The "Hermes Qualities": From Interpretative Translation to Translative Hermeneutics

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Before I address the philosophical and sociocultural importance of Hermeneutics, I would like to express my thankfulness to the International Institute of Hermeneutics and its President, Andrzej Wierciński, for the great honor to be elected *Professor honoris causa*. When I say "great honor" I mean not so much the title, but the professional recognition of colleagues, who are well known for their contribution and impact in the field of hermeneutics. In addition, being part of the IIH is for me a major thing in itself: on the one hand, because it became home for the main figures and specialists of philosophical and non-philosophical hermeneutics, and on the other, because this institution enables us to grasp better the distinction between hermeneutics and phenomenology. It is not my intention here to go on in this vein, but to outline that while we have dozens of phenomenological societies, which could not really be brought into communication with one another[1], with the foundation of the IIH

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[1] I will remind in this connection the foundation of the Organization of Phenomenological Organizations (OPO) in 2002, which intended to interconnect the phenomenological societies, including some hermeneutic and existential philosophy organizations. In 2011, Lester Embree, founder of the Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology (CARP) and main initiator of OPO, identified 186 phenomenological organizations (https://web.archive.org/web/20120331075851/http://phenomenologycenter.org/about/organizations/). Unfortunately, after his death in 2017, OPO ceased to exist and the fragile network broke apart.

Andrzej Wierciński arrived to create a highly effective academic forum. I think that the reason of his success consists in the communicative praxis of friendship and mutual esteem, which he built on the basis of the hermeneutic community.

My personal interest in hermeneutics has been around since my student days, when I wrote my master thesis on "The Ethical Meaning of Sacrifice" (1984) and, later, my doctoral thesis on the relation between French personalism and existential philosophy (1988). In both works I used the approach of a comparative hermeneutics. Later, in 1990, after I began to translate Jean-Paul Sartre's *L'être et le néant* from French into Bulgarian, and thereafter Paul Ricoeur's *Le conflit des interprétations*, I realized that interpretation (*Deutung*)—maybe not exclusively but specially—is the *conditio sine qua non* of translation of philosophical texts.[2] Through my close readings of Paul Ricoeur and the Austrian philosopher Leo Gabriel, I extended both the concept of translation and that of hermeneutics, moving consequently from the specific topic of "interpretative translation" to the broader and complex field of what I call "translative hermeneutics." In regard to the latter, I would like here to argue very briefly that since their beginnings hermeneutics and translation were closely interwoven and that, in order to grasp this linkage, we need to go far back to the mythological and religious roots of hermeneutics and to progress then gradually to some contemporary models of hermeneutic understanding. What is at stake here is to apply the Sartrean regressive-progressive method yet not in order to explain the individual existence, but the human capacities of interpretation and translation and their hermeneutic practice.[3] This will enable us to show the different ways in which hermeneutics were/is/can be used or abused and to open up some perspectives for its positive sociocultural application.

Hermes, the God of "In-between"

Trying to provide a brief answer to the question: "What is hermeneutics?" authors often refer to the etymology or/and to some definition given by the founders of this modern discipline. In some reference works we can find also detailed explanations, which describe the diverse fields of hermeneutics (bible hermeneutics, literary

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[2] See Yvanka B. Raynova, "Philosophische Übersetzung zwischen 'sprachlicher Gewaltanwendung' und translativer Hermeneutik. Translatorische Überlegungen aus der Sicht der Übersetzung(en) von Jean-Paul Sartres 'L'être et le néant'", *in Labyrinth: An International Journal for Philosophy, Value Theory and Sociocultural Hermeneutics*, vol. 21, No. 2, (2019):9-23, DOI: https://doi.org/10.25180/lj.v21i2.190.
[3] See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of dialectical reason*, translated by Alan Sheridan-Smith, New York: Verso 2004, 15, 52, 55.

hermeneutics, historical hermeneutics, legal hermeneutics, etc.) and distinguish them from a "general hermeneutics." Various questions arise from here, e.g., are "general" and "philosophical" hermeneutics the same thing? Who can be considered as the father of the "philosophical hermeneutics?" Should we reserve this label just for Gadamer's conception, etc. Without doubt, all these questions, explanations and discussions are legitime and necessary. Yet, such debates seem often to overlook the entanglement between the etymology, different myths and narratives about the ancient God Hermes, and the historical developments of hermeneutics.

A glimpse at the etymology of "hermeneutics"—a word, which is derived from the Greek ἑρμᾱνεύω,—shows us the following meanings:[4] to interpret foreign tongues, to translate; to put into words, to express; to proclaim, to announce; to describe or write about; to articulate. *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* also derives ἑρμᾱνεύω "from Ἑρμῆς, who was held to be the god of speech, writing, eloquence, learning."[5] Although some philologues deny such a connection, the link between the multiple meanings of ἑρμᾱνεύω and the multifaced representations of Hermes is not coincidental. Heidegger even maintains that this connection can be "more compelling than the rigor of science:"

> Der Ausdruck "hermeneutisch" leitet sich vom griechischen Zeitwort ἑρμηνεύειν her. Dies bezieht sich auf das Hauptwort ἑρμηνεύς, das man mit dem Namen des Gottes Ἑρμής zusammenbringen kann in einem Spiel des Denkens, das verbindlicher ist als die Strenge der Wissenschaft. Hermes ist der Götterbote. Er bringt die Botschaft des Geschickes; ἑρμηνεύειν ist jenes Darlegen, das Kunde bringt, insofern es auf eine Botschaft zu hören vermag. Solches Darlegen wird zum Auslegen dessen, was schon durch die Dichter gesagt ist, die selber nach dem Wort des Sokrates in Platons Gespräch ION (534e) ερμηνης εἰσιν τών θεών „Botschafter sind der Götter." [...] Aus all dem wird deutlich, daß das Hermeneutische nicht erst das Auslegen, sondern vordem schon das Bringen von Botschaft und Kunde bedeutet (GA 12, 115).[6]

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[4] See Liddell–Scott–Jones (LSJ) https://lsj.gr/wiki/ἑρμηνεύω; Georg Wilhelm Pape, Griechisch-Deutsches Handwörterbuch, Braunschweig 1880, https://www.translatum.gr/images/pape/pape-01-1033.png

[5] See https://biblehub.com/thayers/2059.htm

[6] "The expression 'hermeneutic' derives from the Greek verb hermeneuein. That verb is related to the noun hermeneus, which is referable to the name of the god Hermes by a playful thinking that is more compelling than the rigor of science. Hermes is the divine messenger. He brings the message of destiny; hermeneuein is that exposition which brings tidings because it can listen to a message. Such exposition becomes an interpretation of what has been said earlier by the poets who, according to

Thus, Heidegger, following Homer, Hesiod, and partially Plato, sees in Hermes the "herald," the so called "luck-bringing messenger of the immortals."[7] But to understand the figure of Hermes, it is necessary to show the ambiguity and all the dualities it implies. This is already indicated in *Cratylus*. Explaining the name of Hermes, Socrates states:

> I should imagine that the name Hermes has to do with speech, and signifies that he is the interpreter (ermeneus), or messenger, or thief, or liar, or bargainer; all that sort of thing has a great deal to do with language; as I was telling you the word eirein is expressive of the use of speech, and there is an often-recurring Homeric word emesato, which means "he contrived"—out of these two words, eirein and mesasthai, the legislator formed the name of the God who invented language and speech (Plat. Crat. 407e-408a).

Hermes appears also as a God, who is on the one side the messenger of the Olympian Gods, but on the other side a trickster and a liar. Where does this ambiguity come from and how is it to be understood? According Socrates, the reason lies in language itself, because "speech signifies all things (pan), and is always turning them round and round, and has two forms, true and false" (Plat. Crat. 408c). The true part, he adds, is smooth and divine and dwells aloft among the gods, but falsehood dwells below among human beings, and is rough like tragedy. This explanation is given in fact as an illustration of the double-nature of Pan, the son of Hermes, who, as Socrates put it, is smooth in his upper parts and rough and goat-like in his lower parts. However, if we take a closer look at the myth, we will see that Hermes himself appear to have a double nature, even though he is an Olympian God and not a mixed creature like Pan.

According to Hesiod, Homer, and other ancient authors, Hermes was the son of Zeus, the "sky Father," the shining God, and of the "mountain nymph"[8] Maia,

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Socrates in Plato's Ion (534e), hermenes eisin ton theon-"are interpreters of the gods." [...] All this makes it clear that hermeneutics means not just the interpretation but, even before it, the bearing of message and tidings" (Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, translated by Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper and Row, 1971, 29).

[7] See Homer, *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica* with an English Translation by Hugh G. Evelyn-White (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA/London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1914), online: https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0138%3Ahymn%3D4 and http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0130%3Acard%3D938.

