HERMENEUTICS AND THE PROBLEM OF TRANSLATING TRADITIONAL ARABIC TEXTS

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INTRODUCTION

Hermeneutics is a controversial term that has undergone various changes since its earliest usage. It can be defined as an art of understanding, a science of interpretation and a methodology for translating biblical and traditional (scriptural) texts. Furthermore, it is employed as a technique for interpreting legal, social science and literary texts. Historically, hermeneutics has been divided into three major stages of development: biblical, traditional and modern. Biblical hermeneutics consists of a number of stages. The first stage is thought to have originated in the first century AD at the very beginning of the establishment of the Christian Church.

Having an ardent belief that the word of God was complete and transcendental in and of itself, the early theoreticians of biblical hermeneutics applied a literal method to understanding and interpreting the Bible (Silva, 122). The Old Testament was to be understood from within the boundaries of its text and without being linked to any external elements. With the advent of the second century, biblical hermeneutics matured and started to incorporate contextual, grammatical and historical approaches into its interpretive process. This application of contextual elements to the act of interpretation is emphasized by David Dockery who argues that "all of the Fathers gave assent to the literal sense of Scripture, but a contextual, grammatical, and historical interpretation was emphasized by Theodore, and Chrysostom, with a developing convergence in that direction with Jerome, Augustine, and Theodoret" (157).

In the medieval period, biblical hermeneutics formalized its concept of interpretation; this was known as the concept of 'the fourfold interpretation' and included literal, allegorical, topological and anagogical senses (Cassian, 80). During the Reformation, attention was drawn to the literal interpretation at the expense of the allegorical interpretation—this was advocated by Martin Luther, John Calvin and Erasmus. However, in the eighteenth century—the Age of Enlightenment—there was a clear shift in Biblical hermeneutics and the concept of interpretation started to draw heavily on ideas of rational thinking: the miracle of the Bible was rejected and a rational and logical understanding adopted (Mclean, 184). The meaning of the Bible was to be determined by the power of the intellect.

This movement developed through the work of Rene Descartes and Immanuel Kant.

This growing belief in the power of the intellect sharply influenced hermeneutics. Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768–1834), a German protestant theologian and philologist who established hermeneutics as a theory of understanding—the Romantic hermeneutics of the nineteenth century—began to formalize the principles and rules of hermeneutic interpretation (Hamlin, 40). In her book, *Victorian Interpretation*, Suzy Anger contends that Schleiermacher sees hermeneutics as a two stage process: the first stage is that of grammatical understanding and the second is that of psychological understanding. Understanding a text requires the interpreter to interpose himself/herself into the mind of the author. This starts from the premise that the conception of a larger text relies on understanding its smaller constituent units, and vice versa. The translator needs to understand the text hermeneutically, that is, he/she attempts to re-experience the circumstantial realities of the author while translating his/her work.

In the twentieth century, Martin Heidegger developed the field and theory of existential hermeneutics from Romantic hermeneutics. He focused on the process of depicting the world of the text and its relationship to external reality and introduced a new concept of language and understanding on engagement and praxis (*Being and Time*, 60). Having introduced a new concept of language and understanding, Heidegger argued that the interpretation of the text has nothing to do with its linguistic structure, rather, its meaning and interpretation should be shaped by learning about the invisible elements that surround the text, that is, the contextual elements found in the cultural milieu, social environment and historical context.

In the middle of the twentieth century, Hans-Georg Gadamer, in his book *Truth and Method*, introduced the theory of philosophical hermeneutics. Gadamer holds the position that hermeneutics fails to provide an unprejudiced translation or interpretation because the human being undertaking this activity is a historically conditioned creature. The process of translation is always presuppositional in that it focuses on the previous background of a translator whose act of understanding is limited by his/her historical context. Seeking understanding, the translator opens up a dialogue with a traditional text, bringing it from the past to the present in order that it can be studied and investigated.

According to Gadamer, the text is neither stable nor fixed; it is a moving object that travels from the past to the present. Throughout its extended journey, it undergoes various changes, including linguistic,

cultural, historical and social changes, as does its receiver. Philosophical hermeneutics is mainly interested in the philosophy of valid interpretation and concerned with getting to the true meaning of a text. As such, this study attempts to establish a methodology for getting to a true and precise meaning of traditional Arabic texts and asks how they can be translated accurately into English. This study raises questions related to issues of understanding, translation, the concept of the traditional text and its translation, and attempts to answer these crucial issues. It seeks to show the importance of the theory of interpretation in translating traditional texts and starts from the premise that linguistic theories of translation, on their own, are not able to provide us with the true and authentic meaning of a classical text.

In achieving such an objective, I hope to explain the characteristics of traditional texts and how the theories of literary interpretation and linguistic analysis relate to them. This study does not aim to give practical examples in translating traditional texts. Rather, it seeks to present a theoretical framework developed from the hermeneutic theory of understanding, interpreting and translation, and the linguistic theories of translation, in order to address the problematic issues that arise in rendering a traditional text. It proposes a theoretical approach that reconsiders and revisits the traditional Arabic text and how it can be translated in order to communicate its content as clearly and as accurately as possible to the wider world. It attempts to bridge the gap between linguistic theories of translation and theories of literary interpretation, exemplified in hermeneutics (I would suggest that most linguistic theories of translation draw heavily on hermeneutics without admitting that they do so).

What matters in such a context is not how to render a text, but how the translator can mentally and intellectually prepare him/herself to produce a precise translation of a traditional text. Hermeneutics, as a translation approach, is proposed as a means to address the problematic issues of translation. It presents a theoretical and cognitive framework that seeks to overcome the impediments of understanding and translation. These cognitive and intellectual elements are often overlooked in linguistic theories of translation, badly affecting the quality of translated texts. This study seeks to present an integrated approach to translation and interpretation, which combines elements of the philosophy of translation, the rules of literary interpretation and the codes of linguistic understanding.

It draws on the different trends of hermeneutics and applies their key rules and relationships to the process of translating classical texts. The concept of hermeneutic understanding is extensively described in this

study—the idea of understanding is the hallmark of hermeneutic studies. Being acquainted with the truth of the concept of understanding and its connection to the text, the translator's vision of the traditional text as a static object or a linguistic structure is substituted by a broader vision that regards the text as a living, changeable entity. Breaking with linguistic tradition, this introduces a new concept that highlights how closely language is related to its surrounding world and culture.

This attempts to reveal the problematic issues that arise from translating traditional texts alongside the problem of understanding the language of the text itself. Accordingly, this study underscores the importance of critically examining the hermeneutic concept of language and how significantly it affects the process of translating a traditional text. It also attempts to address the following questions: is the language of a text fixed or changeable? What elements affect the process of understanding the language of a text? What is the relationship between the language of a traditional text and the modern world? How can a modern translator understand the language of a traditional text? Is the language of a text sufficient in and of itself to provide a complete understanding of the text? How can the translator deal with the problematic issues that arise in the language of a text, such as its symbolism, metaphor, semantic shifts, figurative language and connotations, and the changing socio-spatial realities of a traditional text?

In *Context and the Attitudes: Meaning in Context*, Mark Richard argues that the process of arriving at the meaning of a traditional text is pertinent to its internal structures; the translation process cannot be done precisely or accurately without understanding the invisible/contextual elements that have brought a text to reality. When the translator deals with a traditional text he/she does not only render its linguistic structure and language, but also the invisible/contextual elements that provide the language with its meaning. The difficulty in understanding and translating a traditional text does not lie in how to bring an ancient text from the past to the present, but in how to reproduce it in the present.

There are several problematic issues that arise in translating traditional texts. In their book, *Found in Translation: How Language Shapes Our Lives and Transforms the World,* Nataly Kelly and Jost Zetzsche accentuate the reciprocal relationship between language and the world. Such an overlapping and intertwined connection between language and the world leads to several issues in translation; these can be divided into two major categories: the visible/linguistic category and the invisible/contextual one. The visible/linguistic elements of a text are best described as the direct, transparent and comprehensible elements comprised of its grammatical

structure, sentences and words; these elements, however, cannot accurately be discerned when separated from their invisible context. Isolating language from its world turns it into a meaningless artifact that is void of a common sense.

In *Language and Linguisticality in Gadamer's Hermeneutics*, Lawrence Kennedy Schmidt underscores the significant role of invisible/contextual elements in shaping and reshaping the meaning of a text. The invisible/contextual elements are the paracontextual elements—the historical moment, socio-spatial realities, cultural influence, temporal distance, historical consciousness, time and space and so on—the understanding of which motivates the translator to grasp these contextual elements. Understanding the effect of contextual elements on traditional texts is a prerequisite for their translation. Appreciating their influence may help us to develop more convincing answers to the following question: how do invisible/contextual elements shape and create the meaning of a text and affect its language, its meaning and its translator's understanding? In *Theories of Translation*, Jenny Williams states that the linguistic theory of translation has focused on the importance of contextual elements in understanding and translating traditional texts. Translation, as a distinct field of knowledge, emerged during the 1960s and was pioneered by Eugene Nida, Ian Catford, Geroges Mounin and others, who set out the key linguistic principles for translation. In the 1970s, translation theory largely developed due to innovations in semantic linguistics, textual linguistics, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics (Hardin, 40).

In *The Science of Linguistics in the Art of Translation*, Joseph L. Malone expounds his views on the inextricable connection between modern translation theories and linguistics—assuming that translation is a scientific discipline that employs linguistic tools for translating texts, translation theories are devised in relation to linguistic theory. According to Andre Lefevere, the issues of translation are related to language and linguistic issues. In the rapidly developing discipline of translation studies, focusing on semantics is proposed as to be an objective approach in translation—meaning is both relational and can be derived through a number of semantic categories, such as phonological meaning, lexical meaning and situational meaning (Kempson, 100). Language plays a pivotal role in translation studies because the translation process is principally based on deciphering and conveying meaning from the source language to the target language.

In his book, *Course in General Linguistics*, Ferdinand de Saussure classifies translation under the umbrella of sociolinguistics as the translation process focuses mainly on the sociocultural differences

between the source language and the target language. The sociolinguistic concept of translation seeks to study the text in relation to its generative community and social values in order to understand it. This approach repudiates the literal translation approach with its inability to uncover the conceptual differences between the source text and the target text.

In *Translation and Culture*, Katherine M. Faull contends that language represents a way of life and depicts the life of its people from a very narrow cultural perspective; she considers that this burdens the translator with great difficulty in producing corresponding equivalence in the target language. Though some linguists believe in the cultural singularity of language, corresponding directly only to its local culture, others, such as Joseph Harold Greenberg and Noam Chomsky, suggest that the languages of the world share universal features: that there is a common set of properties and features shared by all world languages.

However, the hermeneutic world view of language, as proposed by Heidegger, Gadamer and Wilhelm von Humboldt, is quite different from the universal view of language. The hermeneutic concept of language argues that a language reflects its own world and the very specific and private experience of its people to the extent that it is inseparable from its spatial environment and the socioeconomic realities of its own narrow culture. In *On Language: on the Diversity of Human Language Construction and its Influence on the Mental Development of the Human Species*, Humboldt argues that language manifests the extra-linguistic realities that surround it in its own culture.

In *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: a Methodology for Translation*, Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelent argue that translation theory is a purely linguistic discipline that draws on a situational equivalence—the translator attempts to render the situation out of which his/her text is woven. Paradoxically, the basic idea of connecting language to a particular situation is a hermeneutic act of understanding. Focusing on the relationship between translation theories and linguistics, Mounin maintains that language reflects its own culture.

The cultures of the world are not necessarily identical or correspondent, which may bring about wider problems in translation as each culture has its own internal specificity. Cultural singularity is likely to shape the cognition of a translator as the meaning of words is constituted in relation to one's culture and local environment. As such, the process of understanding and translating is relative and culturally oriented. Analyzing such conceptual differences may help translators render their texts and overcome these cultural barriers: translation is meant to transfer the life experience depicted in the original text to the target text.

In *Reflections on Translation*, Susan Bassnett postulates that the translation process is not centered completely on the idea of linguistic understanding, especially with literary translation which has little to do with the linguistic analysis. According to Bassnett, rendering a literary text requires both a linguistic analysis and a contextual understanding. However, although linguistic analysis contains the principal tools needed for the translation process, it does not represent its end point. The translator should bridge the cultural gap between two distinct languages in order to provide a true translation. However, Tony Pinchuck believes that "linguistics, undoubtedly, has most to give and translation as a discipline should be regarded as a branch of Applied Linguistics" (17).

Translation theorists have oscillated between whether translation is a linguistic understanding and representation of the original text or a kind of cultural rendering. In *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context*, Ernst-August Gutt elucidates that the idea of reducing the translation process to linguistic analysis leads to a very flat perception of the text—it implies that the full meaning of a text can be rendered through analyzing it linguistically. Such a naïve conception helps strip the text of its real life context and its interaction with external reality. The core idea of the translation process is to deliver a message; this is more contextual than textual. Communicating a clear message becomes very difficult when dealing with a written text: focusing only on rendering the language of a text without drawing attention to the importance of its contextual elements does not deliver the full message of the original text. The idea of translation should remain largely consistent with the original text and concord well with its nature, its type and its relationship to the outside world.

In *Relevance and Linguistic Meaning: the Semantics and Pragmatics of Discourse Markers*, Diane Blakemore illustrates how linguistic theories of translation focus the translation process on three ordinated stages. These stages are: linguistic analysis, semantic understanding of a text's meaning and pragmatic analysis of its context. Since the translation process is closely related to understanding the true, original meaning of a text, semantic analysis is applied to the original text. This semantic analysis encompasses its connotative, figurative and metaphorical language.

However, it is essential to determine whether such a semantic analysis can cover all the issues arising in the language of the original text or not. In addition, it is necessary to determine whether this semantic analysis has the potential to address the problematic issues arising from the cultural boundedness and specificity of the language in a traditional text. One can further ask whether semantic analysis can tackle the changeable language

of traditional texts and address their invisible elements. In his article, 'Pragmatic Aspects of Translation: some Relevance Theory Observations,' Gutt defines the concept of context, from a pragmatic perspective, in the following way:

> "In relevance theory, the notion of 'context of an utterance' is a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world; more specifically, it is 'the set of premises used in interpreting utterance' (Sperer & Wilson 1986: 15). Under this definition, 'context' is a very wide notion that can include virtually any phenomenon entertainable by the human mind" (42).

Although pragmatics attempts to understand the meaning of a text in relation to its context, it neither explains how the translator can learn about the contextual elements nor does it provide a clear vision of the nature of context. Rather, it presents a simplistic and flat notion pertaining to the idea of context. Adopting such a general and unspecific concept of context, pragmatics is trapped in a condition of ambivalence and ambiguity, that is, it cannot distinguish between 'true' contextual elements and fallacious ones; this has a negative impact on the translator's understanding of his/her text. There is a remarkable difference between the concept of context that is applied by pragmatics and that adopted by hermeneutics.

Pragmatics is mainly interested in understanding speech acts rather than written documents. In his book, *How to Do Things with Words*, John Langshaw Austin discusses the theory of speech acts and introduces the term 'performatives.' According to Austin, performatives include those types of verbs that imply the performance of an act. Performative verbs can be either implicit or explicit. John Lyon indicates that an explicit performative is meant to give an explicit and direct meaning that helps listeners avoid misunderstanding. An implicit performative gives an unclear meaning and is subject to different interpretations. Its meaning draws heavily on linguistic analysis of a statement. It has little to do with the surrounding contextual world of the statement in a speech act. The pragmatic vision of context pertains mainly to conversations and speech acts and does not provide remedies or solutions to the problems of written texts.

In his book, *Principles of Pragmatics*, Geoffrey Leech divides speech acts into the following categories: a locutionary act refers to the idea of producing some words conveying a limited linguistic meaning. An illocutionary act refers to the social validity of an act beyond the internal linguistic meaning of an utterance. A perlocutionary act refers to the actual

impact of an act beyond its internal linguistic meaning. According to Yule George, what matters here is the illocutionary act because it has an inextricable connection to the speaker's intentions. It can be discerned by focusing on the communicative force of the spoken message. The illocutionary function is defined as the actions and physical gestures of a person, while talking, that help communicate the intended message of the speaker. It seems that the illocutionary function only addresses the issues of spoken language and Leech does not identify its application to written texts. When applied to translating across different cultures, the actions of a speaker, his intentions and methods, may be incomprehensible to members of another culture; this impedes the process of intercultural communication. In addition, it does not provide a valid methodology for translating those texts taken from the past.

The English language philosopher Paul Grice suggests a 'cooperative principle' as a means to understanding the meaning of spoken language. He states that there is a mutual relationship between the speaker and the hearer since they are speaking about common goals or their speech shares something in common that facilitates the process of understanding. Grice devises the theory of implicature to explain the differences between what is said and what is meant. Stephen C. Levinson argues that the two parties involved in a conversation or dialogue engage a set of presuppositions when conversing with one another, that is, they are guided by these assumptions in order to understand the intended messages articulated through a conversation. The implicature model can be applied to understand figurative language, puns, metaphors and indirect speech. A text can reveal different meanings through its different interpretations; a text is a 'floating' entity, which takes on different shapes and various forms. Linguistic theories of translation end up in a vicious circle in pursuit of the true meaning of a text. In spite of diagnosing the problems of translation, they fail to present solutions for these problems and neglect the role of the translator in the translation process—his/her ability to produce a precise and true understanding in a translated text.

Sometimes issues may arise in applying linguistic theories of translation to culture-bound elements and culturally specific words. In such cases, the semantic theory of translation does not sufficiently accommodate the cultural connotations concealed in a text; meaning is not only disclosed through linguistic analysis, but also through cultural understanding. Linguistic theories of translation may fail to deal with issues stemming from translating traditional and ancient texts due to a lack of connection to their cultural and historical roots and an inability to deal with changes in meaning across time and space. The cultural theory of

translation offers some solutions and remedies. The cultural theory of translation was proposed in 1980, as described in the following:

> "Ever since its appearance as an academic branch in the 1970s, Translation Studies has always dealt with the thorny problem of the transfer, firstly between languages and later between cultures. In the 1980s the so-called "Manipulation School" led by scholars such as André Lefevere, Theo Hermans, Gideon Toury7 and Susan Bassnett introduced a cultural perspective in translation that was seen as an act of re-writing of the source text. According to these scholars, decoding the language coincides with decoding the culture in which that language is embedded. It follows that translators need to be not only bilingual, but bi-cultural. This line of thought shifted the attention to the target text, claiming that all translated texts reflect the cultural and social norms of the system to which they belong, and are by nature manipulations of the source texts." (Cappuccio, 49).

It can be assumed that the theory of cultural equivalence that emerged in the 1980s regards the text as a kind of cultural production, that is, linguistic analysis has to be coupled with cultural understanding. Faull argues that the cultural theory of translation is designed to address translation problems related to dialects, traditional texts, artistic expressions, proverbs, folklore items, archaic items and so on. In other words, culture brings language to life—this results in the specificity and singularity of concepts that have no equivalence in another culture.

Proponents of the cultural theory of translation highlight the issues that arise in translating cultural markers and culture-bound elements without providing objective solutions as to how one can address these problems when translating a text. In addition, the cultural concept of translation does not touch upon the problems of metaphorical meaning, a remarkable feature in traditional texts, which is placed under the rubric of semantic shift. Verifying whether a meaning is meant to be metaphorical or real cannot be achieved unless the translator starts searching for the classical meanings of the word.

In *Meaning and Translation: Philosophical and Linguistic Approaches*, Franz Guenthner and M. Guenthner-Rutter demonstrate that meaning, which is a true reflection of its own culture and historical time, is fixed and unchanged. However, the intention or the sense of a word is changeable and transformable across time and history. This idea is clearly asserted by Ibrahim Anis in his book *Arabic Dialect*, where he explains that the traditional meanings and authorial intention of the majority of classical Arabic words have changed to such an extent over time that consulting traditional Arabic dictionaries may confuse the modern reader;

these dictionary meanings are now largely different to the current meanings. In his article 'Limits of Cultural Interpretation,' J. Robertson McQuilkin indicates an overlapping connection between language and culture:

"A particular culture would consist of at least the following: Manners, beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, laws (written and unwritten), ideas and thought patterns, language arts and artifacts, tools, social institutions, religious beliefs, myth and legends, knowledge, values, concept of self, morals, ideals and accepted ways of behaving. In short, culture is the total way of life of any group of people" (113).

There is a reciprocal relationship between culture and language; languages abound with cultural terms and expressions, including dialect words, traditional language, social and historical terms. This inextricably intertwined association between culture and language results in several serious problems for translation, particularly with those texts that have been shaped by their traditional cultural context.

Several questions need to be raised with the aim of settling the problem of translating traditional texts: should traditional texts be translated according to the values and norms of the past or the present? How can the modern reader understand the complexities and the ambiguities of an ancient culture? Should a text be rendered meaningful according to the norms of the present to be intelligible to the modern reader? The cultural theory of translation does not provide clear answers for these basic but important enquiries. Though these questions seem to be basic, they are also profound and their answers complicated. In this respect, Irma Hagfors writes:

"All texts reflect the period of time and culture where they were written" (Oittinen 1997:13, my translation). This is what Riitta Oittinen discovered when she studied three different Finnish translations of the British children's classic *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). Each of these translations was made in a different period of time. Oittinen's aim was to study how the period of time in question and the stage of Finnish culture concerned had affected the translations." (115).

The proponents of linguistic and cultural theories of translation pay little attention to the idea that a traditional text represents an integrated system of life; they ignore the fact that the translator belongs to a very different world to that of the original text. The idea of perfect correspondence is a far-fetched dream. Therefore, translating religious, cultural, dialect-heavy and traditional texts has various issues. From this perspective, the hermeneutic theory of translation is proposed to address

these issues. Hermeneutics seeks to provide acceptable remedies for what are often considered to be untranslatable texts. The process of translating a classical text is problematic since its understanding requires a deciphering of the invisible elements surrounding the text that impede the readers' understanding.

Hermeneutics has long been used in the Arab world as a theory for interpreting and studying traditional literary works. The application of hermeneutics to interpreting traditional discourse was pioneered by Nasr Hamed Abu Zeid in the Arab world through his literary works—these were mainly concerned with interpreting and understanding the Arabic tradition. This is clearly reflected in his works: *The Philosophy of Interpretation*; *The Text, the Authority and the Truth*; *Critiquing the Religious Discourse*; *The Problematic Issues of Reading and Hermeneutics*.

Abu Zaid uses hermeneutics both to provide an objective reading and understanding of the tradition and also to train the Arab reader to critically understand and evaluate his/her longstanding tradition. Hermeneutics is used as a method of understanding that seeks to reconstruct the mind of the modern Arab reader in order to objectively understand his tradition. Hermeneutics is a potent methodology for understanding and interpreting traditional literary work.

Abu Zaid, Gaber Asfour, and Mohammed Arkoun engage with hermeneutics as a theory of interpreting and understanding the Arabic tradition. Hermeneutics has been employed as a tool for re-reading and interpreting the realities of this tradition. However, hermeneutics has not yet been applied as a method to provide better translations of traditional Arabic literary texts. As a means of communicating the message of a text with greater precision, hermeneutics is proposed as an approach for translating traditional and classical texts.

This study attempts to provide insight into the issues arising in translating classical and ancient texts, and modern literary texts. It applies hermeneutics as a translation approach to solve the issues inherent in translating ancient texts. It deals with translation not as a science or as an art, but as an act of understanding and interpretation, whose goal is to provide accurate and precise translations of ancient literary texts, taking into account their lexical, etymological, phonological, cultural, social and historical changes over time. Not only does it attempt to bridge the gap between the traditional text and its translator, but also between its past history and its present time. This study suggests an approach to translation derived from hermeneutics that focuses on the following:

- The Traditional text undergoes an endless journey in its travels across time and space and reproduces and reconstructs itself with each new reading. In this study, traditional texts are those texts dating back to ancient times, such as classical Arabic texts, religious texts, culture-bound elements and so on.
- The language of the traditional text derives its meaning and significance from its temporal reality, meaning that the language of the text may fail to reflect the true meaning concealed in the text in its contemporary context; the translator derives the text's meaning from its contextual world.
- The language of the traditional text is not fixed, but changes over time; it can be understood in relation to the social, historical and cultural changes that affect the development of the text and its surrounding world.
- The concept of understanding represents the main channel for the interpretation and translation of the traditional text.
- Those translations that undermine the historicity of the text are deemed inaccurate and imprecise: history not only changes the language of the text, but also its cultural and historical context.

Hermeneutics encompasses the foundation of the philosophy of translation. Modern literature started to focus on the philosophy of translation in 1923 with Walter Benjamin's 'Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers.' Benjamin argued that the relationship between the original and translated text is organic and similar to the relationship between life and the human being—although a human being is originally born in the world, he/she is relatively free from it. The translated text is derived from the original text, but it is no longer shackled by its linguistic structure and is transformed into a totally different language, while still communicating a meaning relatively close to the original one. Hence, what is reflected by the translated text is a kind of a new life fit for a new world: "The notion of the life and continuing life of works of art should be considered with completely unmetaphorical objectivity" (Benjamin, 153).

In *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, George Steiner argues that "translation between languages is a particular configuration and model fundamental to human speech, of writing, of pictorial encoding inside any language" (xii). Steiner divides the problems of translation into two major approaches: the universalist and the relativist approach. The first category maintains that the languages of the world share universal features and that, as such, the process of presenting corresponding equivalence is realizable. The second category is the relativist approach,

that is, the languages of the world have relative similarity and it is proposed that translation can only ever be approximate translation—there is no such notion as identical equivalence. Hermeneutics adopts the relativist approach of translation in that it envisions the text as a fluid entity.

Hermeneutic translation addresses the issues of the translation problematic that cannot be remedied by linguistic theories of translation or a culture-based approach. Likewise, it pays special attention to the significance of the translator's role in the translation process. It not only approaches the translation process as a method of thinking, coupled with a concept of understanding, but also equips the translator with the necessary skills of critical thinking and tools of literary interpretation.

This study consists of an introduction, seven chapters and a conclusion. The introduction provides the background to the study. It outlines the problems of the study and how they can be addressed. In addition, it provides a review of the relevant literature, the methodology of the study and the questions this study seeks to answer.

Chapter one, *Hermeneutics: a Theory of Understanding and Interpretation*, discusses several definitions of hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is introduced as a theory of understanding. The concepts of understanding and interpretation are critically investigated and analyzed with the aim of establishing the basic rules necessary for bridging the gap between translation and interpretation. The mechanism of hermeneutic understanding is clarified and a chronology of hermeneutics is briefly introduced.

Chapter two, *The Reconstruction of Authorial Intention and the Translation Process*, aims to establish the necessary background of the proposed approach of translating classical texts into English. This chapter also presents the concept of traditional hermeneutics, namely Romantic hermeneutics, where the text can be interpreted and translated through a focus on its linguistic structure coupled with a psychological reconstruction of the author, in order to understand his/her authorial intention. This chapter traces how, in historical hermeneutics, a work of art can be translated through coming to terms with the author's lived experience; this can be used as a technique for getting acquainted with authorial intention.

Chapter three, *The Philosophy of Being and the Concept of Existential Equivalence*, tackles the concept of translation and its intricate relationship with the concept of the world. It considers the text as an existential entity whose meaning is taken from its existence in the world. Therefore, those terms and expressions which no longer exist cannot be interpreted or rendered unless the translator searches for their position in the world. It begins with an explanation of the philosophy of Being, time, Dasein,

understanding, historicity and interpretation, drawing mainly on Heidegger's *Being and Time*, with the purpose of identifying the principal features of hermeneutic translation theory. This chapter starts from a premise that any interpretation is a kind of translation. As such, the concept of interpretation substitutes the concept of translation. The reciprocal relationship between understanding and interpretation is underscored and the impact of historicity on the process of understanding and interpretation is critically examined.

