

НЕПРЕВОДЪЛИВОСТИ
БАРБАРА КАСЕН

ИНСТИТУТ ЗА КЊИЖЕВНОСТ И УМЕТНОСТ
Серија Ц: Теоријска истраживања, књ. 20

Уређивачки одбор

др Александра Манчић, Институт за књижевност и уметност
др Милица Бакић – Хејден, Универзитет у Питсбургу
др Гвидо Ерсовић, Национални савет за научна и техничка истраживања/
Универзитет у Буенос Ајресу
др Марија Грујић, Институт за књижевност и уметност
мср Јован Букумира, Институт за књижевност и уметност (секретар)

Рецензенти

др Миланко Говедарица
др Драган Проле
др Јелена Филиповић

НЕПРЕВОДЉИВОСТИ
БАРБАРА КАСЕН

ЗБОРНИК РАДОВА

Уредник
др Новак Малешевић

Институт за књижевност и уметност
Београд
2023

Издавање зборника финансијски је помогло Министарство науке,
технолошког развоја и иновација Републике Србије

САДРЖАЈ

- 7 *Новак Малешевић*
УВОДНА РИЈЕЧ
- 13 *Barbara Cassin*
PRÉFACE AU COLLECTIF DE BELGRADE
- 17 *Барбара Касен*
ПРЕДГОВОР ЗБОРНИКУ РАДОВА СА СКУПА У БЕОГРАДУ
(превео Зоран Миндеровић)
- 21 *Александра Манчић*
ЕВРОПСКИ РЕЧНИК ФИЛОЗОФИЈА ИЛИ ЛЕКSIKOH НЕПРЕВОДЉИВОСТИ
БАРБАРЕ КАСЕН НА ЈЕЗИЦИМА
- 55 *Višnja Krstić*
TRANSPLANTING BARBARA CASSIN'S FRAMEWORK OF 'UNTRANSLATABILITY'
FROM PHILOSOPHY TO COMPARATIVE LITERATURE
An Attempt
- 77 *Mariano Javier Sverdloff*
CARTOGRAFÍAS POLÍTICAS DE LA TRADUCCIÓN
Entre el *Vocabulario de las filosofías occidentales* (2018) y el "Ubuntu"
- 119 *Guido Herzovich*
UNTRANSLATABILITY AMONG THE LATIN AMERICANS
- 153 *Зоран Миндеровић*
БАРБАРА КАСЕН И ЊЕН ЛАВИРИНТ
- 169 *Novak Malešević*
BARBARA CASSIN
The Quality of Babylon
- 189 *Марко Теодорски*
УМИРИТИ СУБЈЕКТА
Носталгија између Барбаре Касен и Патанђалија
- 213 *Татјана Росић*
НОСТАЛГИЈА ПОСЛЕ ХЛАДНОГ РАТА
Концепти носталгије Светлане Бојм и Барбаре Касен или о (не)могућности повратка
- 229 *Биљана Андоновска*
BARBAROLOGIE
О књижевном, аутобиографском и политичком у делу Барбаре Касен

Novak MALEŠEVIĆ

Institute for Literature and Art, Belgrade

malesevicnovak@yahoo.com

BARBARA CASSIN THE QUALITY OF BABYLON

Summary: The paper deals with the analysis of the phenomenon of *language* in the context of *Dictionary of Untranslatables* by Barbara Cassin. To philosophy, or perhaps more precisely, to western metaphysics, the question of *truth* was undoubtable referent foothold around which *thought* had to build its own foundations in order to offer valid conceptual models. Confidence in logos, or through confidence in the possibility of reaching logos, the scientific practice of the western world was constituted. However, the issue that metaphysics encountered did not concern the (im)possibility of the existence of truth, but the inability of *language* to reach that truth. Halved into signifier and signified the language could not “get outside of itself”, without this happening upon – more languages. Every philosophical (mathematical) operation over language has always resulted in certain (non)semanticized remainder, the remainder which continued to transmit the message that only *reminds* of the truth by forming the new chain of signifiers. However, it is precisely in that state, when it could no longer perform the key task of metaphysics, that Barbara Cassin recognized the main quality of language – its *irreducibility*, its *untranslatability*. In this text, by following Barbara Cassin, we will try to recognize such – irreducible – language elements and explore the structure which that irreducibility is based on.

