common noun *means-to-say*, and not only confusion, even though “confusion” has at least two meanings, as Voltaire is aware, the confusion of tongues, but also the state of confusion in which the architects find themselves with the structure interrupted, so that a certain confusion has already begun to affect the two meanings of the word “confusion.” The meaning of “confusion” is confused, at least double. But Voltaire suggests something else again: Babel means not only confusion in the double sense of the word, but also the name of the father, more precisely and more commonly, the name of God as name of father. The city would bear the name of God the father and of the father of the city that is called confusion. God, the God, would have marked with his patronym a community space, that city where people no longer understand one another. And people no longer understand one another when there is only some proper name, and father when there are no longer proper names. In giving all names, the father would be the deconstruction of the tower, the father would be the name of that origin which God, in the action of his anger (like Hegel, he who goes out of himself, determines thus produces history), annuls the gift of words by sowing confusion among his sons, and poisons also the origin of tongues, of the multiplicities of words, of the separate languages of the fathers, or mother tongues. Filiation, generations, and genealogies: *construction of Babel*, the great Semitic family which it wanted to be universal, and its deconstruction, or to impose on the universe. The moment of confusion precedes the deconstruction of the tower. I cite the first translator stays away from what one in other words, from the Hebrew figure *Be* (the second, more concerned about literalonymic), says “lip,” since in Hebrew “lip” other metonymy, “tongue.” One will have not of tongues, to name the Babelian confusion. Louis Segond, author of the Segond Bible.

[Those are the sons of Shem, according to the countries, their nations. Such are the families of Shem, according to their generations, their nations. And it is]
Des tours de Babel

Point justified to see there the translation of the question of the tongue in raised and into which a discourse on the proper name of Babel could also, rendered possible, one could have shown his astonishment in his article "Babel":

that Babel signifies confusion, foreign, and Bel signifies God; Babel signifies God who, in the action of his anger (like the God of Jakob Bohme or of Hegel, he who goes out of himself, determines himself in his finitude and thus produces history), annuls the gift of tongues, or at least embroils it, sows confusion among his sons, and poisons the present (Gift-gift). This is also the origin of tongues, of the multiplicity of idioms, of what in other words are usually called mother tongues. For this entire history deploys filiations, generations, and genealogies: Semitic ones. Before the deconstruction of Babel, the great Semitic family was establishing its empire, which it wanted to be universal, and its tongue, which it also attempts to impose on the universe. The moment of this project immediately precedes the deconstruction of the tower. I cite two French translations. The first translator stays away from what one would want to call "literality," in other words, from the Hebrew figure of speech for "tongue," where the second, more concerned about literality (metaphoric, or rather metonymic), says "lip," since in Hebrew "lip" designates what we call, in another metonymy, "tongue." One will have to say multiplicity of lips, and not of tongues, to name the Babelian confusion. The first translator, then, Louis Segond, author of the Segond Bible (1910 version), writes this:

Ce sont les fils de Sem, selon leurs familles, selon leurs langues, selon leurs pays, selon leurs nations. Telles sont les familles des fils de Noé, selon leurs générations, selon leurs nations. Et c’est d’eux que sont sorties les nations qui se sont répandus sur la terre après le déluge. Toute la terre avait une seule langue et les mêmes mots. Comme ils étaient partis de l’origine, ils trouvèrent une plaine du pays de Schinar, et ils y habitérent. Ils se dirent l’un à l’autre: Allons! faisons des briques, et cuisons-les au feu. Et la brique leur servit de pierre, et le bitume leur servit de ciment. Ils dirent encore: Allons! bâtissons-nous une ville et une tour dont le sommet touche au ciel, et faisons-nous un nom, afin que nous ne soyons pas dispersés sur la face de toute la terre.

[Those are the sons of Shem, according to their families, their tongues, their countries, their nations. Such are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, their nations. And it is from them that emerged the na-
tions which spread over the earth after the flood. All the earth had a single tongue and the same words. As they had left the origin they found a plain in the country of Shinar, and they dwelt there. They said to one another: Come! Let us make bricks, and bake them in the fire. And brick served them as stone, and tar served as cement. Again they said: Come! Let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose summit touches the heavens, and let us make ourselves a name, so that we not be scattered over the face of all the earth.

I do not know just how to interpret this allusion to the substitution or the transmutation of materials, brick becoming stone and tar serving as mortar. That already resembles a translation, a translation of translation. But let us leave it and substitute a second translation for the first. It is that of André Chouraqui. It is recent and wants to be more literal, almost verbum pro verbo, as Cicero said should not be done in one of first recommendations to the translator which can be read in his Libellus de optimo genera oratorum. Here is Chouraqui's translation:

Voici les fils de Shem/pour leurs clans, pour leurs langues/dans leurs terres, pour leurs peuples./Voici les clans des fils de Noah pour leur geste, dans leurs peuples:/et de ceux-là se scindent les peuples sur terre, après le déluge./Et c'est toute la terre: une seule lèvre, d'uniques paroles./Et c'est à leur départ d'Orient: ils trouvent un cañon/en terre de Shinarar./Il s'y établissent./Il disent, chacun à son semblable;/"Allons, briquetons des briques,/Flambons-les à la flambée."/La brique devient pour eux pierre, le bitume, mortier./Ils disent: "Allons, bâtissons-nous une ville et une tour./Sa tête: aux cieux./Faisons-nous un nom,/que nous ne soyions dispersés sur la face de toute la terre.

[Here are the sons of Shem/for their clans, for their tongues,/in their lands, for their peoples./Here are the clans of the sons of Noah for their exploits,/in their peoples:/from the latter: divide the peoples on earth, after the flood./And it is all the earth: a single lip, one speech./And it is at their departure from the Orient:/they find a canyon,/in the land of Shinar./They settle there./They say, each to his like: "Come, let us brick some bricks./Let us fire them in the fire."/The brick becomes for them stone, the tar, mortar./They say: "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower./Its head: in the heavens./Let us make ourselves a name,/that we not be scattered over the face of all the earth."]

What happens to them? In other words, for what does God punish them in giving his name, or rather, since he gives it to nothing and to no one, in proclaiming his name, the proper mark and his seal? Does he put up to the Most High? Perhaps for that to for having wanted thus to make a name for the name, to construct for and by themselves there ("that we no longer be a place that is at once a tongue and a tower the one as the other. He punishes them for themselves, by themselves, a unique and of Genesis links without mediation, imm of the same design, raising a tower, constr oneself in a universal tongue that would a filiation:

Ils disent: "Allons, bâtissons une ville et sons-nous un nom,/que nous ne soyions terre." YHWH descend pour voir la ville de l'homme./YHWH dit: "Oui! Un se tous:/voilà ce qu'ils commencent à faire! fondux là leurs lèvres,/l'homme n'entend [. . . ] YHWH les disperse de là sur la bâtxir la ville./Sur quoi il clame son nom: confond la lèvre de toute la terre,/et de là toute la terre.

They say: "Come, let us build a city in the heavens./Let us make ourselves a name, the name, as Cicero said should not be done in one of first recommendations to the translator which can be read in his Libellus de verbum pro verbo, as Cicero said should not be done in one of the latter: divide the peoples on earth, after the flood./And it is all the earth: a single lip, one speech./And it is at their departure from the Orient:/they find a canyon,/in the land of Shinar./They settle there./They say, each to his like: "Come, let us brick some bricks./Let us fire them in the fire."/The brick becomes for them stone, the tar, mortar./They say: "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower./Its head: in the heavens./Let us make ourselves a name,/that we not be scattered over the face of all the earth."]

Can we not, then, speak of God's jealousy that unique name and lip of men, he im
They said to one another: Come! Let us build ourselves a city and let us make ourselves a name above all the earth.

[Allusion to the substitution or confusion stone and tar serving as mixing stone and tar serving as brick. For the first time, it is almost to be more literal, almost to be done in one of those first translations. It can be read in his Libellus de translation:]

They say: “Come, let us build a city and a tower. Its head: in the heavens. Let us make ourselves a name, that we not be scattered over the face of all the earth.” YHWH descends to see the city and the tower that the sons of man have built. /YHWH says: “Yes! A single people, a single lip for all: /that is what they begin to do! / . . . Come! Let us descend! Let us confound their lips, /man will no longer understand the lip of his neighbor.” [Then he disseminates the children of Shem, and here dissemination is deconstruction.] YHWH disperses them from there over the face of all the earth. /They cease to build the city. /Over which he proclaims his name: Bavel, Confusion, /for there, YHWH confounds the lip of all the earth, /and from there YHWH disperses them over the face of all the earth.