Chapter four, *The Phenomenological Equivalence*, outlines the rules for translating traditional texts; translation is not presented as an act of linguistic transfer, but as a phenomenological transfer that conceives of the thoughts and ideas concealed in a text. Translation is viewed from a new perspective, that of the reflexive concept of translation, breaking with traditional and contemporary concepts of translation—the translation process is to be seen not only as a reflection of the text, but also as a manifestation of its context and its world. The principles of translation in this approach are explained.

Chapter five, *The Historicity of the Context versus the Divinity of the Text*, presents Gadamer's concept of hermeneutics, including his concept of historicity that presents a new vision of understanding and interpreting the traditional text. In addition, this chapter provides a hermeneutic vision of the classical text and its tradition. It explains the characteristics of the classical text, including its transformative nature and temporality. It also explains the paracontextual components of the traditional text, such as its ideology, the ideology of the reader, the feeling revealed by the text, the politics of the text and its socioeconomic realities. Gadamer's explanation of the historical approach to interpretation is taken into consideration. This chapter aims to explain aspects of difference and similarity between the traditions of historicism, new historicism and Gadamer's hermeneutic concept of history. The difference between the true, prejudiced reading of the text and the false, prejudiced reading is introduced. This chapter establishes the interpretive techniques that can be used to provide well-defined strategies for interpreting and translating ancient texts.

Chapter six, *The Hermeneutic Concept of Language and Translation*, establishes the core rules of the hermeneutic theory of translation. The hermeneutic concept of language is clearly explained in relation to modern linguistic theories. It presents a comparison between the approach of hermeneutic translation and modern linguistic theory. The areas of similarity and difference between traditional and modern hermeneutics are discussed. The invisible elements constituting the traditional text are also examined.

Chapter Seven, *Hermeneutic Translation: Theory and Practice*, addresses the issues arising from the translation of the traditional text. In addition, the remedies and solutions for such problems are proposed. The hermeneutic approach to translation is presented and a set of strategies are proposed for translating traditional texts. Translation theories that tackle the issues of translating traditional texts are critically examined. Practical examples are kept to a minimum as the primary concern of this study is to suggest an approach for addressing translation problems in the application of hermeneutics.

Finally, the conclusion recapitulates the main argument and the findings of this book, and completes the discussion of this important topic. Regardless of the difficulties encountered and the shortcomings to be expected in translating traditional texts, I hope that this book makes a contribution and helps translators of texts everywhere.

CHAPTER ONE

HERMENEUTICS:
A THEORY OF UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETATION

The idea of hermeneutics is deeply rooted in the history of the Western philosophical tradition. In *The Hermeneutical Self and an Ethical Difference*, Paul Chung expounds the idea that hermeneutics comes from the Greek word ερμηνευειν (hermeneuein), which means *to interpret*, and its derivative ερμηνεια (hermeneia), which means *interpretation*. It has a linguistic relationship to *Hermes*, the messenger of the Olympian gods, who translates the language of the gods to the people.

Hermeneutics, as praxis, is regarded as a means of translating and interpreting the Bible, the Homeric epics, the Torah, the Talmud and the Midrashim. However, hermeneutics, as a methodology and theory, is said to have changed technically with the advent of Schleiermacher's hermeneutic circle that focused on the problems of interpretation and the need for a unified systematic method of interpretation. Later on, hermeneutics invaded the literary arena, giving rise to the method of literary interpretation; it is also employed in addressing the translation problems of ancient texts.

Therefore, hermeneutics has been subject to various changes and numerous developments in both content and structure. Von Bormann emphasizes that in the development of the term 'hermeneutics,' the Latin word *hermeneutica* was first presented by a theologian from Strasbourg, Johann Dannhauer, as an essential requirement of all sciences that rely on the interpretation of texts. According to H. E. Hasso Jaeger's article 'Studien zur Frühgeschichete der Hermeneutik,' *hermeneutica*, terminologically, is drawn from Aristotle's treatise *hermeneutica* (*De interpretation*); he states that modern hermeneutics is a continuation of Aristotle's Organon. Aristotle's treatise *peri hermeneias* defines interpretation as 'enunciation,' a definition that suggests the first direction of its meaning was 'to say' or 'to announce' (Palmer, 12). Accordingly,

Aristotle defines hermeneutics as the power of the mind to produce statements that can be true or false.

In *Hermeneutics: an Introduction*, Anthony Thiselton proposes that "hermeneutics explores how we read, understand, and handle texts, especially those written in another time or in a context of life different from our own" (1). It is mainly concerned with the process of reading, understanding and handling texts from ancient times and different cultures. His use of the word 'handle' signifies that the idea of encountering any given text is best described as hermeneutic; therefore, handling a text means to analyze, interpret, evaluate or translate it. In other words, hermeneutics is mainly engaged in using the critical and cognitive tools of reading and translating those texts travelling across history from distant times and far-flung places.

In *Biblical Hermeneutics: a Treatise on the Interpretation of the Old and New Testament*, Milton S. Terry argues that hermeneutics is the science of interpretation, treating it as "both a science and art. As a science it enunciates principles […] and classifies the facts and results. As an art, it teaches what application these principles should have" (qtd in *Biblical Heremenutics*,5). In 'What is Hermeneutics,' Romualdo E. Abulad defines hermeneutics as "the art of interpretation" (1). Definitions of hermeneutics can be divided into either the scientific or the artistic; a consequence of this is that there is no clear and explicit strategy for addressing the problems of mistranslation and misinterpretation. If hermeneutics is classified as a science, it has to identify explicit rules for understanding, interpreting and translating texts. However, should it be regarded as an art, it cannot develop fixed or explicit rules for interpreting and translating texts. In his book, *A Short Introduction to Hermeneutics*, Peter Sznodi elucidates this controversy over the definition of the concept of hermeneutics as follows:

> "Hermeneutics has persisted, in part, because it is so protean and polymorphous that if repressed in one form it returns in another. […] Hermeneutics has meant so many things over the last two decades, not to mention the last two centuries, or the last two millennia, that any definition must be vague, partial, or misleading" (XIII).

Sznodi exhorts that hermeneutics is a flexible and liquid concept—it has a conceptual framework that adapts its interpretive strategies and techniques to its respective text. This flexibility provides the interpreter/translator with the freedom to use cognitive tools and interpretive styles that ensure an accurate interpretation and precise translation of the text. The fluidity of hermeneutics makes it an indefinable

concept: it is abstruse to assume that a comprehensive and clear-cut definition of hermeneutics can be given. In this respect, in *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*, Richard E. Palmers argues that one of the advantages of this liquidity of hermeneutics is its ability to interpret and translate different branches of knowledge and different types of texts: "The rules would naturally be varied with the object, and thus there is a hermeneutics for poetry, for history or for laws" (Palmer, 81).

Being liquid and transformable, hermeneutics is a multifaceted philosophy of interpretation and translation that uses various rules, different methodologies and distinct techniques to translate and interpret. For this reason, hermeneutics is a practical, rather than a theoretical, methodology. It is chameleonic in that it changes its interpretative techniques and strategies according to its current situation and type of text.

In *Understanding Hermeneutics*, Schmidt argues that the interpretive tools applied to a historical text may be different to those used to interpret a legal text: hermeneutics persistently creates new rules of understanding and interpretation to fit its purpose. After all, the core idea of hermeneutics is implicit in the concept of understanding; its end result is interpretation and its tools are the rules of interpretation. Despite the longstanding controversy as to whether hermeneutics is definable or not, a large number of its critics have come to the conclusion that it generally involves a process of understanding and interpretation.

In *The Power of Dialogue: Critical Hermeneutics after Gadamer and Foucault*, Hans Herbert Kögler and Paul Hendrickson elucidate that hermeneutic interpretative and translational techniques are derived from the act of pre-understanding—there is no concept of original understanding. A human being's comprehension of his/her surroundings is hierarchical in the sense that it is related to something else. Kögler writes:

> "Understanding is subject to a historical-cultural pre-understanding. Inasmuch as pre-understanding is the condition of possibility for understanding, it is possible to 'get behind' pre-understanding. Nevertheless, we are to infer from this insight not the strong thesis of an event of interpretation, but rather the idea of a reciprocal interplay between implicit assumptions and the reflective presentation of another's meaning, and, contrastively, one's own interpretative premises. This process is essentially determined through language, which first makes possible something like the experience of world or being and, through its dialogic structure, endows understanding with the character of conversation" (*The Power of Dialogue*, 83).

The translator/interpreter investigates his/her text from a previous background that is pertinent to both the interpreter and the text. Overloaded with his/her values and traditions, the reader approaches a text burdened with a set of assumptions mixed up with those ideas revealed through the text; these exert a major influence on the process of determining the meaning of a text. What is encountered in such a complicated process is the language of the text—the translator/interpreter plays a game of musical chairs with the language of the text and through an exchange of roles. A conversation between the text and the reader opens with the aim of making the text speak out its meaning.

Having handled a text, the translator unconsciously starts explaining it; an explanatory interpretation: "In hermeneutics, this area of assumed understanding is called pre-understanding" (Palmers, 25). This process of pre-understanding is inseparable from the sociocultural realities encompassing both the reader and the text. In his book, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, Duncan Sheldon defines pre-understanding as the "body of assumptions and attitudes that a person brings to the perception and interpretation of reality. The pressing question is now: how do we classify the myriad forms in which these assumptions and attitudes appear?" (13). The idea of pre-understanding epitomizes the interpreter's intentions, background, previous thoughts and knowledge related to a text, thereby assuming an essential component in the process of translating and interpreting. Palmers acknowledges that the mutual connection between comprehension and language is the core issue of hermeneutics—it is "the process of bringing to understanding, especially as this process involves language, since language is the medium par excellence in this process" (13). Hermeneutics is an act of understanding, encapsulated and articulated through language. Thiselton argues that hermeneutics is mainly concerned with interpreting and comprehending various types of texts. He outlines it clearly in the following:

> "(1) Biblical hermeneutics raises biblical and theological questions. (2) It raises philosophical questions about how we come to understand and the basis on which understanding is possible. (3) It involves literary questions about types of texts and processes of reading. (4) It includes social, critical, or sociological questions about how vested interests, sometimes of class, race, gender, or prior belief, may influence how we read. (5) It draws on theories of communication and sometimes general linguistics because it explores the whole process of communicating a content or effect to readers or to a community" (1).

In its endeavor to interpret and translate a text, hermeneutics employs a number of techniques and complex methodologies to seek out its meaning.

It searches for any ideas, information, value or vision, which may clarify or reduce the ambiguity of a text, and summons up all the potentialities of the reader, his/her skills, previous background, assumptions, cultural views and knowledge, to achieve its purpose. The translator/reader not only reads the text but also visualizes it as an anthropomorphized figure with whom he/she has a relationship of intimacy to make the text reveal its secrets. Hermeneutics, as a theory of translation, employs philosophical, linguistic and even historical concepts and techniques to help provide a clear understanding of an interpreted/translated text and force the reader to spare no effort in getting to the most accurate understanding of it. In *Hermeneutic Dialogue and Social Science: a Critique of Gadamer and Habermas*, Austin Harrington underscores the significance of visualizing this dialogue between the text and the interpreter and considers this process to be an essential step in disclosing the ambiguity of the text. He writes:

> "Gadamer and Habermas are well known for upholding a 'dialogical' conceptions of the grounds and context of knowledge in the human sciences. Although there are also important differences between the two thinkers, Gadamer defending respect for the heritage of 'tradition' and consciousness of historical finitude, Habermas espousing the project of universal enlightenment and emancipation, both agreed that all understanding of social life should take the form of a real or virtual dialogue between the interpreters of cultural phenomena and the subjects whose lives, actions and productions they interpret. In their views, researchers must not only demonstrate 'understanding' of their subjects, in the traditional sense of an empathic act of Verstehen aimed at eliciting the subjective meaning of historical actors; they must also regard their subjects as possible partners to a normative conversation about the world and imagine themselves as actively seeking to reach critical agreement with them about the appropriate forms of rationality and ways of describing the world" (1-2).

Hermeneutics is the art of revealing the concealed parts of a text: that which is not directly stated, that which is excluded and that which is not articulated through words. Similarly, hermeneutics tries to learn not only about what is unsaid, but also what is intended by the author. The written words themselves do not manifest everything about a text and hermeneutics raises unending questions in exploring the invisible parts of the interpreted text in order to gain a more accurate and insightful interpretation.

The proponents of hermeneutics like Peter Sznodi, Martin Chladenius, George F-Meier, Friedrich Ast, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Hans-Georg

Gadamer, Martin Heidegger, Edmund Husserl and Wilhelm Dilthey maintain a consensus that hermeneutics is the art of understanding and interpretation. However, each writer employs his own distinct concept of this interpretation, which differs from author to author. For example, Schleiermacher believes that the grammatical and psychological modes of interpretation are the most relevant ones for comprehending a given text; Husserl believes that interpretation is a phenomenological act *par excellence*; Dilthey thinks understanding draws on comprehending the lived experience of both the text and the author.

According to Heidegger, the idea of interpretation breaks with the previous Western philosophical tradition that sees it as a mental activity; he conceives of it as a way of coping with the objects being understood— an existential interpretation. Gadamer believes that interpretation is a historical process. In his book, *Radical Hermeneutics: Reception, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project*, John D. Caputo states that although the proponents of hermeneutics supply varied visions concerning the notion of understanding, they concede that all types of understanding are presuppositional.

The hermeneutic translation or interpretation of a traditional text draws on the receiver's familiarity with the text: "It is rather the case that the hermeneutics itself changes over time, as does the concept of the literary work; and this dual change should result in a modification of the rules and the criteria of interpretation, or at least necessitate their reexamination" (Sznodi, 3). In his book, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: a Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Grant R. Osborne argues that hermeneutics yields a singular vision of the concept of context—described as unpredictable, transformable and relative. The text and its related context persistently metamorphose into new realities as it is subject to different external and internal influences; one's own interpretation of a certain phenomenon at the age of 18 will be different at the age of 50. David Jasper has this to say:

> "If you give one text to thirty people, you will come up with more or less thirty different readings, none of them, perhaps, wholly wrong or wholly right. True, there will be a great deal of overlap, and when a powerful institution like a church seeks to impose uniformity on reading (in the interests of orthodoxy or order) we can be persuaded pretty well all to think alike. But the fact remains that what is called 'reader response' to a text is various and often contradictory especially with authoritative, often patriarchal, texts like the Bible" (16).

Hermeneutic interpretation is largely influenced by a reader's knowledge, his/her psychological condition and life experience, which,

consciously or unconsciously, influence his/her analysis of a text. Since interpretation is an individual act, it varies from person to person and two individuals may present two different readings or two distinct translations of the same text. In addition, a single reader can present different readings of the same text at different ages. Accordingly, the ideas of comprehension and interpretation are best described as transformative, since they derive their existence from the notion of context and time—changeable concepts, as is clearly suggested by Palmer:

> "Understanding of literature must be rooted in the more primal and encompassing modes of understanding that have to do with our very Being-in-the-world. Understanding a literary work, therefore, is not a scientific kind of knowing which flees from existence into a world of concepts; it is a historical encounter which calls forth personal experience of being here in the world" (10).

Palmer explains that understanding cannot be aggregated out of nothing because it is closely related to external reality—a part of the world—it is inseparable from its surroundings. However, the world is neither fixed nor static; it is moving forward and a product of renewable historical experience—it derives its logic from this continually renewed context. This explains why a literary work cannot be translated through resorting to a set of fixed scientific rules that give face-value judgments as to the nature of a text—the meaning of literary works changes over time. Analyzing a literary work cannot be reduced to a mere process of interpreting its textual structure; the interpreter not only explains the information being displayed in the words of a text, but also highlights its relevant paracontextual elements. Jasper contends that the meaning revealed in a text derives its conceptual renewal from both internal and external factors. A literary or traditional text has a fixed meaning but a changeable intention and the role of the translator/interpreter should be to disclose the invisible intentions of the text that are constantly being reshaped and transformed: "Hermeneutics recognizes this slippage between intention and meaning, or worse, between the slipperiness of written words and human understanding" (Jasper, 14). The translation process of a text is unique in and of itself, and its interpretation is ultimately different from reader to reader: "A work of art is always stamped with the human touch; the word itself suggests this, for a work is always a work of man" (Palmer, 7).

   In his essay, 'Interpretation and the Science of Man,' Charles Taylor argues that "interpretation, in the sense relevant to hermeneutics, is an attempt to make clear, to make sense of an object of study. This object

must, therefore, be a text, or a text-analogue, which in some way is confused, incomplete, cloudy, seemingly contradictory—in one way or another, unclear" (Taylor, 153). Interpretation is best designated as the logical result of understanding since there is no interpretation without prior understanding. In 'Literary Interpretation,' Donald G. Marshall stresses the relationship between interpretation and understanding:

> "Literary interpretation is another specification of this basic structure. The literary interpreter helps someone understand the meaning of a text. Knowledge of a text's language and of relevant historical contexts and references is presupposed or must be supplied before interpreting can begin. But alienness is also presupposed: something in the text or in our distance from it in time and place makes it obscure. The interpreter's task is to make the text speak again. This task is accomplished by 'reading' the text and by helping students learn to read it" (159).

The process of interpretation/translation requires a number of actions to be carried out correctly: pre-understanding, that is, the presuppositions of the interpreter are projected onto the interpreted text; the interpreter/translator should be able to understand the linguistic structure of the text and its historical context; the interpreter/translator should learn to connect his/her presuppositions to the content of the text; finally, applying such a process helps provide a better interpretation. It is a circular process that starts from pre-understanding and ends at relative understanding. In his book, *The Contexts of Understanding*, Herman Parret argues that this concept of circular interpretation can be applied to translating traditional texts. Some traditional texts cannot be clearly understood without reading them in the light of an entire tradition. This is clearly reflected in attempts to understand religious texts—there are often ambiguous parts that are impossible to understand without reference to an entire religious tradition.

The hermeneutic circle has been applied to interpretation of the Holy Quran in the light of the Old and New Testament. This trend has been addressed in a number of different works. For instance, in the *History of the Quranic Text: from Revelation to Compilation*, Muhammad Mustafa Al-A'zami argues that the Quranic text can be more clearly understood when it is compared to the Old and New Testaments. In his unpublished PhD thesis, *Modern Quranic Hermeneutics*, Peter Mathews Wright explains that the Quran should be interpreted in the broader context of the Abrahamic religions.

In *The History of the Quran*, Theodor Nöldeke contends that the meaning of Quranic verses cannot be accurately interpreted or translated without investigating them in the light of their historical tradition. This

idea is also analyzed by Christoph Luxenburg in *The Syro-Aramic Reading of the Koran*. Luxenburg argues that many Quranic words do not belong to the Arabic language but were borrowed from the S*yro-Aramic* language, originating in the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula before the advent of Arabic as a written language: "For more than a millennium Aramaic, was the lingua franca in the entire Middle Eastern region before being gradually displaced by Arabic beginning in the 7th century " (Luxenburg, 9).

Luxenburg attempts to incorporate the Quranic text into its broader context by studying Quranic words with reference to Aramaic. This starts from a premise that written Arabic draws significantly on the *Syro-Aramic* cultural milieu. He attempts a diachronic study of some of the words of the Quran in order to explore their true and authentic meaning. The requirement of providing an accurate and precise translation of a traditional text rests upon the idea of circular interpretation. However, it is not the idea of circular understanding that matters, rather it is the philosophy of understanding itself, which fuels the concept of objective interpretation and how it can inspire the translator to apply it correctly.

In his book, *Understanding the Quran*, Muhammad Abdel Haleem highlights the importance of hermeneutics for translating sacred texts, particularly those verses known as *mutashabihat*, whose meanings are ambiguous and indefinite. Abdel Haleem supports his argument by quoting the following verse:

> "It is He who has sent this scripture down to you [Prophet]. Some of its verses are definite in meaning—these are the cornerstone of the Scripture—and others are ambiguous. The perverse at heart eagerly pursue the ambiguities in their attempt to make trouble and pinpoint a specific meaning—only God knows the true meaning—while those firmly grounded in knowledge say, 'We believe in it: it is all from our Lord'— Only those with real perception will take heed" (Naksh 3: 7).

According to Abdel Haleem, translating sacred texts requires one to go beyond the textual structure of the verses and apply the interpretative techniques of hermeneutics in order to capture the meaning of the text— particularly with those ambiguous verses whose meaning is known only to God. Abdel Haleem describes Al-Raghib al-isfahni's classification of the *mutashabihat* in the following lines:

> "Al-Raghib al-isfahni divides *mutashabihat* into three types: verses whose meaning is known only to God, such as those concerning the time of the last Hour; verses that require knowledge of the lexical meaning of words; and verses that can be understood only by learned people endowed with

subtle perception from God. Examples of *mutashabihat* given by other scholars include references to the timing of eschatological events; the meanings of the separate letters at the beginnings of some Suras; and the references to the attributes of God, which some see as anthropomorphic" (134).

According to Abdel Haleem, such verses fall into two categories: the first type is *muhkamat*, which can be easily understood without further interpretation because their meanings are explicit and definite in themselves. The second type is *mutashabih*, which does not provide a clear or definite meaning and attempts at understanding always result in a kind of confusion. The meaning of the ambiguous verses in the Quran is not revealed to any one expect God and those who are inspired by His divine Knowledge; this is clear evidence that the idea of confining the understanding of the Quran to its textual structure is inapplicable, and inapplicable to its translation as well. A fully hermeneutic principle of interpretation and understanding, which relentlessly seeks the truth behind the meaning, is required.

Hermeneutics is closely related to the interpretation of scripture in the Western milieu: the philosophy of hermeneutic understanding and interpretation has repeatedly been applied to translating the Bible. Biblical studies have a longstanding tradition of using hermeneutics as a method of understanding, translation and interpretation. However, different trends of hermeneutics have been applied to the Bible and these may be in conflict with each other. In this respect, Thiselton differentiates between the meanings of *exegesis*, *interpretation* and *hermeneutics* in the following:

> "Finally, whereas *exegesis* and *interpretation* denote the *actual processes* of interpreting texts, *hermeneutics* also includes the second-order discipline of asking critically *what exactly we are doing when we read, understand, or apply* texts. Hermeneutics explores *the conditions and criteria* that operate to try to ensure responsible, valid, fruitful, or appropriate interpretation" (4).

Ostensibly, the difference between exegesis, interpretation and hermeneutics may remain unnoticed unless we are informed beforehand of the set of rules used to ensure a valid methodology of understanding and interpretation. According to Thiselton, before the advent of the Enlightenment, the prevalent method for understanding, interpreting and translating scripture was based on biblical exegesis. In *Fidelity and Translation: Communicating the Bible in New Media*, Paul A. Soukup and Robert Hodgson explain the nature of the relationship between translation of the Bible and linguistics as follows:

"Both linguistic and textual approaches apply a set of normative values which assume that meaning inheres in the written text. This is consistent with the ideology of mission that underpins the Bible Societies translation program. It is predicated upon an approach to translation that privileges the author over the receptor and masks the processes of reading and interpretation […]. The important question is not whether the meaning of the text has been preserved, but what is the function of the translation in its particular cultural and historical context? How and where does the locus of authorial power shift in these new translations? […] what if any new interpretations are suggested by such rewritings and in what ways does the translator seek to constrain the range of the interpretative choices within a multimedia translation?" (207)

Biblical exegeses tend to align with the idea that the translation process should focus on the internal structure of the text, isolating it from its context so that meaning is fully textual in derivation and has nothing to do with the historical, social, or cultural experience affecting the text and its translator—the word of God is perceived to be above history and all human and cultural constraints. Translating the Bible in this way focuses on analyzing the internal structure of the text, treating it as if the entire meaning is concealed in its textual structure and also blocking out external elements that may affect the translator's assimilation of meaning.

In his book, *Typology in Scripture*, Richard M. Davidson underscores the significance of textual translation and its related problems: "The first and most basic task in interpreting Scripture is to ensure that one has access to what is indeed the Holy Scriptures—both in the original languages and in the modern translation. This requires attention to textual studies and to the principles of translation" (68). Davidson states that the major concern of biblical studies is to preserve the word of God unchanged. Recommending textual criticism as an approach to translating the Bible, he gives full authority to the text and repudiates the presuppositions of the historical-critical method. However, while applying textual criticism in translating the Bible, a number of changes can be expected to distort or change the meaning of the original text. Davidson describes the problems that arise in using textual criticism in translating the Bible in the following:

"It is difficult to represent accurately the form and content of the original languages of the Bible in the modern target languages because in the process the translator must seek to bridge various barriers, such as the gaps of time, culture, and geography; changed socio-economic and political situations; and different thought patterns" (69).

The translation process derives its validity from a kind of higher authority, represented by the authority of the writer of a text, but this authority is most definitely changed when translating across different cultures and at different times. The text is not an autonomous entity that it is to be hived off from its world. Having started translating a biblical text, one may encounter various problems of translation emanating from cultural differences, the historical gap between the past and the present and different socioeconomic realities. Apart from these issues, problems resulting from lexical changes in meaning over time represent a gap that cannot easily be bridged.

The biblical hermeneutics of the sixteenth century presumed that the idea of understanding biblical scripture did not require a reading of the Bible in light of the entire Christian tradition; it was believed that meaning was to be directly derived from the text. This concept of textual understanding, however, changes into one of historical understanding. Baruch Spinoza argued that the interpretation of scripture can be achieved by applying the historical understanding of the author's mind.

In *Reading Karl Barth: New Directions for North American Theology*, Kurt Anders Richardson argues that following the advent of the philosophy of Enlightenment, many scholars became suspicious of the historicity of the miracles and the historical life of Jesus—there has been a shift in the modes of biblical interpretation and translation and historical interpretation has been applied to understanding and translating the spirit behind the work. Historical interpretation attempts to interpret biblical scripture in a more logical manner to make it compatible with the 'enlightened' mind. In *The Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views*, Stanley E. Porter and Beth M. Stovall argue that the application of historical hermeneutics to interpreting the Bible dates back as far as the emergence of the Bible itself. Richardson puts it clearly in the following lines:

> "***Behind the text.*** In some ways, the history of biblical hermeneutics begins as early as the biblical account itself. In the Old Testament, the latter writings, like the Psalms and the Prophets, reinterpret the story of Israel presented in the Torah, and the New Testament continues to reinterpret this continuing story in light of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (an approach that later redemptive-historical scholars would appropriate)" (33).

A language-bound biblical interpretation underscored the text itself without investigating its liaisons with its authors or its historical experience until the advent of the seventeenth century after which a shift in the modes of interpretation from the textual to the historical was witnessed. This mode of historical understanding and interpretation

inherently draws upon the life of the author of a text and his/her socio-economic realities. That is to say, Enlightenment hermeneutics strips the text of its holiness and interprets it as a non-sacred text.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF AUTHORIAL INTENTION AND THE TRANSLATION PROCESS

Responding to the philosophy of the Enlightenment, Schleiermacher established the school of Romantic hermeneutics. This applied linguistic and psychological hermeneutics to the methodology of translating traditional texts and scripture. Schleiermacher contended that the process of hermeneutic translation should have both psychological and linguistic elements. As he argues in *Hermeneutics: a Handwritten Manuscript*, "the vocabulary and the history of an author's age together form a whole from which his writings must be understood as a part" (84). The hermeneutic concept of grammatical/linguistic translation indicates that the meaning of a text cannot be translated without studying it in the light of its linguistic structure. Grammatical understanding represents the first step towards any kind of interpretation or translation. In his article, 'Schleiermacher and Plato: Hermeneutics and Translation,' Rainer Kohlmayer have this to say:

> "Later Schleiermacher adds that only the native language is present to us in its naturally grown fullness; utterances in foreign languages inevitably come to us in fragmentary form because, not having grown up in the foreign world, we can never acquire more than partial knowledge of their context (1977,84). The actual process of gaining understanding follows two paths simultaneously, which he calls grammatical and technical interpretation;(2012, 75,122;1977a,42) in later writings technical interpretation is also called psychological or divinatory. The distinction between grammatical and technical interpretation reflects, on one hand, the relation between language and mind, each of which modifies the other(1977,79; 1998,9), and, one the other, the dual notion of language as a pre-given supra-personal system and as a malleable instrument that is subject to change when creative individuals set to work on it" (93).