Keywords: *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, Barbara Cassin, metaphysics, logos, epistemology, language

Introduction

What does it mean to write/edit a *Dictionary*? Is it not an ultimate metaphysical cry; a naive attempt at a mathematical, linguistic equation? It is not solely about the assumption that semantic potential of any word can find its equivalent in a set of other words, but it

is about the belief that language really is a valid means through which a (certain) truth (logos) can be represented. Making that logos present through a language, through a word, seems a good starting epistemological point for writing a dictionary. The truth becomes the guarantee of the value of a word, which in words alone, in the context of a wider language structure, enables them to enter into a kind of value exchange. Dictionaries (which is to say, language itself) rely on the justification of that exchange. One word (that is presumed to be in a direct relation with truth) is thus exchanged for a multitude of other words on the basis of the assumption of the possibility of establishing *identical* value between them. In that process of “the exchange of words”, metaphysics does not predict any remainder, any surplus of sense which would resist being restrained by (additional) words. It is up to us to only measure the adequate quantity of logos that those words carry with themselves in order to enter the process of linguistic equation leveling. In a word, metaphysics counts on a clean slate. It is particularly apparent in the phenomenon of translation; moreover, the measure of proper translation is defined by the smallest possible semantic remainder. Emily Apter will characterize such translation as “algorithmic”.

Here, tendentially, “to translate” means to map one point or quantum onto another according to an algorithm: translation is understood as mechanics, as a function, as measure or common measure. This sort of “translation” requires us to understand natural languages as if they were mapped onto a mathematical, or mathematizable, or quantifiable space: what one might call the monadic or mapping or isomorphic definition of translation (Apter 2014: XI).

Therefore, the point here is the leveling of meaning in the context of various language structures (various languages), which further complicates the process of the word exchange itself. “To translate”, in this context, means to transfer the adequate *sense* into a new value system, that is, a new language structure – one that has its own rules, norms and meanings. It also implies that “truth” of that which is being translated is algorithmically (completely) affirmed in the domain of a newly-created language structure. Accordingly, “to translate” aimed at internationalizing knowledge, making it available, *present* and self-evident through any language. It is undoubtable that this “epoch of the logos”, as Derrida calls it (Derrida 1997: 12), greatly trusted language, its capability of *fully* expressing the essence it refers to. From the very beginnings of philosophy in the West, logos has represented the referent point that determines the place of truth (or, more precisely, which brings us back to its origin), which has simultaneously defined the aim of every subsequent philosophical discourse as – reaching the truth. A dictionary is a place where “the reached truth” finds its confirmation. It is a historical landmark whereby metaphysics confirms and justifies its presence in science and philosophy. To compose a dictionary means to close knowledge “in a book” (Derrida 1988: 148), to *write and limit* the truths of a science in commensurate and tangible space which will, through its presence, lay the foundation for reaching new truths.

However, *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*¹ edited by French theorist Barbara Cassin, was created on an anti-philosophical thesis – that between language and truth (which the language ought to represent) exists a certain barrier, a disharmony which can never fully be leveled, but that endures in every expression, every interpretation, every translation. It does not necessarily mean that logos is *inexpressible* through a language, but that language (signs)

¹ The original French version titled *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles* was published in 2004.

remains an inalienable part of that very logos. Philosophy, that is, metaphysics, needs to accept that language is a part of philosophical practice, and not its necessary evil required in order to reach the ultimate sense. “We have tried to think of philosophy within languages, to treat philosophies as they are spoken, and to see what then changes in our ways of philosophizing” (Cassin 2014: XVII). This linguistic turn does not, of course, start with Barbara Cassin. What, however, starts with Barbara Cassin is the consideration of dictionaries (as a structure which explains words through words) on the basis of distrust toward metaphysics. This is the first such attempt in the history of philology. *Dictionary of Untranslatables* is a philological manifestation of an anti-philosophical (anti-metaphysical) theoretical framework. This is an anti-dictionary in a certain sense, the dictionary that has calculated, in its semantic equation, error of metaphysics which has, since its early beginnings, separated logos from language, more precisely, which wanted to reach that logos *despite* language, despite its protean features. “The change in our ways of philosophizing” begins with the departure from the ideality of logos, begins with the understanding of semantic remainder caused by the disproportion between the parts of the structure of a linguistic sign (signifier and signified), where, through and within language, the surplus of sense is formed, which instead of logos, leads toward more language. “Untranslatability” appears in that surplus of sense, a kind of semantic delay occurs which needs to be constrained by new concepts, new expressions, new interpretations. Barbara’s “untranslatability” is the fundamental quality of a language that frees language networks whereby “pure” philosophical concepts are supplemented.