Can we not, then, speak of God’s jealousy? Out of resentment against that unique name and lip of men, he imposes his name, his name of fa-
Des tours de Babel

ther; and with this violent imposition, he initiates the deconstruction of the tower, as of the universal language; he scatters the genealogical filiation. He interrupts the lineage. He at the same time imposes and forbids translation. He imposes it and forbids it, constrains, but as if to failure, the children who henceforth will bear his name, the name that he gives to the city. It is from a proper name of God, come from God, descended from God or from the father (and it is indeed said that YHWH, an unpronounceable name, descends toward the tower) and by him that tongues are scattered, confounded, or multiplied, according to a descendance that in its very dispersion remains sealed by the only name that will have been the strongest, by the only idiom that will have triumphed. Now, this idiom bears within itself the mark of confusion, it improperly means the improper, to wit: Bavel, confusion. Translation then becomes necessary and impossible, like the effect of a struggle for the appropriation of the name, necessary and forbidden in the interval between two absolutely proper names. And the proper name of God is divided enough in the tongue, already, to signify also, confusedly, “confusion.” And the war that he declares has first raged within his name: divided, bifid, ambivalent, polysemic: God deconstructing. “And he war,” one reads in Finnegans Wake, and we could follow this whole story from the side of Shem and Shaun. The “he war” does not only, in this place, tie together an incalculable number of phonic and semantic threads, in the immediate context and throughout this Babelian book; it utters the declaration of war (in English) of he who says, “I am that I am,” and that thus was (wars), will have been untranslatable in its very performance, at least in the fact that it is enunciated in more than one language at a time, at least English and German. Even if an infinite translation exhausted its semantic stock, it would still translate into one language and would lose the multiplicity of “he war.” Let us leave for another time a less hastily interrupted reading of this “he war,” and let us note one of the limits of theories of translation: all too often they treat the passing from one language to another and do not sufficiently consider the possibility for languages to be implicated more than two in a text. How to translate a text written in several languages at once? How is the effect of plurality to be “rendered”? And if one translates with several languages at a time, will that be called translating?

Babel: today we take it as a proper name. Indeed; but the proper name of what and of whom? At times as the name of a narrative text recounting a story (mythical, symbolic, allegorical; it matters little for the moment), a story in which the proper name, which is narrative, names a tower or a city but a name from an event during which YHWH this proper name, which already names different things, also has as proper name, the toion of a common noun. This story recounts the confusion of tongues, the irreducible necessary and impossible task of translation. Now, in general one pays little attention that we most often read this narrative. An name retains a singular destiny, since it is as proper name. Now, a proper name as stable, a fact that may lead one to conclude by the same right as the other words, to the language, be it translated or translated a single tongue, the one in which it appears has a common meaning, a conceptual synonym or a confused association matters little in one language as meaning “confusion.” Babel is at once proper name and common proper name and common noun, the one the synonym as well, but not the equivalent question of confusing them in their value satisfactory solution. Recourse to appending which he proclaims his name: Bavel, Con one tongue into another. It comments, or not translate. At best it sketches an analysis into two words at the point where confuse all its potential, in the internal translation work on the word in the so-called original of the original narrative there is a translation automatically (by some confusion) the sense name which, by itself, as a proper proper name, this intralinguistic translation operation operation in the strict sense.Nevertheless language of Genesis could notice the effect the conceptual equivalent (like pietre [ro] are two absolutely heterogeneous values
which initiates the deconstruction of the genealogical filiation, scatters the genealogical filiation, imposes and forbids, constrains, but as if to failure, is name, the name that he gives God, come from God, descended (indeed said that YHWH, an undivided, single tower) and by him that tongues were divided, according to a descendance by the only name that will have that will have triumphed. Now, the confusion, it improperly means Transliteration then becomes necessary, a struggle for the appropriation of the interval between two absences, of God is divided enough in this proper name, which already names at least three times and three different things, also has as proper name, this is the whole drama, the function of a common noun. This story recounts, among other things, the origin of the confusion of tongues, the irreducible multiplicity of idioms, the necessary and impossible task of translation, its necessity as impossibility. Now, in general one pays little attention to this fact: it is in translation that we most often read this narrative. And in this translation, the proper name retains a singular destiny, since it is not translated in its appearance as proper name. Now, a proper name as such remains forever untranslatable, a fact that may lead one to conclude that it does not strictly belong, by the same right as the other words, to the language, to the system of the language, be it translated or translating. And yet “Babel,” an event in a single tongue, the one in which it appears so as to form a “text,” also has a common meaning, a conceptual generality. That it be by way of a pun or a confused association matters little: “Babel” could be understood in one language as meaning “confusion.” And from then on, just as Babel is at once proper name and common noun, confusion also becomes proper name and common noun, the one as the homonym of the other, the synonym as well, but not the equivalent, because there could be no question of confusing them in their value. There is for the translator no satisfactory solution. Recourse to apposition and capitalization (“Over which he proclaims his name: Bavel, Confusion”) is not translating from one tongue into another. It comments; explains, paraphrases, but does not translate. At best it sketches an analysis by dividing the equivocation into two words at the point where confusion was gathered in potential, in all its potential, in the internal translation, if one can say that, that is at work on the word in the so-called original tongue. For in the very tongue of the original narrative there is a translation, a sort of transfer that gives immediately (by some confusion) the semantic equivalent of the proper name which, by itself, as a pure proper name, it would not have. Truth to tell, this intralinguistic translation operates immediately; it is not even an operation in the strict sense. Nevertheless, someone who speaks the language of Genesis could notice the effect the proper name has in effacing the conceptual equivalent (like pierre [rock] in “Pierre” [Peter], and these are two absolutely heterogeneous values or functions); one would then...
be tempted to say first that a proper name, in the proper sense, does not properly belong to the language; it does not belong there, although and because its call makes the language possible (what would a language be without the possibility of calling by a proper name?); consequently it can properly inscribe itself in a language only by allowing itself to be translated therein, in other words, interpreted by its semantic equivalent: from this moment, it can no longer be taken as proper name. The noun *pierre* belongs to the French language, and its translation into a foreign language should in principle transport its meaning. This is no longer the case with "Pierre," whose belonging to the French language is not assured and is in any case not of the same type. "Peter" in this sense is not a translation of *Pierre*, any more than "Londres" is a translation of London, and so forth. And second, anyone whose so-called mother tongue was the tongue of Genesis could indeed understand Babel as "confusion"; that person then effects a confused translation of the proper name by its common equivalent without having need for another word.

It is as if there were two words there, two homonyms; one of which has the value of proper name and the other that of common noun: between the two, a translation, which one can evaluate quite diversely. Does it belong to the kind that Roman Jakobson calls intralingual translation or rewording? I do not think so: "rewording" concerns relations of transformation between common nouns and ordinary phrases. The essay “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation” (1959) distinguishes three forms of translation. Intralingual translation interprets linguistic signs by means of other signs of the same language. This obviously presupposes that one can know in the final analysis how to determine rigorously the unity and identity of a language, the decidable form of its limits. Then there would be what Jakobson neatly calls translation “proper,” interlingual translation, which interprets linguistic signs by means of some other language—this appeals to the same presupposition as intralingual translation. Finally, there would be intersemiotic translation or transmutation, which interprets linguistic signs by means of systems of nonlinguistic signs. For the two forms of translation that would not be translations “proper,” Jakobson proposes a definitional equivalent and another word. The first he translates, so to speak, by another word: intralingual translation, or rewording. The third likewise: intersemiotic translation, or transmutation. In these two cases, the translation of "translation" is a definitional interpretation. But in the case of translation “proper,” translation in the ordinary sense, interlinguistic and post-Babelian, Jakobson repeats the same word: "interlingual translation" supposes that it is not necessary to translate that means, because everyone has experience to know what a language is, the relation of especially identity or difference in fact of identity that Babel has not impaired, this is a multiplicity of tongues and the “proper". In relation to this word, when it is a question of other uses of the word "translation" would and inadequate translation, like metaphor of translation in the proper sense. There proper sense and translation in the figurative late the one into the other, within the set to another, in the figurative or in the proply quick reveals how this reassuring tri

Very quickly: at the very moment when the impossibility of deciding whether the simply, to one tongue. And it matters that in a struggle for the proper name within a ne and opposes his name, he ruptures the arrupts the colonial violence or the ling them to translation, he subjects them to necessary and impossible; with a blow of name, he delivers a universal reason (it w rule of a particular nation), but he simultaneity: forbidden transparency, impossible the law, duty, and debt, but the debt one insolvency is found marked in the very translates and does not translate itself, b language and indebts itself to itself for an in Such would be the Babelian performance.

This singular example, at once archetyp
Babel

1e, in the proper sense, does not belong there, although andible (what would a language be proper name?); consequently it can only by allowing itself to be translatable by its semantic equivalent: from its proper name. The noun pierre translation into a foreign language; This is no longer the case with language is not assured and is in this sense is not a translation of translation of London, and so forth. Other tongue was the tongue of its "confusion"; that person then other name by its common equivalent.

Two homonyms; one of which has that of common noun: between evaluate quite diversely. Does it calls intralingual translation or translation proper." He supposes that it is not necessary to translate; everyone understands what that means, because everyone has experienced it, everyone is expected to know what a language is, the relation of one language to another, and especially identity or difference in fact of language. If there is a transparency that Babel has not impaired, this is surely it, the experience of the multiplicity of tongues and the "proper" sense of the word "translation." In relation to this word, when it is a question of translation "proper," the other uses of the word "translation" would be in a position of intralingual and inadequate translation, like metaphors, in short, like twists or turns of translation in the proper sense. There would thus be translation in the proper sense and translation in the figurative sense. And in order to translate the one into the other, within the same tongue or from one tongue to another, in the figurative or in the proper sense, one starts down a road that quickly reveals how this reassuring tripartition can be problematic.