Schleiermacher argues that the notion of corresponding equivalence is difficult to realize across different languages simply because it only exists in one's own native language, in which he/she is fully immersed. The translator's knowledge of a foreign language is always incomplete and

insufficient as "languages, for Schleiermacher, are not simple contingent means of communication, but variable historical media—indeed, language as such is for Schleiermacher the only medium of historicity" (Schnitzer, xvii). A discrepancy in historical experience inevitably results in problems of cultural transfer, especially when the two languages used belong to two distinct cultures—the original meaning will only be partially communicated in the target language.

Since the translator is not an original part of the world of the text, he/she is faced by a wide variety of translation problems, mainly centering on the concept of understanding; that is, his/her understanding will be impeded by external and internal elements that go beyond his/her cognitive and intellectual capabilities. Facing such impediments to the translation process, Schleiermacher suggests a grammatical-psychological model for translation. In this respect, Rainer Kohlmayer writes:

> "Grammatical interpretation concerns the utterance as a specimen of language, technical interpretation, the person who speaks and their thoughts. In grammatical interpretation 'a speaker is regarded entirely as the organ of language,' more particularly of the state of the language at the time the utterance was produced. Language enables thought—we cannot think coherently without it—but each language sets a limits to what can be said or thought in it" (93).

Grammatical interpretation aims to understand the linguistic structure of a text and its sentences cannot be conceived of without linking them to their larger context, namely paragraphs and the entire text: "Lexical and grammatical analysis is methodologically the beginning of the interpretation of any text" (Pokorny, 132). The translation process is circular and should cover both linguistic and psychological dimensions. In this respect, translation enjoins both concrete and abstract elements of interpretation. The grammatical elements represent the concrete and visible part of the text to be interpreted. However, rehabilitating the identity of the author and his/her intentions while reproducing his/her work of art is an abstract act— it can be felt but cannot be materially captured. For this reason, it requires a special talent to determine whether the captured intentions of the author are true. Kohlmayer explains his vision regarding technical and psychological interpretation in the following lines:

> "Technical interpretation proceeds as if one had to get to know the language from the speaker's discourse; it rests on the knowledge of the speaker's individuality, and the linguistic expression of this individuality is called style. If grammatical interpretation investigates the state of the

language at a particular moment in its development and is able to yield relatively certain knowledge, technical interpretation is both more dynamic and more speculative: it requires imaginative effort on the part of the exegete who is now dealing with the innovations and transgressions of a particular speakers imposing their will on the language and through their intervention, forcing change on it. The interdependence of the grammatical and technical interpretation appears also in what later became known as the hermeneutic circle: one must already know a man in order to understand what he says, and yet one first becomes acquainted with him by what he says" (130).

Psychological interpretation attempts to fix and understand the thoughts of the writer in the interpreted/translated text by focusing on authorial intention. This can be achieved by "leading the interpreter to transform himself, so to speak, into the author; the divinatory method seeks to gain an immediate comprehension of the author as an individual" (Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics Handwritten Manuscripts*, 150). Being relatively insufficient, the idea of grammatical and linguistic translation is partly incommensurate with authentic translation. Schleiermacher, therefore, attempts to apply a psychological model. Schleiermacher contends that the process of circular translation is not limited to linguistic analysis of an entire text; rather it includes those contextual elements that are inseparable from the text—invisible or contextual elements. Imposing his/her understanding onto the expectations and presuppositions of a text, the translator unconsciously presupposes its meaning. After all, the process of presupposition is endless, moving from the part to the whole and vice versa. Accordingly, the translator must be acquainted with the author's life and times and as a consequence "this psychological dimension involves entering into the creative mind of the original author, also known as 'authorial intent'" (Stiver, 88).

Familiarity with the social, cultural and historical contexts of the author is a prerequisite for the technique of psychological translation: "Interpreting what someone says without any reference to what they intend is fundamentally at odds with how we come to understand anyone else's utterances at all" (Bowie, 84). Schleiermacher argues that a true translation of a text requires us to be guided by our own intuition as a means to understanding authorial intention; this can be achieved by training our minds hermeneutically to come to terms with the thinking of the author. In *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writing*, Schleiermacher says:

"[…] shall come back again to the fact that hermeneutics is not to be limited merely to the writer's work; […] nor is it limited to the writer's work, if the language is alien; and it is also the case within own language,

and it should be noted that, quite apart from the various dialects to which it has broken as well as from the peculiarities which happen to one and do not happen to others, there is always some alien element perceived by everyone in the thoughts and expressions of the others" (315).

Therefore, "feeling or intuition is also intimately related to Schleiermacher's notion of understanding the mind of the author. It is the key term for appreciation of his theory of hermeneutics" (Calvert, 45). In this way, translation is a practice of understanding, not a practice of paraphrasing. Calling for a general hermeneutic methodology, Schleiermacher establishes a hermeneutic theory of translation that is to be applicable to different fields of the humanities—from legal documents and religious scripture to literary works: "For hermeneutics is no longer seen as a specifically disciplinary matter belonging to theology, literature, or law: it is the art of understanding any utterance in language" (Palmer, 94).

Since these texts belong to different branches of knowledge, they cannot be translated with similar theoretical tools of interpretation. Each separate discipline needs to develop its own theoretical tools that are consistent with its own distinct problems of translation: "Here, the conclusion can be drawn that according to Schleiermacher, when it comes to translating, the purpose is more important than the translation method to be applied" (Akin, 70). Although belonging to different branches of knowledge, these texts share a common medium, namely language, which is based on similar phonological, syntactical and grammatical rules. For this reason, a major step towards arriving at a correct translation is an understanding that the translator should analyze and interpret his/her text linguistically: "A luminous early aphorism states that hermeneutics is precisely the way a child grasps the meaning of a new word" (Palmer, 94). Having been considered an act of linguistic understanding, the hermeneutic translation approach derives its validity from a process of communication that is a kind of dialogue between the interpreter and the text. In his article 'On the Different Methods of Translating,' Schleiermacher has this to say:

> "One could even say that only to the extent to which a person influences language does he deserve to be heard beyond his immediate environment. Any discourse [Rede] soon dies away of necessity if it can be reproduced by a thousand organs in a form which is always the same; only that discourse can and may endure longer which forms a new moment in the life of language itself. Therefore each free and higher discourse needs to be understood in two ways: once out of the spirit of the language of whose elements it is composed, as a discursively living representation bound and defined by that spirit and conceived out of it; it should be grasped on the other hand out of speaker's emotion, as his action, as brought forth and

explainable only out of his own being. Indeed, any discourse of this kind is understood, in the higher sense of the word, only when both of these relationships have been perceived together and in their true relation to each we inferred earlier" (46).

Schleiermacher depicts the concept of language from a discursive viewpoint, holding that linguistic understanding and interpretation is shaped in terms of its usage and application in people's daily lives. Language goes through a relentless process of reproduction and reconstruction and acquires its connotations from everyday use. However, the discursive nature of the language is conceived by a speaker whose emotions, assumptions and background intervene in the process of his/her interpretation; this may change or even distort the discursive meaning and lead to it being replaced by a different meaning as constructed by the translator.

This belief asserts the meaning of a text should be defined by the translator, not by the text itself, and that the language of the text is a historical object. This may lead us to an understanding of the process of translation as related to its historical context and represented by a kind of dialogue between the text and translator. The text can be personified as a human being with whom the translator starts a dialogue in order to determine whether his/her understanding fits its purpose. As such, Schleiermacher pays unrivaled attention to the concept of understanding: "If hermeneutics is no longer basically devoted to clarifying the varying practical problems in interpreting different kinds of texts, then it can take the act of understanding as its true starting point" (Palmer, 86).

The translation process is best described as both a philosophical project and a reconstructive process where the translator is held accountable in his/her interposition into the mind of the author so as to be able to perceive the author's attention by focusing on his/her individuality. In *Validity in Interpretation*, Eric Donald Hirsch advocates the concept of authorial intention as a means of restoring meaning to a text—meaning cannot be understood without reverting back to the intention of the original author. He further explains that even if one claims that the author has nothing do with his written text the reader himself will be unconsciously affected by the intentions of the author. This idea is clearly proposed by Burhanettin Tatar:

> "It seems that we can trace this interaction in Hirsch's theory back to Schleiermacher's concept of two-part referential discourse. Schleiermacher remarks that "As every discourse has a two-part reference, to the whole language and to the entire thought of its creator, so all understanding of speech consists of two elements [Momenten]—

understanding the speech as it derives from the language and as it derives from the mind of the thinker." This explains why Schleiermacher proposes grammatical and psychological interpretations as the complementary process " (140).

However, how can the translator interpose himself into the mind of the original author? Being intertwined and overlapping, language and thought affect the translator's understanding of his/her text. Accordingly, the process of translation not only attempts to conceive of the language of the author, but also of the thoughts behind this language; the language conceals the meaning that needs to be revealed in order to accomplish an intelligible and precise translation. Therefore, the key role of the translator is to reveal the meaning hidden in the text's language by tracing the development and change of the thoughts and ideas manifested through the text. The idea of tracing the thinking of the original author is based on a historical study of his/her life and the external and internal elements that constructed his/her views and beliefs; this enlarges the scope of the process of translation. Translating the thoughts reflected by a text may represent a good avenue to reach linguistic understanding. Schleiermacher argues that:

"Every speech has a twofold relationship both to the whole of the language and to the collected thinking of the speaker, so also there exists in all understanding of the speech two moments: understanding it as something drawn out of language and as a 'fact' in the thinking of the speaker" (*On the Different Methods of Translating*, 88).

In his book, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*, Paul Ricoeur repudiates Schleiermacher's model of psychological reconstruction of authorial intention, considering it an abstract, impractical and immeasurable concept. He suggests that this denies the translator access to a fixed or static methodology with which he/she can accurately measure what occurred in the mind of the author while producing the text. Believing in the power of the reader to capture the original meaning of a text means that the text no longer exists in the present—the idea of original meaning requires that the text provides only one interpretation: that of the author. Adhering to such a vision denies the role of the receiver in understanding the text as it homogenizes the understanding process. Ricoeur puts it clearly in the following:

"With written discourse, however, the author's intention and the meaning of the text cease to coincide. This dissociation of the verbal meaning of the text and the mental intention of the author gives to the concept of inscription its decisive significance, beyond the mere fixation of previous

oral discourse. Inscription becomes synonymous with the semantic autonomy of the text, which results from the disconnection of the mental intention of the author from the verbal meaning of the text, of what the author meant and what the text means. The text's career escapes the finite horizon lived by its author. What the text means now matters more than what the author meant when he wrote it" (29).

Grasping the thoughts of the writer is a relative issue since authorial intention is isolated from the author and relates to the 'floating' text. In addition, the thoughts manifested by the text are shaped and constituted by its own renewable world, meaning that these thoughts that are loaded into the text differ across time and space. Furthermore, having written his /her text, the author no longer controls the understanding of the reader, since the reader receives the text in terms of his/her personal point of view, informed by external and internal elements that can be expected to conflict with the intended meaning of the author. Not having been revealed to everyone equally, the psychological reconstruction of the original author is both a personal and metaphysical experience.

Schleiermacher does not determine the techniques that a translator should follow to apply such a psychological interpretation. A text cannot be considered a true representation of the mind of its author, as language does not corresponded completely to thought; as such, the translator cannot understand the thoughts of the author solely by focusing on his/her language. The weight of those other elements, contextual and historical, in defining the meaning of a text, largely exceeds its language and influences the translator's understanding and reproduction of the text in the target language.

Having been produced, the text becomes the particular property of its reader rather than its writer, that is, its meaning, connotations, symbols and even message are understood by the receiver. Accordingly, psychological interpretation, as designated by Schleiermacher, cannot be regarded as a translation approach, but rather a way of thinking. Schleiermacher argues that "either the translator leaves the author in peace as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him. Or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him" (*On the Different Methods of Translating*, 149). According to Schleiermacher, the act of translation can be divided into two types: the first type is not concerned with understanding authorial intention, focusing instead on the language of a text. Similarly, it uses a word-for-word translation methodology giving a literal translation. In 'Schleiermacher and the Problem of Blending,' Anthony Pym writes:

"Schleiermacher's literalist translator - the good translator - follows the source text as closely as possible so that readers may experience what Lefevere, translating Schleiermacher, renders as 'a sense of the strange', 'this feeling of being faced with something foreign' ('das Gefühl des fremden','daß sie ausländisches vor sich haben'). The difficulty with this method is that such literalism ('the translation follows the turns taken by the original'), as the highest and most difficult art, comes close to the easiest and most foolish, that of naïve translations. Translators risk going too far, betraying themselves and their language" (60).

This literal concept of translation unfolds against the backdrop of Schleiermacher's hermeneutic translation theory, particularly with those points related to a psychological reconstruction of the author that may be closely related to his linguistic understanding of a text. The second type is similar to the idea of free translation and implies domesticating the source text; this has much to do with reconstructing authorial intention. In other words, the translator uses his/her creative skills and imagination to envision how the original author of a text would have written it if he/she had belonged to the target culture and the same time period.

The core concept in the process of reconstructing authorial intention is implicit in the idea of its deconstruction; those conditions surrounding the author while producing his/her work first need to be deconstructed. When deconstructing the conditions surrounding the author, the translator cannot avoid falling into the trap of subjectivity; the process of reconstruction is neither flat nor literal, but so complex that it includes many heterogeneous factors belonging to different cultures.

The meaning of the source text is shaped in terms of the reader's understanding of authorial intention inasmuch as the reader or the translator shapes and introduces the source text in terms of his/her own vision; problems of translation do not spring from the content, but from the surrounding context. Gadamer states that "what is to be understood are now not only the exact words and their objective meaning, but also the individuality of the speaker or author" (*Truth and Method*, 184). The text becomes a fixed object when it is isolated from its circumstantial realities. However, since it is a part of a larger world, it cannot be removed from it completely. The text is an immortal being, resurrected from the ashes of the dead at every single reading. In this way, the translator is a creator who not only translates the text but also rewrites it. In his essay 'Genealogies of Translation Theory: Schleiermacher,' Lawrence Venuti quoted André Alphons Lefevere's view on Schleiermacher's hermeneutical translation in the following lines:

"For Schleiermacher, 'the genuine translator' is a 'writer' who wants to bring those completely separated persons, his author and his reader, truly together, and who would like to bring the latter to an understanding and enjoyment of the former as correct and complete as possible without inviting him to the sphere of his mother tongue" (129).

Written texts are not identical to the writer's thoughts, rather they manifest the external realities surrounding a text, with which they start building a web of complicated and interconnected relations. In this way, written texts rewrite themselves such that they are not only authored by their original authors, but also by their world. When the reader/translator focuses on depicting authorial intention, his/her analysis will fall short of an objective and complete understanding of the text; an objective understanding requires investigating both the context and content. Historical intervention, therefore, has been deemed a necessity for obtaining the true meaning of a text. Gadamer writes that:

"Dilthey's logical analysis of the concept of context and coherence in history, in fact, consists in applying to history the hermeneutical principle that we can understand a detail only in terms of the whole text, and the whole only in terms of the detail. It is not just that the sources are texts, but historical reality itself is a text that has to be understood. But, in thus *transposing hermeneutics to the study of history*, Dilthey is only the interpreter of the historical school" (*Truth and Method*, 203).

A circular understanding shifts from conceiving of authorial intention to applying a purely historical understanding to the content of the text, its linguistic structure, utterances, vocabulary and thoughts that have been transformed into a historical reality. The historical context shapes its meanings and constitutes its worldview. It not only provides the text with its meaning, but also informs the mind of the translator and shapes his/her viewpoint towards the text. The idea of the subject matter gives the reader a kind of a meaning that cannot be considered a definite or final meaning. Therefore, the concept of the subject is fluid. In this way, understanding the subject matter of a text assists in communicating its meaning, which can emerge fully and reveal the invisible interaction between the text and life.

In *Dilthey and the Narrative of History*, Jacob Owensby argues that the meaning of a text cannot be disclosed through textual understanding alone. Rather, it may become intelligible when the text is situated in its real life context; locating the text in its larger context, namely life, helps to reveal those individual parts that are ambiguous and unclear. In *Wilhelm Dilthey: a Hermeneutic Approach to the Study of History and Culture*, I. N. Bulhof

indicates that Dilthey's concept of life is significant in understanding the relationship between the world, the text and the translator. The text discloses knowledge the value of which is insignificant when isolated from the experience of life, as life is the source of inspiration and reflection, and helps the reader to reflect on such knowledge. Life gives a reader a kind of distance from the text allowing him/her to develop a more objective understanding.

Therefore, the translator starts understanding his/her text from his/her own perspective towards life—his/her life experience, expanded to include his/her historical world. The translator understands the text from his/her own narrow perspective, which can be enlarged and widened through his/her broader vision of the world. However, in *Understanding Dilthey: Hermeneutics*, Hercules Bantas points out that Dilthey's concept of historical understanding, as a means to objective understanding, is unspecific, general and ambivalent and that the universality of historical experience cannot overcome the biased nature of the translator. In *the Discovery of Historicity in German Idealism and Historicism*, Peter Koslowski demonstrates that such claimed objectivity comes up against the rationale of historical experience, which is unique in its nature, reconciling the opposing streams of eternity and temporality. To put it more clearly, the concept of historical experience derives its temporality and finitude from its connection to a human being tied to a particular time and place; this hinders him/her in obtaining an objective perspective. His/her understanding of the world is shaped, either consciously or unconsciously, by historical experience, which hinders the formulation of objective knowledge.

For this reason, one of the problems arising from translating texts belonging to the social sciences is how to consider their historicity. Following in the steps of Wilhelm von Humboldt, Johann Gustav Droysen, and Leopold von Ranke, Dilthey contends that the concept of the historical understanding is pivotal to hermeneutics: "With Dilthey the primary hermeneutical question became more than just how we should avoid misunderstanding, but how we should understand historically" (Robinson & Porter, 43).

Dilthey asserts that man is a historical being. Man is an evolutionary creature whose own nature and perception are not static but transformable and need to be investigated through specific historical experience. This history is carried from the past to the present through time and space. However, in *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism and the Colonial Context*, Tejaswini Niranjana emphasizes the effect of history on translation. She argues that the concept of history and its association with

the concept of translation is controversial and polemical and raises various questions. For instance, what is meant by the concept of history itself? Is it the history of the text or the history of the context? Is it the history of the author? How can history be connected to both the present and the past? History is carried from the past to the present through various entities, including individuals, cultures, institutions and communities. These carriers are productive systems that not only carry history, but also produce new meanings and values and convert the archaic meanings of ancient texts into new and different meanings.

In *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, Dilthey argues that "The fundamental form of a productive system arises in the individual who gathers together present, past, and possibilities of the future in a life-course" (177–78). Therefore, communities of readers are considered productive systems in their lived experience as they bridge the gulf between the present and the past in order to explore the possibilities of the future. The productivity of history proves how significant historicity is to understanding. Not only does history refer to the past, but also to the present and future in the sense that the translator is not detached from his/her natural temporal affiliations while translating a text. In this respect, Stanley E. Porter and Jason C. Robinson explain the importance of the historical investigation of texts:

> "Dilthey's method of interpretation depends on his key insight that the most fundamental expression is that of history. As a consequence, all other understanding must take place historically, even that of ancient texts. Dilthey claims that through the development of historical sense, as a unity or coherence of meaning, one transcends the prejudices of one's present. One's own historical consciousness makes objectivity in the human sciences possible through a transcending of the individual's relative experience and awareness." (44).

For Dilthey, history plays a significant role in constituting our perception of external reality, which enables the translator/interpreter to understand the ambiguous parts of a text. Studying a text from its historical background helps mitigate the present prejudices of the reader; this historical understanding opens up new horizons of thought and experiences that are different from those ideas and thoughts taken for granted by the reader. In their introduction to, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi argue that "the overall goal of a Critique of Historical Reason will require a progression from an immediate kind of knowledge of life to the conceptual cognition of the human sciences to a reflective knowledge that constitutes mature understanding" (2). History is made by man and it

reflects different views taken from the world; these are converted into subjective views, constituting a fluid and soupy reality that changes over time.

In *Meaning and Understanding*, Herman Parret and Jacques Bouveresse contend that the process of developing historical understanding of meaning is holistic and one should consider the slightest details of the life experience of a text and its author in order to clarify the ambiguity of its meaning. These details cover the cultural, social and historical elements that make up the influential and circumstantial realities surrounding a text. Dilthey proposes that interpreting/translating the meaning of a text can only happen by learning about the lived experience of a text and its author.

According to Dilthey, hermeneutics is not only concerned with interpreting the language of a text, but also with explaining how life can interact with it. As asserted by Palmer, life is a part of textual understanding. He argues that "an expression, for Dilthey, is not primarily an embodiment of one's personal feelings, but rather an 'expression of life'" (112). This human expression is not just the result of psychological factors, but also of the sociohistorical realities that surround him/her. Makkreel and Rodi emphasize that Dilthey's concept of understanding is deeply connected to understanding the lived experience of the author. Dilthey writes:

> "My lived experience of these life-concerns makes me see people and things either as[…]expanding my existence and heightening my powers, or as restricting the scope of my existence.[…]From this subsoil of life, objective apprehension, evaluation, and the positing of purposes emerge as types of attitude with countless nuances that merge into each other" (qtd in *Formation of Historical World,* 153-54).

In *Lost in Translation: a Life in a New Language*, Eva Hoffman underscores the close connection between life and the process of translation. Hoffman explains that translation is meant to comprehend human experience through bridging the gap between the text and its surrounding world. Through translating a text, the translator automatically makes contact with the life-world portrayed in the work itself. Presenting an objective reading and unbiased interpretation/translation of a given text, the translator resorts to using the concept of mental transfer as an interpretative technique. The concept of mental transfer is a prerequisite to understanding Dilthey's concept of translation/interpretation. Palmer clarifies Dilthey's concept of mental transfer in the following:

> "Exactly because a real transposition can take place (when Man understands Man) because affinity and universality of thought[…] can

image forth and from a social-historical *world*, the inner events, and the processes in man can be distinguished from those of animals. Because of this real transposition which can take place through objects that embody inner experience, man can achieve a degree and depth of understanding impossible in relation to any other kind of object. Obviously such a transposition can only take place because a likeness exists between the facts of our own mental experience and those of another person. This phenomenon brings with it the possibility of finding in another person the profoundest depths of our own experience: from the encounter can come to the discovery of a fuller inner world" (104).

The concept of mental transfer states that human beings share a set of ideas, thoughts, beliefs and knowledge about various objects; these are universal to human beings. In his book, *Conceptual Transfer in the Bilingual Mental Lexicon*, Sherif Okasha argues that these implicit assumptions about real-world objects and living creatures are similar, resulting in a conceptual correspondence between different people. Since the mental experience is almost the same, it is possible for human beings to understand the experiences of one another by focusing on these shared concepts. Dilthey recapitulates Schleiermacher's concept of psychological reconstruction of authorial intention. Nevertheless, his vision of mental transfer seems more realistic and intelligible than that which is given by his predecessor.

Dilthey indicates that the idea of re-experiencing—mental transfer—is inadequate for understanding the motivations and thinking of an author. In his book, *Wilhelm Dilthey: a Hermeneutic Approach to the Study of Philosophy*, Ilse N. Bulhof emphasizes that "like Freud, he saw the mind's operations as coherent over time. Human memory links present thought with past experience for the individual and for society" (27). Understanding the thought of an author is an act of historical experience in which history does not represent a chronology of certain events, but rather the dominant cultural modes that shape the attitudes and values of a society during a definite period of time. The process of understanding, according to Dilthey, is to be conceived as follows:

"Elementary understanding knows the meanings things have in their normal, common context. Higher understanding focuses on more specialized contexts to transform what is already known into conceptual cognition, but it also makes it possible to systematize this cognition in terms of a universal framework. Dilthey calls the context of elementary understanding 'objective spirit.' We are already historical because we grow up amidst the ways in which the spirit of the past has been objectified and preserved in our present context. Objective spirit is the medium through which we participate in our socio-historical situation, and

understood our place in it, communicate with each other and interact" (qtd *in The Formation of the Historical World,* 2).

Understanding starts from an elementary understanding and finishes at a secondary one. The idea of elementary understanding refers to a historical understanding where the translator understands his text in terms of historical context and real-life experience through the process of mental transfer. This phase of understanding is converted into a more complicated form—the secondary or specific mode of understanding—where his/her real-life experiences are turned into a conceptual framework employed in understanding specialized texts. According to Dilthey, historical understanding, including the elementary and secondary forms, seeks to fathom out the life-world surrounding a text by conveying its abstract concepts through language. Such abstract expressions of life can range from smiles to pamphlets; from doodles to purposive actions; from facial expressions to body language; from written language to spoken language; and from thoughts to ideas. Therefore, "the human studies, Dilthey contends, attempt to formulate a methodology of understanding that will transcend the reductionist objectivity of the sciences and return to the fullness of 'life' of human experience" (Palmer, 105).

In his book, *A Guide to Contemporary Hermeneutics: Major Trends in Biblical Interpretation*, Donald K. McKim explains that hermeneutic translation comprises the following elements: experience, expression and formula. Experience engages perception and apprehension, which is not an object of understanding; it is, however, a part of the perception of the translator, namely meaning. Applying such a concept to a text, one can find that each text has its own experience, a historical and cultural context, shared by the translator and the author of the text being translated: "It tends to reach out and encompass both recollection of the past and anticipation of the future in the total context of the meaning" (Palmer, 109).

The meaning of a text is understood and translated by a human being who belongs to both the past and the present, and he/she has to resort to using sources from the past in order to interpret/translate his/her text at hand. Although belonging to the past and the present, the translator is a temporal creature who leads a present-time life and this shapes his/her perception of surrounding reality. The temporality of the translator urges him/her to unconsciously strip the text of its 'pastness' and turn it into a temporal object. The text is displaced into the world of the receiver as experience, which "is intrinsically temporal (and this means historical in the deepest sense of the word), and therefore, understanding of experience must be also in commensurately temporal (historical) categories of

thought" (Palmer, III). In this sense, understanding differs significantly from perception. In *Dilthey Selected Writing*, H. P. Rickman explains this difference:

> "Dilthey's case can be succinctly illustrated by pursuing the analogy between understanding and perception. Both processes are taken for granted in everyday life; we perceive houses or cars and understand (as well as perceive) the smiles of friends or the signals of policemen. Both processes are fallible but also fundamental because we cannot correct mistakes by appealing to another form of cognition. We can only look again or try, once more, to understand. The methodology of the sciences tries to minimize error by indicating how the conditions of perception can be controlled and its results checked. The corresponding requirement of human studies is a methodology of understanding and this Dilthey attempted" (9).