The aim of this text is to explain linguistic “untranslatability” on the basis of the structure of a linguistic sign, and to examine the real values of that linguistic phenomenon by going through individual theoretical aspects of Barbara’s work. Of course, it will give us an

opportunity to see what role *Dictionary of Untranslatables* has in the context of (Western) history of philosophy, its epistemology and usefulness in modern scientific practice. In a word, we are going to wonder about the end of metaphysics.

On what endures

In order to answer the question of what makes a linguistic expression *metaphysically valid* (or, perhaps more precisely: metaphysically possible), first we have to recall the structure of a (linguistic) sign. It comprises a dyadic structure: signifier and signified. The signifier is the frame of a sign, its part recognizable through the senses, which refers to (but, in no way, equates with it) sense, to logos, to – the signified. Although it can be recognized through the senses, the signifier does not necessarily need to be expressed through a certain material form (for example, as a sound or an inscription), but it can be – completely – represented as a psychological phenomenon, that is, as “psychological imprint” (Saussure 1959: 66; Малешевич 2021: 88 etc.). In a word, the materiality of the signifier can be “observed”, that is, internalized in our consciousness. Therefore, the signifier ought to lead us to the signified, which is already, in the nature of things, always in our consciousness and manifests as – a concept. The relationship established between these two elements is arbitrary. Any signifier can be bound to any signified (Saussure 1959: 67).

A logocentric structure of a (linguistic) sign tends to isolate the signified, to – as the real meaning and true sense – protect it from all superfluous semantic deposits which the signifier (which this signified is bound to) can bring along. Ideal understanding, that understanding which metaphysics, and implicitly philosophy as well, strive for, would imply only the exchange – of signified. The signifier, as a (material) bearer of the signified, is necessary evil to philosophy;

necessary because we cannot convey the signified (to other participants in a communicative process) beyond the signifier, the evil because the signifier *is not* the signified, and thus cannot be a part of ideal understanding. On the contrary, the signifier can bind to itself multiple signified which makes the very act of the transfer of ideal sense (hence meaning) more complex, more incomprehensible. Therefore, philosophy strives for deleting the signifiers, toward real understanding through the elimination of semantic noise and supplements. To put it briefly, metaphysics is interested in the truth (of sense).

The voice *is heard* (understood) – that undoubtedly is what is called conscience – closest to the self as the absolute effacement of the signifier: pure auto-affection that necessarily has the form of time and which does not borrow from outside of itself, in the world or in 'reality' any accessory signifier, any substance of expression foreign to its own spontaneity. It is the unique experience of the signified producing itself spontaneously, from within the self, and nevertheless, as signified concept, in the element of ideality or universality. The unwordly character of this substance of expression is constitutive of this ideality. This experience of the effacement of the signifier in the voice is not merely one illusion among many – since it is the condition of the very idea of truth... (Derrida 1997: 20).

However, is this tendency of metaphysics to completely isolate the signified realizable? In other words, is ideal understanding possible? Can the truth be conveyed by the means of language? By departing from the signifier, as we can see, metaphysics placed the signified deep in the interior of consciousness. (Of course, one should here be aware of the binary opposition, internal – external.) Both philosophy and philosophers (the better ones) hope that it is only here, at the furthestmost oases of

consciousness, that logos “produces itself spontaneously” whereby, as Derrida goes on to say, the very idea of truth is made possible. The truths liberated of ambiguity, interpretations, meaning, in short – language. However, it is difficult to imagine a semantic system (namely, language) which would respond to this request of metaphysics. The deconstruction of metaphysics, that is, the deconstruction of the linguistic sign structure, starts with the distrust toward the possibility of language to lead us to pure logos – to the signified without its signifier. Moreover, instead of the signified (that we are promised by metaphysics) we always reach new – signifiers; which means that signifiers are that much multiplied, if we try more to present the essence of the logos. In the greatest depths of consciousness, the door to sense will be opened to us by – signifiers.