Very quickly: at the very moment when pronouncing "Babel," we sense the impossibility of deciding whether this name belongs, properly and simply, to one tongue. And it matters that this undecidability is at work in a struggle for the proper name within a scene of genealogical indebtedness. In seeking to "make a name for themselves," to found at the same time a universal tongue and a unique genealogy, the Semites want to make the world see reason, and this reason can signify simultaneously colonial violence (since they would thus universalize their idiom) and peaceful transparency of the human community. Conversely, when God imposes and opposes his name, he ruptures the rational transparency but also interrupts the colonial violence or the linguistic imperialism. He destines them to translation, he subjects them to the law of a translation both necessary and impossible; with a blow of his translatable-untranslatable name, he delivers a universal reason (it will no longer be subject to the rule of a particular nation), but he simultaneously limits its very universality: forbidden transparency, impossible univocity. Translation becomes the law, duty, and debt, but the debt one can no longer discharge. Such insolvency is found marked in the very name of Babel, which at once translates and does not translate itself, belongs without belonging to a language and indebts itself to itself for an insolvent debt, to itself as other. Such would be the Babelian performance.

This singular example, at once archetypical and allegorical, could serve...
as an introduction to all the so-called theoretical problems of translation. But no theorization, inasmuch as it is produced in a language, will be able to dominate the Babelian performance. This is one of the reasons why I prefer here, instead of treating it in the theoretical mode, to attempt to translate in my own way the translation of another text on translation. Without acquitting myself of it, I would also recognize in this way one of my numerous debts to Maurice de Gandillac. Among so many other irreplaceable teachings, we are indebted to him for his introduction to Walter Benjamin and singularly, "The Task of the Translator." The preceding ought to have led me instead to an early text by Benjamin, "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man" (1916), likewise translated by Maurice de Gandillac in the same volume. Reference to Babel is explicit there and is accompanied by a discourse on the proper name and on translation. But given the, in my view, overly enigmatic character of that essay, its wealth and its overdeterminations, I have had to postpone that reading and limit myself to "The Task of the Translator." Its difficulty is doubtless no less, but its unity remains more apparent, better centered around its theme. And this text on translation is also the preface to a translation of Baudelaire's Tableaux parisiens, and I will refer to it first in the French translation that Maurice de Gandillac gives us. And yet, translation—is it only a theme for this text, and especially its primary theme?
The title also says, from its first word, the task (Aufgabe), the mission to which one is destined (always by the other): commitment, duty, debt, responsibility. Already at stake is a law, an injunction for which the translator is answerable. He must also acquit himself, and of something that implies perhaps a fault, a fall, an error, or even a crime. The essay has as horizon, as we will see, a "reconciliation." And all of this in a discourse multiplying genealogical motifs and allusions—more or less metaphorical—to the transmission of a family seed. The translator is indebted, he appears to himself as translator in a situation of debt; and his task is to render, to render that which must have been given. Among the words that correspond to Benjamin's title (Aufgabe, duty, mission, task, problem, that which is assigned, given to be done, given to be rendered), there are, from the beginning, Wiedergabe, Sinnwiedergabe, restitution, restitution of meaning. How is such a restitution, or even such an acquitting, to be understood? And what about meaning? As for aufgeben, it is to give, to dispatch (emission, mission) and to abandon.

For the moment let us retain this very debt that could well declare itself insolvent, "love and hate, on the part of who is summoned to translate, with regard to the signatory or the language and the writing, to the bond and the agreement between the author of the "original" and the reader. Perhaps what we think the very possibility of a"
Theoretical problems of translation. Once a language, will be able to attempt another text on translation. Among so many reasons why theoretical mode, to attempt. A discourse on translation, and singularly, "The Task of the Translator," led me instead to an early essay, and on the Language of Man" by Maurice de Gandillac. Among so many notes to him for his introduction to "Man," and on the Language of Man" by Maurice de Gandillac in the same volume.3 Benjamin has just quoted Mallarmé, in French, after having left in his own sentence a Latin word, which Maurice de Gandillac has reproduced at the bottom of the page to indicate that he did not translate "genius" from German but from Latin (ingenium). But of course he could not do the same with the third language of this essay, the French of Mallarme, whose untranslatability Benjamin had measured. Once again: how is a text written in several languages at a time to be translated? Here is the passage on the insolvent (I include here or there the German word that supports my point):

"Les langues imparfaites en cela que plusieurs, manque là suprême:

penser étant écrire sans accessoires ni chuchotement, mais tacite encore
l'immortelle parole, la diversité, sur terre, des idiomes empêche personne
de proférer les mots qui, sinon, se trouveraient, par une frappe unique, elle-
même matériellement la vérité."

For the moment let us retain this vocabulary of gift and debt, and a debt that could well declare itself insolvent, whence a sort of "transference," love and hate, on the part of whoever is in a position to translate, is summoned to translate, with regard to the text to be translated (I do not say with regard to the signatory or the author of the original), to the language and the writing, to the bond and the love that seal the marriage between the author of the "original" and his or her own language. At the center of the essay, Benjamin says of the restitution that it could very well be impossible: insolvent debt within a genealogical scene. One of the essential themes of the text is the "kinship" of languages in a sense that is no longer tributary of nineteenth-century historical linguistics, without being totally foreign to it. Perhaps what is here being proposed to us is that we think the very possibility of a historical linguistics.

Benjamin has just quoted Mallarmé, in French, after having left in his own sentence a Latin word, which Maurice de Gandillac has reproduced at the bottom of the page to indicate that he did not translate "genius" from German but from Latin (ingenium). But of course he could not do the same with the third language of this essay, the French of Mallarme, whose untranslatability Benjamin had measured. Once again: how is a text written in several languages at a time to be translated? Here is the passage on the insolvent (I include here or there the German word that supports my point):

Philosophy and translation are not futile, however, as sentimental artists allege. For there exists a philosophical genius, whose most proper characteristic is the yearning for that language which manifests itself in translation.

"Les langues imparfaites en cela que plusieurs, manque là suprême:

penser étant écrire sans accessoires ni chuchotement, mais tacite encore
l'immortelle parole, la diversité, sur terre, des idiomes empêche personne
de proférer les mots qui, sinon, se trouveraient, par une frappe unique, elle-
même matériellement la vérité."

If what Mallarme evokes here is fully fathomable to a philosopher, translation, with the seeds [Keimen] it carries of such a language, is midway between poetry and theory. Its work is less sharply defined than either of these, but it leaves no less of a mark on history.

If the task of the translator is viewed in this light, the roads toward a solution seem to be all the more obscure and impenetrable. Indeed, the problem of ripening the seed of pure language [den Samen reiner Sprache zur Reife zu
bring in a translation seems to be insoluble [diese Aufgabe ... scheint nie-mals lösbar], determinable in no solution [in keiner Lösung bestimmbar]. For is not the ground cut from under such a solution if the reproduction of the sense ceases to be decisive?24

Benjamin has, first of all, forgone translating the Mallarmé, which he has left shining in his text like the medallion of a proper name; but this proper name is not totally insignificant; it is merely welded to that whose meaning does not allow transport without damage into another language or into another tongue (and Sprache is not translated without loss by either word). And in Mallarmé’s text, the effect of being proper and thus untranslatable is tied less to any name or to any truth of adequation than to the unique occurrence of a performative force. So the question arises: does not the ground of translation finally recede as soon as the restitution of meaning (Wiedergabe des Sinnes) ceases to provide the measure? It is the ordinary concept of translation that becomes problematic: it implied this process of restitution, the task (Aufgabe) was finally to render, give back (wiedergeben) what was first given, and what was given was, one thought, the meaning. Now, things become obscure when one tries to accord this value of restitution with that of maturation. On what ground, in what ground, will the maturation take place if the restitution of the given meaning is no longer the rule for it?

The allusion to the maturation of a seed might resemble a vitalist or geneticist metaphor; it would come, then, in support of the genealogical and parental code that seems to dominate this text. In fact, one has, it seems, to invert this order here and recognize what I have elsewhere proposed calling the “metaphoric catastrophe”: far from knowing first what “life” or “family” mean whenever we use these familiar values to talk about language and translation, it is rather starting from the notion of a language and its “sur-vival” (spirit, history, death: “It is rather in recognizing for eye and which is not merely the setting for this concept of life. For it is starting from that the domain of life must finally be a philosopher the task [Aufgabe] of comp from this life, of much vaster extension, .

From the very title—and for the mon situates the problem, in the sense of that as a task: it is that of the translator, and it said in passing, and the question is no- less [traductrice]). Benjamin does not translation. He names the subject of obligated by a duty, already in the posit a genealogy, as survivor or agent of sur-authors. Perhaps the sur-vival of author not of authors.

Such sur-vival gives a surplus of life, it does not simply live longer, it lives more means.