Not all perception provides a necessarily correct understanding; perception derives its validity and logic from a set of presuppositions. The idea being addressed in this context is not so much related to the nature of presuppositional thoughts as to whether they are innate in our minds or come from external reality. In *Translating the Perception of Text: Literary Translation and Phenomenology*, Clive Scott explains the differences between perception and understanding in relation to translating those texts that belong to the social sciences and humanities. Perception refers to the prior ideas stored in one's own mind, or human consciousness more generally, regarding the object being analyzed.

Since Plato and Aristotle philosophers have been divided between two antagonistic visions concerning the idea of perception; the first category proposes that perception is an innate faculty of the human mind, while the second group embrace the view that perception is a direct consequence of encountering external reality and that different concepts and ideas are stored in our minds, resulting in a collective consciousness of various objects and entities. In *Speech Acts*, *Meaning, and Intentions: Critical Approaches to the Philosophy of John R. Searle*, Armin Burkhardt demonstrates that these experiences, stored in our minds in the form of consciousness, are a set of presuppositions that are constituted from one's direct and indirect contact with surrounding reality. In addition, a major part of these presuppositions is unconsciously received through tradition and culture. However, the idea of perception does not penetrate deeply into the objects being perceived: it depicts the appearance of reality, not reality itself. It never goes deeper into the concealed layers of truth hidden in a text and may be misleading or provide an incorrect model of truth. However, understanding is a mental process that seeks the truth behind

what we perceive by examining whether our perception of an object is true or not. Dilthey called the systematic coordination of elementary acts of understanding in order to comprehend the meaning of complex, permanent expressions "interpretation and its methodology 'hermeneutics'" (Palmer, 9).

Accordingly, translation is defined as a technique for verifying whether one's own perception of the life-world surrounding a text is true or false. In other words, perceiving is a matter of understanding and understanding is a matter of verifying our perception of objects; this verification is called translation. The process of interpretation/translation is pronounced in terms of a methodology that consists of a set of explicit interpretative rules, namely hermeneutics. Dilthey's perception of the social science text as an object contradicts his vision that the text is taken from lived experience. According to Palmer, Dilthey's model of understanding, which aims to objectify a text, results in various interpretative issues:

> "First, it focused the problem of interpretation on an object which had a fixed, enduring, objective status; thus the human studies could envision the possibility of objectively valid knowledge, since the object was relatively unchanging in itself. Second, the object clearly called for 'historical' rather than scientific modes of understanding; it could only be understood through reference to life itself in all its historicity and temporality" (121).

Dilthey's historical method of interpreting the social science text is not consistent with his vision of the text as an object, which, due to the static and fixed nature of the object, has a set of explicit and definite features that may conflict with the nature of its historical understanding—known for its transformable nature. Dilthey is in error when he thinks that one can measure a fixed entity with changeable tools. In this way, understanding is referential; we refer to something we already know and thus, the process of understanding is biased and prejudiced. Presenting an objective understanding of an ancient text or one that belongs to human science cannot possibly occur.

Dilthey is aware of the issues of providing unbiased understanding of a classical text. Therefore, he applies his concept of historicity, which not only reads the text against its past historical experience, but also against the backdrop of the present reality of the reader. However, Dilthey's historicity contradicts itself in dealing with the text as an object. In this way, it strips a text of its lived experience and converts it into a dead object, which cannot be moved forward historically. Dilthey's historicity is an impractical concept for interpretation/translation and one which

cannot present a convincing approach for translating or interpreting traditional texts since its rules of interpretation are invalid.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PHILOSOPHY OF BEING
AND THE CONCEPT OF EXISTENTIAL
EQUIVALENCE

Heidegger presents the concept of Being as the foundation of existential translation. Understanding and evaluating Heidegger's concept of existential translation requires an acknowledgement of the mutual and interrelated association between it and the idea of Being. The existential modes of understanding, interpreting and translating derive their logical and argumentative tools from the concept of Being as explained in *Being and Time*. The concept of Being is an ambiguous term the meaning of which can be made to fit different contexts. Sometimes, Being refers to human beings, but it can also refer to the world. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger provides his understanding of the concept of Being as follows:

> "Everything we talk about, and mean are related to is in being in one way or another. What and how we ourselves are is also a being. Being is found in thatness and whatness, reality, the objective presence of things, subsistence, validity, existence (Dasein) and in the 'there is' (es gibt). In *which* being is the meaning of being to be found; from which being is the disclosure of being to get its start? Is the starting point arbitrary, or does a certain being have priority in the elaboration of the question of being? Which is this exemplary being and in what sense does it have priority?" (5).

Heidegger's concept of Being is not defined to the extent that his/her reader may be able to determine whether Being refers to the text, the context, the world, the human being, the surrounding reality or all of them: Being is a universal concept, indefinable and self-evident. The overwhelming universality of Being is consistent with its indefinable nature: it includes all extant phenomena on the ground of reality, encompasses the whole universe and fits itself to each entity. In *Routledge Guidebook to Heidegger's Being and Time*, Stephen Mulhall writes of the indefinable nature of Being:

"It is no accident that Heidegger provides no clear and simple answer to this question—neither at the opening of his book nor at any later point within it; for, in his view, it will take at least the whole of his book to bring us to the point where we can even ask the question in a coherent and potentially fruitful way. Nevertheless, he also takes a certain, preliminary understanding of Being to be implicit in everything human beings say and do; so it should be possible, even at this early stage, to indicate at least an initial orientation for our thinking" (1).

Everything one talks about, deals with, attempts to understand or encounters is a kind of Being. Whatever one tries to learn about is a kind of Being: "Here he became fascinated by "is," the little word that applies to everything – that enjoys an inconceivable polyvalence (makes world to be world and man to be man), without detriment to the marvelous unity of itself. Yet what of this unity?(Richardson,4)." Heidegger offers different concepts of Being, including: *the existential being*; *the being of occurrence*; *the phenomenological being*; *being with, being-in-the world.* According to Heidegger, arriving at a definite meaning of Being is a tedious task because "we do not know what 'being' means. But already when we ask, 'what is being'? We stand in an understanding of the 'is' without being able to determine conceptually what the 'is' means. We do not know the horizon upon which we are supposed to grasp and pin down the meaning" (*Being and Time*,4). Understanding this indefinite, eternal and ahistorical concept of Being enables us to develop a new concept of translation: the existential concept of translation. Existential translation starts from the premise that the text is liquid, unstable, dynamic, moving, temporal, eternal and renewable—these are the existential features of a translated text. Conceiving of the existential features of a translated text is a pivotal and necessary step in changing the thinking of the translator about the nature of the translation process and the translated text itself. Among the most remarkable existential features of a text is the idea of 'self-showing.'

In *Readings in Interpretation: Hölderlin, Hegel, Heidegger*, Andrzej Warminski explains that Heidegger's anatomy of the text derives mainly from his concept of Being. This is described as a self-showing that reflects its appearance. Identifying the nature of a text is a relative act that depends on how one accesses it. The self-showing text always postpones the revelation of its truth as it is known for eternity. For example, translating the concept of *Jihad* is a controversial issue—the translator cannot arrive at a single, final translation or a complete meaning; the term *Jihad* always reflects a dynamic and transformative meaning. In *Lessan Al-Arab Dictionary*, the term *Jihad* is derived from *aljouhd*, exerting energy and power, and *al-jahad*, undergoing hardship and painful experience. *Jihad* is

commonly known as 'fighting enemies'; however, in the Holy Quran this word refers to different meanings whose various connotations may have diminished associations with the concept of fighting, as explained as follows:

1) The term *Jihad* means to argue with infidels, using logic and proof in order to refute their views. Its meaning is introduced in the following verse: "Therefore listen not to the Unbelievers, but strive against them with the utmost strenuousness, with the (Qur´an)" (al-Furqan, 52). Here, 'strive against' does not mean 'to fight or kill.' However, Almighty God orders his prophet to start a dialogue and open discussion with unbelievers in order to communicate the divine message to them. In this respect, the translation is both a kind of understanding and interpretation. The meaning needs to be interpreted hermeneutically before it is translated.

2) It refers to the personal struggle found in one's devotion to Islam in order to realize spiritual discipline. This meaning is clearly mentioned in the following verse: "And if any strive (with might and main), they do so for their own souls: for Allah is free of all needs from all creation" (Al-´Ankabut, 6). Here it refers to an inner struggle and has nothing to do with the idea of fighting.'

3) It is the struggle against the devil in order to achieve guidance. This meaning is shown in the following verse: "And those who strive in Our (cause)—We will certainly guide them to our Paths: For verily Allah is with those who do right" (Al-´Ankabut, 69).

It is clear that the self-showing meaning of the term *Jihad* has little to do with the concept of fighting, killing and terrorism. The above-mentioned translations all see the concept of *Jihad* as 'to strive.' However, the question posed here is why is it commonly seen to be cognate with terrorism, fighting and killing? And why is it presented, even by religious scholars, as a kind of holy war? Heidegger's existential hermeneutics explains that the text receives its meaning from its external world. *Jihad* is such an existential self-showing expression that changes itself constantly with the passage of time. Herman Philipse states that since a text is known for an eternity, it always changes the appearance of its reality to be consistent with renewed historical experience. For this reason, the term *Jihad* has taken on different meanings, and despite its positive connotation as a kind of struggle against the weakness of the inner self and the devil, it has recently developed a negative connotation referring to terrorism, violence and hatred of the other. In this way, the meaning of a text is taken

from the world surrounding it, not from the text itself; meaning is thus a reflection of the reality of a text. According to Heidegger, the text can be classified as a kind of Being and its context is also a kind of Being. The text is indefinite, enduring and universal. Heidegger attempts to highlight the similarity between the text and Being. To put it in another way, what is applied to Being is directly applied to text. Therefore, the characteristics of Being introduced by Heidegger should be applied to understanding and interpreting traditional texts.

   Being indefinite is another existential feature of the text. Once regarded as indefinite, the text furnishes a multitude of textual interpretations—there are neither definite nor clear rules for textual interpretation. For example, the concept of *Jihad* is subject to different and sometimes antagonistic interpretations—the translator can never determine whether he/she has reached a final and true meaning or not. For this reason, the concept of *Jihad* has generated a large number of meanings in translation. In this way, the term *Jihad* is no different to the concept of Being: "Beings can show themselves from themselves in various ways, depending on the mode of access to them. The possibility even exists that they can show themselves as they are not in themselves. (Heidegger, 27).

   Temporality is an existential feature of a text although the text has an enduring power being temporal in nature. The temporality of the text does not conflict with its enduring power because the immortality of the text does not deny its temporality and its temporality can be fixed at a certain moment in its extended life. Accordingly, the term *Jihad* has undergone different interpretations, which are largely consistent with historical change. In the early Islamic period, the term *Jihad* was interpreted as fighting against infidels and unbelievers, as is clearly shown in the following verse:

> "SUCH of the believers as remain passive—other than the disabled—cannot be deemed equal to those who strive hard in God's cause with their possessions and their lives: God has exalted those who strive hard with their possessions and their lives far above those who remain passive. Although God has promised the ultimate good unto all [believers,] yet has God exalted those who strive hard above those who remain passive by [promising them] a mighty reward (95) Ranks (of honour) from Him, and forgiveness, and mercy; and Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful" (An-Nisa, 69).

Understanding the historical experience of such a verse may help the reader determine whether the concept of *Jihad* in a text is a call to fight against unbelievers. In other words, the external conditions in which a text is revealed provide a point of access for exploring the invisible and

concealed meaning of a text. However, resorting to the historical context of the verse may help the reader understand and interpret the previous and ancient meanings of a text and these may be incompatible with the contemporary understanding of it. In this way, the reader has a limited number of options to understand and translate a text. That is to say, if he/she sticks to the historical and ancient meaning of a text, the textual message will be rendered meaningless in the present. Whereas, if he/she sticks to the current meaning of a text he/she may be accused of hearsay or misunderstanding. This can be clarified through analysis of the following verse: "If ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, Marry women of your choice, Two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one, or (a captive) that your right hands possess, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice" (An-Nisa,3).

This translation appears linguistically correct and represents a clear and understood meaning. However, its message may be not clear to the contemporary reader and it is not congruent with the mores of the modern world. Here, the problems of translation have nothing to with wording, structure, linguistics or semantics. The problem is related to the core value of the text and its message as a sacred text, which is considered to be valid for all times and all places. The expression "captive that your right hands possess" is incongruent with modern times as it is understood by the modern reader to mean a prisoner of war; this distorts the lofty message of the verse and distorts its meaning. In his book, *Race and Slavery*, Bernard Lewis translates *ma malakat aymanukum* as "those whom you own" (146). In his translation of the meaning of the Holy Quran, Abdullah Yusuf Ali translates the same phrase as 'those whom your right hands possess.' In his translation, N.G. Dawood translates it as 'those whom you own as slaves.' In their totality, these translations do not provide any meaningful message to the modern reader because such a concept as *ma malakat aymanukum* no longer exists in the modern world. In addition, it has a highly negative connotation being associated with a war crime—having sex with a female captive is regarded by international law as a war crime. For this reason, resorting to the historical meaning of a text can result in the misrepresentation and distortion of the message of a holy text. This is a clear example of the difficulties in translating traditional texts and the translator often vacillates between the historical meaning of a text and its current meaning. Sometimes the message of a text contradicts its language, which causes a major translation problem.

According to Heidegger's philosophy, these contextual elements are not static, but dynamic—the meaning of a verse changes over time. The

idea of Being, as proposed by Heidegger, is presented as a valid approach for understanding, interpreting and translating ancient texts. Though the concept of Being remains contradictory and ambivalent, it has the ability to reconcile concepts in meaningful opposition to each other. The concept of Being is not only intended to uncover the appearance of a text—its superficial meaning—but also to reveal its concealed layers—its existential meaning. In this respect, *ma malakat aymanukum* may have two different translations, which derive their meaning from the historical moment of the text. Historically, it speaks of female slaves captured during warfare with unbelievers, with whom sexual intercourse was not regarded as a sin under Islamic jurisprudence. However, such an interpretation is not acceptable under contemporary substantive law, nor in contemporary Islamic *sharia.*

From an existential perspective, the concept of Being is eternal and temporal; superficial and deep; literal and literary; textual and contextual. The contradictory features of Being highlight the existential nature of a text. A hasty reading of meaningfully opposite qualities revealed in the same entity may confuse the reader and renders the text meaningless. As such, it is necessary to settle the issue of the apparent ambivalence and paradoxical nature of the concept of Being in order to provide a clearer understanding in translating a text. Such a text offers its message to the reader through its linguistic or grammatical meaning in a literal translation. This can be shown in the example of *haal alamel alhoukouma*, which translates as 'the worker has dissolved the government.' This translation contradicts logic and common sense as the worker cannot dissolve the government. However, looking backwards to the historical context of this statement, the translator reaches a more acceptable conclusion: this statement was made during the Abbasid period and the Arabic meaning of the word *amel* does not mean a worker, but a governor. In addition, the word *houkouma* does not mean government but rather 'committee.' In this way, this sentence can be translated as follows: 'The government has dissolved the committee' and this is consistent with the historical moment in which the sentence was said. Additionally, this translation makes sense in the present-time context. Since Being is both temporal and operates in a historical world, it changes its appearance with the progress of time and this makes the text subject to changeable and even contradictory interpretations. The actions of understanding and translating are also existential features of a text: the text is conceived of by a human being, who is located in historical time, that is, his /her understanding is not fixed or static. In this respect, Heidegger writes:

"Understanding is the existential being[Sein] of the ownmost potentiality of being of Dasein itself in such a way that this being[Sein] discloses in itself what its very being is about. The structure of this existential must be grasped more precisely. As disclosing, understanding always concerns the whole fundamental constitution of Being-in-the world. As a potentiality of Being, Being-in is always a potentiality of Being-in-the-world. Not only is the world, qua world, disclosed in its possible significance, but innerworldly beings themselves are freed, these beings are freed from their own possibilities. What is at hand is discovered as such in its serviceability, usability, determentality " (*Being and Time*, 140).

The temporality of Being does not contradict its eternal nature. The eternity of a traditional text derives its logic and validity from being temporal; its temporality is the moment in time in its eternal existence and it changes its appearance in moving from the past to the present. Therefore, when looking at the text as a fixed and temporal entity, it stops being able to renew its reality or display its deeper meaning. Traditional and social science texts have an enduring power, which means that those texts belonging to human science can last forever. Therefore, the action of understanding needs to be undertaken existentially to be consistent with the nature of traditional texts.

Traditional philosophy defines understanding as a mental process for reaching a 'true' conclusion about an issue. However, according to Heidegger, it is an existential process where things that do not exist cannot be understood or translated—it is a question of the disclosure and revelation of the truth of a text. Becoming acquainted with a text does not lie in perceiving its textual content; it rests upon the translator's experience of how to cope with the manifestations of the text in the world. If one separates a traditional text from its world, it turns into a fixed and meaningless object and can no longer renew itself—its historical experience becomes imprisoned in its past. What is articulated in this context is that the process of understanding can shape the nature of the text and its meaning. Understanding a written or recorded text has little to do with its form and internal structure, but rather its deeper connection with its representation in the real-world: "Understanding is conceived not as something to be possessed but rather as mode or consistent element of Being-in-the-world" (Palmer, 13).

The translator neither understands nor translates the written language of a traditional text; he/she is mainly concerned with the message communicated through a text to the world and how the world can receive such a message in its existential equivalence. If the message of a text is incommensurable with its world then either the translator is unable to decipher the language of the text, or the values, ideologies, views,

thoughts and social realities it conceals are outdated and no longer consistent with the world. This is clearly shown in informal, colloquial Arabic, which has broken its bonds with classical Arabic. In his article 'Language, Religion and Tradition in the Life of the Independence,' Zaki Mubarak writes:

> "The Arabic language is not clearly engaging to its speakers because of the fact that the religious books are void of linguistic attraction. The classical works have been abandoned to the extent that they have neither supporters nor allies. The classical Arabic language, the written language, has no readers in Egypt […] It is no longer the modern language that has to be used as it should be: as a means of communication between different classes" (*author's trans.*, 26)

Classical Arabic has diversified over time into different dialects and informal languages. Egyptian informal language has become different to classical Arabic—this process shows the reciprocal relationship between language and its present-time world. The process of communicating a valid message that is clear and comprehensible and congruent with the modern world requires us to learn about the mechanisms of understanding suggested by Heidegger and closely investigate the direct correlation between 'text' and Being—that is the relationship between the abstract and the concrete. Mulhall explains the mechanism of understanding adopted by Heidegger in the following way:

> "In other words, Being is not a being, not a particular phenomenon we encounter in our active engagement with the world; rather, we arrive at our concept of it by progressive abstraction from our encounters with specific beings. For example, from our encounters with cats, dogs and horse, we abstract the idea of 'animalness'; from animals, plants and trees we abstract the idea of 'life', of 'living beings'; and then from living beings, minerals and so on, we abstract the idea of that which every entity has in common—their exactness or being." (8).

The concept of existential understanding overlaps with the practical ability to encounter objects in real-life and convert them into abstract concepts to be held in our minds and recalled when necessary. The idea of understanding lies in everyday practices—it involves a kind of engagement with the objects that we encounter. This view is supported by Harold Garfinkel and Charles Taylor: Garfinkel's concept of enthnomethodology provides a method for understanding the world, people and objects through experiencing their reality in real-life situations. Abstract concepts cannot be clearly understood unless they are objectified in the real world.

The relationship between language and the world is stressed by Fouad Dawra in *Ten Authors Speak Up*:

> "Arabic is very poor in words that denote abstract values. However, it is high in words denoting material values and their descriptions, and one should read widely in Islamic philosophy in order to enrich oneself with those terms denoting intellectual values. It is a pity that our literary growth confines our access to Arabic to the literary domain. In my view, this is a major cause of our inability to express concepts clearly in the Arabic language. If one wants to write about contemporary Egyptian themes in novels and TV episodes, one cannot imagine how one can make the Egyptian characters, like the natives *Fetwa*, *Fatama*, and *Khadiga*, speak using the language of judges, university graduates and their equals. If one wants to achieve sincerity of expression, one should make such characters speak the language fit for their personalities" (*author's trans.*, 79)

The reader discovers not only the text, but also its world and surrounding reality. Being in the world or situating the text in its world can provide us with the necessary background to disclose the ambiguous and invisible parts of the text in order to arrive at the deeper layer of meaning covered up by the text. The world of the plebeian—uneducated people and men of the street—is totally different to the world of the elite and this affects the level of linguistic structure used by each class, as each group uses its own terms and expressions in different ways. The language of ordinary people is different to that of the language of educated people. For this reason, translating the informal language of the workers should not use highly formal language as this language should coincide with their world. In *Philosophy and the Human Sciences*, R.J. Anderson explains that understanding can be referred to as a kind of direct encounter with the objects that surround us. Therefore, those objects which have no existence in our world are not comprehensible or knowable to us: "For in translation we grasp or else we fail to grasp the experience of another thinker; and we either transfer this experience or else we fail to put it across, not simply into another language, but into another way of thinking" (Groth, 127). In her essay 'Hermeneutics,' Cristina Lafont explains how Heidegger's concept of Being changes hermeneutics from a theory of textual interpretation to a theory of human understanding: "To bring about this paradigm shift, Heidegger generalizes hermeneutics from a traditional method for interpreting authoritative texts (mainly sacred or legal texts) to a way of understanding human beings themselves" (296). In attempting to offer a philosophical analysis and more logical interpretation of the text, Heidegger focuses on understanding the nature of the human mechanism of comprehension: a human being is regarded as a self-interpreting agent

rather than a rational man. Thus, one's reaction to external reality is a condition of the permanent process of interpretation by which one understands oneself and the world through interpreting everything that one encounters. Heidegger's concept of the human being as a self-interpreter changes the traditional concept of hermeneutics from a theory of textual interpretation to a theory of understanding the world. It deals with human beings as self-interpreting/translating creatures whose experience of different aspects of life is always an act of interpretation and translation; this, in turn, exerts a major force on analysis, interpretation and the translation of various types of literary and traditional texts.

Every act of self-interpretation is coupled with an unconscious act of self-translation. According to Heidegger, the process of translation is unconsciously produced in our lives: "We are always constantly translating our own language, our mother tongue, into its words" (*Being and Time*, 17). The translator does not translate a text, but renders his/her own understanding of the text; this is a reflection of his/her true being through direct experience of external reality. In this place, the text does not reflect its content but manifests the mediation of the interpreter who is a Being-in-the world. In *Critical Heidegger*, Christopher E. McCann argues that Heidegger's concept of understanding is divided into authentic and inauthentic understanding. According to Macann, the concept of inauthentic understanding is an original part of the hermeneutic theory of translation and interpretation. Human beings undergo a relentless process of translation whereby their comprehension of phenomena paves the way for understanding other experiences. In this way, the process of interpretation describes a spiral movement. This spiral of interpretation offers a collective and panoramic view of an interpreted text, which aims to enlighten the 'dark' parts of the text in order to make it intelligible. The idea of the spiral, a consecutive and relentless movement of understanding, aims to help produce various interpretations and different translations of a work of art. As such, it becomes difficult to establish an original understanding. McCann writes:

> "An inauthentic understanding of a text is one in which the interpreter simply assumes that there is something there to be understood and that such an understanding not only can be, but ought to be undertaken in abstraction from the 'being-there' of the one who interprets. By contrast, authentic understanding of a text occurs when the interpreter recognizes the inevitability of pre-conceptions, which pre-conceptions can, however, be made explicit in the course of the interpretation and in such a way that, in working out an understanding of the text, the interpreter also comes to an understanding of himself or herself as the one undertaking the interpretation. Textual interpretation is, for Dasein in general, just one

among many other possibilities of being and indeed one of the least significant" (102).

The idea of Being-in-the-world relates to both the text and the translator. It presupposes that the translator is *a priori*—he/she starts understanding his/her text from a previous background that shapes his/her viewpoint—from an inauthentic understanding. Admitting that the process of understanding is derived from preconceptions and previous background influences allows for an authentic understanding—there is no precise translation without understanding the world from which the text has come into reality. According to Heidegger, Being-in-the world means that the translator should be familiar with things manifested throughout his/her text and should have the ability to connect them to the contemporary world in order to achieve conceptual or existential equivalence. This is a question of practicality since our understanding derives its reliability from our confrontation with the reality surrounding the text.

In *Being-in-the-World: a Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time*, Herbert Dreyfus states that "these practices do not arise from beliefs, rules, or principles and so there is nothing to make explicit or spell out. We can only give an interpretation of the interpretation already in the practices" (22). Values, social realities, religious beliefs and language will become impractical and meaningless if they are not practiced. Human beings practice language even before they understand its set of references, as is shown with children who learn to speak their mother tongue before realizing or knowing the meaning of objects in it. For instance, a value system is something people are used to practicing until it has become a common code of behavior that informs and organizes life in broader society. In this way, practice comes before understanding.

In his book, *Being and Meaning: Reality and Language in Bhartṛhari and Heidegger*, Sebastian Alackapally argues that practicing a language through dialogue, giving a speech or writing text, regardless of whether using a mother tongue or a foreign language, is a mode of translating and interpreting. The text is only accessible through the technique of presupposition. In other words, the text is neither a static nor a fixed entity. Rather, it is always capricious, unpredictable and protean. As Heidegger puts it:

> "It is true that 'being' is 'presupposed' in all pervious ontology, but not as an available concept—not as the sort of thing we are seeking. 'Presupposing' being has the character of taking a preliminary look at being in such a way in that on the basis of this look beings that are already given are tentatively articulated in their being. This guiding look at being grows out of the average understanding of being in which we are always

already involved and which ultimately belongs to the essential constitution of Dasein itself. Such 'presupposing' has nothing to do with positing a principle from which a series of propositions is deduced. A 'circle in reasoning' cannot possibly lie in the formulation of the question of the meaning of being, because in answering this question it is not a matter of grounding by deduction, but rather of laying bare and exhibiting the ground" (*Being and Time*, 7).

The idea of presupposition is a relative issue that varies from translator to translator. In this context, one is not meant to deduce meaning from a set of assumptions. On the contrary, the concept of presupposition is grounded in the ability of the reader to conceive of the relationship between the text and its world—an existential understanding—that is represented in the idea of how one can spot those moments in which the text extends its web of relations into external reality and forms a reciprocal relationship with the world. Existential understanding does not conflict with the traditional concept of presuppositional understanding because both types of comprehension derive their practical and conceptual foundations from their own world. Presuppositional understanding gives the reader the freedom to choose what he/she thinks to be the most convenient assumption for interpreting a text. However, the idea of existential understanding may be considered the true moment in which a reader is able to select the assumption most valid for interpreting a text:

> "As Heidegger himself emphasized, no interpretation of a text can be void of preconceptions and value-judgments. Even a basic and primarily exegetical introduction to the main themes of a philosophical work must choose to omit or downplay certain details and complexities, and to organize the material it does treat in one of many possible ways. (Mulhall, IX)."

Perceiving a text is an act of cognition and "such an understanding is contained in our knowing—how-to-cope in various domains rather than in a set of beliefs that such and such is the case. "Thus we embody an understanding of being that no one has in mind" (Dreyfus, 15).

In *Heidegger's Concept of Truth*, Daniel Dahlstrom contends that Heidegger's idea of presupposition is not meant to represent an act of deducing a conclusion through positing a set of assumptions in order to select the one that is most valid . Heidegger's existential presupposition refers to the ability of the translator/interpreter to access the renewable interpretations produced by a text. A renewable interpretation is measured in relation to something else existing in reality—the translator/interpreter

conceives something as something else already extant in reality. In this respect, El-Said Badawi argues that:

"There is a remarkable difference between the expressional features of formal and informal Arabic. The feeling shared among intellectuals, regardless of their affinities, is that formal language, which is inherited from one's predecessors, is not valid for all times and all places" (*author's trans.*, 67).