Its argument [argument of philosophy – N. M.] can be summed up in the fact that the idea, concept keeps a certain difference from an expression, form, representation, word, and also keeps that difference in that which it refuses to be reduced to. [...] Thought differentiates itself from a word, so it resists being fully represented by it and reduced to it, but a word keeps that difference whereby it denotes its own unrepresentability and irreducibility (Milić 1997: 20).

An idea, that is, a concept that bears the signified in its ideality, can never be fully expressed by the signifier. Understanding is the selection process of sense which the signifier (a word) carries with itself. Ideal understanding in a communicative act does not exist; the understanding process itself is almost always an interpretation process that involves determining the signified through (always present) signifiers. “Thought can be generally determined as what is lacking speech, and vice versa, speech can be generally determined as that which lacks thought” (Milić 1997: 20). A language, through its

dyadic structure, always reminds us of that dissemination of sense, the absence of the promised logos. Thought attempts to break through the language, to crystallize its true *being*, but the breaking through is doomed in advance because it is based on a language (rules). Thus, language, not thought, becomes the subject of philosophy.

A sign, hence, bears within itself a certain semantic surplus, based on the non-identity of its elements, which needs to be clarified through other signs. However, according to the same principle, all those “other signs” demand identical semantic supplement (new signs) in order for the illusion of *absoluteness* of meaning to hold on. The inability of absolute apprehension of a sign, as we see it, is its inherent feature. That surplus (or deficit) of sense which the sign carries with itself, certainly, becomes even more complex when it is to be translated into another language. This inter-language boundary, to Cassin, becomes the point in which “untranslatability” is affirmed; the point in which a language keeps its autonomy in relation to sense.

To speak of *untranslatables* in no way implies that the terms in question, or the expressions, the syntactical or grammatical turns, are not and cannot be translated: the untranslatable is rather what one keeps on (not) translating. But this indicates that their translation, into one language or another, creates a problem, to the extent of sometimes generating a neologism or imposing a new meaning on an old word (Cassin 2014: XVII).

“The old word” includes all the whims of one culture’s language; those are specific semantic networks, idioms, implied knowledge, ironies, metaphors – all the pulsations of a living language. To translate all of that all at once, to fully solve that dictionary equation – is impossible. Consequently, the mathematical operation of translation is constantly ongoing. We, language consumers, thus satisfy our hidden metaphysical

desire; we are those who-wish-to-understand and we are those who, for the sake of additional explanation, do not shy away from burdening that which is being translated, with – more language. However, the untranslatable endures; it is not an anomaly that should be made transparent (by erasing signifiers) so that we could reach the concept, as metaphysics taught us, but the quality of language we are to count on when dealing with it. Translating is a process in which a living language is restrained, a process in which *decisions are made* about what will remain untranslated as well as what will be translated with one or two more words. Consequently, translating is a type of interpretation. A translator is a mediator between two living languages, two wor(l)ds whose wishes (logocentric ones) he attempts to reconcile – harmonize. He, of course, does not succeed in it, and knowing it frequently justifies himself (by footnotes, brackets, supplements) engaging, to his own demise, more signs, more living language.

A language is a place of interpretation – constant proliferation of signifiers. Abandoned by logos, or, perhaps more precisely, at constant *distance* from it, the language is left to its own devices. Barbara Cassin ascribes the main role in her *Dictionary of Untranslatables* precisely to *such* language. She does not reject it, nor condemn it due to its sophistic nature, but sees in it its special quality whereby it builds the world which we live in. It creates fictions which we (want to) believe in, and more than that, it creates the very illusion of logos! *It is not the language that is distant from logos, but the possibility of reaching logos is the fiction that was embodied by the language.* And of which it brazenly convinced us. “Origin”, “essence”, “being”, they are all part of an illusion game where, instead of the promised signifieds, we are given only – signifiers, empty shells of sense that we fill with those same signifiers. One such “the illusion of origin”, according to Barbara Cassin, is noticeable in doxography, in its manipulation and construction of facts on the basis of saved fragments of text.