[8] In Greek Mythology, the nymphs as female spirits of the natural world (forests, rivers, fields, mountains, seas) represented Goddesses lower rank as the Olympic deities. They were not all

daughter of the Titan Atlas and the Oceanid Pleione. Hermes was born in a cave on Mont Cyllene in Arcadia, where his mother lived and secretly entertained a relationship with Zeus. This gives us already an indication of the celestial and chthonic lineage of Hermes. In his *Hymn to Hermes*, Homer describes Hermes as very vital and ingenious, as an inventor of the lyre, of fire, of sacrifice.[9] He tells the fun story about how a few hours after his birth, Hermes secretly escaped from his cradle. The first thing he saw was a turtle, which he killed and, by covering her back armor with strings, invented the lyre. Soon bored, he went to Thessaly and stole fifty oxen from his half-brother Apollon. In order to eradicate the traces, he made the cattle walk backwards and covered his own footprints. Then slaughtered two of the animals, made a fire, roasted them and offered them as a sacrifice to the Gods. After hiding the rest of the cattle, he returned to the cave of his birth. When Apollo noticed the theft and came to reclaim his herd, he found Hermes laying in the cradle like a baby and playing the innocent. Apollo dragged him to Zeus, where Hermes, after lies and denials, finally confessed the theft and agreed to return the cattle. Yet, as Apollo heard him playing the lyre, he was so enchanted that he was willing to forgive and reconcile with him, if he becomes the instrument in exchange. Apollo even gave Hermes a golden shepherd's crook, the caduceus—Hermes' most emblematic item—which had the ability to grant blessings and wealth. Henceforth the two brothers became best friends and companions, and Hermes was appointed by Zeus to be his messenger and psychopomp, leading the souls to the underworld.

From this Hymn we can deduce some important characteristics of Hermes, namely his agility, movability, playfulness, ingenuity, creativity, eloquence. We can hereby assume that because of these qualities Zeus made him messenger and guide of the souls, i.e., a mediator between the opposite realms of the divine and the human, of life and death, of the eternal and the ephemeral, of truth and deception. This in-betweenness, i.e., *intermediary role*, as well as the *mediation skills* are maybe the most important feature in regard of the subject of hermeneutics.

I have cited above Plato's *Cratylus* by choosing one of the most trusted and utilized English translations, that of Benjamin Jowett.[10] Let us repeat it again:

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immortal. According Homer, they "rank neither with mortals nor with immortals" as they live very, very long but are also subject to the "faith of death" (see Homer, *Hymn 5 to Aphrodite*, https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0138%3Ahymn%3D5)

[9] See "Hymn 4 to Hermes". Perseus Digital Library, Tufts University http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0138:hymn=4

[10] Plato, *Cratylus*, translated by Benjamin Jowett, online: http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/cratylus.html

> I should imagine that the name Hermes has to do with speech, and signifies
> that he is the interpreter (ermeneus), or messenger, or thief, or liar, or
> bargainer; all that sort of thing has a great deal to do with language. (Plat.
> Crat. 407e-408a)

But there are also other translations. Harold N. Fowler[11], e.g., translates Socrates'
sentence in a slightly different way:

> Well then, this name 'Hermes' seems to me to have to do with speech; he is
> an interpreter (ἑρμηνεύς) and a messenger, is wily and deceptive in speech,
> and is oratorical. All this activity is concerned with the power of speech. (Plat.
> Crat. 407e-408a)

Obviously, the difference between these two translations is a difference of
interpretation: While Jowett's translation emphasizes the fraudulent behavior of
Hermes, due to "a great deal" with the "nature" of language, Fowler accentuates his
oratorical skills and the "power of speech." Yet both, Jowett and Fowler, translate
ἑρμηνεύς as "interpreter," a word that is ambiguous because it includes the ability to
interpret as well as that to translate. That is why it is not surprising that in the German
translation of *Cratylus*, Schleiermacher translates ἑρμηνεύς as Dolmetscher,[12] i.e., as
interpreter in the sense of translator but also in the sense of someone who is able to
interpret the meaning behind the words. The duality between language and speech
which appears in *Cratylus*, is an important milestone on the way to medieval and
modern accounts of hermeneutics as interpretation of the diverse levels of meaning of
a text – the literal, the allegorical, the moral, the anagogical (mystical). On this way we
encounter the allegoric and the symbolic interpretations of mythological narratives
(Heraclitus, Cornutus, Porphyry), the exegetics of the Bible and other sacred texts,
diverse mystical and esoteric interpretations, including gnosis and hermeticism. From
the antiquity—specially in Neo-Pythagoreanism and Neo-Platonism—to our days,
there were and still are tendencies to see in Plato's dialogues some allegoric and even
encoded messages.[13] And this is not astonishing as Plato, who criticized the allegorists

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[11] See Plato*, Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 12 translated by Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge, MA, Harvard
University Press/London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1921).

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[13] According Sean D. Kirkland "Plato presents the essential ambivalence of logos not only in Socrates'
elenctic arguments, but also in the etymology of Hermes, where the possession of language is a cryptic
message indicating to humans a divine wisdom" (Sean D. Kirkland, "Logos as the Message from the

(Rep. II 378d–378e; Pl. Tht. 18cd), used himself allegories (e.g., that of the Cave). Yet, Plato's critique of Homer's immorality and impiety led some authors like Heraclitus to take the defense of the author of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. According to Heraclitus, Homer would be the greatest blasphemer, if we take literally his tales. But everything comes in a completely other light, when we take an allegoric account, including different levels of interpretation: first, a *physical exegesis*, which connects elements of the Homeric poems to natural phenomena, second, a *moral exegesis*, which uncovers some hidden messages, and third, a *historical exegesis*, which gives a rational explanation of certain text fragments. I will quote and briefly analyze here an excerpt of Heraclitus' *Homeric Problems* because it offers some detailed explanations, which can be insightful in regard of the connection if we want to uncover the link between the Hermes myth and a contemporary understanding of hermeneutics.

> The tradition gives Hermes as their leader, showing that one's favors must be reasonable—not given at random, but to those who are worthy of them, since someone who meets with a lack of gratitude becomes more reluctant to do good in the future. And 'Hermes' happens to be reason [Logos – Y.R.], the preeminent possession of the gods, which they sent to us from heaven, making man alone of the terrestrial animals rational. He is named from contriving to speak [er(ein) mēs(asthai)], that is, to talk, or from being our bulwark [eruma] and stronghold, so to speak. […] And he is 'Argeiphontes,' as if the word were argephantes, because it illuminates [phae(nien)] everything brightly and clarifies [(sa)phēn(izein)] it—for the ancients used the word argos for 'bright,' or else because of the speed of sound, since argos means 'swift' as well. […] The tradition makes him the herald of the gods, and he was said to announce their doings to men. He is a herald because a herald uses a loud voice to present rational meaning to an audience, and he is a messenger because we know the will of the gods from the concepts rationally instilled in us. That he wears winged sandals and is carried through the air is consistent with the idea of 'winged words,' as they have been called. […] And mythology represents Hermes as the Conductor of Souls, associating with him its proper task of guiding souls. Anyway, this is why they put in his hand a wand "with which he charms the eyes of those men he wishes" (obviously the eyes of the mind) "but again rouses others, even the sleeping." […] And the snakes which twine around and complete the aforementioned wand, the wand which looks like a

messenger's wand, are a symbol of the fact that the savage, too, are bewitched and charmed by it [reason]; it resolves their differences and binds them together with a knot which is hard to undo. For this reason the herald's wand seems to be a 'peacemaker.' […] They said that Hermes was born to Zeus from 'Maia,' again suggesting through this that reason is the offspring of contemplation and inquiry; those who help women deliver [maioumenai] are thus called midwives [maiai] because, as in the case of inquiry, they bring something to light—the fetus. [...] He is set up on roads [en hodois] and is called 'Wayside' [enodios] and 'Guiding,' as it is necessary to use it as guide in every action, and because it leads us in our planning down the path we need, and perhaps also because it needs solitude to be refreshed and cultivated. Because reason is shared, and the same in all men and in the gods, it is customary for someone who finds something as he goes along a road to say 'Hermes in common! […] He is also, reasonably, the first to be called god 'of the Agora'; for he is overseer of public speakers [agoreuontes]. And from the 'agora,' he also extends to those who trade agorazontes] and sell, as everything should be done in line with reason. From here he came to be thought of as the superintendent of the markets and was named god "of Business" and 'of Profit' [kerdōios], since it [reason] alone is the cause of true profit [kerdos] for men. He is the inventor of the lyre, as of the harmony and consistency by which those alive are happy, when it falls to them to have a well-adjusted disposition. […] He is called god 'of Law' [nomios] because the purpose of reason is rectification; it is prescriptive of those things that must, for the good of the community, be done and proscriptive of things not to be done.[14] (75-81)