The idea of the invalidity of classical Arabic to all times and all places is fueled by the concept of a renewable interpretation of a source text, the sense of which is derived from the concept of presuppositional understanding. Presupposition is a cognitive and existential concept with an existence in the world that precedes its existence in a text. This concept of existential presupposition is clearly highlighted by Heidegger:

"The 'as' constitutes the structure of the explicitness of what is understood; it constitutes the interpretation. The circumspect, interpretative dealing with what is at hand in the surrounding world, which 'sees' this as a table, a door, a car, a bridge does not necessarily already have to analyze what is circumspectly interpreted in a particular *statement*. Any simple pre-predicative seeing of what is at hand is in itself already understanding and interpretative. But does not the lack of this 'as' constitute the simplicity of a mere perception of something? The seeing of this sight is always already understanding and interpreting. It contains in itself the explicitness of referential relations (of the in-order-to) which belong to the totality of relevance in terms of which what is simply encountered is understood (*Being and Time*, 144).

Heidegger's concept of existential interpretation seeks to determine the objects reflected by a text as something measured or as some other thing that has its own existence in the world. Revealing the ambiguity of a text and deciphering its secret codes requires the use of the translator/interpreter's experience of those objects in the real world. According to Heidegger, some words, like table, door and car, are meaningless if they have no existence in the world—we cannot understand the nature of a table unless we encounter it in our world. Before the cell phone came into existence, no one could have had even the slightest idea about it. If we are not familiar with tables or doors, regardless of the different styles and outlooks of tables and doors generally, we are not in a position to understand or translate them. Encountering objects in the world and realizing their purpose and meaning in everyday life is clear evidence that we have already understood them and unconsciously translated these things, conceptually, into our minds. In *Heidegger: an Introduction*,

Richard Polt attempts to underscore Heidegger's concept of existential presupposition. However, he defines it from a novel perspective by arguing that it may refer to the skill of how one determines the superficial layer reflected by a text in its own world. The reader's knowledge of the text does not rest upon its textual meaning, but upon how the world receives such meanings and then reinforms the text itself. In this way, the world helps the reader interpret the superficial meaning of the text. This view is also stressed by Macann:

> "With this remove to the level of textual interpretation, we find ourselves upon the plane required to come to terms with Heidegger's Kant interpretation. The interpreter always and invariably comes to a text with certain theoretical presuppositions. The task of interpretation will require that he neither simply let these presuppositions direct the work of interpretation in an unselfconscious fashion (that is, without any recognition of the presuppositions as such), nor yet that he attempt to suppress these presuppositions in the interests of a neutral, detached and so impartial, assessment. For Heidegger, the latter attitude is an interpretative attitude like any other and already involves a projective decision which is all the more insidious for being unrecognizable as such" (103).

The translation process is an existential act of understanding and every act of translation derives its validity and reliability from the search for the meaning of a text. Since all objects exist in the world, they are not transcendental. The translator/interpreter is affected unconsciously by his/her theoretical presuppositions that he/she has accumulated through reading and encounters with different branches of knowledge. He/she is influenced by two extreme forces: the subjectivity of his/her presuppositional thinking and a desire for neutrality and detachment. An existential interpretation repudiates these. Simply, it draws the attention of the critic/translator/reader to the idea that presuppositional understanding is inescapable and detachment is unachievable in the sense that once the translator is informed that his/her understanding of a certain idea is presuppositional, he/she can avoid succumbing to its negative effect. Heidegger provides existentially interpretative concept terms to help prevent the translator/interpreter from being negatively influenced by his/her assumptions while critiquing, interpreting or translating. Heidegger argues that "interpretation does not, so to speak, throw a 'significance' over what is nakedly objectively present and does not stick a value on it, but what is encountered in the world is always already in relevance which is disclosed in the understanding of world, a relevance which is made explicitly in interpretation " (*Being and Time*, 145). The translator/interpreter should never seek to impose his/her values upon a

text, but should conceive of such a text as a part of the world; as a reflection of his/her world, he/she attempts to adjust his/her presuppositions to be consistent with the interpreted text. The meaning of a text is a manifestation of its world and the translator's task is not to impose his/her values on the source text, but to allow it to reveal itself.

Let us study a simple example of how some Arabic words, originally with clear and explicit meanings, have lost their classical dictionary meanings and have come to take on totally different connotations. This example highlights the relationship between meaning and the present realities of a text and how its present realities can reshape and reconstitute the meanings of a text according to current norms and values. In Arabic, the word *tayyeb* means the following: 1) a good-natured person; 2) a person of good origin; 3) everything void of harm or problems; 4) a person who is known for his/her virtue. These meanings share a sense of goodness and virtue and are opposite to vice and bad behavior. However, in colloquial Egyptian speech, this word has acquired a totally different meaning with very negative connotations—foolishness and naivety. This new connotation is used in the Egyptian media, journalism and modern Egyptian novels in line with everyday speech. This clearly indicates how words rely on the world for meaningful content, rather than from dictionary entries—the world shapes and reshapes language. There are abundant examples that depict this linguistic phenomenon. For example, in colloquial Arabic, people say *daa ragel tayyeb ya a'm.* Translated literally into English, this statement means 'He is a good man, my uncle.' This translation offers an acceptable translation in its representation of the linguistic structure of the expression, but this says nothing about whether it communicates a precise and accurate meaning—the reader cannot know for sure whether it successfully renders the original meaning of the text or not.

The second question asks whether the statement properly reflects the intention of the speaker and his/her world view. Answering this question necessitates searching for the meaning of such a statement in a broader context; different aspects of modern Egyptian culture may need to be investigated in order to be fully aware of its significance. This may also require an anthropological study of modern Egyptian values, reflection on Egyptian society and the everyday language of common people. From an existential perspective, meaning is not a reflection of authorial intention or the perception of the reader. As clearly explained by Dreyfus in the following:

> "But Heidegger has a more radical reason for saying that we cannot get
> clear about the 'beliefs' about being we seem to be taking for granted.

> There are no beliefs to get clear about; there are only skills and practices. These practices do not arise from belief, rules, or principles, and so there is nothing to make explicit or spell out. We can only give an interpretation of the interpretation already in the practices. This is why Heidegger says in Introduction II that since phenomenology deals with our understanding of being, it must be hermeneutic. To sum up, an explication of our understanding of being can never be complete because we dwell in it— that is, it is so pervasive as to be both nearest to us and farthest away—and also because there are no beliefs to get clear about" (22).

For Heidegger, our beliefs, values and social and cultural realties belong to our world more than they belong to us. These beliefs unconsciously become practices embodying an integral part of the world. However, our world is neither fixed nor static, but moving forward through history; this makes our skills and experiences changeable and permanently renewable. As such, each interpretation has to be directly followed by a new interpretation; each translation has to be followed by a new translation. The role of the translator is confined to letting the text manifest its reality through placing it in its own contextual world, while presupposing various possibilities in interpreting such a text. Having placed a text in its relevant context, the translator can more easily grasp the connection between its meaning and its presupposed ideas; his/her attention is directed intuitively to choosing the most valid assumption fitting the present meaning of the text. These presuppositions are intertwined with the historical experience of the text and its manifestation in the world. What is understood and translated is nothing but a kind of disclosure that emphasizes the relationship between the text and its world; in other words, the text receives its significance and meaning from Being-there-in-world. This paves the way for what is termed by Heidegger as 'the totality of relevance,' an essential strategy of translating. According to Heidegger, it can be defined as follows:

> "Things at hand are always already understood in terms of a totality of relevance. This totality need not be explicitly grasped by a thematic interpretation. Even if it has undergone such interpretation, it recedes again into an undifferentiated understanding. This is the very mode in which it is the essential foundation of everyday, circumspect interpretation. This is always based on a fore-having. As the appropriation of understanding in being that understands, the interpretation operates in being toward a totality of relevance which has been understood" (*Being and Time*, 140).

Heidegger employs certain philosophical terminology to highlight definite strategies for translation. One of these strategies is the totality of relevance that states that the translator should have a complete awareness

and familiarity with the manifestations of the text in the world. Heidegger argues that human beings rarely understand the mechanism behind the operation of a machine, but they know how to operate it through using it in real-life. As such, our knowledge of such equipment is principally based on our practice of using it. The totality of relevance operates in a coherent and well-organized system and helps create a kind of harmony between the content of the text and its contextual world. This familiarizes the message of the text with the circumstantial realities revealed in its external world. Heidegger writes:

> "The interpretation is grounded in a foresight that 'approaches' what has been taken in fore-having with definite interpretation in view. What is held in the fore-having and understood in a 'fore-seeing' view becomes comprehensible through interpretation.[…]The interpretation has always already decided, finally or provisionally, upon a definite conceptuality; it is grounded in fore-conception" (*Being and Time*, 141).

According to Heidegger, the translation process is grounded in three circular strategies. The first is 'fore-having,' meaning that the interpreter should be familiar with the interpreted object. For example, the translator should have good background knowledge of the text to be translated and this knowledge should be relevant to the progressive nature of the translated text.

Accordingly, the process of translation/interpretation requires that the translator should be familiar with the interpreted text, as he/she understands the text as something already encountered and extant in the world. However, such an interpretative vision may conflict with traditional texts; written a long time ago, they may have been intended to address a different world whose language, values and social realities are completely different from the contemporary period. In this way, the totality of relevance may not provide a valid interpretive tool for understanding and translating traditional texts—the receiver may be incapable of engaging with this past worldview/context of a traditional text. Freezing the historical experience of a traditional text is a naïve approach that is at variance with its progressive message; it may not only have been intended to address an ancient audience, but also a modern one—the traditional text reconstructs itself, its language, values, ideology and its meaning to remain consistent with its current reality. According to Heidegger, existential understanding converts the fore-having or prior knowledge of the reader into a conceptual interpretation, known as "fore-conception; this means that our understanding of an object has to be turned into written

signs: "the particular vocabulary that is at the disposal of the interpretation" (Lafont, 77).

The end result of any kind of translation is a kind of conceptual framework that decodes the ambivalent message of a source text and reveals its ambiguity. In this way, the translation process goes beyond the linguistic structure of the original text; it is based on communicating what is known as an existential equivalence where the translating process aims to transfer the thoughts and existential framework of the source text onto the target text. These three stages of the translation/interpretation process are preceded by the term 'fore' as Heidegger states that "interpretation is never presuppositionless grasping of something previously given" (*Being and Time*, 141). Heidegger adds:

> "When the particular concretion of the interpretation in the sense of the exact text interpretation likes to appeal to what 'is there,' what is initially 'there' is nothing else than self-evident, undisputed prejudice of the interpreter, which is necessarily there in each point of departure of the interpretation as what is already 'posited' with interpretation as such, that is, pre-given with fore-having, fore-sight, fore-conception" (141).

The process of translation is mainly engaged with communicating the thoughts of the source text into the target text without ignoring its context. In his book, *Translation and the Nature of Philosophy: a New Theory of Words*, Andrew Benjamin explains that Heidegger's concept of translation is grounded in translating the thoughts manifested through a text. The translator has to know how the text has previously been understood; this may be divergent or convergent to the original one. Referring back to my previous example of *daa ragel tayyeb ya a'm* and its translation from Arabic into English, this expression can be translated as follows: 'He/she is a naïve person, my dear.' The first translation offers a dictionary meaning and aligns with linguistic equivalence theory. However, this second translation reflects the everyday meaning of the phrase and represents one of Heidegger's rules for hermeneutic translation—that of existential equivalence. Accurate translation should reflect the real-life experience out of which meaning is manufactured. Indeed, looking further at Heidegger's concept of phenomenology may help us understand more about how the translator can employ a better sense of presupposition in understanding the concept of Being. Heidegger sets out his understanding of phenomenology as follows:

> "The Greek expression *phainomenon*, from which the term 'phenomenon' derives, comes from the verb *phainesthai*, meaning to 'show itself.' Thus, *phainomenon* means what shows itself, the self-showing, and the manifest.

Phainesthai itself is a 'middle voice' construction of *phaino*, to bring into daylight, to place in brightness. *Phaino* belongs to the root *pha,* like *phos*, light or brightness, that is, that within which something can become manifest, visible in itself. Thus the meaning of the expression 'phenomenon' *is established as what shows itself in itself*, what is manifest" (*Being and Time*, 25).

'Phenomenon' is not an etymologically English or German word, but a Greek word derived from *phainesthai*, meaning that which shows itself— i.e. self-revealing. It is a source of light, revelation and brightness that highlights obscurity and ambiguity and brings objects to light—it is the brightness of the day that overcomes the darkness of the night. The metaphorical style of Heidegger's designation of phenomenology intends to reflect the truth behind the object depicted through a process of self-reflection and self-showing; it thereby establishes the rules for letting things reveal their truth through themselves. Dreyfus explains Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology as follows:

"Heidegger developed his *hermeneutic* phenomenology in opposition to Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. Husserl had reacted to an earlier crisis in the foundations of the human sciences by arguing that the human sciences failed because they did not take into account intentionality—the way the individual mind is directed at objects by virtue of some mental content that represents them. He developed an account of man as essentially a consciousness with self-contained meanings, which he called intentional content. According to Husserl, this mental content gives intelligibility to everything people encounter. Heidegger countered that there was a more basic form of intentionality than that of a self-sufficient individual subject directed at the world by means of its mental content. At the foundation of Heidegger's new approach is a phenomenology of 'mindless' everyday coping skills as the basis of all intelligibility" (2-3).

Dreyfus distinguishes between Husserl's phenomenology and that of Heidegger. Heidegger's phenomenology serves as the foundation of his concept of hermeneutic translation. In *Phenomenology and Imagination in Husserl and Heidegger*, Brian Elliott proposes that the core idea of understanding of Husserl is manifested in the idea of intentionality, meaning that man can understand and grasp external reality through his mental power, namely, the power of his mind. Man is a self-conscious being whose consciousness directs him towards understanding the world—the meanings of objects are produced through the action of our minds, not vice versa. This mental content makes things in our life intelligible and clear. In other words, we experience external reality through our own consciousness.

However, in *Heidegger's Theory of Intentionality*, Niels Ole Bernsen emphasizes that Heidegger rejects the principle of intentionality: he repudiates the idea that mental faculty is the sole avenue for recognizing external reality. Instead, he develops a new model of intentionality, which has nothing to do with the 'subject-object' model. He states that human beings can identify surrounding reality and objects in the world through engaging with them: "Such a method would be of highest significance to hermeneutical theory, since it implies that interpretation is not grounded in human consciousness and human categories but in the manifestness of the thing encountered, the reality that comes to meet us" (Palmer, 128). Things reflect their truth to us in our coping with them or using them in order to become informed of their realities.

However, some critical questions remain: what is the role of the translator when addressing a self-showing text? Does the self-showing text reflect its appearance or its depth? If it mirrors the superficial layer of the text, how can the translator delve into its concealed layers and bring them to the surface? Understanding Heidegger's concept of 'phenomenological Being' is vital to finding answers to the above-mentioned questions. For Heidegger, phenomenology can be defined as follows:

> "The expression 'phenomenology' signifies primarily *a concept of method*. It does not characterize the 'what' of the objects of philosophical research in terms of their content, but the 'how' of such research. The more genuinely effective a concept of method is and the more comprehensively it determines the fundamental conduct of science, the more originally is it rooted in confrontation with the things themselves and the farther away it moves from what we call a technical device—of which there are many in the theoretical disciplines" (*Being and Time*, 26).

Phenomenology primarily presents a methodology for understanding something that is analogous to something else; it is not related to the content, but seeks to establish rules and methods for comprehending surrounding reality in terms of something already in existence: "Accordingly, the term 'phenomenology' differs in meaning from such expressions as 'theology' and the like. Such titles designate the objects of the respective disciplines in terms of their content" (*Being and Time*, 32)—it is intellectually designed to manifest things in themselves by allowing objects to display their own Being. Phenomenology is an applied method that can help the translator/interpreter to conceive of the world; it presents a conceptual framework that builds up the methods used for understanding and interpreting the various things that one may encounter over one's lifetime: "Thus, to describe the 'world' phenomenologically means to show and determine the Being of Beings objectively present in

the world conceptually and categorically" (*Being and Time*, 52)— conceiving of things around us in relation to their world is a phenomenological act. In applying such a method for translating a given text, the translator uses his/her own real-life experience of the text as the first step towards translation; the text reflects the image of the world visualized in the consciousness of the translator. Heidegger puts it clearly in the following:

> "Appearing' is an announcing of itself through something that shows itself. If we then say that with the word 'appearance' we are pointing to something in which something appears without itself being an appearance, then the concept of phenomenon is not thereby delimited but presupposed. However, this presupposition remains hidden because the expression 'to appear' in this definition of 'appearance' is used in two senses. That in which something 'appears' means that in which something makes itself known, that is, does not show itself; in the expression 'without itself being an 'appearance ' appearance means the self-showing. But this self-showing essentially belongs to the 'wherein' in which something makes itself known" (*Being and Time*, 28).

In his book, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger explains that phenomenological interpretation is a twofold notion. At a superficial level, it focuses on the appearance of a text and is concerned with bringing out its 'flat' and direct meaning. At a deeper level, it seeks to bring out the invisible and concealed meaning of a text—the translator depicts the text's 'appearance' in connection with its shadow-in-the-world. What is translated is not the text, but its 'shadow' in real-life. In this way, the self-showing text does not mirror its appearance, but reflects the reader's perception of its reflection in its own world, in the deep layers of the text, namely, at the level of existential equivalence. In other words, the reader not only tries to comprehend the appearance, but also the concealed and invisible layers of a text. According to Heidegger, the text is a kind of Being of which one of the most salient features is self-showing; this cannot be grasped by the translator as authentic as the original text, but rather, it is seen from a subjective viewpoint and is therefore presupposed and not directly copied by the mind. What is perceived or presupposed by the translator may be different to the reflected appearance of the text or the object.

The intervention of a human being in the process of textual analysis, whether to determine the meaning of a text or to interpret or translate it, results in changes to the original text that are reflected in the target text; this largely destabilizes the concept of faithfulness in translation. Heidegger writes:

"The phenomenological concept of phenomenon, as self-showing, means the Being of Beings—its meaning, modifications, and derivatives. This self-showing is nothing arbitrary, nor is it something like an appearing. The Being of Beings can least of all be something 'behind which' something else stands, something that 'does not appear'" (*Being and Time*, 33).

The existential interpretation of a text does not reflect the appearance of reality, but the deep layers of reality presupposed and grasped by its translator; this is employed by Heidegger in his theory of translation and understanding. However, such a concept does not provide a solution or a methodology for addressing the problematic issues arising from the original context of a traditional text and on establishing the connections between the text and its current realities; it presents a new translation concept—that of conceptual equivalence. However, further study is required and a critical reading needed in order to discover how this conceptual process helps the translator both to understand what is revealed by the text and also what is concealed. For this reason, the concept of phenomenological interpretation has yet to be fully investigated.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL EQUIVALENCE

When a translator starts translating a text, he/she does not render it word for word or only provide the linguistic equivalence of the words in the text. In *Heidegger, Translation, and the Task of Thinking: Essays in Honor of Parvis Emad*, F. Schalow explains that Heidegger's concept of translation entails the translator rendering the thoughts presented through the text. A limited linguistic translation may be unsatisfactory in providing us with a world view of the original text. For example, translating idiomatic expressions involves a kind of transfer between thoughts and ideas that go beyond the linguistic and syntactic structures used to express them. The English proverb 'it's raining cats and dogs' cannot be linguistically rendered into Arabic. In such a case, the translator has to render not only the thoughts of the author to the source language, but also the reflection of the text in its modern world context—its existential equivalence. The contemporary translator resorts to translating such an idiom as follows: تمطر كأفواه القرب

It can clearly be noticed that relying on linguistic theories of translation distorts the original meaning of expressions like these and misleads the reader in its unfaithful translation of the original text. When the language is isolated from its context, it becomes ambivalent and ambiguous and the meaning is incomprehensible. There are different factors that result in the meaning of a text being concealed, such as misunderstanding, distortion and ambiguity, all of which cause problems of mistranslation and misinterpretation. However, the language in itself can cover the meaning of a text and the translator has to uncover this meaning to bring the text 'into the light.' The interpreter or translator cannot uncover and enlighten the meaning of a text unless the language used is transformed into written or spoken structures which fit with its historical and cultural context, namely, its real-life.

In his book, *Translating Heidegger*, Miles Groth states that the translation process should focus on the position of the text in the world. In other words, the act of translation/interpretation may produce a different reality from that which is reflected by the translated statement itself. This

reality implies rendering available the thoughts, values, ideology, culture and social realities concealed in the deeper levels of the text to a current world view—a phenomenological equivalence. In the translation of the aforementioned idiom, this study raises the following question: Is such a translation consistent with modernity and advanced technology where, for example, the term *bota bag*, in its traditional understanding, has almost disappeared from our everyday use? Indeed, such an Arabic translation may fit well with classical Arabic culture, but does not represent an equivalence that fits well with life in the twenty-first century. In this sense, the problem of translation is an existential issue. As Dreyfus puts it in the following:

> "Hermeneutic phenomenology, then, is an interpretation of human beings as essentially self-interpreting, thereby showing that interpretation is the proper method for studying human beings. Moreover, Heidegger's account, as we have seen, is supposed to be 'transcendental' or, more exactly existential, since he does not discuss what it means to be a human being in specific cultures or historical periods, but rather attempts by describing everyday life to lay out for us the general, cross-cultural, transhistorical structures of our self-interpreting way of being and how these structures account for all modes of intelligibility" (34-35).

Phenomenological interpretation neither places the text in its historical world nor in its cultural context. However, the text, a 'floating' thesis, moving relentlessly from the past to the present, is displaced into a new space and time with every act of reading. Throughout this continuous process of displacement, the text loses its transcendental nature and acquires a sense of historical and cultural specificity. The reader depicts his/her own text from his/her present-time worldview. Therefore, phenomenological interpretation starts from the premise that a human being interprets and understands everything he/she encounters in everyday life. This act of interpretation is best described as an unconscious process that represents the existential nature of human beings active in the world. Interpretation and translation are natural gifts that enable humans to survive; since human beings always interpret what they encounter in their everyday life, they are immersed in the social, cultural, historical and ideological realities that surround them. Phenomenological understanding is something that is acquired from the external world. According to Heidegger, the reader starts translating his/her text just like a fish swims in water. The reader cannot have sufficient knowledge or experience to enable him/her to gain a complete understanding of a text; there is always something missing or postponed in an interpreted text. As Heidegger explains:

"The way of encountering Being and the structures of Being in the mode of the phenomenon must first be *wrested* from the objects of phenomenology. Thus *the point of departure* of the analysis, the *access* to the phenomenon, and the *passage through* the prevalent coverings must secure their own method. The idea of an 'originary' and 'intuitive' grasp and explication of phenomena must be opposed to the naivete of an accidental, 'immediate,' and unreflective beholding " (*Being and Time*, 34).

A true and objective understanding does not lie in conceiving of the appearance or the manifested reality of a text. Rather, it seeks to understand the concealed layers of meaning that are indirectly hidden in it. Phenomenological interpretation bridges the gap between the thoughts manifested through a text and the perception of the translator. In his book, *Reader, Reading and Reception of Translated Fiction in Chinese: Novel Encounter*, Leo Tak-hung Chan highlights that the translator's perception of the original text plays a major role in revealing its concealed and invisible parts—the text is self-showing and the receiver attempts to grasp its indirect and invisible structure. At the last, a reader's response to a text is a temporal act governed by a set of external and internal factors all of which contribute to developing his/her views and perception of text. The historical experience of the reader is a vital element in understanding any given text. This motivates us to study the Being of occurrence and its connection to Heidegger's approach to translation. Though the text is a fluid, floating entity in this world, shaped in many forms, it is constrained by the movement of history—it moves through space and time and is conceived of by a historically limited human being. Heidegger clarifies the interrelationship between the text and history:

"Not only does an understanding of Being belong to Dasein, but this understanding also develops or decays according to the actual manner of Being of Dasein at any given time; for this reason it has a wealth of interpretations at its disposal. [...] The Being of Dasein finds its meaning in temporality. But temporality is at the same time the condition of the possibility of historicity as temporal mode of Being of Dasein itself, regardless of whether and how it is a being 'in time.' As a determination, historicity is prior to what is called history (world historical- occurrences). Historicity means the constitution of the Being of the 'occurrence' of Dasein as such; upon its ground something like 'world history' and belonging historically to world history, is possible." (*Being and Time*, 16-19)

The interpretation of a text is inseparable from its historical moment and its interpreter is a historical creature; therefore, his/her vision,

opinions and views are temporal, relative and compatible with his/her historical moment. The meaning of a text is always momentary and temporal: "Language is the prevailing of the world-forming and safe-keeping middle of the historical Dasein of the people. Only where temporality is temporalized does language happen; only where language happens is temporality temporalized" (*Language*, Heidegger, 6). The idea of the state of Being-of-occurrence plays a major role in explaining how history can affect a traditional text. According to Heidegger, the Being-of-occurrence means that the text has an unlimited number of occurrences at different times as it reproduces itself across time. Thus, the text which occurs in the past can occur in the present and the future also—it can occur at any time.

The idea of occurrence in itself does not signify the history of a text, but it is a clear mark of its historicity: "Radical historicity is the hallmark of ontological hermeneutics. As Heidegger argued in his ground breaking work *Being and Time*, all understanding is circumscribed by its time" (Shalin, 160). In other words, each text has its own historicity, which moves forward unstoppably. Historicity refers to a certain moment in the extended history of a traditional text that inscribes it with new historical experience and different cultural and social realities: the text is conceived in terms of its contemporary world, which results in the production of interpretations that are different to those prevailing at the time of its creation. These new realities exert major force on the process of changing the meaning of a text in order to obtain a historical equivalence. The intricate relationship between the text and history is clearly articulated by Lafont in the following:

> "However, as decades of philosophical hermeneutics have made abundantly clear, recognizing that we are always interpreting out of a contingent, historical, hermeneutic situation may have constructive rather than merely destructive consequences.[…] Precisely by discovering that interpretation entails a moment of application to our own hermeneutic situation, we finally realize what we wanted to know all along: the point of interpreting a text is not so much to find out what its author *literally* said at the time, but first and foremost what she may have to say to us now, that is, in our current situation" (392).

The Being-of-occurrence is an essential concept in understanding the mechanism of translation proposed by Heidegger. The relationship between translation and history is momentary and situational. In *The Question of Language in Heidegger's History of Being*, Robert Bernasconi explains that the process of translating a text from ancient times requires

the translator to focus on how to translate it in terms of the current historical moment. In *Heidegger and Tradition*, Werner Marx writes:

> "But the task of thinking the historical character of Being is itself historical. If the essence of man is an occurrence rather than a substance, so that human existence is temporal and historical through and through—as *Being and Time* tries to show—then the very human attempt to understand it in its Being is itself subject to the same finitude. Human existence is inescapably situated; it takes place in a historical world of inherited precedents which provide the meaningful context without which we would not understand anything at all. Accordingly, the attempt to surpass the tradition can still be accomplished only from within the a tradition. (XX)

Historical change has a major part to play in the construction of human identity; human beings are controlled by their temporal historical experience, rather than their value system or socio-cultural environment. Their temporal values, cultural background and social affiliations are temporal—they have a temporal and present understanding of the world. This temporal understanding unconsciously affects the translation of any given text. Though a human being is a temporal creature, his/her temporality cannot be separated from his/her historical experience extending from the past to the present. In this way, while the reader escapes history, he/she engages with a renewable historical experience, which makes his /her movement circular—it is a circular understanding.