Would the translator then be an inde and to the given of an original? By no cluding the following: the bond or obli between a donor and a donee but betw or two “creations”). This is understood and if one wanted to isolate theses, her sampling:
Indeed, not so much from its life as from its “survival” [Oberleben]. For a translation comes after the original and, for the important works that never find their predestined translator at the time of their birth, it characterizes the stage of their living on [Fortleben, this time, living-on as continuation of life rather than as life postmortem]. Now, it is in this simple reality, without any metaphor [in völlig unmetaphorischer Sachlichkeit], that it is necessary to conceive the ideas of life and living on [Fortleben] for works of art. (254)

And according to a scheme that appears Hegelian, in a very circumscribed passage, Benjamin calls us to think life starting from spirit or history and not from “organic corporeality” alone: There is life at the moment when “sur-vival” (spirit, history, works) exceeds biological life and death: “It is rather in recognizing for everything of which there is history and which is not merely the setting for history that one does justice to this concept of life. For it is starting from history, not from nature... that the domain of life must finally be circumscribed. So is born for the philosopher the task [Aufgabe] of comprehending all natural life starting from this life, of much vaster extension, that is the life of history.”

From the very title—and for the moment I go no further—Benjamin situates the problem, in the sense of that which is precisely before oneself as a task: it is that of the translator, and not that of translation (nor, it said in passing, and the question is not negligible, that of the transla-toress [traductrice]). Benjamin does not say the task or the problem of translation. He names the subject of translation as an indebted subject; obligated by a duty, already in the position of heir, entered as survivor in a genealogy, as survivor or agent of sur-vival. The sur-vival of works, not authors. Perhaps the sur-vival of authors’ names and of signatures, but not of authors.

Such sur-vival gives a surplus of life, more than a surviving. The work does not simply live longer, it lives more and better, beyond its author’s means.

Would the translator then be an indebted receiver, subject to the gift and to the given of an original? By no means. For several reasons, including the following: the bond or obligation of the debt does not pass between a donor and a donee but between two texts (two “productions” or two “creations”). This is understood from the opening of the preface, and if one wanted to isolate theses, here are a few, as brutally as in any sampling:
1. The task of the translator does not announce itself or follow from a
reception. The theory of translation does not depend for the essential on
any theory of reception, even though it can inversely contribute to the
elaboration and explanation of such a theory.

2. The essential goal of translation is not
to communicate. No more is it
the goal of the original. Benjamin maintains, secure from all possibility or
threat of dispute, the strict duality between the original and the version,
the translated and the translating, even though he shifts their relation.
And he is interested in the translation of poetic or sacred texts, which
would here yield the essence of translation. The entire essay unfolds be­
tween the poetic and the sacred, so as to trace things back from the first
to the second, the one that indicates the ideal of all translation, the purely
translatable: the intralinear version of the sacred text would be the model
or ideal (Urbild) of any possible translation in general. Now, this is the
second thesis: for a poetic text or a sacred text, communication is not the
essential. This putting into question does not directly concern the com­
municative structure of language but rather the hypothesis of a communi­
cable content that could be strictly distinguished from the linguistic act of
communication. In his 1916 essay, Benjamin’s critique of semiotism and of
the “bourgeois conception” of language was already directed against that
distribution: means, object, addressee. “There is no content of language.”

3. If, between the translated text and the translating text, there is indeed
a relation of “original” to version, it could not be representative or repro-
ductive. Translation is neither an image nor a copy.

With these three precautions taken (neither reception, nor commu-
nication, nor representation), how are the debt and the genealogy of the
translator—or, in the first place, of that which is to-be-translated, of the
to-be-translated—constituted?

Let us follow the thread of life or sur-vival wherever it communicates
with the movement of kinship. When Benjamin challenges the viewpoint
of reception, it is not to deny it all pertinence, and he will undoubtedly
have done much to prepare for a theory of reception in literature. But he

wants first to return to the authority of what he still calls "the original," not insofar as it produces its receiver or its translators, but insofar as it requires, mandates, demands, or commands them in establishing the law. And it is the structure of this demand that here appears most unusual. Through what does it pass? In a literary—let us say more rigorously in this case "poetic"—text it does not pass through the said, the uttered, the communicated, the content, or the theme. And when, in this context, Benjamin still says "communication" or "enunciation" (Mitteilung, Aussage), it is not about the act but about the content that he is obviously speaking: "But what does a literary work [Dichtung] 'say'? What does it communicate? Very little to those who understand it. What it has that is essential is not communication, not enunciation."

The demand seems thus to pass, indeed, to be formulated, through the form. "Translation is a form," and the law of this form has its first place in the original. This law first establishes itself, let us repeat, as a demand in the strong sense, a requirement that delegates, mandates, prescribes, assigns. And as for this law as demand, two questions can arise, which are different in essence. First question: in the sum total of its readers, can the work always find the translator who is, as it were, capable? Second question and, says Benjamin, "more properly" (as if this question made the preceding more appropriate, whereas we shall see, it does something quite different): "by its essence does it [the work] bear translation and if so—in line with the signification of this form—does it require translation?"

The answers to these two questions could not be of the same nature or the same mode. Problematic in the first case, not necessary (the translator capable of the work may appear or not, but even if he does not appear, that changes nothing in the demand or in the structure of the injunction that comes from the work), the answer is properly apodictic in the second case: necessary, a priori, demonstrable, absolute because it comes from the internal law of the original. The original requires translation even if there is no translator fit to respond to this injunction, which is at the same time demand and desire in the very structure of the original. This structure is the relation of life to survival. Benjamin compares this requirement of the other as translator to some unforgettable instant of life: it is lived as unforgettable, it is unforgettable even if in fact forgetting finally wins out. It will have been unforgettable—there is its essential significance, its apodictic essence; forgetting happens to this unforgettable only by accident. The requirement of the unforgettable—which is here constitut-
He has not finished pleading for the translation of his name even as he
forbids it. For Babel is untranslatable. God weeps over his name. His text
is the most sacred, the most poetic, the most originary, since it creates a
name and gives it to itself, but it is left no less destitute in its force and
even in its very richness; it pleads for a translator. As in La folie du jour by
Maurice Blanchot, the law does not command without demanding to be
read, deciphered, translated. It demands transfer or transference (Über-
tragung and Übersetzung and Überleben). The double bind is in the law.
Even in God, and it is necessary to follow rigorously the consequence of
this: in his name.

Insolvent on both sides, the double indebtedness passes between names.
It surpasses a priori the bearers of the names, if by that is understood the
mortal bodies that disappear behind the sur-vival of the name. Now, a
proper noun does and does not belong, we said, to the language, not
even, let us now specify this, to the corpus of the text to be translated, of
the to-be-translated [l’a-traduire].

The debt does not commit living subjects but the names at the edge
of the language or, more rigorously, the trait that contracts the relation
of the aforementioned living subject to his name, insofar as the latter
stays at the edge of the language. And this trait would be that of the to-
be-translated from one language to the other, from this edge to the other
of the proper name. This language contract among several languages is
absolutely singular. First of all, it is not what is generally called a language
contract: that which guarantees the institution of a language, the unity of
its system, and the social contract that binds a community in this regard.
Secondly, it is generally supposed that in order to be valid or to institute
anything at all, every contract must take place in a single language or ap-
peal (for example, in the case of diplomatic or commercial treaties), to a
translatability that is already given and without remainder: in this case,
the multiplicity of tongues must be absolutely mastered. Here, on the
contrary, a contract between two foreign languages as such commits to
rendering possible a translation that subsequently will authorize every sort
of contract in the originary sense. The signature of this singular contract
needs no documented or archived writing; it nevertheless takes place as
trace or as trait, and this place takes place even if no empirical or math-
ematical objectivity pertains to its space.

The topos of this contract is exceptional, unique, and practically impos-
sible to think under the ordinary category of contract: in a classical code,
it would have been called transcendental, since in truth it renders possible every contract in general, starting with what is called the language contract within the limits of a single idiom. Another name, perhaps, for the origin of tongues. Not the origin of language but of languages—before language, languages plural.

The translation contract, in this quasi-transcendental sense, would be the contract itself, the absolute contract, the contract form of the contract, that which allows any contract to be what it is.

Should one say that the kinship among languages presupposes this contract or that it provides a first occasion for the contract? One recognizes here a classic circle. It has always begun to turn whenever one asks oneself about the origin of languages or society. Benjamin, who often talks about the kinship among languages, never does so as a comparatist or as a historian of languages. He is interested less in families of languages than in a more essential and more enigmatic family relation, an affinity that may not necessarily precede the trait or the contract of the to-be-translated. Perhaps even this kinship, this affinity (Verwandtschaft), is like an alliance sealed by the contract of translation, to the extent that the survivals that it associates are not natural lives, blood ties, or empirical symbioses.