In this interpretation we see that Heraclitus presents Hermes not as a simple messenger but as a leader, i.e., as the one, who has the abilities and the mission to lead the human beings in all their affairs. And he is a leader, because he is (the) logos. It seems that the presentation of a Messenger of God, who is sent to a human group as a spiritual leader, as a Savior or a Messiah, has something "archetypical," as it is to be found in diverse cultures and narratives. This enabled the successive identifications of Hermes with other Gods (Toth, Mercury) and/or historic figures (Moses, Enoch, Idris). Furthermore, the merging of Hermes with the logos led some Christian exegetics to see in the pagan God an anticipation of Jesus Christ as the incarnation of the divine Logos.[15] These "archetypic" traits are in a certain sense present in Heraclitus'

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[14] Heraclitus, *Homeric problems* (Atlanta : Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 75-78.
[15] This is the case in the *Apology* of St. Justin the Martyr (Apology 1:22), whereby the reference to John 1:1, "At the beginning was the Word (Logos)," is obvious.

interpretation that shows Hermes as a leader, a guide, an instructor as well as a helper/savior whose mission is to bring to the humankind the divine gift of language and reason (logos), and thus "good luck," insofar as the logos is understood as the basis of everything that is good. In this context logos signifies the rational meaning expressed through language, which helps to clarify a situation, an event, a "state of affairs," or—as later Gadamer will put it—a meaning context (*Sinnzusammenhang*). At the difference of Socrates' and Plato's understanding of logos in *Cratylus*, which stresses out the ambiguity of language,[16] Heraclitus tries to constitute an entirely positive image of Hermes and therefore to dissolve the duality of the logos. This is achieved by interpreting the logos as reason and by the trivialization of some negative connotations, e.g., the appellations "Argeiphontes" ("slayer of Argus") and "thief," through the use of astute etymological explanations. Hence, Hermes is exculpated from the slain of the giant Argus, because Heraclitus manages to associate the epithet Argeiphontes etymologically with bright light, i.e., illumination or clarification by the action of the logos. And again, the epithet "thief" is explained as a specific use of reason:

> Some people wished to establish his power through incongruous images as well and made it part of the tradition that he was a thief, and there are those who build altars to Hermes the Deceitful because it stealthily erases the beliefs a man previously held, and there are times when, by persuasion, it steals away the truth—in cases where it is said that someone is using "thieving words." And in fact the ability to use sophisms belongs to people who know how to use reason. (ibid.)

In other words, Heraclitus explains everything what is said about Hermes as an allegory referring to his being as logos. Hermes as the son of Zeus from 'Maia,' is an indication that "reason is the offspring of contemplation and inquiry." He is the God of the Agora, because he teaches people the right measure and shows that "everything should be done in line with reason." The snakes which twine around the caduceus represent the charming of the savage and primitive forces with help of reason, and consequently the resolution of differences or conflicts makes Hermes appear as the God of Peace. Furthermore, Hermes is the God of Law, because "the purpose of reason is

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[16] This ambiguity is specially emphasized by Montgomery Ewegen in his explanation of *Cratylus*: "As the shifty, deceitful progenitor of λόγος, Hermes imbues λόγος with a certain fatal ambiguity, rendering it capable of both truth and falsity" (Shane Montgomery Ewegen, *Plato's Cratylus: The Comedy of Language*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013, 27).

rectification", i.e., prescription of those things that must be done or not for the good and the prosperity of the community. Thus, by means of figure of Hermes-Logos, reason, word, communication and community are interconnected not only in a vertical way, by the message or orders of the Gods to the humans, but also in a horizontal way, by enabling intersubjective and social relations. It is particular the horizontal level, as I will show in the last section of this paper, that is explored by translative hermeneutics with the aim to unfold the sociocultural dimensions, possibilities and tasks of contemporary hermeneutics.

The "Hermes Qualities" or the Prerequisites of Interpretative Translation

As we have seen, the diverse meanings of ἑρμᾱνεύω (to interpret foreign tongues, to translate; to put into words, to express; to proclaim, to announce; to describe or write about; to articulate) have found expression through the myth of Hermes. All these aspects and the other qualities of Hermes that we have enumerated refer to what I would call the "Hermes qualities" that we as hermeneuticians should try to cultivate. Furthermore, while the name and the epic of Hermes have been closely connected by Socrates and Plato with the ambiguity of the logos and his manifold meanings, other authors like Heraclitus have tried to overcome any duality by univocal allegoric explanations. What I will try to show in this regard is, first, that hermeneutics has always to do with the ambiguities of language, which are to be found on different levels of understanding and that these ambiguities should not be ignored, nor concealed, but unveiled and explored. Thus, we have to accept that a text can have different interpretations and even enter into the a "conflict of interpretations."[17] Second, and this my central point, there is a complex relation between hermeneutic interpretation and translation, which has not been enough reflected. It is on this level that the ambiguities of language show up most evidently. It would be not difficult to demonstrate that different interpretations lead to different translations, including misunderstandings or wrong translations. But the thesis that I would like to argue goes in a double direction, namely, that it is not only translation that needs (adequate) interpretation but also interpretation cannot be without (adequate) translation, because interpretation is in a certain manner already a sort of translation. Finally, to achieve an

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[17] P. Ricoeur, *The conflict of interpretations. Essays in hermeneutics* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1974).

adequate translation we need special skills like creativity and invention, which are precisely "Hermes qualities" par excellence.

There are few authors who have expressly emphasized the relation between hermeneutic interpretation and translation. In his extensive article on "Hermeneutics," written for a German encyclopedia of religion, Gerhard Ebeling states that the origin of ἑρμηνεύω is controversial, but it has been used in three different ways: in the sense of "to express" (aussagen/ausdrücken), to explain (auslegen/erklären) and to translate (übersetzen/dolmetschen).[18] He notes, that from point of view of language history none of them has priority but all three refer to the fundamental meaning of "convey understanding" and thus are structurally related. Following Ebeling Richard Palmer clarifies:

> All three meanings may be expressed by the English verb 'to interpret,' yet each constitutes an independent and significant meaning of interpretation. Interpretation, then, can refer to three rather different matters: an oral recitation, a reasonable explanation, and a translation from another language—both in Greek and in English usage. Yet one may note that the foundational "Hermes process" is at work: in all three cases, something foreign, strange, separated in time, space, or experience is made familiar, present, comprehensible; something requiring representation, explanation, or translation is somehow 'brought to understanding'— is "interpreted."[19]

Palmer illustrates this by showing that even simply saying, asserting, or proclaiming is an important act of interpretation, and that words, after all, do not merely say something but explain something, rationalize it, make it clear. Translation as another basic interpretative process goes into action when we encounter different languages and texts. Palmer points out that problems of translation are not just of linguistic nature but of worldview having to do with historic and cultural differences:

> The act of translation is not a simple mechanical matter of synonym-finding, as the ludicrous products of translation machines

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[18] Gerhard Ebeling, "Hermeneutik", in: *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft* (3. Auflage, Bd. 3, Tübingen: Mohr, 1959), 242-243.

[19] Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics. Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer.* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), 13-14.

make only too clear, for the translator is mediating between two
different worlds. Translation makes us aware of the fact that
language itself contains an overarching interpretation of the world,
to which the translator must be sensitive even as he translates
individual expressions.[20]

This social, cultural and historic background that the text deploys, discovers,
and reveals is thematized by Ricoeur, under influence of Gadamer, as "le monde du
texte" (the world of the text) or "la chose du texte" (the thing of the text)[21], and
constitutes, as I will show, the basis of the interconnected domains of interpretative
translation, translative hermeneutics and sociocultural hermeneutics. The contextual
side of hermeneutics has been specially outlined by Gadamer not only in *Truth and
Method*[22], but also in his excellent article on *Hermeneutics*[23] published in the prestigious
Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie, edited by Joachim Ritter. Gadamer points out
there that hermeneutics is the art of proclaiming, translating, explaining and
interpreting, where proclaiming is not just informing, but explaining divine commands
in such a way that the messenger [Hermes] *translates* them into mortal language and
intelligibility:

Hermeneutik ist die Kunst des ermhneyein, d.h. des Verkündens,
Dolmetschern, Erklärens und Auslegens. Hermes hieß der
Götterbote, der die Botschaften der Götter den Sterblichen
ausrichtet. Sein Verkünden ist offenkundig kein bloßes Mitteilen,
sondern Erklären von göttlichen Befehlen, und zwar so, daß er
diese in sterbliche Sprache und Verständlichkeit übersetzt. Die
Leistung der Hermeneutik besteht grundsätzlich immer darin, einen
Sinnzusammenhang aus einer anderen «Welt» in die eigene zu
übertragen. Das gilt auch von der Grundbedeutung von ermhneia,
die «Aussage von Gedanken» ist, wobei der Begriff der Aussage

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[20] Ibid., 27.

