

Title: Translation and Historical Difference—Or, Józef Tischner's Contemporaneity  
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**Abstract:**

This paper will reflect on the possible specificity of contemporary translation in Slavic contexts by presenting the historical, political, and methodological dilemmas that emerge from my practice of translating a Polish philosopher of the latter half of the twentieth century. What, if anything, might be particular to the Slavic context in the practices of translation it demands? And, is there anything we can learn about translation as such from attending to this context? These dilemmas, I contend, mirror the fate of the former Eastern Bloc as it undergoes integration and supposedly loses its specificity. I am in the process of translating and editing a volume of selected works from the oeuvre of Józef Tischner (in English, so far known for *The Spirit of Solidarity*, and *Marxism and Christianity*) that would present its contemporary relevance. “Translation in Slavic contexts” emerges here as quite a provocative phrase because—in the course of post-Soviet transitions, EU accession, and larger processes of globalization—the terms of otherness and location of difference have shifted and keep shifting. What counts as “native” to a culture, in other words, or what is ours and not ours, is open to renewed scrutiny and changes aspect. Translation as such, meanwhile, presupposes—and perhaps even demands and maintains—mutual categorical otherness of source and target cultures, of source and target texts. Slavic contexts frustrate this presumption of stability because they themselves are putatively unstable. The paper would trace the consequences of this for notions of authorial originality and of cultural singularity or universality that come into play in the course of translating Tischner.