For this reason, whether the interpreter/translator claims that he/she has the skill to present a contemporary reading of a text—one that is isolated from the past—he/she cannot realize such a condition of separation in reality. He/she is consciously or unconsciously attached to a particular tradition. The text renews its reality through its continuous transfer across time: "It is not a fixed understanding, but historically formed, accumulated in the very experience of encountering phenomena" (Palmer, 129). Accordingly, it always shows itself in terms of the historical period to which it has been relocated. The text is no longer treated as a fixed entity or as a piece of antiquity. Any act of interpretation or translation is always changeable: "The Being of Dasein finds its meaning in temporality. But temporality is at the same time the condition of the possibility of historicity as a temporal mode of Being of Dasein itself, regardless of how and whether it is a Being 'in time'" (Heiddeger, 9): the translation process is related to the current historical moment in which the text is being translated.

In his book, *Heidegger: Thought and Historicity*, Christopher Fynsk explains that translating a text, whether ancient or modern, is a momentary

act that has to fit with its present time. Therefore, the process of understanding, interpreting and translating should be consistent with the contemporary realities of the text, without rejecting its connection to the past. The concept of historicity does not mean that texts should only be investigated in terms of their past or ancient condition; however, before an interpretation can begin, the translator must "cross over to where what has been brought up in the utterance has come from" (Lafont, 393). The principle of Being-in-the world explains that there is no true translation or interpretation without placing the text in its current world and considering that the temporality of a text does not deny a concealed relationship to its tradition; this has to be brought to light with each new reading.

Studying the concept of Dasein is pivotal to learning about how the text is invisibly connected to both its past tradition and its present time. In addition, it presents a means for conceiving of the relationship between the translator and his/her text. In his book *Being and Nothingness*, Jean Paul Sartre defines the human as a conscious subject. However, in his book, *Dasein Disclosed: John Haugeland's Heidegger*, John Haugeland explains that this concept cannot be identified as a human being, breaking with Heidegger. Having a clear idea about Heidegger's concept of Dasein paves the way for learning about his concept of interpretation and translation. Dasein can be disguised in different forms, such as 'coping Dasein,' 'historical Dasein,' 'understanding Dasein,' 'interpreting Dasein' and 'translating Dasein.' The concept of Dasein focuses on the importance of the translator in the translation process. Though Heidegger claims that the role of the interpreter is limited to laying bare the appearance of the text without projecting his/her values or ideology on it, his/her concept of Dasein may contradict such a vision. Heidegger defines it as follows:

> "Dasein exists. Furthermore, Dasein is the Being which I myself always am. Mineness belongs to existing Dasein as the condition of the possibility of authenticity and inauthenticity. Dasein exists always in one of these modes, or else in the modal indifference to them" (*Being and Time*, 53).

Heidegger mainly defines Dasein as a human being: it is 'me' and 'you' in this world. Therefore, the translator can substitute Dasein in the current context. Heidegger's concept of the human being is different to that of standard Western philosophy, which regards the human being as a transcendental creature in whose mind the meaning of the external world is constituted through consciousness. In contrast, Heidegger considers that a human being is not a transcendental creature who receives the meaning of objects from his/her surroundings: "The best way to understand what Heidegger means by Dasein is to think of our term 'human being,' which

can refer to a way of being that is characteristic of all people or to be a specific person—a human being" (Dreyfus, 14). According to Heidegger, Dasein is a historical creature who belongs both to the past and to the present. His/her understanding of the surrounding world draws heavily on permanent encounters with the various objects of real-life and these constitute his/her perception and vision of the world. The translator is unable to know these things or objects directly; however, he/she can extrapolate from his/her direct experience of the world. As such, the translator can present an endless process of translations to his/her given text—the concept of endless equivalence. Heidegger expresses this idea in the following:

> "Faulty interpretations of the basic relationship of Dasein to beings and to itself are no mere defects of thought or acumen. They have their reason and their necessity in Dasein's own historical existence. […]Without our knowing where the faulty interpretation lies, we can be quietly persuaded that there is also a faulty interpretation concealed within the temporal interpretation of Being as such, and again, no arbitrary one" (*Basic Problems*, 332).

The translator starts translating his/her text from a point of view that entails a faulty translation and subsequently has to search for another truer translation. Indeed, the translator does not attempt to understand or translate the meaning reflected by the text, being fully aware that the text reflects the appearance of reality. This appearance might have nothing to do with the true meaning of the text if it is isolated from its world. Accordingly, the task of the translator is to render meaning through recovering a set of bonds and affiliations from the text to its context in order to achieve an existential equivalence. There is no definite or explicit meaning for a text and every translation is a faulty one, as the meanings produced in a text changes over time.

According to Heidegger, the problems of translation do not rest upon understanding or grasping the nature of a text which is self-showing and self-evident: "Heidegger holds that Dasein's understanding of Being is not a belief system implicit in the minds of the individual subjects, as Cartesian philosophers have generally held" (Dreyfus, 13). That is to say, a human being's understanding of a text cannot be restricted to any fixed or static principle of interpretation or translation and this denies the theoretical nature of the concept of hermeneutics. The idea of textual understanding is creative, and has no limits. It should not be subject to rules, as these may distort the meaning of the text. This idea is illustrated by Dreyfus in *Being-in-the-world: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, División I*:

"We are now in a position to draw out the implications of Dasein's special way of Being, which is existence. Cultures and cultural institutions have existence as their way of Being, and so does each of us. To exist is to take a stand on what is essential about one's Being and to be defined by that stand. Thus Dasein is what, in its social activity, it interprets itself to be. Human beings do not already have some specific nature. It makes no sense to ask whether we are essentially rational animals, creatures of God, organisms with built-in needs, sexual beings, or complex computers. Human beings can interpret themselves in any of these ways and many more, and they can, in varying degrees, become any of these things, but to be human is not be *essentially any of them*. Human being is essentially simply self-interpreting" (23).

The problematic issue of translating traditional texts arises from three definable elements. The first element is how the translator can depict and represent manifested reality. The second element is how the translator can relocate the text from the past to the present and whether the text reflects its own past or present reality. The third element rests upon how the translator determines the complicated relationship between a text and its world. In addition, a diachronically mobile text, such as a traditional text, is understood, interpreted and translated by a historically limited translator; this translator's understanding is constituted in present time and thus has an equivalent worldview. This worldview equivalence relates to the idea that developing equivalence is possible when it is made through the concepts offered by the world; despite languages differing superficially they maintain similarity at a conceptual level. The differences are confined to the ways of expressing thoughts and the feelings, but these feelings and thoughts are universal ideas shared by all world cultures. Heidegger has this to say:

"The elemental historicity of Dasein can remain concealed from it. But it can also be discovered in a certain way and be properly cultivated. Dasein can discover, preserve, and explicitly pursue tradition. The discovery of tradition and the discourse of what it 'transmits,' and how it does this, can be undertaken as a task in its own right. Dasein thus assumes the mode of Being that involves historical inquiry and research. But the discipline of history—more precisely, the historicality underlying it—is possible only as kind of Being belonging to inquiring Dasein, because Dasein is determined by historicity in the ground of its Being" (*Being and Time*, 19-20).

Tradition is a major part of the translator's intellectual composition and is embedded in his/her mental and psychological construction. The text is also a traditional entity but it moves both forwards and backwards. A

major part of tradition is epitomized in inherited discourse, and there can be no accurate translation of such a tradition without historical inquiry and involvement; this necessitates an attempt at historical equivalence. Such a historical involvement starts by raising a number of questions against the text itself, as there can be no true interpretation of a text without first interrogating it: "As what is really intended, what is to be ascertained lies in what is questioned; here questioning arrives at its goal. As an attitude adopted by Being, the questioner, questioning has its own character of Being" (*Being and Time*, 4). Through the process of permanent questioning, the translator always interprets him/herself and his/her surrounding reality. Text is a movable entity, which moves across history and is faced by a changeable, non-fixed and moving translator. Heidegger writes:

> "Not only does an understanding of Being belong to Dasein, but this understanding also develops or decays according to the actual manner of Being of Dasein at any given time; for this reason it has a wealth of interpretations at its disposal. Philosophical psychology, anthropology, ethics, 'politics,' poetry, biography, and historiography pursue in different ways and to varying extents the behavior, faculties, powers, possibilities, and destinies of Dasein" (*Being and Time*, 16)

In *The Authenticity of the Text in Hermeneutics*, Seyed Musa Dibadj argues that the historicity of a text generates various translations for the same text at various times. In addition, the concept of historicity is related to both text and reader. The text is not only attributed to its creator, the author, but also attributed to its translator/interpreter. If the language of the text is detached from its surrounding context, the reader cannot understand its true meaning. Translating or reading requires three significant elements: the language, the reader and the context. A reading of a text always leaves unexplored gaps and these have to be recovered through learning about the connections between the language and its visual and concealed context. The concept of the context aims to present things in their totality and in Heidegger's view:

> "As an existential, 'being with' the world never means anything like the Being-objectively-present-together of things that occur. There is no such thing as the 'being next to each other' of a Being called 'Dasein' with another being called 'world.' It is true that, at times, we are accustomed to express linguistically the being together of two objectively present things in such a manner: 'The table stands 'next to' the door.' 'The chair 'touches' the wall.' Strictly speaking, we can never talk about 'touching,' not because in the last analysis we can always find a space between the chair and the wall by examining it more closely, but because in principle

the chair can never touch the wall, even if the space between them amounted to nothing. The presupposition for this would be that the wall could be *encountered* 'by' the chair. A being can only touch an objectively present Being within the world if it fundamentally has the kind of Being of Being in—only if with its Dasein something like world is already discovered in terms of which beings can reveal themselves through touch and thus become accessible in their objective presence" (*Being and Time*, 51-52).

Placing the text in its context helps the reader to uncover the layers of thought hidden deep in the heart of the text and explore its invisible world. The text cannot be completely rendered linguistically; when it is articulated through language, the language fails to communicate its truth, and there will be invisible gaps, which cannot be filled. Heidegger provides a tangible example of this—'The table stands next to the door.' The language does not represent a visual image of how the table can stand next to the door, nor does it explain how the table can 'stand.' The idea of 'stand' is a physical competence attributed to human beings, rather than to inanimate objects. Furthermore, the linguistic structure of the sentence does not explain how the table could touch the door. This is a clear indication that translation cannot be limited to linguistic analysis of a sentence—it requires both existential and conceptual equivalence.

In her book, *Visual Intelligence: Perception, Image, and Manipulation in Visual Communication*, Ann Marie Barry focuses on gaps of understanding, which cannot be filled linguistically, but can be comprehended through one's own visual experience or encounter of the position of objects in the world. The reader has prior experience of how a table can 'stand next to the door' and this helps him/her understand this sentence without even having to focus much on its linguistic structure. A visual image is fixed in our perception, which makes us unconsciously visualize a linguistic structure without noticing the process taking place. However, this visual image does not originate solely in our perception—it is taken from the outside world.

Thus, the concept of world " is not the whole of all beings but the whole in which a human being finds himself already immersed, surrounded by its manifestness as revealed through an always pre-grasping, encompassing understanding" (Palmer, 132). Our consciousness records how the chair or the table stands next to the door, and this steers our own sense of how to understand and thus translate or interpret such a visual image. The translator grasps the meaning, which is composed of cohesive linguistic structures, through comparing it to its parallel structure or visual objects in the world. Heidegger defines a statement as a kind of judgment that is generally stable and constant. Contrary to the constancy of a statement,

meaning is renewable, liquid and historically contingent: "To understand the meaning involves entering into a real, not imaginary relationship with the forms of 'objectified spirit' found everywhere about us" (Palmer, 120). Therefore, it is important to depict Heidegger's concept of a statement and its connection to his concept of translation and interpretation. A statement has a function implied in conveying the reality of Being as something else. In other words, it presents the appearance of reality, not the reality itself. As such, a statement fails to provide the truth of Being. What is articulated through a statement is a relative representation of the truth of Being, taken from a certain perspective. Heidegger's symbolic and philosophical concept of the statement explains the failure of the language to provide for the complete reality of its text.

The language of a text conceals more than it reveals. Revealing the concealed layers of a text is an endless and relative process, which depends on an unlimited number of external and internal elements that are different between readers and over time. Accordingly, the translator needs to take into consideration the transformable nature of language in order enlarge his/her horizon of understanding and should doubt the reliability and validity of the meaning presented. In *On Heidegger and Language*, Joseph J. Kockelmans dwells on Heidegger's concept of language:

> "In reading Heidegger's reflections on language one must keep in mind that by *language* he does not mean the whole body of words and method of combining words used by man or a group of men; nor is he concerned with what Ferdinand de Saussure aptly called the structural system of diacritical oppositions necessary and sufficient for a system of sounds to constitute a system of communication. Heidegger uses the term in its broadest possible sense; thus by language he means everything by which mankind brings meaning to light in an articulated way, regardless of whether it is done concretely, by means of the sentences of a language in the narrow sense of the term, or through a work of art, a social or religious institution, and so on" (xiii).

Heidegger's concept of Being, as defined in chapter three, constitutes the foundation of his thinking of the text and language. The features of Being as universal, indefinable and expansive are applicable to his concept of language; language is not defined as a system of signs or a group of words, but a conceptual tool that gives meaning to different aspects of life. Language is a means to bring things to light through communicating their meaning to external reality; this suggests that there is no final meaning for any given word. In this way, the appearance of things is equal to the linguistic understanding of a statement; the language of a text should be diachronically and historically analyzed in order to reflect on its web of

correlations with the contemporary world, as such the act of translation requires critical skill and creative thinking. Language refers to things in the world but does not reflect the truth behind them. In his book, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being: a Critical Interpretation*, Herman Philipse explains Heidegger's concept of language:

> "In order to come into the speaking of language in the desired manner, we should realize that *language speaks*. What Heidegger means by this obscure statement, which he often repeats in his later works, is not the structuralist doctrine that language as a structure is prior to the individuals speaking that language, these individuals being raised in a common culture and into preexisting language. He rather claims that Being speaks to us through language, so that language in its primacy essence is the Word of Being. Thanks to the fact that language is the advent of Being, language speaks to us, and if we listen in the right manner, we 'inhabit' language as our home. Language is the House of Being, for Being provides us with language as our dwelling. Animals lack language, because they never exist in the light or clearing of Being" (205).

In itself a text is a dead and silent object. Language, however, is the medium that makes the text speak up and reveal its concealed layers of thought. The text has no existence without language because it contains the text and communicates it to the entire world. Therefore, language predates the text that it conveys to the world and, in this way, language is more pertinent to the world than to its text. Revealing the connections between language and the world helps to make manifest the meaning of a text; the text is fixed and stable, but its language is transformable, which makes it consistent with the progress of historical time. The fixity and rigidity of a text are contrary to the progress of history. The language of a text has nothing to do except for rendering the surrounding world through the image of the text. Language expands to enlighten the vague and concealed things in our lives.

According to Heidegger, the smallest unit that expresses meaning is called a statement. A statement represents one side of the truth of a text without disclosing its other invisible sides. In the following lines, Heidegger introduces the characteristics of a statement:

> "1. Primarily, statement means *pointing out*. With this we adhere to the primordial meaning of logos as *apophansis*: to let Beings be seen from themselves. In the statement 'the hammer is too heavy,' what is discovered for sight is not a 'meaning,' but a Being in the mode of its Being at hand. Even when this Being is not near enough to be grasped and 'seen,' pointing out designates the Being itself, not a mere representation of it,

neither something 'merely represented' nor even a physical condition of the speaker, his representing of this Being" (*Being and Time*, 142).

Contrary to the common linguistic principle that language reflects the image of its text, Heidegger explains that a statement is a reflection and manifestation of its world. In other words, the world reflects itself through the statement. Thus, the statement does not reflect linguistic meaning but the social, cultural, historical and economic realities enclosing the text. Heidegger clarifies his viewpoint of a statement as a manifestation of Being in his philosophical analysis of the statement, 'the hammer is too heavy' (*Being and Time*, 144). He explains that our own understanding of this statement has nothing to do with a linguistic understanding of the sentence: "In the context of being ready to hand, the hammer disappears as an object into a function of being a tool: we do not approach it as an object, but as a tool" (Palmer, 138). In other words, our understanding of the hammer results from our direct encounter with it in real-life experience through use; as such, understanding is a kind of practice. Our mind recognizes the hammer before encountering it in a statement, as language exists before its text. We know of the hammer as it is a part of the world: "Heidegger suggests to us that the claims upon thought and thought's transformation are to be understood in terms of an arrest or capture of thought by its thing" (Fynsk, 60). Accordingly, if the hammer had no existence in our world, our mind would be unable to understand its significance. Our knowledge and perception of objects spring from their existence in the world and language always reproduces itself to be consistent with its world. Primitive or backward societies preserve unchanged linguistic expressions, however, technologically advanced societies are linguistically enriched with new expressions and terms as new inventions and objects appear. In this way, the object precedes the language, not vice versa: "The hammer disappearing into its function as a tool represents the 'existential-hermeneutical'" (Palmer, 138). The second characteristic of a statement is described by Heidegger in the following way:

> "2. Statement is tantamount to *predication*. A 'predicate' is 'stated' about a 'subject,' the latter is determined by the former. What is stated in this signification of statement is not the predicate, but the hammer itself. What does the stating, that is, the determining, on the other hand, lies in the 'too heavy.' What is stated in the second signification of the statement, what is determined as such, has been narrowed down in its content as opposed to what is stated in the first signification of this term. Every predication is what it is only as pointing out" (*Being and Time*, 144).

A statement does not represent the truth of its message, but manifests surrounding reality and helps depict the message of a text. In doing so, it neither presents the truth nor does it represent it: it predicates it. The predication is done by the reader as he/she scrutinizes the text—the predication process is a direct result of what has already been pointed out. However, why does Heidegger not refer to it as a result rather than a predication? Predication does not explain whether the obtained result is true or false. It predicts something through using the information given, which is implied in the subject of a statement—its main function is to point to something predictable.

The idea of predication highlights that language is unable to provide us with any clear meaning of a text; it simply offers predication, which is derived from its surrounding world. In other words, in 'the hammer is too heavy,' the subject is 'hammer' and points to the predicate 'too heavy,' the statement neither gives us the truth of itself nor the truth of its object. Its role is confined to expecting something predictable to happen. Even the predication does not provide us with a certain or definite result and it is a kind of predication which may be true or false: the reader cannot say for sure whether the hammer is heavy or light unless he/she weighs it in reality. Heidegger has this to say:

> "The second signification of statement has its foundation in the first. The elements which are articulated in prediction, subject-predicate, originate within the pointing out. Determining does not first discover, but as mode of pointing out initially limits seeing precisely to what shows itself-hammer-as-such, in order to manifest explicitly what is manifest in its determinacy through, the explicit limitation of looking" (*Being and Time*, 144).

There is a direct connection between 'pointing out' and 'predicate' and the second is manifested through the first. A statement does not reveal any concealed meaning or remove ambiguity; it merely refers to what is already manifest; it is a tool for limiting our perception of what is referred to by the subject. In the previous example, the hammer points out its heaviness at the superficial layer of the statement. If this statement is analyzed in its larger context, its interpretation/translation may be totally different to its superficial meaning: the meaning of 'hammer' may have nothing to do with the literal meaning of the word itself. Accordingly, the third feature of the statement is explained as follows:

> "3. Statement means communication, speaking forth. As such it has a direct relation to statement in the first and second meanings. It is letting someone see with us what has been pointed out in its definite character.

Letting someone see with us shares with the others the Being pointed out in their definiteness. What is 'shared' is the Being toward what is pointed out which has a way of seeing common to all. We must keep in mind that this Being-toward is Being-in-the-world, namely, in the world from which what is pointed out is encountered. Any statement, as a communication understood existentially, must have been expressed. As something communicated, what is spoken can be 'shared' by others with the speaker even when they themselves do not the beings pointed out and defined in a palpable and visible range. What is spoken can be 'passed along' in further retelling. The scope of communication which sees is broadened. But at the same time what is pointed out can become veiled again in this further retelling, although the knowledge and cognition growing in such a hearsay always means beings themselves and does not 'affirm' a 'valid meaning' passed around. Even hearsay is a Being-in-the-world and a Being toward what is heard" (*Being and Time*, 145).

The main purpose of any statement is to communicate an idea or give a complete thought. The communicative feature of a statement manifests the world of that statement. Thus, the role of a statement is to let us see the image of Being articulated in language. Language's function changes from communicating a written or spoken message to a visual message. In this respect, Humboldt explains that language is "the external manifestation of the minds of peoples. Their language is their soul, their soul is their language" (24).

Working out through its own world, the communicative message of a statement conveys the image of Being, located in the world, which signifies that the communicative aspect of the statement derives its power from its place in the world. Therefore, it expresses that which a human being encounters in his/her everyday life. In other words, the main features of the statement, such as 'pointing out,' 'predicate' and 'communicative,' will be both useless and meaningless if the statement is separated from its own existence and the communicated message has to be understood existentially. In this way, the translator shifts his/her focus from the word to the reality that produced the word and gave it its significance and meaning. Focusing only on the language so as to understand the meaning of a text impedes the process of translation. Language in itself is a lifeless, unchangeable and fixed object; it is enlivened and made meaningful through its use in speech and written forms in our daily lives. What is more striking is that our subjective views, analysis and judgments reproduce the language of a text. The process of translation assumes that one issues a judgment over a statement or a text. Indeed, a text is composed of units and statements and a statement is composed of words Heidegger argues that:

"The 'problematic' which has entrenched itself around this idolatry of the word is just as opaque. On the one hand, validity means the *'form' of the reality* which belongs to the content of the judgment since it has an unchangeable existence as opposed to the changeable 'psychic' act of judgment. In the light of the position of the question of Being in general characterized in the introduction to this inquiry, we can hardly expect that 'validity' as 'ideal being' is going to be distinguished by any special ontological clarity" (*Being and Time*, 148).

Accordingly, linguistic theories of translation focus on the word as the main unit of meaning. Heidegger's thesis attempts to deconstruct the idolatry of the word and of linguistic understanding. According to Heidegger, sometimes the dictionary meaning of a word may be incompatible with the intended meaning in a text and/or the current realities of the world that surround it. Heidegger believes in the fluidity of language and that it can develop vertically as well horizontally. This vertical development of language takes place through the invention of new words (coinage) and borrowing and loan-words in order to keep up with new inventions and new styles of life; life is not fixed but is always being renewed through technological advances, scientific inventions, new styles of life and cultural and intellectual production. Horizontal development explains how old meanings of words are changed and replaced by ones with new and different meanings. Heidegger has much to say on the relationship between meaning and the world and how consulting a dictionary to get the meaning of traditional words may be meaningless:

In most cases, a dictionary will give a correct account of the meaning of a word (wortbedeutung), but even given this exactness, to the extent that we inquire about what is referred to as the realm of the essence (wesensberich) of the word, it (the dictionary) still may not prevent (verburgt) insight into the truth of what the word means (bedeutet) and can mean. A 'dictionary (book of terms)' can provide hints for the understanding of a word, but it is never simply and *a priori* the definitive[verbindlich] authority. Given its nature and its limits, in general a dictionary[faBbar] reference is always only a reference to what is a not at all comprehensible interpretation of a language. To be sure, as soon as we consider language as a medium of exchange, a dictionary, which is geared to the techniques of business and exchange; is 'without further ado' right [in der Ordnung]' and 'definitive.' On the other hand, seen from the spirit of a language [Geist einar Sprache] its entirety, every dictionary lacks immediate standardization[MaBablichkeit] and definitiveness. In truth, this is valid of course for every translation, because it necessarily has to carry out the passage[Uberschritt] from the spirit of one language [Sprachgeist] to that of another. Above all, it is not translation in the sense that a word from one language can or cannot be made congruent

[gebrachwarden] with a word from another language. However, this impossibility should not in turn mistakenly lead us to devalue translation, in the sense of seeing it as being something that fails to work[Veragen]. On the contrary, translation can even bring to light connections that in fact lie in the translated language but have not been brought out[herausgelegt]. From this we see that every translating has to be an interpretation [Auslegen]." (qtd in Miles 60).

 Not understanding the meaning of words, the translator conceives of what they represent on the 'ground of reality.' Thus, the word is a kind of Being in the world. Isolating the word from its context would fix its meaning as unchangeable and static. However, a statement is "a pointing out which communicates and defines" (Heidegger, 146). Therefore, there is a crucial question to be addressed in such a context: is it possible for the translator to depend only on a statement in producing a clear and understandable translation?

There are a multitude of statements that can be understood without the need for linguistic analysis because they imitate real-life situations: "Projecting-opening each key word and phrase of Heidegger's thinking cannot be achieved by seeking recourse in dictionaries. Rather, it must take its orientation from the words hidden in the treasury of "returnership " (Schalow, 178). The genuine act of interpretation lies in developing the skill of thinking about the existence of the interpreted object; such critical thinking may help fill in a gap that cannot be bridged through language alone. The meaning of a statement is taken from its context: "We make no advance restriction on the concept of meaning which would confine it to a signification of a 'content of judgment,' but we understand it as the existential phenomenon characterized in which the formal framework of what can be disclosed in understanding and articulated in interpretation becomes visible as such" (Heidegger, 146). The meaning of a text is self-evident, indefinite, inexplicit, regenerative, historical and temporal. From this perspective, the translated text should be self-evident, regenerative, renewable, historical and temporal too. Simply put, there is no final translation to any given text, but an endless process of translating and thinking. However, the practice of translation can be subdivided into the following types:

"There are many interim stages between interpretation, which is quite enveloped in heedful understanding, and the extreme opposite case of a theoretical statement about objectively present things: statements about events in the surrounding world, descriptions of what is at hand, 'reports on situations,' noting and ascertaining a 'factual situation,' describing a state of affairs, telling about what has happened. These 'sentences' cannot

be reduced to theoretical propositional statements without essentially distorting their meaning."(*Being and Time*, 148).

According to Heidegger, the practice of interpretation/translation is divided into two major types. The first type is a flat interpretation/translation depicting only the superficial layer of objects; this has little to do with communicating the deeper thoughts or ideas concealed in a text's statement. It is confined to those statements expressing simple ideas and direct thoughts, such as "This is a book" and "It is a tree." The second type is a deep, circumspective or complicated interpretation, which aims to interpret and understand complicated and concealed concepts, and figurative and metaphorical language, the meanings of which are invisible and change over time.

Jeffrey Powell, in his book *Heidegger and Language*, explains Heidegger's concept of language and argues that Heidegger's influence on linguistics is remarkably significant. For him, there is no major difference between discourse and language. Language can take different forms as 'existential language,' 'language as use' and 'language as something on hand.' This can be exemplified in the difference between reading a poem and analyzing it. The process of reading a poem refers to language as use and the process of analyzing the poem refers to language on hand

Heidegger presents a new concept of hermeneutic translation—the reflexive concept of translation—which is based on conceptual equivalence, existential equivalence and phenomenological equivalence: the translated/ interpreted text is a reflection of its world. He states that translation is an act of interpretation, crossing the lines of demarcation between translation and interpretation. Humans are self-interpreting and self-translating. Previous trends in hermeneutic translation have tended to focus on syntactic and linguistic hermeneutics, as shown in the grammatical-psychological approach of Schleiermacher. However, Heidegger's concept of hermeneutic translation addresses the translation process as an act of interpretation; the translation process decodes the manifestation of a text in the world and vice versa: a text does not represent its internal or linguistic structure, but rather it depicts its relationship to its surrounding world. The translation process starts with the premise that there is no true translation without interpretation. Translation focuses mainly on translating the 'shadow' of the text and mediating the thoughts of the author into the translator's current context.