As the unfolding of an original and high form of life, this process is determined by an original high purposiveness. The correlation of life and purposiveness, seemingly obvious yet almost beyond the grasp of knowledge, reveals itself only if the purpose, toward which all the singular purposiveness of life tends, is not sought in the proper domain of that life but rather at a higher level. All purposeful phenomena of life, like their very purposiveness, in the final analysis have their end not in life but in the expression of its essence, in the representation [Darstellung] of its meaning. Thus translation has ultimately as goal to express the most intimate relation among languages. (255)

The translation would not seek to say this or that, to transport this or that content, to communicate some particular charge of meaning, but to re-mark the affinity among the languages, to exhibit its own possibility. And this, which holds for the literary text or the sacred text, perhaps defines the very essence of the literary and the sacred, at their common root. I said re-mark the affinity among the languages so as to name the strangeness of an "expression" ("to express the most intimate relation among the languages") that is neither a simple "presentation" nor simply anything else. In a mode that is solely anticipatory, annunciatory, almost prophetic,
translation renders present an affinity that is never present in this presentation. One thinks of the way in which Kant at times defines the relation to the sublime: a presentation inadequate to that which is nevertheless presented. Here Benjamin's discourse proceeds in twists and turns:

It is impossible that it [the translation] be able to reveal this hidden relation itself; that it be able to restitute [herstellen] it; but translation can represent [darstellen] that relation by actualizing it in its seed or in its intensity. And this representation of a signified [Darstellung eines Bedeuteten] by the endeavor, by the seed of its restitution, is an entirely original mode of representation, which has hardly any equivalent in the domain of nonlinguistic life. For the latter has, in analogies and signs, types of reference [Hindeutung] other than the intensive, that is to say, anticipatory, annunciantory [vorgreifende, andeutende] actualization. As for the relation we are thinking of, this very intimate relation among languages, it is one of an original convergence. It consists in this: the languages are not foreign to one another, but, a priori and apart from all historical relations, are related to one another in what they mean. (255)

The whole enigma of this kinship is concentrated here. What is meant by "what they mean"? And what about this presentation in which nothing is presented in the ordinary mode of presence?

At stake here are the name, the symbol, the truth, the letter.

One of the deepest foundations of the essay, as well as of the 1916 text, is a theory of the name. Language is determined starting from the word and the privilege of naming. This assertion, made in passing, is very strong if not very conclusive: "the originary element of the translator" is the word and not the sentence, the syntactic articulation. To help one think about it, Benjamin offers a curious "image": the sentence (Satz) would be "the wall in front of the language of the original," whereas the word, the word for word, literality (Wortlichkeit), would be its "arcade." Whereas the wall braces while concealing (it is in front of the original), the arcade supports while letting light pass through and giving one to see the original (we are not far from the Paris arcades). This privilege of the word obviously supports that of the name and with it the properness of the proper name, the stakes and the very possibility of the translation contract. It opens onto the economic problem of translation, be it a matter of economy as the law of the proper or of economy as a quantitative relation (is it translating to transpose a proper name into several words, into a phrase, or into a description, and so forth?).
that is never present in this presentation in this presenta­
Kant at times defines the relation
there is no hidden relation
[i.e., but translation can represent
be able to reveal this hidden relation
by the endeavor,
the domain of nonlinguistic life. For the
manner by which reference (Hindeutung) other than
nunciatory [vorgreifende, andeu-
we are thinking of, this very intimate
consists in
another, but, a priori and apart from
the other in what they mean. (255)
concentrated here. What is meant by
is this presentation in which nothing is
the essay, as well as of the 1916 text, is
termined starting from the word and
a, made in passing, is very strong if
ment of the translator” is the word
arcade. Whereas the wall
the original), the arcade supports
ving one to see the original (we are
properness of the proper name, the
translation contract. It opens onto
it a matter of economy as the law
itive relation (is it translating
al words, into a phrase, or into a
There is some to-be-translated. From both sides it assigns and contracts.
It commits not so much authors as proper names at the edge of the lan-
guage: it commits essentially neither to communicate nor to represent,
nor to keep an already signed commitment, but rather to draw up the
contract and to give birth to the pact, in other words, to the symbolon, in
a sense that Benjamin does not designate by this term but suggests, no
doubt with the metaphor of the amphora, or rather let us say (since we
are suspicious of the ordinary sense of metaphor) with the ammetaphora.

If the translator neither restitutes nor copies an original, it is because
the original lives on and transforms itself. In truth, the translation will
be a moment in the growth of the original, which will complete itself
in enlarging itself. Now, growth must not give rise to just any form in
just any direction (and it is in this that the “seminal” logic must have
imposed itself on Benjamin). Growth must accomplish, fill, complete
(Ergänzung is the most frequent term here). And if the original calls for
a complement, it is because at the origin, it was not there without fail,
full, complete, total, identical to itself. From the origin of the original to
be translated, there is fall and exile. The translator must redeem
(erlöschen), absolve, resolve, in trying to absolve himself of his own debt, which is at
bottom the same—and bottomless. “To redeem in his own tongue that
pure language exiled in the foreign tongue, to liberate by transposing this
pure language captive in the work, such is the task of the
translation is poetic transposition (Umdichtung): We will have to examine
the essence of the “pure language” that it liberates. But let us note for the
moment that this liberation itself presupposes a freedom of the transla-
tor, which is itself none other than—relation to that “pure language”; and
the liberation that it operates—possibly in transgressing the limits of the
translating language, in transforming it in turn—must extend, enlarge,
and make language grow. As this growth comes also to complete, as it is
symbolon, it does not reproduce: it adjoining in adding. Hence this double
simile (Vergleich), all these turn and metaphoric supplements: (1) “just
as the tangent touches the circle only in a fleeting manner and at a single
point, and just as it is this contact, not the point, that assigns to the
tangent the law according to which it pursues to infinity its course in a
straight line, so the translation touches the original in a fleeting manner
and only at an infinitely small point of meaning, to follow henceforth its
proper course, according to the law of fidelity in the freedom of language
movement” (261). Each time that he talks about the contact (Berührung)
between the bodies of the two texts in the process of translation, Benjamin calls it “fleeting [fluchtig].” On at least three occasions, this “fleeting” character is emphasized, and always in order to situate the contact with meaning, the infinitely small point of meaning that the languages barely brush (“The harmony between the languages is so profound here [in the translations of Sophocles by Hölderlin] that the meaning is only touched by the wind of language in the manner of an Aeolian lyre”). What can an infinitely small point of meaning be? By what measure is one to evaluate it? The metaphor itself is at once the question and the answer. And here is the other metaphor, the metaphor that no longer concerns extension in a straight and infinite line but enlargement by adjoining along the broken lines of a fragment (2). “For, just as the fragments of an amphora, if one is to be able to reconstitute the whole, must be contiguous in the smallest details, but not identical, to one another, so instead of rendering itself similar to the meaning of the original, the translation should rather, lovingly and in full detail, cause the mode of intention of the original to pass into its own language: thus, just as the debris becomes recognizable as fragments of the same amphora, original and translations become recognizable as fragments of a larger language” (260).

Let us accompany this movement of love, the gesture of this loving one (liebend) that is at work in the translation. It does not reproduce, does not reterritute, does not represent; essentially, it does not render the meaning of the original except at that point of contact or caress, the infinitely small of meaning. It extends the body of languages, it puts languages into symbolic expansion, and symbolic here means that, however little restitution is to be accomplished, the larger, the new vaster aggregate [ensemble] has still to reconstitute something. It is perhaps not a whole, but it is an aggregate whose opening must not contradict its unity. Like the jug that lends its poetic topos to so many meditations on word and thing, from Hölderlin to Rilke and Heidegger, the amphora is one with itself even as it opens itself to the outside—and this opening opens the unity, renders it possible, and forbids it totality. The opening allows it to receive and give. If the growth of language must also reconstitute without representing, if that is the symbol, can translation lay claim to truth? Truth—will that still be the name of what lays down the law for a translation?

Here we touch—at a point no doubt infinitely small—the limit of translation. The pure untranslatable and the pure translatable here pass one into the other—and that is the truth, “itself materially.”

The word “truth” appears more than a translation insofar as it might conform original. Nor is any more a matter, either translation, of some adequation of the representation to some under the name of truth? And is it that

Let us start again from the “symbolic,” or the ammetaphora: a translation we joined fragments, as different as they can form a larger tongue in the course of a thing. For, as we have noted, the native tongue. Such at least is my interpretation—my translator. It is what I have called the marriage contract with the promise to promise points toward a kingdom that den, where the languages will be reconstituted, or the Babelian note in an analysis of the limit of all writing, in any case, of all lated. The sacred and the being-to-be-thought one without the other: They promote the same limit.

This kingdom is never reached, too. There is something untouchable, and only promised. But a promise is not no what it lacks to be fulfilled. As promise, and the decisive signature of a contract, not prevent the commitment from taking or the archive. A translation that succeeds, facilitation, in talking about it, desiring of translation is a rare and notable event.

Here, two questions before going closer: Is there are such a
The word “truth” appears more than once in “The Task of the Translator.” We must not rush to seize upon it. It is not a matter of the truth of a translation insofar as it might conform or be faithful to its model, the original. Nor is it any more a matter, either for the original or even for the translation, of some adequation of the language to meaning or to reality, nor even of the representation to something. Then what is it that goes under the name of truth? And is it that new?