[21] Paul Ricœur, *Du texte à l'action. Essais d'herméneutique*, (Paris: Seuil, 1986, 130); Eng. *From Text to
Action. Essays in Hermeneutics II* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 95-96.

[22] Gadamer states there that "the verbal process whereby a conversation in two different languages is
made possible through translation is especially informative. Here the translator must translate the
meaning to be understood into the context in which the other speaker lives," (Hans-Georg Gadamer,
Truth and method (revised second edition), London/New York: Bloomsbury 2004, 402).

[23] Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Hermeneutik", in J. Ritter (Hrsg.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Bd.
3 (Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe und Co., 1974), 1061-1073.

selber vieldeutig ist, Äußerung, Erklärung, Auslegung und Übersetzung umfassend[24]

Although Gadamer do not go in this article into the details of translation, it becomes clear from that definition that he uses the notion of translation in a broader sense, i.e., not just as translation from a language into another, but as a *transfer of a meaning context* (*Sinnzusammenhang*) from another world into the own. This implies, in my opinion, that hermeneutics is always a sort of translation, even in *Truth and Method* Gadamer maintains the contrary: "Where there is understanding, there is not translation but speech. To understand a foreign language means that we do not need to translate it into our own."[25] Translation is needed, according Gadamer, only when we do not understand a language. And because the translator must translate the meaning to be understood into the context in which the other speaker lives, i.e., in a "new language world", this process implies always a kind of interpretation. Gadamer explains:

> When we really master a language, then no translation is necessary—in fact, any translation seems impossible. Understanding how to speak is not yet of itself real understanding and does not involve an interpretive process; it is an accomplishment of life. For you understand a language by living in it—a statement that is true, as we know, not only of living but dead languages as well. Thus the hermeneutical problem concerns not the correct mastery of language but coming to a proper understanding about the subject matter, which takes place in the medium of language. Every language can be learned so perfectly that using it no longer means translating from or into one's native tongue, but thinking in the foreign language. Mastering the language is a necessary precondition for coming to an understanding in a conversation. Every conversation obviously presupposes that the two speakers speak the same language.[26]

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[24] Ibid., 1061.

[25] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and method* (revised second edition), London/New York: Bloomsbury 2004, 402-403.

[26] Ibid., 403.

This explanation is equivocal as Gadamer plays between a broader and a narrow meaning of translation and of language as well. On the one hand translation is according him a transfer of a meaning context because "the translator must translate the meaning to be understood into the context in which the other speaker lives," which means that "every translation is at the same time an interpretation."[27] Thus, translation "is" at same time hermeneutics. But on the other hand, translation is a specific transfer from a foreign language in the native tongue, e.g., from Greek to German, so it is not just hermeneutic interpretation but has to do also with the "mastering of language." We can agree that to understand a language, especially a foreign language, one must "live in it" so that the knowledge of the language is just a precondition. The dialectic between both is a process that we could call, following Gadamer and Ricoeur, "appropriation" (Aneignung, appropriation), i.e., the approach "to make one's own what was initially alien."[28] And the best way to do that is to enter in a live communication with others, if we have the chance, and not just to learn a language from dictionaries and textbooks. But can we really learn a language so "perfectly," that there is no more a sole unknown word and thus never the need of any lingual translation? Even in our mother tongue we cannot know all words and need sometimes to use a vocabulary or a search engine when it comes to technical terminology. If we no longer need to translate what the other says, it is because we understand him/her immediately, i.e., without mediation. To put it differently, when we truly live in a foreign language, we no longer need to translate (to ourselves) words and meanings because we did already in the past some translation work that we memorized so that our brain or mind works like a simultaneous interpreter (*Simultandolmetscher*). Let me clarify this.

In the most language dictionaries translation is defined as a transfer of a meaning from a language to another language. Etymologically, it refers to the Old French *translater* and to the Latin *translatus* "carried over," serving as past participle of *transferre* (Lat.), which means "bear across, carry over, bring through; transfer, copy, translate," from trans "across, beyond, through, on the other side of, to go beyond"[29]. Translation, in the broader sense that I comprehend it and use it, is always a transfer from place/point A to a place/point B. Thus, every thought or idea that we express discursively, even in the mother tongue, is always a kind of translation, i.e., of

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[27] Ibid., 402.

[28] Paul Ricoeur, "Appropriation," in J. B. Thompson, ed., Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (New York: Cambridge University, 1981, 182-193), 185.

[29] See the *Online Etymology Dictionary* by Douglas Harper:
https://www.etymonline.com/word/translate

exteriorization of the inner world. Even more, every cognition or perception is a sort of translation as it transfers an information from the outside/inside to the inside so we gain an insight into something. Accordingly, my point here is—at the difference of Gadamer—that in communication with others or with ourselves (reflection as inner speech) we always carry out a sort of translation, which happens in a circular process where translation is interwoven with study, reflection, interpretation (*Deutung*), explanation, understanding, and lingual expression, oral or written, as the result of translation. This circular process begins with our being-in-the-world, i.e., with the experience of the world and the community with the other, the being-with (*Mitsein*). Through this experience the child learns to speak, later to read and to write, to count etc., it becomes familiar with the own culture, customs and history, i.e., with the own sociocultural lifeworld. In this never-ending learning process, we always need other people to explain us things that we do not understand, to deepen and widen our knowledge, and vice versa—we pass our experience and knowledge to our children or other persons. In learning and education, explanation is always connected with translation as the teacher has to transfer the content of knowledge to a level, which make it understandable to the student. His work can be described exactly in the way Gadamer explains translation—"the meaning must be preserved, but since it must be understood within a new language world, it must establish its validity within it in a new way."[30] The student for his part has to reflect the content and effectuate a sort of transfer that I would call "translative appropriation." Only in that way, the teacher and the student can encounter each other in a "common world of understanding."[31] This makes clear why translation, understood in the broad meaning I use it, could be utilized, especially in combination with hermeneutics, as a mediation tool in conflict situations—a subject to which I shall return.

Let us now take a look at translation understood in the narrow sense as a transfer of a meaning from a source language (A) to a target language (B). We encounter here three forms of translation: oral translation, which has been divided in consecutive and simultaneous, written translation, and hybrid translation, known also as "sight translation," where the source text is seen and has to be more or less simultaneously translated.[32] These forms have their specificities; accordingly, diverse

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[30] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and method*, 402.
[31] Ibid.
[32] See Dragsted, Barbara et Hansen, Inge G., "Exploring Translation and Interpreting Hybrids. The Case of Sight Translation," *Meta*, 54(3) 2009:588–604. https://doi.org/10.7202/038317ar

methods were developed in the translation studies.[33] As my main interest is to show the importance of *interpretative translation* as an essential element of translative hermeneutics, I will limit my analyses to written translation and even to a special case of it, namely to the translation of philosophical texts. On this occasion, I should clarify that my conception of "*translative hermeneutics*" (*translative Hermeneutik*), which is based on the broader sense of translation, is not identical or analogical to what some authors refer to as "*translational hermeneutics*" (*Übersetzungshermeneutik*). Translational hermeneutics is a relatively new field of research in the translation studies that takes its point of departure from the translator's perspective. It's guiding question is about how a translator deals with the texts, how he/she has to translate. From this perspective are established diverse principles of hermeneutic translation as subjectivity, historicity, phenomenology, process character, holistic nature, and reflection, which form its theoretical frame.[34] In other words, translational hermeneutics is not a new type of hermeneutics, rather it uses hermeneutics as a paradigm for translation and explication of translation. Translative hermeneutics, on the contrary, is the elaboration of a sociocultural type of hermeneutics, which seeks to broaden the philosophical perspectives and the application options of hermeneutics, e.g., by unveiling the possibilities of manipulation and abuse of language and discourse as well as the hermeneutic possibilities of mediation and conflict resolution. My version of "interpretative translation" *(interpretative Übersetzung)* crosses some of the questions posed by "translational hermeneutics," but it is focused on the translation of philosophical texts and its very own particularities, and hence it is based on other principles. One example: While the point of departure of translational hermeneutics is the principle of subjectivity, interpretative translation parts from the principle of intersubjectivity and the intricate interconnections of inner/outer dialogue and polylogue. Based on the experience gained from the translation of complex philosophical texts, its aim is to effectuate a revision of some key principles and/or concepts of both, translation theory and hermeneutics. I will try to illustrate it here concisely.

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[33] According Peter Newmark there are eight methods of translation word-for-word translation, literal translation, faithful translation, semantic translation, adaptation, free translation, idiomatic translation, communicative translation (Peter Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation*. New York: Prentice-Hall International, 1988).

[34] See also: R. Stolze, *The Translator's Approach – Introduction to Translational Hermeneutics. Theory and Examples from Practice*. Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2011.

