

TRANSFORMING THE LANGUAGE: TRANSLATION AS EXILE AND HERMENEUTIC
DIALOGUE

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The problematic of translation is viewed in this thesis through the theoretical framework of Walter Benjamin and Paul de Man. First, the notion of “translatability” is discussed, a move that involves arguments on language by Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer. Next, the discussion of translation is conducted through the context of a hermeneutic perspective on language and understanding.

It is argued that translation is at center stage of every process of understanding and communication. Such being the case, translation should not be accessed from the viewpoint of translatability and its results cannot be judged according to the criteria of “adequacy” and “correctness.” The relation of translated version to “original” text, the difficulties of translation, and the goals of the translator can be treated as a boundary situation, as a test case and as an avenue through which other modes of communication should be viewed.

The concluding argument is that the *untranslatability* must be situated at the core not only of translation but of language itself and precisely these disjunctions (between different languages, and between signifier and signified) bring the multiplicity of interpretations, allowing new approaches to translation, reading, understanding. Moreover, not only does translation clarify relationship to our own language but its *untranslatability* allows one to establish a dialogical medium necessary for any act of communication to take place. Since difference and *untranslatability* are valuable aspects of foreignness, which exists between languages, people, cultures, hermeneutics of translation has potential for bridging the gap between alienated linguistic and cultural systems.