Let us start again from the “symbolic.” Let us remember the metaphor, or the ammetaphora: a translation weds the original when the two adjoined fragments, as different as they can be, complete each other so as to form a larger tongue in the course of a survival that changes them both. For, as we have noted, the native tongue of the translator is altered as well. Such at least is my interpretation—my translation, my “task of the translator.” It is what I have called the translation contract: hymen or marriage contract with the promise to produce a child whose seed will give rise to history and growth. A marriage contract in the form of a seminar. Benjamin says as much: in the translation the original becomes larger, it grows rather than reproduces itself—and I will add: like a child, its own, no doubt, but with the power to speak on its own, which makes of a child something other than a product subject to the law of reproduction. This promise points toward a kingdom that is at once “promised and forbidden, where the languages will be reconciled and fulfilled.” This is the most Babelian note in an analysis of sacred writing as the model and the limit of all writing, in any case, of all Dichtung in its being-to-be-translated. The sacred and the being-to-be-translated do not let themselves be thought one without the other: They produce each other at the edge of the same limit.

This kingdom is never reached, touched, trodden by the translation. There is something untouchable, and in this sense the reconciliation is only promised. But a promise is not nothing, it is not simply marked by what it lacks to be fulfilled. As promise, the translation is already an event, and the decisive signature of a contract. Whether or not it is honored does not prevent the commitment from taking place and from bequeathing its archive. A translation that succeeds, that succeeds in promising reconciliation, in talking about it, desiring it, or making one desire it, such a translation is a rare and notable event.

Here, two questions before going closer to the truth. Of what does the untouchable consist, if there is such a thing? And why does such a meta-
phor or ammetaphora of Benjamin make me think of the hymen, more visibly of the wedding gown?

1. The always intact, the intangible, the untouchable (unberührbar) is what fascinates and orients the work of the translator. He wants to touch the untouchable, that which remains of the text when one has extracted from it the communicable meaning (a point of contact that is, remember, infinitely small), when one has transmitted that which can be transmitted, or even taught: what I am doing here, after and thanks to Maurice de Gandillac, knowing that an untouchable remnant of the Benjaminian text will also remain intact at the end of the operation. Intact and virgin in spite of the labor of translation, however: efficient or pertinent that may be. Here pertinence does not touch. If one can risk a proposition apparently so absurd, the text will be even more virgin after the passage of the translator, and the hymen, sign of virginity, more jealous of itself after the other hymen, the contract signed and the marriage consummated. Symbolic completion will not have taken place to its very end and yet the promise of marriage will have come about—and this is the task of the translator, in what makes it very acute as well as irreplaceable.

But again? Of what does the untouchable consist? Let us study again the metaphors or the ammetaphoras, the Übertragungen that are translations and metaphors of translation, translations of translation or metaphors of metaphor. Let us study all of these Benjaminian passages. The first figure that comes in here is that of the fruit and the skin, the core and the shell (Kern, Frucht/Schale). It describes in the final analysis the distinction that Benjamin would never want to renounce or even to question. One recognizes a core, the original as such, by the fact that it can bear further translating and retranslating. As for a translation, as such, it cannot. Only a core, because it resists the translation it attracts, can offer itself to further translating operations without being exhausted. For the relation of the content to the language, one would also say of the substance to the form, of the signified to the signifier—it hardly matters here (in this context Benjamin opposes tenor, Gehalt, and tongue or language, Sprache)—differences from the original text to the translation. In the first, the unity is just as dense, tight, adherent as between the fruit and its skin, its shell or its peel. Not that they are inseparable, by law one must be able to distinguish them, but they belong to an organic whole, and it is not insignificant that the metaphor here is vegetal and natural, naturalistic.
It [the original in translation] can never fully attain this kingdom, but it is there that is found what makes translating more than communicating subject matter. More precisely one can define this essential core as that which, in the translation, is not translatable again. For, as much as one may extract of the communicable in order to translate it, there always remains this untouchable toward which the work of the true translator is oriented. It is not transmissible, as is the creative word of the original [übertragbar wie das Dichterwort des Originals], for the relation of this tenor to the language is entirely different in the original and in the translation. In the original, tenor and language form a determinate unity, like that of the fruit and the skin. (257–58)

Let us peel away a bit more the rhetoric of this sequence. It is not certain that the essential “core” and the “fruit” designate the same thing. The essential core, that which in the translation is not translatable again, is not the tenor, but this adherence between the tenor and the language, between the fruit and the skin. This may seem strange or incoherent (how can a core be situated between the fruit and the skin?). It is necessary no doubt to think that the core is first the hard and central unity that holds the fruit to the skin, and the fruit to itself as well; and above all that, at the heart of the fruit, the core is “untouchable,” beyond reach, and invisible. The core would be the first metaphor of what makes for the unity of the two terms in the second metaphor. But there is a third, and this time one without a natural provenance. It concerns the relation of the tenor to the language in the translation and no longer in the original. This relation is different, and I do not think I give in to artifice by insisting on this difference in order to say that it is precisely that of artifice to nature. What is it in fact that Benjamin notes, as if in passing, for rhetorical or pedagogical convenience? That “the language of the translation envelops its tenor like a royal cape with large folds. For it is the signifier of a language superior to itself and so remains, in relation to its own tenor, inadequate, forced, foreign” (258). That is quite beautiful, a beautiful translation: white ermine, crowning, scepter, and majestic bearing. The king has indeed a body (and it is not here the original text but that which constitutes the tenor of the translated text), but this body is only promised, announced, and dissimulated by the translation. The clothes fit but do not cling strictly enough to the royal person. This is not a weakness; the best translation resembles this royal cape. It remains separate from the body to which it is nevertheless conjoined, wedding it, not wedded to it. One can, of course, embroider on this cape, on the necessity of this
Übertragung, of this metaphoric translation of translation. For example, one can oppose this metaphor to that of the shell and the core, just as one would oppose technology to nature. An article of clothing is not natural; it is a fabric and even—another metaphor of metaphor—a text, and this text of artifice appears precisely on the side of the symbolic contract. Now, if the original text is demand for translation, then the fruit, unless it be the core, insists upon becoming the king or the emperor who will wear new clothes: under its large folds, in *weiten Falten*, one imagines him naked. No doubt the cape and the folds protect the king against the cold or natural aggressions; but first, above all, it is, like his scepter, the eminent visibility of the law. It is the index of power and of the power to lay down the law. But one infers that what counts is what comes to pass under the cape, to wit, the body of the king, do not immediately say the phallus, around which a translation busies its tongue, makes pleats, molds forms, sews hems, quilts, and embroiders. But always amply floating at some distance from the tenor.

2. More or less strictly, the cape weds the body of the king, but as for what comes to pass under the cape, how is one to separate the king from the royal couple? It is this wedded couple (the body of the king and his gown, the tenor and the tongue, the king and the queen) that lays down the law and guarantees every contract from this first contract. Let us not forget that the scene of translation implies genealogy or inheritance. I therefore thought of a wedding gown. Benjamin does not push matters in the direction that I am giving to my translation, reading him always already in translation. I have taken some liberty with the tenor of the original, as much as with its tongue, and again with the original that is also for me, now, the French translation. I have added another cape, it is still floating, but is that not the final destination of all translation? At least if a translation has destined itself to arrive.

Despite the distinction between the two metaphors, the shell and the cape (the royal cape, for he said “royal” where others might have thought a cape sufficed), despite the opposition of nature and art, there is in both cases a unity of tenor and tongue; natural unity in the one case, symbolic unity in the other. It is simply that in the translation, the unity signals a (metaphorically) more “natural” unity; it promises a tongue or language more originary and almost sublime, sublime to the immeasurable extent that the promise itself—namely, the translation—there remains inadequate (*unangemessen*), violent, and forced (*gewaltig*), and foreign (*fremd*).
This “fracture” renders useless, even “forbids” every Übertragung, every “transmission,” as the French translation says correctly: the word also plays, like a transmission, with transferential or metaphorical displacement. And the word Übertragung imposes itself again a few lines down: if the translation “transplants” the original onto another terrain of language “ironically” more definitive, it is to the extent that it could no longer be displaced by any other “transfer” (Übertragung), but only “raised” (erheben) anew on the spot “in other parts.” There is no translation of translation; that is the axiom without which there would not be “The Task of the Translator.” If one were to violate it, and one must not, one would touch the untouchable of the untouchable, namely, that which guarantees to the original that it remains indeed the original.

