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**Paolo Bartoloni, *On the Cultures of Exile, Translation, and Writing***

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Developing his erudite concept of community beyond identity and universality, Giorgio Agamben once wrote: "the movement Plato describes as erotic anamnesis is the movement that transports the object not toward another thing or another place, but toward its own taking place" (1993: 2). It is precisely the attention to this "own-taking-place", as potential living space, that characterises Bartoloni's innovative discussion developed in *On the Cultures of Exile, Translation, and Writing* in which our very creativity hidden in the folds of life can possibly be found. A journey in time and space within an alternative understanding of subjectivity, which Bartoloni experiences through a process of distillation of different voices, ranging from Western thinkers including Agamben, Augustine, Benjamin, Heidegger, and major French, German, Italian writers of the twentieth century, particularly Blanchot and Caproni. Indeed, the wide range of interpretations emerging from these thinkers and writers — assiduously compared under the lens of potentiality — weaves an interdisciplinary net of manifold echoes resonating between remembering and forgetting, invention and modes of translations within which a new exploration of categories of being, such as exile, translation and temporality, are eminently contextualised and examined.

Illustrating his methodological considerations mainly based on the hermeneutic tradition of Heidegger's and Benjamin's ideas and thoughts — but nonetheless underscoring the relevance of both Blanchot's and Caproni's 'suspended' writing — Bartoloni demonstrates how the discourse of potentiality offers new trans-disciplinary venues for fruitful outcomes in the fields of both Comparative literature and Comparative cultural studies, thus turning our attention to 'an

open disposition' to simultaneously listen and experience the many voices of Western literary and philosophical tradition. From the opening pages it becomes immediately evident that, beyond narrow discipline boundaries and specificities, Bartoloni has programmatically decided to revisit and revise several philosophical and literary 'traces' of Western civilization, in order to provide excellent testimonial of a discussion which continues to evolve along with his ongoing interdisciplinary interests, leading him into new and exciting areas of research in literary theory, post-modern cultural analysis and hermeneutics. The structure of the book is decidedly original in the way every chapter is devoted to opening a window onto a critical discourse that offers new insights especially into the fields of study of "Translation", "Time", "Exile", and "Writing", which mutually integrate and coalesce from different directions, yet coming full circle at the end as parts of a coherent whole.

In the opening chapter, "Translation", the author demonstrates the indeterminate nature of language by focusing on its 'potential becoming', thus tracing a visible in-betweenness capable of synthesizing the richness of multiple voices not merely confined to the origin (*aletheia*). Here translation is defined as 'language-that-comes' which lies on the potentiality's openness to produce meanings by defying closure. This is particularly articulated in Leopardi's poetic experience of the 'solitary hill' as a place of ascetic transcendence described in "The Infinite". A poetic experience through which, in a brilliant and most convincing fashion, Bartoloni shows the process of translation no longer representing the original home of language and subjectivity, but, as he affirms, 'its living-room'. In the second chapter, potentiality is further analysed in relation to time and memory which both allow a mode of being "where singularity concretely encounters the community in a potentially powerful and empowering dialogue. In the language of potentiality resides the whole in its many facets and possibility — happiness, anger, joy, nostalgia, hope, anxiety, sadness, bliss — and it is here that our singularity as being can become dialogical and choral" (p. 78). Frequent references are made to Benjamin,

Heidegger and Augustine through which the author's skills of reflecting on time and memory are amply shown along with his strong encyclopaedic competence and, above all, his profound interest in seeing the dynamic subjectivity of the modern individual through the paradigm of plurality. This is illustrated for instance in the fascinating examples of some of the most powerful visual representations of the Baroque period. In the third chapter, by interrogating Plotinus's formula 'the flight of one alone into one,' the author succeeds admirably in helping readers to understand exile by thinking of memory as both philosophical and literary suspension, between metaphor and condition of experience, purposefulness and *flânerie*. With the fourth chapter, "Writing", the conventional experience of discovery is expanded by addressing the ontological significance of potentiality, particularly through the poetic and aesthetic affinity between Caproni's and Blanchot's writing, quintessential interface of both Hegel's and Heidegger's thought. This closing chapter also continues the epistemological search already problematised in Bartoloni's previous work, *Interstitial Writing* (2003), in which Caproni is explored along with other Italian writers in both his innate openness and his space of temporal immanency.

By voicing his objection to most of the current negative post-modern critiques, *On the Cultures of Exile, Translation, and Writing* displays Bartoloni's outstanding talent in bringing to light a hermeneutic and literary zone where received and monochromatic understandings of the phenomenon of globalization — along with its sub-narratives — are discarded in favour of what he tantalisingly calls 'waiting', an inter-zone of the 'meanwhile', ultimately open and capable of various prismatic configurations of potential voices and presences, resurfaced through the illuminating process of translation as 'event'. It is to Bartoloni's credit that he is able to see beyond some of the previously established divergent readings of contemporary key thinkers and authors, in which his accounts and judgments are constantly both stimulating and entertaining, even as he examines complicated theoretical, philosophical, literary and cultural issues,

thus taking a giant step in the direction of focusing on potentiality as a productive cross-cultural, trans-national and interdisciplinary approach.

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