“With doxography, the question of transmission is formulated as a question of hermeneutics, of meaning rather than of truth, and meaning oscillates endlessly between not enough and too much” (Cassin 2020: 8). In order to arrive at the original text, doxographers fill historical gaps with their own interpretations and methodological directions. They do not follow the tracks that would lead them to the place of origin, they create those tracks by themselves. Cassin demonstrates it in the example of Herman Diels’ *Doxographi Graeci*, where the author, by its own admission had to use “sourcery” to link different historical sources (Cassin 2020: 13–14). It appears that the language, not Diels, in one moment, assumes the role of a detective while searching for the “original” work. Namely, while comparing the saved fragments by Plutarch and Stobaeus, Diels tries to tie them historically to the lost text by certain Aetius, about whom we absolutely know nothing, and whose name is mentioned only once by Theodoret. However, Cassin points out an interesting fact that the name Aetius comes from the word *aitia* which means “cause”. “Would *you* believe in a writer called Aetius who is the cause of several texts and the main source of our pre-Socratics” (Cassin 2020: 13). In other words, the consequence of our knowledge about the pre-Socratics unmistakably led us toward the Cause. Language made an *intervention* here by helping us determine, form and *construct* one of the places of the origin of logos. Aetius appears to us as the one-who-knows, the one who can be marked as the place of origin, the epistemological support for Plutarch and Stobaeus. We can now certainly wonder what is the epistemological support to Aetius himself? What is the cause of the Cause? To answer this question, Diels’ “sorcery” had to delve even deeper into the past, further in history to the very source of logos – to Theophrastus. For this kind of work, Theophrastus was undoubtedly “inspired” by his teacher – Aristotle. The final source! The cause of all causes. It is evident, however, that Aristotle as well, had to use

sources... Language thus leads us from origin to origin, constituting its own epistemology. “In other words, nothing without doxography, but nothing with it, where nothing means: not something one could hold on” (Cassin 2020: 8). The origin is not the place of the beginning, the place of birth of logos, it is the place of – language. The origin should not be apprehended in the context of a linear structure, but rather as rhizome, which elusively spreads in all directions. It is, with its one part, always in the past – always in the origin. Rhizome arrives at the place of origin, it does not begin with it.

The power of language reflects in the simulation of ideality. The turmoil in the language is a consequence of its distance from the logos. It is simultaneously a prerequisite for the very knowledge of that same logos. Language promises logos (signified) to us, but instead leads us around the margins of sense, the traces of interpretations and dictionary explanations. Although we do not find logos, along the margins of those outlines of sense we find – solace. Cassin would say that we find – a home. “This feeling, at once overwhelming and gentle, is, like every origin, a chosen fiction that constantly gives clues so as to be taken for what it is, an adorable, human fiction, a cultural fact. [...] Just like language, a homeland ’is not something that belongs” (Cassin 2016: 3). The illusion of origin has therapeutic effect. And who can guarantee that the illusion is not more real than the experienced reality? (Cassin 2016: 48). We live through language and rely on that untranslatable “surplus” that, in a rhizome-like manner, binds to itself an ever-evolving chain of signifiers. On the margins of those branches, we come upon reference points of our contemplating existence. Those footholds, structurally speaking, represent centers around which special axiological systems are organized. Without those systems, there is no science, no epistemology, no “home”. We seek for them, and accept to be tricked (just like Diels who places all the causes of his epistemology in poor Aetius) only to find