This is not unrelated to truth. Truth is apparently beyond every possible Übertragung and Übersetzung. It is not the representational correspondence between the original and the translation, nor even the primary adequation between the original and some object or signification exterior to it. Truth would be rather the pure language in which the meaning and the letter are no longer dissociated. If such a place, the taking place of such an event, remained undiscoverable, one could no longer, even by right, distinguish between an original and a translation. In maintaining this distinction at all costs as the original given of every translation contract (in the quasi-transcendental sense discussed above), Benjamin repeats the foundation of the law. In so doing he exhibits the possibility of copyright for works and author, the very possibility by which positive law claims to be supported. This law collapses at the slightest challenge to a strict boundary between the original and the version, or even to the self-identity or to the integrity of the original. What Benjamin says about this relation between original and translation is also found, translated into rather wooden language but faithfully reproduced as to its meaning, at the opening of all legal treatises concerning the positive law of translations. And this whether it be a matter of the general principles of the difference original/translation (the latter being “derived” from the former) or a matter of the translations of translation. The translation of translation is said to be “derived” from the original and not from the first translation. Here are some excerpts from the French law; but there does not seem to be from this point of view any opposition between it and the rest of Western law (nevertheless, a study of comparative law should also concern the translation of legal texts). As we shall see, these propositions appeal to the
Benjamin also began by saying: translation is a form, and the symbolizer/symbolized split organizes his whole essay. Now, in what way is this system of oppositions indispensable to this law? Because only it allows, starting from the distinction between original and translation, acknowledgment of some originality in the translation. This originality is determined, and this is one of the many classic philosophemes at the foundation of this law, as originality of expression. Expression is opposed to content, of course, and the translation, which is not supposed to touch the content, must be original only in its language as expression; but expression is also opposed to what French jurists call the composition of the original. In general one places composition on the side of form; but here the form of expression in which one can acknowledge some originality to the translator, and for this reason the rights of author-translator, is only the form of linguistic expression, the choice of words in the language, and so forth, but nothing else of the form. I quote Claude Colombet, Propriété littéraire et artistique, from which I excerpt only a few lines, in accordance with the law of March 1957, recalled at the opening of the book and “authorizing . . . only analyses and short quotations for the purpose of example or illustration,” because “every representation or reproduction, integral or partial, made without the consent of the author or of his beneficiaries or executors, is illegal,” constituting therefore an infraction punishable under articles 425ff. of the Penal Code.

Translators are works that are original only in expression [a very paradoxical restriction: the cornerstone of copyright, it is indeed the case that only form can become property, and not ideas, themes, contents, which are common and universal property (here Colombet inserts a footnote: “cf. all of chapter 1 in this book, L’absence de protection des idées par le droit d’auteur”). If a first consequence is good, since it is this form that defines the originality of the translation, another consequence could be ruinous, for it would lead to abandoning that which distinguishes the original from the translation if, excluding expression, it amounts to a distinction of substance. Unless the value of composition, however lax it may be, were still to indicate the fact that between the original and the translation the relation is neither one of expression nor of content but of something else beyond these oppositions. In following the difficulty of the jurists—sometimes comic in its casuistic subtlety—so as to draw the consequences from axioms of the type “Copyright does not protect ideas; but these can be, sometimes indirectly, protected by means other than the law better the historicity and conceptual fragments the law cites them among the protected permitted that a translator demonstrates or to render best in one language the mean. As M. Savatier says, “The genius of each makes several words, several expressions of the mind; but, of course, he could not work translated, for he is bound to respect that is, with some additional detail.

Derived works that are original in expression, to be relatively original [emphasize] imprint of a personality on its compositions. It is enough that the author, while existent work step by step, has performed article 4 attests to this, since, in a nonexclusive it puts translations in the place of honor, are wont to say, in a bit of wit, which, if there are bad translators, who multiply misrepresentation of their task. The risk of a mistake the perspective of an authentic version of the two languages, an abundance of effort. Consulting a dictionary suffices conscientious and competent translator the painter who makes a copy of a mod is furnished by the comparison of several texts: each may differ from the comparison of several writings; the variety in modes of expression with the possibility of choice, that the manifestations of personality. (My emphasis)
protected by means other than the law of March 1957” (21), one measures better the historicity and conceptual fragility of this set of axioms; article 4 of the law cites them among the protected works; in fact, it has always been admitted that a translator demonstrates originality in the choice of expressions to render best in one language the meaning of the text in another language. As M. Savatier says, “The genius of each language gives the translated work its own physiognomy; and the translator is not a simple workman. He himself participates in a derived creation for which he bears his own responsibility”; translation is in fact not the result of an automatic process; by the choices he makes among several words, several expressions, the translator fashions a work of the mind; but, of course, he could never modify the composition of the work translated, for he is bound to respect that work.6

In his language, Henri Desbois (in Le droit d’auteur en France) says the same thing, with some additional details:

**Derived works that are original in expression.** 29. The work under consideration, to be relatively original [emphasized by Desbois], need not also bear the imprint of a personality on its composition and its expression, like adaptations. It is enough that the author, while following the development of a pre-existent work step by step, has performed a personal act in the expression: article 4 attests to this, since, in a nonexhaustive enumeration of derived works, it puts translations in the place of honor. “Traduttore, traditore,” the Italians are wont to say, in a bit of wit, which, like every coin, has two sides: if there are bad translators, who multiply misreadings, others are cited for the perfection of their task. The risk of a mistake or an imperfection has as counterpart the perspective of an authentic version, which implies a perfect knowledge of the two languages, an abundance of judicious choices, and thus a creative effort. Consulting a dictionary suffices only for mediocre undergraduates: the conscientious and competent translator “gives of himself” and creates just like the painter who makes a copy of a model. The verification of this conclusion is furnished by the comparison of several translations of one and the same text: each may differ from the others without any one containing a misreading; the variety in modes of expression for a single thought demonstrates, with the possibility of choice, that the task of the translator leaves room for manifestations of personality. (My emphasis.—JD)7

One will note in passing that the task of the translator, confined to the duel of languages (never more than two languages), gives rise only to a “creative effort” (effort and tendency rather than completion, artisan labor rather than artistic performance), and when the translator “creates,” it
is like a painter who copies his model (a ludicrous comparison for many reasons, is there any use in explaining?). The recurrence of the word "task" is remarkable enough in any case, for all the significations that it weaves into a network, and there is again the same evaluative interpretation: duty, debt, tax, levy, toll, inheritance and estate tax, noble obligation, but labor midway to creation, infinite task, essential incompleteness, as if the presumed creator of the original were not also indebted, taxed, obligated by another text, and a priori translating.

Between the transcendental law, in Benjamin's repetition of it, and positive law as it is formulated so laboriously and at times so crudely in treatises on author's rights [droit d'auteur] or intellectual property rights, the analogy can be followed quite far, for example, as concerns the notion of derivation and the translations of translations: these are always derived from the original and not from previous translations. Here is a note by Desbois:

The translator does not even cease to fashion personal work when he goes to draw advice and inspiration from a preceding translation. We will not refuse the status of author for a work that is derived, in relation to anterior translations, to someone who would have been content to choose, among several versions already published, the one that seemed to him the most adequate to the original; going from one to the other, taking a passage from this one, another from that one, he creates a new work by the very fact of the combination, which renders his work different from previous productions. He has exercised creativity; since his translation reflects a new form and results from comparisons, from choices. The translator would still deserve a hearing in our opinion, even if his reflection had led him to the same result as a predecessor, whose work, let us suppose, he did not know: his unintentional replica, far from amounting to plagiarism, would bear the mark of his personality and present a "subjective novelty," which calls for protection. The two versions, accomplished separately and each without knowledge of the other, have given rise, separately and individually, to manifestations of personality. The second is a work derived vis-à-vis the work that has been translated, not vis-à-vis the first. (ibid. 41; my emphasis in the last sentence—JD)

Of this right to the truth, what is the relation?

Translation promises a kingdom to the reconciliation of languages. This promise, a proper symbolic event adjoining, coupling, marrying two languages like two parts of a greater whole, appeals to a language of the truth (Sprache der Wahrheit). Not to a language that is true, adequate to some exterior content, but to a true to itself. It would be referred only to itself. It would be like a tower that they are trying to sur
Des tours de Babel

To some exterior content, but to a true tongue, to a language whose truth would be referred only to itself. It would be a matter of truth as authenticity, truth of act or event that would belong to the original rather than to the translation, even if the original is already in a position of demand or debt. And if there is such authenticity and such force of event in what is ordinarily called a translation, it is because it would produce itself in some fashion as an original work. There would thus be an original and inaugural way of indebted oneself; it would be the place and date of what is called an original, a work.

To translate well the intentional meaning of what Benjamin means to say when he speaks of the “language of the truth,” perhaps it is necessary to understand what he regularly says about the “intentional meaning” or the “intentional aim” (Meinung, Art des Meinens). As Maurice de Gandillac reminds us, these are categories borrowed from the scholastics by Brentano and Husserl. They play a role that is important if not always very clear in “The Task of the Translator.”

What is it that seems intended by the concept of intention (Meinen)? Let us return to the point where in the translation, a kinship among languages seems to be announced, beyond all resemblance between an original and its reproduction and independently of any historical filiation. Moreover, kinship does not necessarily imply resemblance. With that said, in dismissing the historical or natural origin, Benjamin does not exclude, in a wholly different sense, consideration of the origin in general, any more than a Rousseau or a Husserl did in analogous contexts and with analogous gestures. Benjamin even specifies it literally: for the most rigorous access to this kinship or to this affinity of languages, “the concept of origin [Abstammungsbe Griffin] remains indispensable.” Where, then, is this original affinity to be sought? We see it announced in the plying, replying, co-deploying of intentions. Through each language, something is intended that is the same and yet that none of the languages can attain separately. They can claim, and promise themselves to attain it, only by co-employing or co-deploying their intentional modes, “the whole of their complementary intentional modes.” This co-deployment toward the whole is a replying because what it intends to attain is “the pure language [die reine Sprache],” or the pure tongue. What is intended, then, by this co-operation of languages and intentional aims is not transcendent to the language; it is not a reality that they besiege from all sides, like a tower that they are trying to surround. No, what they are aiming at
intentionally, individually and together, in translation is the language itself as Babelian event, a language that is neither the universal language in the Leibnizian sense nor is it a language that is the natural language each still remains on its own; it is the being-language of the language, tongue or language as such, that unity without any self-identity that makes for the fact that there are plural languages and that they are languages.