In his classic work *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* John C. Catford defines translation as "a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another."[35] The most dictionaries define translation in a similar way.[36] But if we take a closer look to the translation of some major philosophical works as for example Sartre's *L'être et le néant*, we will see that such definitions are imprecise due to the fact that the French text includes a large number of notions and concepts translated from German and that Sartre's main terminology is based on a certain reception of Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger in France. Thus, translating *L'être et le néant* is not just translating a thick book from a source language, e.g., French, into a target language, e.g., English or into German or into Bulgarian etc., but—as I will show—also revision, annotation, explanation, retranslation, whereby all this work is based on philosophical interpretation. As a result, we have often a translation from a translation from a translation, and accordingly an interpretation from an interpretation from an interpretation. The most notorious case in this regard is Sartre's translation of Heidegger's concept "*Dasein*" as "*la réalité humaine,*" which was actually an uncritical adoption of Henry Corbin's translation. For a translator this is not a serious problem as it suffices that he/she puts a note explaining that *réalité humaine* stands for *Dasein*. This is done for example in the German translation of Hans Schöneberg and Traugott König, but not in the English translation of Hazel Barnes, which is a pity because a reader who is not familiar with Sartre's work will not realize the connection between the two concepts. One could counter that neither did Sartre explain it. But that is exactly one of the serious problems in this text for both, readers and translators—the source in Sartre's translations cannot always be indisputably, unequivocally identified. As an example: A notion like *au-milieu-du monde* may seem easy to translate, but a closer scrutiny would lead to complex issues of philosophical interpretation as one can see by examining the German translation.

Hans Schöneberg and Traugott König have translated *au-milieu-du monde* as "innerweltlich" (innerworldly, intra-mundane) or "Innerweltlichkeit" (innnerworldliness)[37] referring obviously to Heidegger's vocabulary of *Sein und Zeit*. But this poses the question why Sartre uses sometimes *au-milieu-du monde* and then

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[35] John C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation. An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, (1965), 5th ed. 1978, 1.

[36] For example the *Cambridge English Dictionary* defines translation as "the activity or process of changing the words of one language into the words in another language that have the same meaning" (see https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/translation) and *Merriam Webster Dictionary* as "an act, process, or instance of translating, a rendering from one language into another and/or the product of such a rendering (see https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/translation).

[37] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Das Sein und das Nichts: Versuch einer phänomenologischen Ontologie*, übersetzt von H. Schöneberg und T. König, Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1991, 221, 266, 271, 373

again *intramondain*, which means exactly *innerweltlich* (innerworldly). In contrast to the German translators, I came to the conclusion that Sartre's term *au-milieu-du-monde* does not refer to Heidegger's "innerworldly" or "inner-worldliness," but to what Heidegger calls "in the midst of beings." In *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger explains the difference between *weltlich* (worldly) and *innerweltlich* (innerworldly) as follows: "Die Abwandlung 'weltlich' meint […] terminologisch eine Seinsart des Daseins und nie eine solche des 'in' der Welt vorhandenen Seienden. Dieses nennen wir weltzugehörig oder innerweltlich."[38] (GA 2, 88) Later, in his study *Vom Wesen des Grundes*, Heidegger emphasizes that Dasein is not only worldly but also world grounding: "Das Dasein gründet (stiftet) Welt nur als sich gründend inmitten von Seiendem." (GA 9, 167)[39] Heidegger does not say "sich innerweltlich gründend" (grounding itself innerworldly), but „sich gründend inmitten von Seiendem" (grounding itself in the midst of beings). This passage is translated by Corbin as "au milieu de l'existant,"[40] and Sartre's "au-milieu-du-monde" or "être-au-milieu-du-monde," means the same. This is obvious from diverse passages, e.g.,

> Ainsi mon être-dans-le-monde, par le seul fait qu'il réalise un monde, se fait indiquer à lui-même comme un être-au-milieu-du-monde par le monde qu'il réalise, et cela ne saurait être autrement, car il n'est d'autre manière d'entrer en contact avec le monde que d'être du monde. (Sartre 1994, 357) [41]

In simple terms, following Heidegger Sartre asserts that the human being discovers itself as a world grounding being, i.e., as activity, transcendence, for-itself, and at the same time as a being among other beings, i.e., as passivity, facticity, in-itself. Yet Sartre understands *au-milieu-du monde* not merely as facticity but also as a center, a midst (milieu) from which the world is shaped (ibid, 305). Consequently, Sartre moves closer to Husserl who conceives the body as a center of orientation around which the

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[38] "Thus, terminologically 'worldly' means a kind of being of Da-sein, never a kind of being of something objectively present 'in' the world. We shall call the latter something belonging to the world, or innerworldly." (M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh, New York: State University of New York Press, 1996, 61)

[39] "Dasein grounds (establishes) world only as grounding itself in the midst of beings." (M. Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, edited by William McNeill, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 128).

[40] Martin Heidegger, *Situations I*, traduit par Henry Corbin, Paris: Gallimard, 1968, 147.

[41] In Barnes English translation: "Thus my being-in-the-world, by the sole fact that it realizes a world, causes itself to be indicated to itself as a being-in-the-midst-of-the-world by the world which it realizes. The case could not be otherwise, for my being has no other way of entering into contact with the world except to be in the world." (Jean- Paul Sartre, *Being and nothingness*, translated by Hazel E. Barnes, New York: Pocker Books, 1978, 318)

consciousness constitutes the world (Hua I, 148). This becomes clear from a later interview with Pierre Verstraeten where Sartre explains that at the difference of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and the structuralists he rejects the idea of an opening to being as based on something "behind" and "in front," because there is no "behind" and "in front" of human being: "Je pense qu'un homme est au milieu, ou, s'il y a des choses derrière lui, il les intériorise."[42]

This example gives also some idea of one of the particularities of philosophical language, namely the construction of concepts by the use of words of the ordinary language like "world," "midst," etc., that everybody seems to understand and/or to have some pre-understanding (*Vorverständnis*) of what they mean. But the concept as a result of the construction is a deviation of ordinary language and its meaning is non-understandable without a precognition (*Vorkenntnis*), i.e., a background knowledge of phenomenological philosophy and its conceptual language, e.g., the basic concepts of embodied experience and ontic-ontological difference. The term *au-milieu-du-monde* seems uncomplicated and that is probably the reason why Hazel Barnes proposes a literal translation—being-in-the-midst-of-the-world—which is eventually exact and proves that literal translation can in some cases be beneficial and not necessarily a sign of the translator's weakness (Cicero). More serious problems occur when we have to translate a polysemantic term, which is used in its different significations or complicated neologisms, which play with meanings or/and etymologies. I will give some examples with the French word "reconnaissance" in its use by Sartre and Ricoeur, and also with Heidegger's use of "Sache" and "Ding"

The French "reconnaissance" can be easily translated in English as "recognition," but it is a true challenge if the target language of translation is German, Russian, or Bulgarian where we have different words for its different meanings. In German it can be translated as *Anerkennung* (appreciation, acknowledgment, honor) or as *Erkennen* (cognition, identification, discerning, realizing, revealing) or *Wiedererkennen* (to recognize someone or something). In *L'être et le néant* Sartre uses it in the Hegelian sense of struggle for recognition (*Anerkennung*) as well as in the cognitive sense of recognizing, discerning something. This ambiguity shows the importance of the contextual side of translation and a good translation would put *reconnaissance* in brackets to make visible these different meanings. In his book *Parcours de la reconnaissance,*[43] Ricoeur undertook a meticulous and highly impressive examination of the word. By consulting diverse French dictionaries, he found 20 different significations of

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[42] Jean- Paul Sartre, *Situations IX* (Paris : Gallimard, 1972), 52 : "I think that a human being is always at the center, and in case there are things behind him he interiorizes them."

[43] Paul Ricœur, *Le parcours de la reconnaissance* (Paris : Stock, 2004).

reconnaissance, ranging from cognition to gratitude. From these he filtered out three key meanings as the basis of his theoretical considerations: *reconnaissance* (a) as identification/distinction, (b) as recognizing, rememorizing something, and (c) as recognition in the Hegelian sense of *Anerkennung*, i.e., "mutual recognition." That is why the German translation of the book was entitled *Wege der Anerkennung: Erkennen, Wiedererkennen, Anerkanntsein.* The need of a subtitle that emphasizes the three key meanings, shows that we have here different subject matters so that it is not enough to translate *reconnaissance* just as *Anerkennung,* even the most contemporary debates deal with this issue. This translation is a successful solution for the title, no doubt, but when in some passages of the book the word is loaded with all the key meanings given by Ricoeur, then it becomes a significant challenge for the translator.