A remarkable flaw in Heidegger's phenomenological approach is that it downplays the importance of studying the past context of traditional texts and focuses mainly on their present actualities. The idea of having a better objective understanding of traditional texts should combine

elements from the past and the present and fuse them into a unified interpretative and critical approach. However, difficulty remains in building up a model of thinking that helps the translator/interpreter understand the historical context of traditional texts and bridges the gap between a text's past realities and its present conditions.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE HISTORICITY OF THE CONTEXT VERSUS THE DIVINITY OF THE TEXT

Translating traditional texts and those written in the past raises a variety of issues, ranging from semantics, word etymology and grammatical issues to socio-cultural problems and there can be no true translation without a true understanding of a text. Problems in the realization of this true understanding increase when translating a traditional text. Hermeneutics is mainly concerned with translating traditional texts and different trends of interpretation and translation address the process of translating traditional texts in various ways. In *Piecing Together the Fragments: Translating Classical Verse, Creating Contemporary Poetry*, Josephine Balmer discusses the issues that arise in translating traditional texts:

> "A comprehensive examination of the semantic, cultural, and creative issues each source might raise for a classical translator, who, as we will see, must often carry out painstaking scholarly research in order to make informed personal choices, the former providing the bedrock on which the latter can be based. There are, as Lorna Hardwick has noted, various ways in which translators might 'embed' their commentary within their accompanying translation, and their decision on how best to proceed with such metatexts might well be determined by the needs(and demands) of their audience. This can range from those familiar with both the original's language and cultural context, to those who might have second-hand stereotypical views about [classical] gods and heroes" (6).

The issues involved in translating classical texts are complicated and require translators to examine the various elements that help bring a text from the past into the present without ignoring the changes that occur to its internal structure. The early trends of hermeneutics explain that the idea of translating a traditional work should focus on its subject matter, regardless of the life of the author and the socioeconomic realities surrounding the text: "The interpreter of a text should not be completely bound to the text or the authorial intention behind the text, but should rather take a certain

distance from the text and in doing so develop an interpretative autonomy and freedom” (*Truth and Method*, 126). Accordingly, hermeneutics starts interpreting/translating a text from a purely linguistic perspective, as “language is the medium in which substantive understanding and agreement take place between two people” (*Truth and Method*, 402).

Translating a text hermeneutically involves two modes of understanding. In *Reading Schleiermacher: Translation, Cognition and Culture*, Teresa Seruya and Joes Miranda Justo argue that the first mode tends to analyze the internal content and individual parts of a text—its grammatical structure, utterances, vocabulary and internal structure—namely the smaller or individual units of a text. These smaller units rarely offer problems in translation: “All understanding is dependent upon a prior acquisition of linguistic practices and horizons of meaning, which guide our initial conceptions of self and world” (Davey, 9). Furthermore, the smaller units of a text are often explicit and definite in nature. Linguistics is mainly concerned with the process of analyzing these individual and internal parts of a text.

In *On Translation*, John Sallis contends that the second mode of hermeneutic translation is epitomized by grasping the external context, that is, the circumstantial realities of a text. These realities are often invisible and abstract in nature and include various artifacts of hermeneutic analysis, including authorial intention, the psychological reconstruction of the author, the worldview of a text, historical understanding and the reader’s response; these are all components of a speculative understanding. Gadamer argues that interpretation is a direct result of experiencing the object of understanding: “The translator has to be aware of his or her own personal horizon of experience and knowledge and must widen it phenomenologically by learning and entering into unfamiliar horizons e.g. to foreign cultures and scientific disciplines” (Stolze, 142). Translating a traditional text is distinct from translating a contemporary text. In seeking to understand an ancient text, the reader confronts various issues in the nature and characteristics of the text itself. Gadamer defines the classical or traditional text as follows:

> “The “classical” is something raised above the vicissitudes of changing times and changing tastes. It is immediately accessible, not through that shock of recognition, as it were, that sometimes characterizes a work of art for its contemporaries and in which the beholder experiences a fulfilled apprehension of meaning that surpasses all conscious expectations. Rather, when we call something classical, there is a consciousness of something enduring, of significance that cannot be lost and that is independent of all the circumstances of time—a kind of timeless present that is contemporaneous with every other present” (*Truth and Method*, 299)

A classical work of art loses neither its value nor its significance with the passage of time. It resists the mobility of time because it is capable of adapting itself to the emerging values of the present, its different modes of thinking and its changeable tastes. However, its power lies in its spiral movement; this movement fuses it to the present in such a way that it is necessary to interpret it in its present time without downplaying the importance of its past tradition. Traditional work receives its value and significance from its enduring power, while, being a part of the present, it transcends the sense of time becoming largely consistent with its new world: "What we call 'classical' does not first require the overcoming of historical distance, for in its own constant meditation it overcomes the distance by itself. The classical, then, is certainly 'timeless,' but this timelessness is a mode of historical being" (Gadamer, 301). The concept of timelessness, transformative in nature, means that a classical work is everlasting and endlessly developing. In his book, *Reception Theory and Biblical Hermeneutics*, David Paul Parris points out that:

> "There are two aspects of Gadamer's thought which Tracy develops in particular. The classic (1) possesses an excess of meaning and (2) a form of timelessness that while rooted in its own historicity, addresses the contemporary reader. The surplus of meaning that a classic text possesses means that the truth of the classic is open for possible disclosure in every reader's horizon. The classic not only possesses an excess of meaning, but it actually encourages this through its interpretations. The ability of the classic to disclose its truth claims in a relevant manner to each horizon is the basis for its timelessness" (60).

There is a reciprocal relationship between a work of art and its historical context. The historical context encompasses both text and reader. The text unwillingly transforms itself into the new realities of its renewable historical experience. The transformative nature of the text is genuinely compatible with a renewable faculty of understanding. The classical work opens up unlimited possibilities of understanding in that it is both regenerative and renewable: "The transformation is a transformation into the true. It is not enchantment in the sense of a bewitchment that waits for the redeeming word that will transform things back to what they were, but it is itself redemption and transformation back into true being " (*Truth and Method*, 116–17). A classical work is described as a transformative work of art where the process of transformation expands to cover aspects of a text ranging from its language, the nature of textual understanding, its interpretation and its modes of reception to the nature of the receiver. The receiver of a classical text differs, culturally and socially, across time and space. As such, the translation process of a classical text changes from

epoch to epoch. Translating a classical text is grounded on bridging the gap between the past and the present. Sallis explains Gadamer's concept of translation in the following way:

> "The translator not only must intend the meaning and keep that intention in force so that the meaning is preserved in the translation, but also must interpret the meaning so as to be able to set it in the context of the other language, to express it in the new language-world in such a way as to establish it as a valid meaning within that world. Because the meaning must be fitted to the new context, installed within that context, it can never suffice for the would-be translator of a text only to reawaken the original psychic processes of the writer, that is, the complex of meaning— intentions borne by the original text. Rather, as Gadamer says, the translation of a text is a text formed anew" (72).

According to Gadamer, the translation of a traditional text is a kind of interpretation of the original text and implies an interpretation of the various elements constituting the original text. The process of interpretation should precede the process of translation as the ambiguous and ambivalent elements of the original text have to be analyzed and interpreted in order to fit into the target text. In this way, the original text is culturally, as well as linguistically, transformed into the target language to the extent that the translation process produces a 'new' text. Therefore, the translation process involves the incorporation of a classical text into the present so that it becomes invisibly mixed up with its new reality. Reconstructing itself, the translated text is largely congruous with the relentless movement of history. Gadamer writes:

> "Every age has to understand a transmitted text in its own way, for the text belongs to the whole tradition whose content interests the age and in which it seeks to understand itself. The real meaning of a text, as it speaks to the interpreter, does not depend on the contingencies of the author and his original audience. It certainly is not identical with them, for it is always co-determined also by the historical situation of the interpreter and hence by the totality of the objective course of history" (*Truth and Method*, 307).

According to Gadamer, the classical text is on an extended journey that starts at the time of its writing and leads it to encounter different times and new worlds. Every age understands such a 'travelling text' in terms of its own norms, cultural values, socio-economic conditions and spatial realities. Therefore, obtaining the real meaning of a text has little to do with its authorial intention or content. In this way, Gadamer breaks with Romantic/traditional hermeneutics which aims at reconstructing the authorial intention of the original writer as a necessary condition for

presenting a true and correct translation/interpretation. This kind of text is prey to the judgment of its receiver and the values of the modern world, making it subject to an endless series of interpretations and changes. Hermeneutic understanding is considered to be the first tendency of interpretation to introduce the travel theory of literature to the literary arena—offered indirectly in the work of Gadamer. The concept of travelling literature was later directly elaborated by Edward Said. In his book, *The World, the Text and the Critic*, Said explains the notion of the travelling text:

> "Like people and schools of criticism, ideas and theories travel—from person to person, from situation to situation, from one period to another. Cultural and intellectual life are usually nourished and often sustained by this circulation of ideas, and whether it takes the form of acknowledged or unconscious influence, creative borrowing, or wholesale appropriation, the movement of ideas and theories from one place to another is both a fact of life and a usefully enabling condition of intellectual activity. Having said that, however, one should go on to specify the kinds of movement that are possible, in order to ask whether by virtue of having moved from one place and one time to another idea or theory gains or losses in strength, and whether a theory in one historical period and national culture becomes altogether different for another period or situation.[…] Such movement into a new environment is never unimpeded. It necessarily involves processes of representation and institutionalization different from those at the point of origin. This complicates any account of the transplantation, transference, circulation, and commerce of theories and ideas" (226).

According to Said, the travelling theory seeks to present a well-defined strategy for conceiving of the nature of the classical text on its endless journey. Travelling across time and space, the traditional text is exposed to cultural and linguistic changes that help reproduce it in the new reality in which it finds itself. When translating this kind of text, the cultural and socioeconomic changes occurring to the mother culture have to be transferred to the target culture, requiring the translator to redouble his/her efforts: the classical text travels not only from the past to the present, but also from culture to culture. In her book, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity*, Lydia He Liu elucidates her viewpoint regarding the translation of travelling texts:

> "What happens when a word, category, or discourse 'travels' from one language to another? In nineteenth-century colonial and imperialist discourse, the 'travel' of ideas and theories from Europe to the rest of the world usually evoked notions of expansion, enlightenment, progress, and teleological history. In recent years, the move to historicize and decolonize

knowledge in various academic disciplines has led to a growing number of studies that scrutinize these notions. The word 'travel' is no longer seen as innocent and is often put in quotation marks" (20).

Liquidity and transformation are among the major features of the classical text; adapting itself culturally and linguistically to its temporal moment, it regenerates its form and content: "The importance hermeneutics gives to the concept of 'transmission,' in relation to 'tradition,' should be clear. For hermeneutics, there is no tradition without transmission, since a tradition that cannot be transmitted will rigidify and perish" (*Philosophical Portrait*, Gadamer, 92). The historical context of the interpreter is inextricably interwoven with the text being transmitted, constituting its meaning through a contemporary vision—its temporal distance. A major feature of the classical text is its temporality. The classical work derives its durability from being temporal. In this way, the translation process differs from era to era and also from translator to translator. The translator's job is not solely confined to rendering the language of the source text into the target text, but also to reconstruct and reproduce the original text in order to make it largely compatible with its new historical setting.

In its endeavor to set up the necessary conditions for making the act of translation possible, hermeneutics underscores the significance of the translator in the process of understanding. The translator is a historical being who is totally absorbed in his/her world: "The task of hermeneutical understanding is not to (deceptively) convince us that we can somehow abstract ourselves from our own historical context, or that it is even conceivable to think that by some pure act of empathy we can leap out of our situation and 'into' the minds of the creators of works of art or historical subjects" (Bernstein, 126). Understanding involves concretization: "It is the very understanding of the universal—a subject matter—in concrete terms" (Gadamer, 341). Every act of understanding is based on a certain situation: "Hermeneutic understanding involves the process of comprehending what a text or dialogue imparts and, in addition, the development of a practice, of a preparedness or skill in changing mental perspective" (Davey, 37). The critical thinking of the translator is improved by him/her being forced to recheck his/her inherited values and preconceived ideas; it is a multilayered process, irreducible to a single step.

T.S Eliot explains in his essay 'Tradition and Individual Talent,' the difficulty in interpreting traditional literary works. He argues that "no poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists (60) In only applying a textual understanding, the translator fails to generate a

complete and precise translation of a traditional text. Traditional texts have to be evaluated in the light of their entire tradition. Translating a traditional text is not solely concerned with the question of how to transfer it from the past to the present; it is also interested in the intellectual and mental preparedness of the translator and his/her capability in providing an accurate and correct translation: "In the hermeneutical reconstruction of textual meaning, the translator always will start at his/her own understanding, and he can only translate what s/he has understood beforehand. The task is to offer one's interpretation of text – as precisely as possible-to one's readers" (Cercel, Stanley, & Stolze, 19). The hermeneutic concept of translation provides a methodology for translating a traditional text and also affects the translator's vision of his/her inherited tradition.

Hermeneutics aims to address the perceptual and conceptual issues affecting interpretation and translation in a realistic manner. It does not demand idealism or detachment: "Thus, hermeneutics may be defined as a mixed mode of thinking, combining horizontal and vertical thinking and characterized by a striving for truth" (Uggla, 50). Historical change, incidents and events foster the consciousness of the reader and his/her viewpoint of different phenomena in the world. Fusing the past with the present requires a historically trained mind whose consciousness is historically affected. In translating a traditional text, the translator should conceive of the ontology of historical consciousness, exercising a 'historical' mind. The hermeneutic tradition divides humanity's historical mind into the infinite and finite. The human mind is finite in that it belongs to a historical being that is "tied to a particular time and place as any fundamental impairment of the possibility of knowledge in the human sciences" (*Truth and Method*, 236); this concept of historical consciousness is neither transcendental nor infinite. Gadamer writes:

> "The claim of philosophical consciousness to contain within itself the whole truth of the history of mind is contested precisely by the historical worldview. That impossibility is, rather, the reason historical experience is necessary; human consciousness is not an infinite intellect for which everything exists, simultaneous and co-present. The absolute identity of consciousness and object simply cannot be achieved by finite, historical consciousness. It always remains entangled in the context of historical effect" (*Truth and Method*, 228).

The concept of historical consciousness is not transcendental because it is constrained by time and space; it is temporal. As such, "the task is to show how values relative to an age have extended into something absolute" (*Truth and Method*, 239). They derive their validity and logic from the concept of a historically effected consciousness: "History is

effective in the sense that we would not be who we are without the effects that history has upon us" (*Truth and Method*, 77). History practices an invisible but continuous effect on the translator's understanding of his/her text, which may go against the grain of his/her objective understanding: "The sovereignty of the subject is once again taken to be fictional since the interpreter is little more than the effect of tradition rather than its controlling subject" (Lawn & Keane, 79).

The interpreter/translator's values, attitudes, life experiences and thinking are shaped by the situations he/she encounters during his/her journey through life. His/her historical consciousness of the past is also formed out of belonging to a particular cultural/linguistic tradition: "Gadamer proposes 'effective-historical consciousness' in contrast to 'historical consciousness,' as a characterization of consciousness involved in the interpretive dynamic that proceeds by way of the effective character of history" (Froman, 257). The effect of history is unconsciously conveyed to the reader's mind through his/her natural bond and affiliations to his/her extant tradition. The concept of historical consciousness is vulnerable to the circumstantial realities that surround and inform it; it cannot be separated from its present time. A human being's historical consciousness is not fixed but grows alongside the progress of history. Gadamer writes:

> "Obviously the value and importance of research cannot be measured by a criterion based in the subject matter. Rather, the subject matter appears truly significant only when it is properly portrayed for us. Thus we are certainly interested in the subject matter, but it acquires its life only from the light in which it is presented to us. We accept the fact that the subject presents different aspects of itself at different times or from different standpoints. We accept the fact that these aspects do not simply cancel one another out as research proceeds, but are like mutually exclusive conditions that exist by themselves and combine only in us. Our historical consciousness is always filled with a variety of voices in which the echo of the past is heard" (*Truth and Method*, 285).

The translation process is inextricably interwoven with the historical consciousness of the translator. As such, the idea of translating a traditional text is mixed up with this changing historical consciousness : "We showed that understanding is not a method which the inquiring consciousness applies to an object it chooses and so turns it into objective knowledge; rather, being situated within an event of, a process of handing down, is a prior condition of understanding" (*Truth and Method*, 320). Every translator has his/her own historical consciousness, which presents historical truth from a different angle. The interpretation/translation of a given text is based on prior experiences and encounters in the translator's

life; they are retained unconsciously in memory to be recalled when facing a similar situation: "For history is not only not at its end, but we its interpreters are situated within it, as a conditioned and finite link in a continuing chain" (*Truth and Method*, 204).

Historical understanding of a traditional text does not seek to separate the text from its author. Instead, the translator brings it into the present in order to present a contemporary understanding of it. Jörn Rüsen explains that "historical consciousness functions as a specific orientational mode in actual situations of life in the present: it functions to aid us in comprehending past actuality in order to grasp present actuality" (24). It is a cognitive method that helps the translator analyze a text in light of its specific historical context. In *Historical Consciousness: the Remembered Past*, John Lukacs explains the importance of historical consciousness for studying works written in the past:

> "And what historians ought to consider are not only increasing varieties of records, but a deepening consciousness of the functions of human memory; that different kinds of records are reflections of different kinds of memory—and this is what I mean when I, too, restate something that may sound obvious: that the remembered past is a much larger category than the recorded past. […] These function of remembering involve understanding beyond accuracy, a preoccupation with problems rather than periods, an exploration in depth rather than in width, a constant rethinking of the past, involving qualities rather than capacities of memory" (33).

Translating a traditional work, which may be characterized as 'soupy' and regenerative, necessitates a relatively well-developed historical consciousness. The author's ideas and concepts portrayed in his/her text are no longer a valid fit for the circumstantial realties of the present time and are replaced by the historical consciousness of the translator. Though a text is a part of its historical tradition, it always reintroduces itself to its translator. For this reason, a clear notion of context should be presented. In the words of Bronislaw Malinoswki:

> "It should be clear at once that the conception of meaning as contained in an utterance is false and futile. A statement, spoken in real life, is never detached from the situation in which it has been uttered. For each verbal statement by a human being has the aim and the function of expressing some thought or feeling actual at that moment and in that situation, and necessary for some reason or other to be made known to another person or persons—in order either to serve purposes of common action, or to establish ties of purely social communion, or else to deliver the speaker of

violent feelings or passions. Without some imperative stimulus of the moment, there can be no spoken statement" (220).

Malinowski attempts to explain how the meaning of a text can be clearly obtained through studying the contextual elements surrounding it. He argues that meaning can be clearly defined in terms of its everyday use; this supports the hermeneutic claim that the best method for obtaining the meaning of a text is to bring the text from the past to the present where it can be critically examined in terms of real-life experience. He also notes that language is a mode of action; this means that the language of a text is not restricted to an understanding of its linguistic structure as there are various elements that intercept the language of the text and determine its meaning. For this reason, the problematic issues arising in translation can be subsumed under the rubric of contextual elements. He presents a clear analysis of the crisis in translating traditional texts and points out that some languages do not have the vocabulary to satisfy the linguistics needs of the contemporary world. Such a problem is shown when translating a traditional text where a large number of words are so incongruous with modernity and the contemporary world that they do not have synonyms either in the source or in the target language; rather, their ancient meanings have changed over time; this is highly problematic for a translator.

In applying a historical interpretation, the translator "sees the text simply as a source which is part of the totality of the historical tradition" (*Truth and Method*, 203). The idea of an effected historical consciousness considers tradition a part of the present where "our usual relationship to the past is not characterized by distancing and freeing ourselves from tradition. […] It is always part of us, a model or exemplar, a kind of cognizance that our later historical judgment would hardly regard as a kind of knowledge but as the most ingenuous affinity within tradition" (*Truth and Method*, 294). Translating a traditional text cannot be done through adopting a universal concept of history. Such a concept contributes to removing the contextual elements, which are necessary to clarify the ambiguity of a text. The historical consciousness of the translator cannot be effective unless it is situated in its temporal distance. However, the concept of temporal distance seems to be paradoxical and has two opposing interpretations. Gadamer writes:

"In historical studies, this experience has led to the idea that objective knowledge can be achieved only if there has been a certain historical distance. It is true that what a thing has to say, its intrinsic content, first appears only after it is divorced from the fleeting circumstances that gave rise to it. The positive conditions of historical understanding include the relative closure of a historical event, which allows us to view it as a whole,

and its distance from contemporary opinions concerning its import. The implicit presupposition of historical method, then, is that the permanent significance of something can first be known objectively only when it belongs to closed context—in other words, when it is dead enough to have only historical interest " (*Truth and Method*, 297).

In his book, *Historicism: the New Critical Idiom*, Paul Hamilton argues that the idea of objective understanding is only realistically possible when there is a historical distance—a temporal distance. In interpreting or translating a classical text, the translator may have a historical distance from a text and this imparts on his/her mind a kind of illusive impartiality and detachment. At the superficial level, the reader/translator, who is culturally and historically affiliated to the present, will study the classical text unburdened with any kind of restraint preventing him/her from achieving an objective understanding. In terms of historicism, historical distance serves as a method for understanding traditional texts and the gap between the past and the present; this mitigates or overcomes the bias and subjectivity of the translator. To translate, therefore, such a traditional text, the translator must set his/her affiliations to the contemporary world aside and transpose himself/herself into the age in which the text was produced.

In contrast, the idea of temporal distance makes the translator start to think of traditional works in terms of his/her present time realities, bringing the values and the principles of his age to bear on the traditional text. The idea of temporal distance should be seen as a positive and productive element in the process of translation because it aims to investigate that which is handed down from the past to the present. Temporal distance evokes our historical consciousness and "it not only allows us to understand ourselves better, but more modestly, it also allows us to understand better how historical consciousness is itself daughter of its time, by applying historical consciousness to itself" (Grondin & Plant, 68). In other words, the past is reevaluated and reassessed in light of the present. Thus the ambiguous and obscure elements in a traditional text can only be revealed when they are relocated to the present. In this way, traditional texts should be translated in the context of present time, so that obscure meanings can be clearly understood in their circumstantial reality. However, an important point remains: how can a translator realize words, items and tools that have lost their use and value in the present? The traditional text is imbued with the soul of the past in terms of language, values, ideology and even its internal and external structure. It was written to address the problems and social conditions of its own time; the traditional text is valid for the time when it was written and in being handed down from the past to the present may lose its message and

meaning. Therefore, it is essential to determine whether the traditional text is unchangeable and transformable or fixed. What is the role of the translator in this? Is his/her role confined to depicting and representing the intended meaning of the original author? How can he/she make sure that he/she can represent the original message of the traditional text? A simple question remains: does the traditional text have a fixed and unchanged message? Is it isolated from its world? Or is it affected by its external world? It is essential to have an idea about the concept of temporal distance and its association to the transformable nature of traditional texts. Understanding the concept of temporal distance provides a partial answer to this problem. According to Gadamer, the idea of temporal distance can be defined as follows:

> "Temporal distance obviously means something other than the extinction of our interest in the object. It lets the true meaning of the object emerge fully. But the discovery of the true meaning of a text or a work of art is never finished; it is in fact an infinite process. Not only are fresh sources of error constantly excluded, so that all kinds of things are filtered out that obscure the true meaning; but new sources of understanding are continually emerging that reveal unsuspected elements of meaning" (*Truth and Method*, 309).

The idea of temporal distance explains that the distance between a traditional text and the present can be bridged; traditional texts create distance over time. Having crossed a temporal gap, the text creates another distance to be bridged; it is in a relentless process of producing and reproducing new meanings and distinct interpretations. The historical distance separating a traditional text from the present is no longer a barrier to understanding as time does not negatively affect the reader's understanding of a traditional text nor distort its meaning or intended message. In this way, the traditional static vision of the text has to be replaced by a new vision that considers the text to be a developing and moving entity that gains its validity from its position in the present: "Time is no longer primarily a gulf to be bridged, because it separates, but it is actually the supportive process in which the present is rooted" (*Truth and Method*, 264). In such a process of renewable understanding, many corrections may occur to a misleading and long-standing interpretation of a traditional text. In other words, many dogmatic and fallacious ideas taken from the past should be reconsidered and reevaluated in light of the present. In this way, the process of translation is no longer simply a process of transfer between two different languages. It becomes a process of restoration, rehabilitation and reconsideration of one's antecedents and a representation of their tradition. For Gadamer:

"This is just what the word 'classical' means: that the duration of a work's power to speak directly is fundamentally unlimited. However much the concept of the classical expresses distance and unattainability and is part of cultural consciousness, the phrase 'classical culture' still implies something of the continuing validity of the classical. Cultural consciousness manifests an ultimate community and sharing with the world from which the classical work speaks" (*Truth and Method*, 301)

In *Language and Interpretation: Hermeneutics from East-West Perspective*, Raghunath Ghosh contends that the idea of temporal distance assists the interpreting of classical texts belonging to one's own culture through adopting a concept of cultural distance: "The reason for the fecundity of temporal distance is the persistence of the effects of the events themselves in spite of and across that distance, a persistence that Gadamer refers to by means of the phrase *history of effect*" (Ricoeur, 240).Cultural distance does not aim to create a cultural gap between a classical work and the modern world. Classical culture is invisibly commingled with the present time of the modern reader in such a way that there is no separation between classical and present day culture. The latter derives its values, wisdom, and creativity from the former. The effect of Hellenic culture, Homer and Virgil and so on, is still influential in European thought. The permanent effect of the past on the present has been investigated by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger in their book *The Invention of Tradition*. They explain to what extent modern Europe remains infatuated with its past traditions:

"Invented tradition is taken to mean a set of practices normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past. A striking example is the deliberate choice of a Gothic style for the nineteenth-century rebuilding of the British parliament, and the equally deliberate decision after the World II to rebuild the parliamentary chamber on exactly the same basic plan as before" (2).

Western tradition is interwoven with the movement of Western history, extending its unseen but notable effect on the consciousness of the collective Western mind. What of those texts that belong to an alien culture? In *World Englishes: a Cognitive Sociolinguistic Approach*, Hans-Georg Wolff attempts to answer this question:

"Applying the notion of temporal distance to intercultural understanding, however, is not unproblematic. We cannot simply equate temporal

distance with cultural distance, because the infinite process of discovering new elements of meaning is along a temporal trajectory (an aspect that would be missing if cultures are involved that exist synchronically). Also, temporal distance in Gadamer's writing refers to understanding passed down through historical periods, whereas in intercultural understanding, it would have to refer to understanding by a person over his/her lifetime. Still, Gadamer's notion of 'historical consciousness' could reasonably be extended to include 'cultural consciousness' as well" (204).