metaphysical solace. Language both betrays us (because it does not lead us to logos) and saves us (because it shows us the clues of sense based on which logos should be found). On the margins of those clues, Babylon lives, language is here celebrated for the sake of language, truth here gives way to logology, but not so as to abolish logos, but to be *written* again. Language is not obliged to answer to truth, but the truth cannot be expressed beyond language. Doxography and psychoanalysis, to Cassin, are precisely two areas in which truth is not capable of following all the traces of linguistic performativity. Language branches, turns into itself, comes up with reference patterns on which it builds epistemological towers, only to, upon required by metaphysics to answer, turn them into towers of Babel. The truth is reduced to “lowly status it deserves” (Cassin 2020: 5), it is no longer a referent around which values are built, but – the effect of language. That effect, in the domain of psychoanalysis, can have therapeutic outcome. Actually, language in that sense becomes *pharmakon*, both medicine and poison depending on the dose used. Is *speech* not psychoanalytical means used to treat a patient? Therefore, Freud’s fascination with words, their “magical powers” which can make a person both blissfully happy and drive him to despair is not surprising (Cassin 2020: 42). Just like Diels, Freud as well needs to rely on magic to deal with all the rhizome capabilities of language. And while magic helped Diels determine origin, so far Freud used the magical aspect of language to – treat patients. However, just as in Diels’ *Aetius*, here we have a linguistic turn as well: *pharmakon* is in itself an impossible term, it is both poison and medicine. It is not a contradiction, it is its natural, marginal, Babylonian state, with which it observes logos from distance, whereby it reduces truth to “lowly status it deserves”. Both *pharmakon* and *Aetius* remain that “untranslatable” in the text, that which “keeps on (non) translating”. They are the Cause and the Contradiction authorized by language to

create and deconstruct logos, build and decompose linguistic towers, demolish and rebuild (write) epistemological foundations. In a word, they become irreducible and untranslatable qualities of Babylon.

Can we, however, trust language, if truth is no longer on the pedestal of epistemology? Doxography and psychoanalysis, as Cassin demonstrates, do not have an issue with it. They continue their lives (one to transmit the voices from the past, the other to heal the troubled ones in the present) in their full performative and sophistic swing. And that is an acknowledged life. The life that entered Universities and was given a voice to speak from the position of power (lectern). It is the language that teaches and heals and which inscribes its irreducibility and untranslatability into *Dictionary*. What, though, does this mean for metaphysics?

On what is present. Conclusion

The tendency to make truth present represents the main feature of metaphysical tradition of the West which Derrida calls – logocentrism. Reaching logos, the knowledge of essence of being, the source, is the main goal of philosophizing. Unlike sophistry, philosophy attempts to reach truth and show it as it is, and to, like an exhibit, make it *present* and available for all the future generations of the fans of wisdom. In the context of language, logocentrism has always been related to phonocentrism, “living word”, where the Father of expression, by his own presence, guaranteed accurate apprehension.

We already have a foreboding that phonocentrism merges with the historical determination of the meaning of being in general as *presence*, with all the subdetermination which depend in this general form and which organize within it their system and their historical sequence (presence of the thing to the sight as

eidos, presence as substance/essence/existence [*ousia*], temporal presence as point [*stigma*] of the how or of the moment [*nun*], the self-presence of the cogito, consciousness, subjectivity, the co-presence of the other and of the self, intersubjectivity as the intentional phenomenon of the ego, and so forth). Logocentrism would thus support the determination of the being of the entity as presence (Derrida 1997: 12).

A presence is a referent foothold of truth; it guarantees that an element cannot be deconstructed or subsequently structured. This presence is *logos*; the origin (place) of truth is determined here and signified (as) the center around which the structure is organized. “It could be shown that all the names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the center have always designated an invariable presence – *eidos*, *arche*, *telos*, *energia*, *ousia* (essence, existence, substance, subject), *alethia*, transcendentality, consciousness, God, man, and so forth” (Derrida 2005: 353). The tendency to determine the foundation, the main principle, on the basis of which a complex structure is to be explained (out of which this “foundation” is the central part of that structure) with a certain value system (where the center itself would represent the organizing principle of the structure and at the same time its most valuable part) is the starting point of metaphysics; science (or discourse in a wider sense) is, in this case, the means leading to the discovery of the presence of “fundamental principle”. “History and knowledge, *istoria* and *episteme* have always been determined (and not only etymologically or philosophically) as detours for the purpose of the reappropriation of presence” (Derrida 1997: 10). The shift of reference footholds (centers) refers to the logocentric tendency of metaphysics to reaffirm constantly, or re-establish, a new organizational principle which will give us the answer to the questions about the absolute origin and identity in the domain of the given structure. Science thus advances by conquering presence.