I encountered this problem years ago when I was writing my third doctoral thesis. Ricoeur's book was already translated into Bulgarian, yet the title *Pytiat na razpoznavaneto* (the way of recognition in the sense of *Erkennung*) made it clear to me that I cannot utilize this translation. Well, if one wants to solve the problem of translating *reconnaissance* by a foreign word, one could, at least in German, use the term *Rekognition.* But as the term has a Kantian connotation referring to the so-called "*Synthesis der Rekognition,*" i.e., the summarization of past representations, it captures only one aspect of Ricoeur's *reconnaissance.* The most creative solution I have found so far is that of Jean Greisch, who uses brackets, hyphens and slashes to translate *reconnaissance* into German: *(Wieder-/an-)Erkennen.*[44] His innovative account helped me a lot for the Bulgarian translation, which then became *pri(ras/po)snavane.* Such interpretative "creative solutions" can work sometimes, but I think that we should avoid them if possible as they make a difficile text even more difficult to "digest." Let me note on this occasion that creativity and invention are not something positive *per se.* There is a whole range of translations where interpretation and invention equate to random improvisation and snobbish experimentation. At the same time the original work of some renowned philosophers is sometimes a result of interpretative deviations, if not misunderstandings, of key texts of other philosophers.[45]

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[44] See Paul Ricœur, „Phénoménologie de la reconnaissance – Phänomenologie der Anerkennung", Übersetzt von Jean Greisch, in S. Orth und P. Reichenberg. Hrsg. *Facettenreiche Anthropologie. Paul Ricœurs Reflexionen auf den Menschen* (Freiburg, München: Karl Alber, 2004), 139-159.

[45] I'm thinking here on Heidegger's *Letter on Humanism*, where he dissociates himself from Sartre's existentialist interpretation of *Sein und Zeit*. Also, on Tymieniecka, who wrote an article to unfold Ingarden's theory of essences but recieved a letter back from him saying that this paper is about her own theory, and that he had never thought in such a way. And again, on Jaspers, who in his preface to *Karl Jaspers et la philosophie de l'exsitence* of Dufrenne and Ricoeur praised the translation of his philosophical ideas into French, but at the same time noted that their interpretation of his philosophy is in fact their own philosophy.

This example shows that some philosophical concepts are easier to translate in one language than in another. Generally speaking, it seems to me that it is less problematic to translate Heidegger's sophisticated terminology into English than into French or into Slavic languages like Russian or Bulgarian. It is indicative that there are three French translations of *Sein und Zeit*, that some Heidegger experts, e.g., Françoise Dastur, prefer with good reasons to use their own translations, and that one and the same Heideggerian term has been translated by the different French translators in a different manner depending on their own philosophical understanding and interpretation. These leads to problems that I would like briefly to point up in order to draw some conclusions.

In the French translation of Heideggers's lecture "Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe des Denkens,"[46] Jean Beaufret translates *Sache des Denkens* (matter of thinking) either with "affaire de la pensée" or *Sache* as "l'affaire en question," which articulates only one aspect of the meaning and word usage in Heidegger's text, e.g., when *Sache* is used in the sense of "der Sache nach" (quant à l'affaire). But Heidegger exploits the polysemy of *Sache* to refer to both, to Hegel's matter as a "matter of thinking" and to Husserl's back to "the things themselves!" When it comes to the latter, Beaufret inserts in parentheses the German word *Sache* without any explanation.[47] André Préau, for his part, explains that he translates *Sache* as "cause," "affaire," "cas," "propos," "chose" depending on the context.[48] Maybe this contextual way of translating conveys the meaning more accurately, but since Préau never adds the German word in parentheses next to the translation, one loses sight of the *Sache* as a special polyvalent concept in Heidegger's later works.

The translation of *Sache des Denkens* in English seems to be an easier task. Joan Stambaugh, who has translated numerous essays of Heidegger, translates it as "matter of thinking,"[49] and many other follows this translation. The problem is that Stambaugh does not mention the German expression and that she translates Husserl's "*Zu den Sachen selbst*" (again without mentioning the German original) as "To the things themselves."[50] Thus we not only lose sight of Heidegger's special use but we also encounter two different translations for *Sache* without any indication. *The Cambridge*

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[46] Beaufret, Jean. "La fin de la philosophie et la tache de la pensée," dans Martin Heidegger. *Questions III et IV* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 279-280.

[47] Ibid, 289.

[48] Martin Heidegger, "Identité et différence," in idem. *Questions I.* Traduit par André Préau, (Paris: Gallimard, 1968, 253-308), 276.

[49] Martin Heidegger. *On Time and Being.* Translated by Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 26, 38, 55, 59, 73, 82.

[50] Ibid., 45, 61, 79.

Heidegger Lexicon offers a special entry on the subject "The Matter (Sache)"[51] but encounters at the same time additional translation problems. The author of the entry uses two different translations of Husserl's "*Zu den Sachen selbst*" on one and the same page—"Back to the things themselves" and "To the matters themselves"—without giving any reason for that, suggesting maybe that both translations are equal.[52] You may ask: Is that so important that it need to be expressly stated? The answer is yes, because there is a substantial difference between *Sache* (matter) and *Ding* (thing) in Heidegger's thought. At least the difference is briefly mentioned in the entry "Thing (Ding)."[53] A noteworthy clarification about the difference between *Ding* and *Gegenstand* is given finally in the entry "Object (*Gegenstand*)" explaining also the alternative ways of translation:

> Heidegger wants to underscore a certain subject-independence of the object. In the latter case, English translations paraphrase Gegenstand frequently with "what stands over against" in order to avoid the English alternatives of "object" or "thing." In this respect, one also has to keep in mind that beginning in the 1930s Heidegger distinguishes object from "thing" (Ding).[54]

Yet, the problem with the translation of *Ding* becomes complicated when we take into account Heidegger's daring language game "*Das Ding dingt.*" It has been probably easy to translate it in English as "The thing things," but the question is what does it mean? A translator's note in this case would be more than appropriate. Instead, the English translator, Albert Hofstadter, offers an introduction, in which he claims that the origin of Heidegger's *Ding* lies in Husserl's conception of the things themselves, thus confounding *Ding* with *Sache*:

> The remarkable essay on "The Thing" (and "thing" is another of the basic concepts in Heidegger's thought) makes indelibly clear and vivid what a thing can be—a jug, as he deals with it here, or, as he notes, a bench, a brook, a bull, a book. He takes hold of the Being of things in the concretest way, a way he learned originally from the phenomenology of Husserl, according to

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[51] Tobias Keiling. "Matter, The (Sache)," in Mark A. Wrathall. ed. *The Cambridge Heidegger Lexicon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 477-479.

[52] Ibid., 477.

[53] James D. Reid, "Thing (Ding)," in Mark A. Wrathall. ed. *The Cambridge Heidegger Lexicon.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021),

[54] Sam Richards, in Mark A. Wrathall. ed. *The Cambridge Heidegger Lexicon.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021, 531.

which one's vision is addressed to things as they show themselves in the
fullness of their appearance.

In contrast to English, the translation of "Das Ding dingt" in French or in some Slavic languages is a major challenge. As it is impossible in French to translate it literally, André Préau has proposed an idiomatic translation: "La chose a le comportement du thing,"[55] referring in a footnote to the original German sentence but without any explication about the difference between the existing translations of chose for *Ding* and of chose for *Sache*. For his part, the Russian translator Vladimir Bibikhin offers like Hofstadter a literal translation of "Das Ding dingt" – Vyesht vyeshtyestvooyet.[56] While he does not go into details about this translation, he indicates somewhere in his translator notes that both *Ding* and *Sache* refer etymologically to "dispute, speech, judgment," leaving the impression that for Heidegger they represent the same.

With these examples I wanted to show that interpretation and explanation are essential parts of the translation of philosophical texts. In a certain sense they go hand in hand involving the necessity of an introduction and/or a translators postface, of detailed annotations, of a discussion of particular translations available in other languages, and/or of a glossary of special terms. Because of the internationalization of philosophical discourse, the translators must not only be proficient in the target language but also in additional languages. To have good language skills and translator experience is a prerequisite, no doubt, but it is not enough. Complex philosophical translations can and should be done by specialists in the philosophical field having solid knowledge of the work of the translated author. We have not to be Hegelians to admit that philosophy has to do with concepts, i.e., that it is in certain sense a "work on the concept" (*Arbeit am Konzept*).[57] Yet, as Sartre highlighted, philosophical concepts are often ambiguous and, in addition, philosophers tend to force language and to create new words, which break with usual language and distort it. The ambiguities, the creation of neologisms as well as specific language usages playing with etymologies and semantics requires from the translator a cautious combination of literal and

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[55] Martin Heidegger, "La chose," in idem. *Essays et conférences*, traduits par jean Beaufret (Paris : Gallimard, 1980), 206.