These languages relate to one another in translation according to an unheard-of mode. They complete each other, says Benjamin; but no other completeness in the world can represent this one, or that symbolic complementarity. This singularity (not representable by anything in the world) comes no doubt from the intentional aim or from what Benjamin tries to translate into a scholastico-phenomenological language. Within the same intentional aim it is necessary to distinguish rigorously between the thing intended, the intended (das Gemeinte), and the mode of intention (die Art des Meinens). As soon as he sights the original contract of languages and the hope for the “pure tongue,” the task of the translator excludes the “intended” or leaves it in parentheses.

The mode of intention alone assigns the task of translation. Each “thing,” in its presumed self-identity (for example, bread itself) is intended by way of different modes in each language and in each text of each language. It is among these modes that the translation should seek, produce, or reproduce, a complementarity or a “harmony.” And since to complete or complement does not amount to the summation of any worldly totality, the value of harmony suits this adjustment, and what can here be called the accord of tongues. This accord lets the pure language, and the being-language of the language, resonate, announcing it rather than presenting it. As long as this accord does not take place, the pure language remains hidden, concealed (verborgen), immured in the nocturnal intimacy of the “core.” Only a translation can make it emerge.

Emerge and above all develop, make grow. Always according to the same motif (in appearance organicist or vitalist), one could then say that each language is as if atrophied in its isolation, meager, arrested in its growth, sickly. Owing to translation, in other words, to this linguistic complementarity by which one language gives to another what it lacks, and gives it harmoniously, this crossing of languages assures the growth of languages, even that “holy growth of language” “unto the messianic end of history.” All of that is announced in the translation process, through “the eternal sur-vival of languages [am ewigen Fortleben der Sprachen]” or “the infinite rebirth [Aufleben] of languages,” constant regeneration (Fort- and Aufle­ben, revelation itself, than an anni­hilation).

This religious code is essential here. The pure even if inaccessible model of pure from which one could think, evaluate, poetic, translation. Translation, as holy the messianic end, surely, but the sign of “present” (gegenwärtig) only in the “kn Entfernung, the remoteness that relates us­ness, have knowledge or a presentimen­ti. Yet it puts us into relation with the “true language” (so ist diese Sprache). This putting into relation takes place in the “intensive” mode that renders presentness to approach as remoteness, is experience, which one can translate translation.

The to-be-translated of the sacred te what would give at the limit the ideal sacred text assigns his task to the tran as it announces itself as translatable, si which does not always mean immedi­sense that was dismissed from the star­guish here between the translatable at pure and simple is that of the sacred te are no longer discernible as they form a and untransferable event, “materially t debt, the task, the assignation are ne­thing more translatable, yet by reaa­ing and literality (Wortlichkeit), the pu give itself, present itself, let itself be at this limit, at once interior and exter­all the signs of remoteness (Entfernu course, at the edge of the abyss, of ma­Hölderlin as translations of Sopho­abyss to abyss.” This danger is not th it is the law of translation, the to-be
translation is the language either the universal language in is the natural language each age of the language, tongue identity that makes for the hey are languages.

translation according to an her, says Benjamin; but no that this one, or that symbolic realizable by anything in the aim of from what Benjamin enological language. Within distinguish rigorously between and, the mode of intensifies the original contract of e the task of the translator.

The task of translation. Each example, bread itself) is in-language and in each text of the translation should seek, or a "harmony." And since that to the summation of any adjustment, and what can cord lets the pure language, nominate, announcing it rather does not take place, the pure, immured in the nocturnal can make it emerge.

4. Always according to the one, could then say that on, meager, arrested in its other words, to this linguistic is to another what it lacks, languages assure the growth of "unto the messianic end of action process, through "the leben der Sprachen" or "the

infinite rebirth [Aufleben] of languages." This perpetual reviviscence, this constant regeneration (Fort- and Aufleben) by translation is less a revelation, revelation itself, than an announcement, an alliance, and a promise.

This religious code is essential here. The sacred text marks the limit, the pure even if inaccessible model of pure translatable, the ideal starting from which one could think, evaluate, measure the essential, that is to say, poetic, translation. Translation, as holy growth of languages, announces the messianic end, surely, but the sign of that end and of that growth is "present" (gegenwärtig) only in the "knowledge of that distance," in the Entfernung, the remoteness that relates us to it. One can know this remoteness, have knowledge or a presentiment of it, but we cannot overcome it. Yet it puts us into relation with that "language of the truth" that is the "true language" (so ist diese Sprache der Wahrheit—die wahre Sprache). This putting into relation takes place in the mode of "presentiment," in the "intensive" mode that renders present what is absent, that allows remoteness to approach as remoteness, for themselves. Let us say that translation is experience, which one can translate or experience also: experience is translation.

The to-be-translated of the sacred text, its pure translatable, that is what would give at the limit the ideal measure for all translation. The sacred text assigns his task to the translator—and it is sacred inasmuch as it announces itself as translatable, simply translatable, to-be-translated, which does not always mean immediately transferable, in the common sense that was dismissed from the start. Perhaps it is necessary to distinguish here between the translatable and the transferable. Translatability pure and simple is that of the sacred text in which meaning and literality are no longer discernible as they form the body of a unique, irreplaceable, and untransferable event, "materially the truth." Call for translation: the debt, the task, the assignment are never more imperious. Never is there anything more translatable, yet by reason of this indistinction of meaning and literality (Wortlichkeit), the pure translatable can announce itself, give itself, present itself, let itself be translated as untranslatable. From this limit, at once interior and exterior, the translator comes to receive all the signs of remoteness (Entfernung) that guide him on his infinite course, at the edge of the abyss, of madness, and of silence: the last works of Hölderlin as translations of Sophocles, the collapse of meaning "from abyss to abyss." This danger is not that of accident; it is translatability, it is the law of translation, the to-be-translated as law, the order given,
the order received—and madness waits on both sides. And as the task is impossible at the approaches to the sacred text that assigns it to you, the infinite guilt absolves you immediately.

That is what is named from here on Babel: the law imposed by the name of God who in one stroke commands and forbids you to translate by showing and hiding from you the limit. But it is not only the Babelian situation, not only a scene or a structure. It is also the status and the event of the Babelian text, of the text of Genesis (a unique text in this regard) as sacred text. It comes under the law that it recounts and translates in an exemplary way. It lays down the law it speaks about, and from abyss to abyss it deconstructs the tower, and every turn, twists and turns of every sort, in a rhythm.

What comes to pass in a sacred text is the event of a pas de sens, a step of meaning/no meaning. And starting from this event, it is also possible to think the poetic or literary text that tends to redeem the lost sacred and there translates itself into its model. Pas-de-sens: this does not signify poverty of meaning but no meaning that would be itself, meaning, beyond any “literality.” And right there is the sacred. The sacred surrenders itself to translation, which devotes itself to the sacred. The sacred [l’] would be nothing without translation [elle], and translation [elle] would not take place without the sacred [lui]; the one and the other are inseparable. In the sacred text, “the meaning has ceased to be the divide for the flow of language and for the flow of revelation.” It is the absolute text, because in its event it communicates nothing, it says nothing that makes sense beyond the event itself. That event melds completely with the act of language, for example, with prophecy. It is literally the literality of its tongue, “pure language.” And since no meaning lets itself be detached, transferred, transported, or translated into another tongue as such (as meaning), it commands right away the translation that it seems to refuse. It is translatable (übersetzbar) and untransferable. There is only the letter, and it is the truth of pure language, the truth as pure language.

This law would not be an exterior constraint; it grants a liberty to literality. In the same event, the letter ceases to oppress insofar as it is no longer the exterior body or the corset of meaning. The letter also translates itself of itself, and it is in this self-relation of the sacred body that the task of the translator finds itself engaged. This situation, though it is one of pure limit, does not exclude—quite the contrary—gradations, virtuality, interval, and in-between, the infinite laborless past, already given, right here, between doing so, whether it be Yahweh, Babel, I next to his last word? But literally, and by signature of Maurice de Gandillac that I question: can one quote a signature? “For writings, but to the highest point holy S lines their virtual translation. The interlin the model or ideal of all translation.”
Des tours de Babel

interval, and in-between, the infinite labor to rejoin that which is nevertheless past, already given, right here, between the lines, already signed.

How would you translate a signature? And how would you refrain from doing so, whether it be Yahweh, Babel, Benjamin when he signs right next to his last word? But literally, and between the lines, it is also the signature of Maurice de Gandillac that I quote to conclude in posing my question: can one quote a signature? “For, to some degree, all the great writings, but to the highest point holy Scripture, contain between the lines their virtual translation. The interlinear version of the sacred text is the model or ideal of all translation.”

—Translated by Joseph F. Graham