We consider dictionaries (i.e. the phenomenon of dictionary *writing*), in the context of linguistics, kind of historical event that marks a new conquest of presence. In the epistemological sense, it is the source (or new origin) of previously accumulated knowledge. Knowledge thus becomes a historical artifact. Of course, the relation of that knowledge toward language should not be overlooked. As long as language could guarantee the presence of logos, epistemology succeeded in holding fast the reins of scientific development, whose object of study was that very language. Simply put, language was there to direct us to logos, logos was there to explain to us what the essence of language was, and the development of science could be clearly understood within the domain of that circle. Language – epistemology – language, here is a successfully solved metaphysical equation. However, by criticizing metaphysics, that is, by deconstructing the structure of a linguistic sign, this rift between thinking and language had to, in a historical sense, produce a new kind of scientific landmark – Antidictionary. When, instead of a promised presence, we found just traces of that presence, language could no longer guarantee epistemological validity. It could simulate logos (origin, being, conscience, etc.), but could not make it present, so, instead of the previous tripartite structure language – epistemology – language, we have reached the triad: language – trace (language) – language.

What is the relationship between Dictionary and Antidictionary regarding epistemology? Let us consider dictionaries. In *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, the second sentence in a row, while describing the concept “epistemology”, begins with: “Its central question include...” (Blackburn 2005: 118). Metaphysics goes like this; authoritatively, from the lectern top, right in the center! A complete history of philosophy is concentrated in those “central questions”, all that has been discussed, what has been thought about for years, has been reduced to a few main, logos-filled points about the essence of epistemology. On the other hand,

in *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, under the term epistemology, Catharine Chavalley, among other things, says: “The work of epistemologist today makes the lost of unity in their vocabulary very clear, and they work as though under the assumption that in order to identify their problems, a map of the words is required first” (Chavalley 2014: 270). There where three great philosophical languages (English, German and French) meet, Chavalley says, there is little homogeneity in the context of understanding “epistemology”. There is no longer that logocentric authority we found in *The Oxford Dictionary*, that precise list of central questions on the coordinates where the fate of a single science rests. In *Antidictionary*, the issue of epistemology is related to the issue of various languages, in whose domains various kinds of untranslatability survive, which we have to assign various chains of signifiers, in a word, which we have to burden with – more language!

Dictionary of Untranslatables by Barbara Cassin was created as a consequence of a critical period in philosophy according to history of metaphysics. However, it is not possible to observe it outside of metaphysics, that is, outside of history of philosophy. It is a part of practice of philosophy in the West, its “modern” product, which makes it a reference point in a longtime structure of history of thought. To think of *Antidictionary*, as a philological milestone in critique of metaphysics is not possible without – *Dictionary*. By the same principle, to question epistemology cannot be done without – epistemology. To think away from logos, does not mean to disregard that very logos. Its gravitational force distorts language, betrays meaning, and yet again forms a certain structure of thought that has its own rules and norms (conventional, of course). How would we be able to think in another way? Is the entire history of aesthetics not an example of this? We can design a complex structure of the study of beauty, and never to learn what the *being* (essence) of beauty is. Is it not the same issue when it comes to ethics as well?