[56] See Martin Heidegger, "Vyesht", *in Vryemya i bitiye: Statji i vistuplyeniya*. Sostavlyeniye, pyeryevod, vstupityeljnaya statjya, kommyentarii i ukazatyeli V. V. Bibikhina (Moskva: Ryespublika, 1993, 316-326), To be exact, Bibikhin was not the first to translate Heidegger's sentence this way. Sergei Avernizev used this translation already in the 70ies, in his esthetical studies (Sergei Averintsev, "Pryedvarityeljniye zamyetki k izoochyeniyo sryednyevyekovoy estyetiki", in *Dryevnyeroosskoye iskusstvo. Zarubyezhniye svyazi.* (Moskva: Nauka, 1975, 371-382.).

[57] Gottfried W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (in Hegel, *Werke in 20 Bänden*, Bd. 3, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), 31, 56, 65.

idiomatic translation, of moderate foreignization and creative domestication so that the meaning is preserved in a language that is as understandable as possible. In other words, for a good translation we need all of these "Hermes qualities," which are the gift of talent, plus hard work and time to invest in philosophical and comparative research. As nobody can teach us "how" to translate or what methods to use, I do not believe that translation theories or precepts can be of much help in praxis. What we rather need are in-depth discussions about the alternative ways of interpretation and translation of concrete philosophical concepts and texts but such discussions happen rarely.

On the Paths of Translative Hermeneutics

As I mentioned previously, when we speak about translation, it is important to distinguish between the broader and the narrow meaning of the term. The same is valid for language. According to *The Encyclopedia Britannica* language is "a system of conventional spoken, manual (signed), or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves."[58] This is a common definition of language that applies to the so called "signed languages," which are verbal and considered as "natural." But there are broader definitions that imply the body language as well, which is a non-signed and non-verbal type of communication. Since translative hermeneutics is interested in the sociocultural use and abuse of language and translation, it is based on the broad meanings of both terms and also on the idea of the ambiguity of language, which can uncover and cover truth, as Plato indicates in *Cratylus*. The choice to explore the broad meanings of language and translation is not random but connected to the main goal of translative hermeneutics, which is to broaden the philosophical perspectives and the application options of hermeneutics. There are at least three general directions or "paths," which can be taken in order to achieve this goal, and they are: first, to unveil the real intentions, objectives and interests, which are hidden often behind the spoken/written word or deliberately concealed by means of a manipulative rhetoric, second, to disclose some mechanisms of discursive dominance, and third to show how translative hermeneutics can be used as a tool for non-violent conflict resolution. I

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[58] David Christel, "Language," in *Ecyclopedia Brtannica* (onlne: https://www.britannica.com/topic/language)

cannot here display in extenso the possibilities of application of translative hermeneutics, but I will give some examples about how I already used it.

Let me begin with translation. In his article "Le paradigme de la traduction" (1998), Paul Ricoeur refers to the Babel myth as the event of the original splitting of languages, which for him is irreversible, but does not represent a definitive obstacle to understanding. He takes the fact of the dispersion and the plurality of languages as an opportunity to formulate a plea for translation and linguistic hospitality as an ethical principle or "paradigm:"

> Indeed, it seems to me that translation sets us not only intellectual work, theoretical or practical, but also an ethical problem. Bringing the reader to the author, bringing the author to the reader, at the risk of serving and of betraying two masters: this is to practise what I like to call linguistic hospitality. It is this which serves as a model for other forms of hospitality that I think resemble it: confessions, religions, are they not like languages that are foreign to one another, with their lexicon, their grammar, their rhetoric, their stylistics which we must learn in order to make our way into them?[59]

The ethical paradigm of translation was conceived by Ricoeur's follower Domenico Jervolino as a gift and reinterpreted as an approach to a new European politics. Jervolino was convinced that Europe, matured by its centuries-long history of conflicts and wars, is called to become the translator and mediator of the world and the encounter between cultures, religions, and nations by promoting an active peace policy.[60] In contrast to these extremely positive and somehow "idealizing" interpretations of translation, I have tried to show how translation and linguistic hospitality can be abused. For this purpose, I have transformed the German word *Übersetzung* (translation) into *Über-Setzung* (subordination) to designate a particular form of domination through language by exploiting the gift of linguistic hospitality of translation. I started first from the empirical-phenomenological description of a concrete historical context—the problems and politics of translation in Eastern Europe after 1990, and showed how certain discursive conflicts led to asymmetries and to a discursive colonization of the human and social sciences. On this basis was finally elaborated an eidetic description of mechanisms of *Über-setzung*.

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[59] Paul Ricoeur, *On Translation*. Translated by Eileen Brennan (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 23-24.

[60] Domenico Jervolino, "Übersetzung und hermeneutische Phänomenologie," in *Labyrinth: An International Journal for Philosophy, Value Theory and Sociocultural Hermeneutics* (Vol. 16, No. 1, 2014, 52-61), 60.

If we consider the great number of translations in the field of philosophy and, more generally, in the human and social sciences that have been published in Eastern Europe since 1990, this appears at first sight as a positive opening. On closer inspection, however, this work could also be described as a problematic and adventurous learning process, firstly because many failed translations appeared on the market and caused considerable cultural damage and secondly because the Eastern European opening toward the West, especially the linguistic hospitality, provided an occasion for asymmetric relationships, e.g., discursive dominance.

A large part of the translated books in Bulgaria for example was financed with the help of special programs of various foundations such as the "Fund for Central and East European Book Projects," the translation programs of the "Ford Foundation" and the "Open Society Foundation," the "Vitosha" program of the French Ministry of Culture, etc. All of these programs supported translations of works by well-known Western scholars into an Eastern European language, but not vice versa. Most of these subsidies were part of the global project of implementing liberal Western ideologies in the post-communist countries and were publicly presented as some kind of aid to the democratic processes that had started. At the initiative of Western institutions, various NGOs and institutes were founded in the post-communist countries, new disciplines such as women's studies and gender studies were established, and Western scholars, consultants and experts were sent to teach and supervise. There is no doubt that many people from East and West benefited financially from this.[61] However, this led to conflicts and gradually some Eastern European scholars began to talk about a "colonization of the social sciences" by the West. A special issue of the Hungarian journal *Replica* was dedicated to this topic, in which the one-sidedness of the cultural "East-West exchange" was addressed.[62] The Hungarian scholars discussed, among other things, the fact that at the Central European University in Budapest professors from Eastern Europe were required to be proficient in English and other Western languages, as well as to know Western history, ideas, and culture, but no language skills and no knowledge of the history and the culture of the host country was required from the Western professors.

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[61] See Yvanka Raynova, *Feministische Philosophie in europäischem Kontext. Genderdebatten zwischen "Ost" und "West"* (Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau, 2010), 120-137.

[62] Miklós Hadas, ed. *Colonization or Partnership? Eastern Europe and Western Social Sciences.* A special issue of *Replika: Hungarian Social Science Quarterly*, 1996/1 (online: http://www.c3.hu/scripta/scripta0/replika/honlap/english/01/00contw.htm)

In the so-called colonial and postcolonial studies, the question of language dominance was addressed, but the problem of translation was barely noticed.[63] The reason for this is that it has often been assumed that the colonizer imposed his language, either as a second language or in some cases as a substitute for the mother tongue. That is true, but that is not all as the objectives of the colonizer goes much far. His aim is the full domination of his discourse trough acceptation. To achieve this goal, he imposes his language in two ways: first, it becomes the official foreign language that must be learned, and second, the ruler intervenes in the mother tongue through translation work in order to proclaim and install his norms, values and world view expecting from the oppressed to recognize his authority.

The usual definition of the term translation, as we have seen, is that it is a kind of transfer from one language to another. This means that translation is not necessarily and not primarily an ethical or political problem, but a means of communication, often used for quite pragmatic purposes, such as facilitating trade between different nations. In order to grasp translation in a very specific ethical and political sense as the transmission of a dominant discourse, I introduced the neologism of *Über-Setzung*, i.e., the superposition of one language, language game, idiom or culture over another by using and abusing its hospitality. In brief, the dominant language and its discourse intrude into the mother tongue and its culture, imposing itself "on" and "above" it as something more essential and universal. The dominant discourse, which wants to establish itself through translation, demands to be heard, to be understood and accepted, and at the same time it refuses to hear and understand the dominated, since they are not equal. Ricoeur's reflections on the so-called external translation and internal translation help us here to clarify the problem at the level of understanding. In order for the foreign discourse to be successfully translated, it must be internalized and become part of the translator's inner life. The discourse placed over it not only demands an adequate transmission, but also an internal reception and acceptance, a commitment to the ideas and the content that it propagates.

By using the methods of phenomenological description, eidetic reduction, and comparative hermeneutics I arrived to capture the general structures and characteristics of the phenomenon of *Über-Setzung*, which can be summarized as follows:

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[63] One of the few exceptions is the article of Ieva Zauberga, "Translation as Ideology-Driven Activity. Latvian Translation in the Soviet Period," in Anu Mai Kõll, *The Baltic Countries under Occupation. Soviet and Nazi Rule 1939-1991* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2003), 279-286.

1. The use of linguistic hospitality to establish a relationship of dominance through translation, or the use of translation as a means to an end that enables the dominance of one discourse over another;

2. The privilege of one language, language game, or discourse at the expense of another language or discourse, not only by giving it an official status, but also by standardizing its monopoly as the principal referent;

3. The establishment of translation as an ideological institution of "*traduction*" (in French), i.e., as a translation of the dominating discourse from the foreign language into the mother tongue of the dominated, excluding the reverse direction, i.e., the "version," the translation of the discourse of the dominated into the language of the ruler. The problem of the difference between "*traduction*" and "*version*", which appears here in the negative light of asymmetry, is of central importance for intercultural communication and European integration;

4. The refusal of discursive reciprocity as a consequence of rejecting the language and discourse of the other as the dominated;

5. The dissimulation of the abuse of linguistic friendship by presenting it as a gift, e.g., through unilateral subsidies and programs for translation that disguise the non-reciprocity and the real interests;

6. The practice of provincialization keeping the language and discourse of the dominated at the margin of the dominant discourse in a remote "province" from which they can eventually break out by mastering the language and discourse of the ruler and directing it against him.

What conclusions can be drawn from this brief overview?

In connection with other methos e.g., the mentioned phenomenological methods of description and eidetic reduction, translative hermeneutics as a sociocultural and intercultural approach can make an important contribution by providing us with interpretive tools to uncover and articulate existing ethical and political asymmetries in the field of communication and translation and show the fragility of hospitality. However, this potential can only be fully utilized if such phenomena of domination are recognized, analyzed and addressed by the affected themselves.

Another area where I have used translative hermeneutics, along with other methods such as the Karpman drama triangle and the transactional analysis of Eric Berne, is feminist philosophy. Let me remind the drama triangle comes from the transaction analysis and was first elaborated by Stephen Karpman in 1968, in an article

about fairy tales.[64] In his analysis, Karpman shows there are three main roles that the fairy tale characters repeatedly play, namely that of the persecutor, the victim, and the rescuer. These character roles form a kind of drama, whereby the roles do not remain fixed because the actors change them in the course of the game. In other words, the victim can become the persecutor of his persecutor or self-rescuer, the rescuer can become victim, etc.

In my book on feminist philosophy in European context (2010)[65], I have taken up the conflicts between the Western and Eastern feminists by means of translative hermeneutics in order to examine the hidden problems of these conflicts and to propose some possible solutions for similar issues. The western feminists, who came uninvited to Eastern Europe at the beginning of the 1990s with the purpose to help eastern women, i.e., to open up their eyes about their "decades-long patriarchal suppression," took an ostensive rescuer position. "Ostensive," because the "salvation," which they offered the eastern women, without being asked, was in fact a persecutor role, a missionary intending to reshape their ideas of gender and gender identity. Simple said, they acted as a rescuer and at the same time as a persecutor, an offender, who pretend to know "what is the best" for the eastern women and started to evaluate them from the position of being "superior." Thus, instead of helping, which was their declared intention, the Western feminists triggered a drama that escalated and led finally to a break of communication. In order to disclose the drama dynamics and the views of both parties, I have undertaken a close reading of two texts. The first was an excerpt from an article by Claire Wallace, presenting the western feminist point of view, and the second an excerpt of an article by Hana Havelková, presenting the point of view of a scholar in women's studies from Eastern Europe, both published in the number 9 of the European Journal *Transit*.[66]

The translative hermeneutics that I have used aimed to unveil the hidden problems and the implicit values behind the said. This enabled, on the one side, to capture the true reasons of the conflict and, on the other side, certain similarities as well as essential differences of perspectives and interpretation. To clarify this, I will briefly present the essential positions and problem perceptions of both groups:

• The starting point, i.e., the arrival of the western feminists in Eastern Europe, was perceived and presented differently by both sides. The western feminists claimed

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[64] Stephen B. Karpman, "Fairy tales and script drama analysis," (*Transaction Bulletin*, 7/26/1968), 39-43, (also online: http://www.karpmandramatriangle.com/pdf/DramaTriangle.pdf)

[65] Yvanka B. Raynova, *Feministische Philosophie in europäischem Kontext. Gender-Debatten zwischen "Ost" und "West"* (Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau, 2010).

[66] *Transit, Europäische Revue*, Heft 9, Sommer 1995.

that they had come to help (rescuer) their "eastern sisters," but the eastern women apprehended that as an ideological act, as a manipulative interference (persecutor), and the guest, who should behave as a guest, as acting like a master in his own home.

• The western feminists said that they could contribute with their liberation discourse to the emancipation of the eastern women (rescuer), but it was understood by the eastern people as an "imperialist" or "post-colonial" domination discourse (persecutor).

• The western feminists went from the (false) assumption that feminism was a western product (as they reduced it to the so-called "second wave feminism") and believed that they hold alone the "patent" of any feminist discourse. Hence, they forgot or ignored that women's movements and feminist conceptions existed already in the 19th century in Eastern Europe. The eastern women also forget this too when they labeled feminism as a "western ideology." In order to resists the role of the victim, they refused to call themselves "feminist" and adopted the label "women's studies scholar."

• The western feminists saw themselves as authority in the given research area (rescuer), insisting on their know-how superiority, and from this position they started to instruct the eastern women (persecutor or parent-ego). But the eastern women did not recognize them as authority (self-sufficient or child-ego); instead of superiority, they saw in the behavior of the western feminists only ignorance, incomprehension, and distortion of the real circumstances in the post-communist societies and suggested that western feminists (real victims) should try to learn something instead to teach others about their own situation.

• The western feminists felt in the position of "the stronger" (superiority) because they had a very high self-confidence; hence they evaluated the Eastern women as "two-ranking citizens", lacking "self-confidence" (victims), and underrated their self-esteem. Because the eastern women possessed the same high self-confidence, it came to a collision between rescuer and self-rescuer, between persecutor and another persecutor, and finally they break off any contact.

From the point of view of translative hermeneutics, the question arises if both parties could act differently without cancelling the communication? In other words, could the different conceptual languages and life situations be translated, so that the conflicting parties arrive to approach each other, if not in a "fusion of horizons" at least in a productive dialogue?

Because both, the western feminists as well as the eastern women, had a high self-esteem, they insisted on their own arguments and treated the other as an immature person, as a "child." This situation reminds of the game "I'm just trying to help you,"

described in Eric Berne's psychological paradigm "parent ego"/"child ego." One of the set phrases of the parent ego is: "See how competent I am." To this the child ego answers: "I will make sure you feel incompetent." The conclusion I have drawn from the entire conflict analysis is that a dialogue can only work and be constructive only if the participating parties show *goodwill* and *interest* in solving the conflict, i.e., if they are ready to approach the problems from different perspectives, to put in question the own beliefs and eventually to revise it. The hermeneutic imperative consists exactly in that: to be ready to take the other seriously, to be ready to give up the own prejudices, and to accept that we can be wrong. If one of the parties insists on its preconceived opinions, if it sticks to them and tries to impose them on the other (persecutor), then the drama dynamic cannot be resolved. Such conflicts can lead not only to a communication break but cause also a war. In a more favorable case, when all concerned parties have good will, then the first step to begin with is *pacing*, i.e., to say, "Stop, let us calm down and take a sober look at the problems and the current situation." After that, a range of necessary steps could be taken to resolve the conflict, e.g. the six step strategy used in NLP, which are: (1) *detect* (to recognize the drama and drama dynamics as such), (2) *guess* (to guess what role is playing the opponent), (3) *explore* (to explore the situation and the emotions of the other more precisely, and then to make an interruption to stop the drama), (4) *open* (to open its real mind and feelings to the interlocutor and give him the opportunity to make himself an image of us), (5) *finding solutions*, (6) *application* (to implement the solutions in actions and to check periodically the results in order to readjust or improve it).

The given examples reveal only a small part of the application possibilities of translative hermeneutics. But they display clearly the importance not only of interlingual translation but also of what I call "discourse translation," which deals with worldviews, concepts and power relations. This kind of translation is crucial on any sociocultural level: on the personal, on the academic, but especially on the political and the international level. In our actual world, ripped by life-threatening conflicts, it is necessary, more than ever, to convey between colliding interests and worldviews but also to unmask actively the mechanisms of manipulative rhetoric, lies and fake news. Perhaps the great task of hermeneutics in this regard consist in the instruction that the Olympian God once gave to his messenger:

> Zeus, fearing that our race was in danger of utter destruction, sent
> Hermes to bring respect and right among men, to the end that there
> should be regulation of cities and friendly ties to draw them
> together. (Plato, Prot. 322c).