Is it not ultimately the same situation when it comes to Barbara's *Dictionary*? What amount of metaphysics and tradition this *Dictionary* drags along? Is it not explicitly stated in the Preface to the English edition? Thus, we can follow the genealogy of this *Dictionary*, from Reinhard Koselleck, through Emile Benveniste, all the way to Diderot's *Encyclopédie* (Apter 2014: VII). Just as Diels needs Aetius to determine the beginning (the origins) of his *Doxographi Graeci*, so Diderot is indispensable for Barbara Cassin to be able to orient herself in linguistic labyrinths of metaphysics. Here as well, the past had to be visited to get epistemological validity. The *Dictionary*, which proves to us that *logos* remains elusive, reaches for it itself. Successfully, as a matter of fact. A great number of researchers took part in creating this monumental work. They created a system, values, epistemology. All of this in order to deconstruct it. Never has history of metaphysics built a more stable foundation for its own criticism. What are the consequences? Here, we can undoubtedly talk about Derridean "rupture" (Derrida 2005: 353), the place of the division of structure into philosophy reflections. That division signifies the *established* beginning of critique of metaphysics. But also a new way of thinking. It does not necessarily mean the end of metaphysics, but the change in the manner of philosophizing. Instead of *logos*, the structure remains. Instead of *being*, there are values. Instead of philosophy, there is *Dictionary of Untranslatables*. Everything will, in a word, remain the same as before. However, without illusions. With an empty center as an organizing principle. On traces. So, we will meet somewhere half way between Babylon and *logos*. And we will know it.

WORKS CITED

- Apter, Emily. "Preface". *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*. Barbara Cassin (ed.). Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. VII–XV.
- Blackburn, Simon. *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Cassin, Barbara. "Introduction". *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*. Barbara Cassin. (ed.). Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014: XVII–XX.
- Cassin, Barbara. *Jacques the Sophist: Lacan, Logos, and Psychoanalysis*. Trans. by Michael Syrotinski. New York: Fordham University Press, 2019.
- Cassin, Barbara. *Nostalgia. When Are We Ever at Home?* Trans. by Pascale-Anne Brault. New York: Fordham University Press, 2016.
- Cassin, Barbara (ed.). *Vocabulaire Européen des Philosophies. Dictionnaire des Intraduisibles*. Paris: Edition du Seuil/Dictionnaires Le Robert. 2004.
- Chevalley, Catharine. "Epistemology". *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*. Barbara Cassin (ed.) Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. 269–273.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Limited Inc*. Trans. by Samuel Weber, Jeffrey Mehlman and Alan Bass. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988.

Derrida, Jacques. *Writing and Difference*. Trans. by Allan Bass. London and New York: Taylor and Francis e-Library, 2005.

Малешевић, Новак. *Теорија деконструкције и афирмација нихилизма у роману Зли дуси Ф. М. Достојевског*. Београд: Институт за књижевност и уметност, 2021.

Milić, Novica. 1997. *ABC dekonstrukcije*. Beograd: Narodna knjiga – Alfa, 1997.

Saussure, Ferdinand de. *Course in General Linguistics*. Trans. by Wade Baskin. New York: Philosophical Library, 1959.

Новак МАЛЕШЕВИЋ

БАРБАРА КАСЕН
КВАЛИТЕТ ВАВИЛОНА

Сажетак: Рад се бави анализом феномена *језика* у контексту *Рјечника непреводљивости* Барбаре Касен. За филозофију, или можда прецизније, за западну метафизику, питање *истине* било је несумњиво референтно упориште око којег је *мисао* морала да изгради сопствене темеље да би могла да понуди сопствене епистемолошке сазнајне моделе. Повјерењем у логос, или опет, прецизније, повјерењем у могућност досезања логоса, конституисала се научна пракса западног свијета. Међутим, проблем на који је метафизика наишла није се тицао (не) могућности постојања истине, него немогућности *језика* да досегне до те истине. Језик, располућен у самом себи (на ознаку и означено), није могао да „изађе из себе“, а да при томе не удари на – још језика. Свака филозофска (математичка) операција над језиком, увијек је резултирала одређеним (не)семантизованим остатком, остатком који је формирајући ланац ознака наставио да преноси поруку која само *подсјећа* на истину. Међутим, управо у том стању, када више није могао да испуњава основни задатак метафизике, Барбара Касен препознаје главни квалитет језика – његову *несводљивост*, његову *непреводљивост*. У овом тексту, пратећи Барбару Касен, покушаћемо да препознамо овакве – несводљиве – елементе језика и да истражимо структуру на којој се та несводљивост заснива и, коначно, да сагледамо семантички значај који из те несводљивости проистиче.

Кључне ријечи: *Рјечник непреводљивости*, Барбара Касен, метафизика, логос, епистемологија, језик