The concept of historical consciousness helps the translator to be aware of potentially false prejudice adversely affecting his/her understanding of a traditional text; the translator or reader should not submit blindly to the intellectual authority of tradition, but cast doubt on its authority. Using historical consciousness to interpret those texts belonging to an alien culture that is strange to the reader, the translator/interpreter can seek to avoid the preconceptions and fixed moulds of such a culture. These preconceptions and stereotypes mainly engage in blocking objective understanding of foreign texts: "The temporal distance between interpreter and interpreted is not, unlike historicism argued, an obstacle to get over, but rather the constitutive condition of understanding itself" (Lawn& Keane, 151). There is often something incongruous evoked in our thinking about the past, therefore, we need to transpose ourselves into the alien culture that has generated the text and expand our horizon of understanding. Bringing the text over from its distant culture, the translator can tackle the truth of the text from a number of different viewpoints. He/she must first deconstruct the long-standing prejudices that block his/her mind from applying a hermeneutic understanding. The idea of making distance in itself is essential for unbiased understanding; it helps the translator to set aside his/her dogmatic prejudices, and subject them to scrutiny and investigation. Karl Simms has this to say:

"Hence Gadamer's argument has turned full circle; from acknowledging that some prejudices are legitimate (since they may be true), Gadamer (2004:298) is now in a position to claim that understanding is dependent on the fundamental suspension of our own prejudices. Even the legitimate prejudices must still be suspended in order to arrive at understanding. One might wonder, this being the case, why Gadamer has taken the trouble to defend the concept of prejudice against its Enlightenment attackers in the first place. The clue is in Gadamer's term 'suspension.' This means not that prejudices are discarded, devalued or forgotten; rather, it means that we decline, during the process of interpreting a text, to make a judgment as to their validity" (76).

Hermeneutics as a theory of translation seeks to differentiate between false and true prejudice: "In this respect, all understanding involves a process of meditation and dialogue between what is familiar and what is alien in which neither remains unaffected" (Malpas, 205). Accordingly, the importance of temporal distance is that it provides a rudimentary awareness that helps overcome inherent false prejudice influencing the thought of the translator. The idea of temporal distance is a multifaceted concept, which is applicable to the translator, his/her world and the text. It gives the translator the opportunity to recheck his/her inherited values and preconceived ideas. Being aware of the idea of prejudice, the interpreter/translator can escape its negative influence; this requires an understanding of how to make distance while interpreting/translating any given text. Gadamer writes:

> "even in simultaneity, distance can function as an important hermeneutical element; for example, in the encounter between persons who try to find a common ground in conversation, and also in the encounter with persons who speak an alien language or live in an alien culture. Every encounter of this kind allows us to become conscious of our own preconceptions in matters which seemed so self-evident to oneself that one could not even notice one's naive process of assuming that other person's conception was the same as one's own, an assumption which generated misunderstanding " (*The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, 227).

Preconceptions mechanically work themselves out when translating/interpreting a work of art, that is, the translation process is presuppositional. In their totality, these presuppositions are not completely true and can be subdivided between false and true prejudices. False presuppositions contribute to the forming of false prejudices, which can have a negative influence on the translator's response to a text: "The preconception permits the interpreter to call one or more of his own prejudgments into question" (Malpas & Zabala 209). In addition, they manipulate the text that is being analyzed by the translator. There is no such thing as an unprejudiced understanding; the mechanical withdrawing of preconceptions by the translator is akin to adopting a kind of prejudice. Hermeneutics endeavors to train the mind of the translator to distinguish between false and true presuppositions because false presuppositions impede our understanding, changing it into misunderstanding.

The problem presumably does not rest on whether one can provide a subjective or objective interpretation; it lies, however, in how one can overcome false prejudice when interpreting a text. Gadamer's concept of historical consciousness and his concept of historical and cultural distance pave the way for the translator to accept the idea that the concept of

interpretation is interwoven with the historical experience of the translator: there is no form of pure thinking that is isolated from its world. In this way, the translator, consciously or unconsciously, renders the text from his/her own personal viewpoint and his/her thoughts and those ideas revealed by the text are mixed together. The prejudiced thinking of the translator toward his/her tradition cannot be given up; rather it can be reconsidered and revisited in the light of historical change. Gadamer writes:

> "The temporal distance that performs the filtering process is not fixed, but is itself undergoing constant movement and extension. And along with the negative side of the filtering process brought about by temporal distance, there is also the positive side, namely the value it has for understanding. It not only lets local and limited prejudices die away, but allows those that bring about genuine understanding to emerge clearly as such" (*Truth and Method*, 309).

The idea of interpretation revolves around the orbit of expectation. The translation process is based on a prior expectation. The process of gaining the expected meaning is coupled with the taking of a temporal distance from the text: "In light of this preconception of the whole, certain parts of the text stand out. The parts may affirm the preconception or clash with it" (Sandel, 182). When this distance is created, a different meaning often emerges in the constant shift in movement backwards and forwards. The process of translating/interpreting is one of reconstruction producing a new meaning or correcting a misunderstood one: "Our task is to expand the unity of the understood meaning centrifugally. The harmony of all details with the whole is the criterion of correct understanding. The failure to achieve this harmony means that understanding has failed" (*Truth and Method*, 291).

The idea of making distance from a text aims to mitigate our own forced prejudice, which we unconsciously impose upon our understanding and interpretation. Prejudiced thinking is an integral component of our mental activities and it cannot be avoided when reading a work of art; it can be corrected, however, and reshaped in order to avoid its negative influence. Gadamer traces the development of the concept of prejudice in Western thinking as follows:

> "The history of ideas shows that not until the Enlightenment does *the concept of prejudice* acquire the negative connotation familiar today. Actually 'prejudice' means a judgment that is rendered before all the elements that determine a situation have been finally examined. In German legal terminology a 'prejudice' is a provisional legal verdict before the

final verdict is reached. For someone involved in a legal dispute, this kind of judgment against him affects his chances adversely. Accordingly, the French prejudice, as well as the Latin praejudicium, means simply 'adverse effect, 'harm.' But this negative sense is only derivative. The negative consequence depends precisely on the positive validity, the value of the provisional decision as a prejudgment, like that of any precedent" (*Truth and Method*, 283).

In *What is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth-century Answers and Twentieth-century Questions*, James Schmidt argues that prejudiced thinking urges the reader to issue an opinion based upon hasty judgment and irrational thinking that derives its logic from the concept of generalization, preconceived ideas and misconception. Enlightenment philosophy rejects the idea of prejudice and instead gives absolute authority to the power of reason: reason becomes the sole power to deconstruct human prejudice. However, historicism assumes that any interpretation or understanding has to be made in a historical context so that prejudice overlaps with human thinking. For Gadamer, the idea of prejudice is divided into two types: valid and invalid prejudice. The main issue of false prejudice is that it works internally and thus often seems logical and acceptable. However, it is the origin of logical fallacy: "Logical fallacy is a specific kind of error—a mistake in reasoning. This kind of fallacy occurs when an argument contains a mistake that makes it invalid" (Shabo, 57). Such fallacious thinking is inescapable because it is unconsciously called on when one starts thinking of a subject. Similarly, it cannot be controlled because, being superficially logical, it can deceive our minds: "They are living forms of a process seeking shared understanding which always has the facts of the matter themselves before it and which finds its criterion solely in its success in developing its capacity to see these facts" (qtd in *Questioning Platonism*, 170). False prejudice strips the reader of his/her mental and critical faculty to distinguish between a rational and fallacious understanding of the subject matter and, in this sense, logical fallacy fuels the concept of prejudice. It is mixed up with our thinking to the extent that there is no form of understanding that is isolated either unconsciously or consciously from prejudice: "The recognition that all understanding inevitably involves some prejudice gives the hermeneutical problem its real thrust" (*Truth and Method*, 272).

The major problem facing a translator is how can he/she distinguish between valid and invalid prejudice? Prejudiced thinking cannot appear directly to the translator since it often presents itself in the form of logical ideas. In addition, such prejudice goes almost unnoticed because it is an integral part of our consciousness of external reality, shaped through our

own daily encounters and our experiences of different situations alongside the impacts of culture and tradition. The effect of tradition reinforces our prejudicial thinking, in its historical and cultural credibility, to the extent that it cannot be called into question or subject to investigation.

In *Gadamer and the Legacy of German Idealism*, Kristin Gjesdal states that there are two classes of prejudice: authority and overhastiness. Authority is represented in the intellectual authority imposed by classical works on the minds of contemporary readers. This intellectual authority entails that the reader should neither think critically about the traditional work nor read it in the light of current reality. He/she is completely subservient to its authority. Overhastiness is the issuing of hasty judgments on the validity and reliability of a text. The truths manifested in old texts are unreliable simply because they are old. However, Gadamer's project of translating traditional texts includes a presupposition that every understanding starts from a prejudiced position. Therefore, the following questions should be raised: is the reader's freedom to think narrowed and imprisoned in a jail of prejudice? Is there a kind of contradiction between the absolute power of reason and the inevitability of prejudiced thinking? To answer these questions, a clear concept of prejudice needs to be introduced. In addition, the invisible thread connecting the process of understanding and history needs to be clarified.

In *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition, and Reason*, Georgia Warnke explains that reason does not exist in a free space, but in an historical world where thinking and historical experience are interwoven. Therefore, the human mind cannot be separated from its own historical reality when seeking to understand a traditional work. Indeed, it is a far-fetched dream to detach the critic from his/her own tradition. Such inherited tradition plays a major role in shaping and forming our attitudes, our worldview and even our ethics—tradition validates our thoughts and opinions. Such false authority subjugates human thinking to its power: "Here it becomes dogmatic freedom. Dogmatic freedom, we may say, is the desire for control which brings with it a false sense of certitude" (Couch, 185). In its dogmatism it prevents the translator from thinking critically about the traditional text. True authority, however, is derived from knowledge and wisdom: it can be gained through hard work and wide reading and is not merely a gift of heaven. True authority does not impose upon us a certain type of knowledge, but rather it is like a torch that guides us toward choosing the knowledge suitable for our purpose. As such, true authority is not obedience or servitude, but knowledge. Gadamer has this to say:

> "Thus, acknowledging authority is always connected with the idea that what the authority says is not irrational and arbitrary but can, in principle,

be discovered to be true. This is the essence of the authority claimed by
the teacher, the superior, the expert. The prejudices that they implant are
legitimized by the person who presents them. But in this way they become
prejudices not just in favor of a person but a content, since they effect the
same disposition to believe something that can be brought about in other
ways—e.g., by good reasons. Thus the essence of authority belongs in the
context of a theory of prejudice free from the extremism of the
Enlightenment" (*Truth and Method*, 292).

Those great writers who achieved intellectual authority are usually
known for the reliability of their content and form. Accordingly, true
authority does not mean a denial of self in return for being subjugated to
the views and opinions of a certain writer. Sometimes the validity and
reliability of a work of art leads us to accept its authority; in this way
authority is derived from the ability of a work of art to communicate
logical and convincing thoughts that do not contradict common sense or
reason: "The written tradition of Scripture, like any other historical
document, can claim no absolute validity; the possible truth of the tradition
depends on the credibility that reason accord it" (*Truth and Method*, 285).
This starts from the standpoint that there is neither innate biblical nor
exegetical authority—a traditional text must be subject to reason and what
is rejected by reason is deemed irrelevant and not authoritative. In other
words, the concept of false authority has to be suspended through the
power of the mind.

The authority of tradition exerts great power on the development of
human thinking. This power ranges from exegetical, cultural and historical
authority to intellectual authority. The concept of authority not only blinds
the mind of translator, but also further strengthens his/her prejudice and
justifies it. However, the translator cannot escape the authority of tradition
as it "always has power over our attitudes and behavior" (*Truth and
Method*, 283). Tradition can impose its authority on people because people
are part of it and thus it is not strange to them.

In *Reason after Its Eclipse: on Late Critical Theory*, George L. Moses
emphasizes that Gadamer holds a belief that human freedom is a relative
issue, whereas human nature is best described as finite. In other words, a
human being is governed by a specific historical period, considered an
extension and continuation of its past tradition. Accordingly, he/she is not
enslaved by this tradition nor isolated from it: he/she is in-between.
Therefore, in translating a traditional work, the translator proceeds through
a number of stages. The first stage involves deconstructing a traditional
text; this can be achieved through calling the translator's prejudice and the
text itself into question. The second step is to reconstruct what has been

deconstructed. The problems arising from translating classical and traditional works can be summed up in the following:

"Gadamer's hermeneutic account of the role of tradition does not, therefore, attempt to undermine the idea of objective understanding, but to show how we can avoid three problematic misconceptions. The first problematic approach to objectivity is a conception according to which our understanding could be objective simply by virtue of an appeal to prejudice or tradition. Gadamer's critics assume that his rehabilitation of tradition and prejudice expresses precisely such an appeal—but, as I have pointed out, Gadamer is not an advocate of immediacy. Rather, he allows for the possibility of radical critique of traditions and prejudices. The second problematic strategy on which Gadamer focuses is the idea of completely self-transparent understanding. He regards this idea as mythical, especially in the light of the subject matters of the human sciences. Rejecting that understanding can be completely self-transparent could lead to a skepticism that denies that we can make sense of the very notion of objective understanding—this is the third problematic approach to objectivity that Gadamer seeks to dismantle" (Thaning, 127).

In *Translating the Religion: What is Lost and Gained*, Michael De Jonge and Christiane Tietz argue that the idea of producing a faithful translation should not be the preoccupation of the translator. Rather, the translator has to overcome the misconceptions that prevent him/her from producing a faithful translation. Arriving at Gadamer's concept of faithful translation, the translator should have a full awareness of his/her prejudice. There are various invisible conditions that direct and guide our understanding to the extent that we are not able to control our thinking processes. These invisible elements, specifically paracontextual elements, take different names, including presuppositions, misconceptions and prejudgments. They are double edged weapons and can be used negatively as well as positively depending on the ability of the translator to distinguish between their positive and negative sides. Questioning the text under investigation represents the primary path towards setting aside one's own false prejudices and replacing them with true ones; the textual content of a traditional text should be called into question as it represents vague and ambivalent data that needs to be verified. Gadamer writes:

"The essence of the *question* is to open up possibilities and keep them open. If a prejudice becomes questionable in view of what another person or a text says to us, this does not mean that it is simply set aside and the text or the other person accepted as valid in its place. Rather, historical objectivism shows its naivete in accepting this disregarding of ourselves as what actually happens. In fact our own prejudice is properly brought into

play by being put at risk. Only by being given full play is it able to experience the other's claim to truth and make it possible for him to have full play himself" (*Truth and Method*, 310).

Questioning a traditional text shakes the translator's fixed, rigid thinking and his/her established moulds of thought. The core issue in this process of questioning is that the reader opens a dialogue with the text. Although the idea of calling the text into question reveals the prejudices hidden in it, this does not provide a solution or remedy to getting rid of them. In this conversation between the text and the translator, the translator neither surrenders to the point of view of the text nor refuses it. Rather, he /she attempts to understand it through setting an interrogative process in motion in order to divine the truth of the text without distorting or manipulating its message. However, this does not deny that an interpretation or translation is therefore unbiased or unprejudiced. This idea of questioning in Gadamer's thought can be explained as follows:

> 1. *The cognitive predominance of questioning.* To understand a statement means interpreting the statement as an answer to a corresponding question. From a hermeneutic point of view, epistemology is in fact the epistemology of questions. 2.*Contextualization.* The logic of question and answer reveals (parts of) a relevant horizon that functions as a background. Questions thus indicate the hermeneutic relation of parts and the whole contained in any understanding.[…] 8.*Twofold openness.* The accomplishment of a question entails the openness of the issue in question and of the questioning person, i.e., the suspension of a belief. This openness is a necessary condition for experience in an existential sense. 9. *Possibility.* The modality of questions is possibility. To question a belief means to suspend the actuality of its propositional content. The subject matter in question has the ontological value of possible being" " (Wiercinski, 266).

The process of questioning a text is not meant to find an answer. Rather, it is intended to make sure that the translator avoids falling into the trap of invalid prejudice, as a prerequisite condition for true understanding. In this process, there is a silent conversation between the subject matter and the translator: "Gadamer maintains that the interpreter's anticipation of an answer from the text presupposes that the questioner is part of the tradition and regards himself as addressed by it" (qtd in *Gadamer and Ricoeur*, 108). The translator begins to question his/her understanding of the text to determine whether the answers provided by the subject matter correspond to his/her understanding or not. The end result of this process is a permanent correction of understanding that helps reveal the obscure and ambiguous points of a text: "In this process, our prejudices undergo a

filtering process as inappropriate prejudices or questions are replaced with ones that are more appropriate" (Parris, 130).

Questioning a subject seeks to shed light on its relationship with its broader context, which consists of past tradition and present realities. To question the subject matter, one has to suspend one's presuppositional ideas of the subject matter; this does not mean that the translator has to remove all such prejudiced ideas—this is impossible. However, he/she has to be aware of them and their role in combating his/her true understanding of the subject. In other words, he/she has to train his/her mind to set aside the negative effect of prejudice and presupposition that imprisons his/her thought. The subject is fluid and may not be contained in a precise mould of thought; thus the translator cannot admit that he/she has reached a final meaning or absolutely faithful translation of his/her text because the text in itself is shaped by that which surrounds it—similar to a liquid being poured into a vessel, it takes on the shape of its container. The liquid here is the subject matter and the container refers to the vicissitudes of history. As such, the same text can be understood differently at different times.

The process of translation is subjective and its main motivators are critical consciousness coupled and temporal distance: "Each generation and each individual raises new questions and gains a different perspective on history. For that reason the questioning process goes on, and history must be re-written by each generation" (*Reception Theory*, 130). Subsequently, the meaning of a text may diverge from its authorial intention and the translator reproduces the work of the author through his/her individual understanding: translating involves a kind of reconstruction and reproduction of the original text through the mirror of the interpreter. The idea of questioning tradition derives its validity and power from the ability of the reader to travel across time and space. The concept of questioning casts doubt on the translator's capacity for understanding, and whether it can be expanded or not. This capacity is known as the translator's horizon. This idea is clearly described by Gadamer:

> Every finite present has its limitations. We define the concept of 'situation' by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence essential to the concept of situation is the concept of 'horizon.' The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point. Applying this to the thinking mind, we speak of narrowness of horizon, of the possible expansion of horizon, of the opening up of new horizons, and so forth. Since Nietzsche and Husserl, the word has been used in philosophy to characterize the way in which thought is tied to its finite determinacy, and

the way one's range of vision is gradually expanded" (*Truth and Method*, 313).

Understanding cannot occur without being located in a certain situation. Every act of understanding and translation derives its logic from its circumstances: the hermeneutic situation. The process of translating a text is situational and requires an awareness of the elements surrounding it. In translating a traditional work the translator is no longer free from its situation, but is part of it. This situation is reflected through history and changed by human beings acting within these historical trajectories. Its understanding is an endless process, whose starting point is identified, but with a destination still unknown. Subsequently, the idea of understanding takes its credentials from a historical pre-given knowledge that is intertwined with the thoughts and intentions of the translator. There is no such thing as pure human knowledge or understanding.

The translation process is always connected to the translator's life, value system, inclinations, attitudes and thinking: the translator is a hybrid of multiple influences. Every translator starts his/her understanding of a traditional text from a definite standpoint that is relatively consistent with his/her horizon. The concept of the 'horizon' stands for the depth of our understanding. Our understanding of an object is based on our range of vision and the wider it is, the deeper it is.

Figuratively, the concept of the horizon expresses the extent to which the translator is able to see the ambiguous, ambivalent, hidden and invisible parts of the text under investigation: "On the one hand, following a certain tradition of philosophical thinking, 'horizon' can mean that one's vision is limited in the sense of bounded, that one cannot see far enough and hence over-values what is nearest" (Simms, 78). The process of understanding, therefore, should be based on expanding the horizons of the translator to positively affect and develop his/her thinking: the horizon sees beyond the text and develops the reader's understanding by enlightening what is obscure and concealed. In other words, this is a creative method of thinking that allows the translator to think beyond what is seen and adopt a transcendental standpoint from which he/she can discover the truth of things around him/her. It is to see the truth of the text from a bird's eye view, not a worm's eye view. Therefore, translating a traditional text necessitates acquiring a horizon—a kind of creative and critical thinking, which provides access to that which is unreachable in the process of understanding. There is no correct translation that does not rely on expanding the horizon of the text and the horizon of the translator. In this respect, Gadamer writes:

"If we fail to transpose ourselves into the historical horizon from which the traditionary text speaks, we will misunderstand the significance of what it has to say to us. To that extent this seems a legitimate hermeneutical requirement: we must place ourselves in the other situation in order to understand it. We may wonder, however, whether this phrase is adequate to describe the understanding that is required for us" (*Truth and Method*, 314).

Translating a traditional or ancient text requires us to travel back in time to discover the historical horizon in which the text was written. To render clear an author's viewpoint, one should place oneself in the author's position or situation. Engaging with another's horizon, in text or in conversation, does not mean that the translator agrees to the message of the speaker or the content of the written text. Rather, one seeks to understand the circumstantial realities out of which the text was born—the textual horizon. Similarly, translating a traditional text requires an understanding of the historical period in which the text was written in order to clarify the ambiguity surrounding it: "In such a case, the doctor is trying to understand the patient, but only in the limited sense of discovering his ailment: the patient becomes intelligible, but the doctor doesn't have to agree with him. Similarly, a text that is understood historically, in the sense of its reader being aware of the horizon in which it was produced, becomes intelligible" (Simms, 42). Understanding the surrounding historical context of a text from the past helps make it intelligible. There are two types of horizons: one's own personal horizon and the horizon into which one tries to transpose oneself—the horizon of the text: "The horizon is […] something into which we move and that moves with us. Horizons change for a person who is moving. Thus the horizon of the past, out of which all human life lives and which exists in the form of tradition, is always in motion" (*Truth and Method*, 315).

Our horizons naturally expand when we try to understand the different phenomena of the world. Past tradition is not stable; it is always moving forwards into the present. This expanded horizon starting in the past reaches the translator and presents its relative destination—a destination that is permanently regenerative. Accordingly, the hermeneutic concept of translation can best be represented in the form of a triangle where the three angles are composed of the following: the translator, the historical horizon and the traditional text.

The translator represents the temporal end point of a text. The historical horizon represents the linking or the middle point that connects the traditional text and the translator. The traditional text derives its significance and meaning from the experience of understanding, which

changes over time. In order to achieve an understanding of an 'inherited' text, the translator must bridge the gap between present time and the 'pastness' of the text. Fusing the past historical experience of the text with its present reality is necessary in providing an accurate understanding of it. Gadamer writes:

> "When our historical consciousness transposes itself into historical horizons, this does not entail passing into alien worlds unconnected in any way with our own; instead, they together constitute the one great horizon that moves from within and that moves from within and that, beyond the frontiers of the present, embraces the historical depths of our self-consciousness. Everything contained in historical consciousness is in fact embraced by a single historical horizon. Our own past and that other past toward which our historical consciousness is directed help to shape this moving horizon out of which human life always lives and which determines it as heritage and tradition " (*Truth and Method*, 315).

Historical consciousness is an integral part of a human being, whether a reader or a translator, which is constituted out of voices from both the past and the present. This historical consciousness does not detach the translator from the past, but incorporates him/her into its 'pastness': it fuses the past horizon with the present horizon—the life of the text and that of the translator. The translator attempts to keep the text alive and continuing by linking the past to the present. Through this process of fusing the past with the present, the text gradually reveals itself and fits into the present time.

In other words, the obscure elements of a text including those pertaining to linguistics, culture, semantics and history are gradually revealed. The text reproduces itself as newly born in its present time: "If we put ourselves in someone else's shoes, for example, then we will understand him— i.e.,become aware of the otherness, the indissoluble individuality of the other person—by putting ourselves in his position" (*Truth and Method*, 303). The traditional text unfolds a number of problematic issues that are not solely linguistic—linguistic issues are of minor importance in translating traditional texts compared to those other problems of history and culture. Furthermore, linguistic, cultural and historical problems are overlapping, intertwined and interrelated. There are even difficulties in understanding a traditional text in the same source language. Such difficulties, however, are increased when attempting to translate between different languages. Hermeneutics looks at translation from a different perspective. It differs to linguistic theories of translation by mainly focusing on the content of the text in light of the external context implied in historical experience.

CHAPTER SIX

THE HERMENEUTIC CONCEPT
OF LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION

The hermeneutic theory of translation is primarily concerned with investigating the concept of language and its impact on the process of translating traditional texts. It follows a direction that is different to the linguistic concept of language and identifies several elements that hinder the process of translating a traditional text. These components can be divided into three major types: contextual, paracontextual and textual. The hermeneutic theory of translation is principally concerned with studying the effect of contextual, paracontextual and textual components on the process of translation. Though language is mainly classified as a textual component, it is shaped and informed by paracontextual and contextual elements. Providing an accurate, precise and flexible translation requires a bridging of the gap between those elements and language. The concept of language should be hermeneutically investigated and studied.

The effect of contextual and paracontextual components is obvious when translating a traditional text. These components have been discussed in previous chapters without clarifying their connection to language and it is essential to study the relationship between these elements and language to explain their impact on the translation process. Hermeneutics has a distinct concept of language, which is somewhat different to the linguistic concept of language. Gadamer contends that:

> "Since the Romantic period we can no longer hold the view that, in the absence of immediate understanding, interpretative ideas are drawn, as needed, out of a linguistic storeroom where they are lying ready. Rather, language is the universal medium in which understanding occurs. Understanding occurs in interpreting. This statement does not mean that there is no special problem of expression. The difference between the language of a text and the language of the interpreter, or the gulf that separates the translator from the original, is not merely a secondary question" (*Truth and Method*, 407).

Hermeneutics draws significant attention to the concept of language as the main medium of understanding, interpreting and translating a text. It provides a unique concept of language that ultimately breaks with the narrow linguistic concept. Translating a traditional text requires the translator to have a hermeneutic understanding of the concept of language: "Translation is a dual act of communication. It presupposes the existence, not of a single code, but of two distinct codes, the 'source language' and the 'target language.' The fact that the two codes are not isomorphic creates obstacles for the translative operation" (Brisset, 443). This result can be accounted for by the idea that a text cannot exist without language.

The language of a text is made up of contextual, paracontextual and textual or linguistic components. Linguistic problems of translation are exemplified by "lexical or morpho-syntactic deficiencies or as problems of polysem" (Brisset, 443), while contextual elements affecting the process of translation can be represented by "the relation between signs and their users, a relation that reflects such things as individuality, the social position, and geographical origin of the speakers" (443). Translating the contextual components of a traditional text is a controversial issue that raises numerous problems. Brisset writes:

> "These problems become more complex when historical time is factored in. Should the translator recreate the feeling of the time period of the text for the contemporary reader? Or, conversely, should the archaic form of the language be modernized to make the text more accessible to the contemporary reader? Should Dante, Shakespeare, Cervantes, or Chaucer be translated into archaic language? Should Cicero's style be rendered by the style of a well-known politician of modern times ?" (443).

Steiner argues that a text is composed of textual and contextual components. The translator is driven towards investigating the concrete and visible elements of a text and its invisible ones. The translator is confronted not only with the language of the text, but also with the language that he/she uses for interpreting and translating his/her own understanding of the text. In translating a traditional work, the translator is torn between using archaic or modern language and consciously bringing the text from the past to the present, or preserving its originality and pastness.

In her book, *Linguistics and the Language of Translation*, Kirsten Malmkjaer points out that these contextual components produce a threefold concept of language: the language of the author, the target language and the language of the translator. The first level pertains to the language of the original text. The second level is that of the translator's own understanding of the text. The third is that which is reflected in the

translated text. The translator interprets his/her text through understanding the interaction between the linguistic structure of the text and its surrounding world. As such, the translated text is reproduced according to the translator's understanding of both the language and its world. There is a reciprocal relationship between understanding and interpretation. The language of the original text is understood and interpreted and is reproduced in the form of a foreign language. A translator does not just translate the linguistic content, but renders the value system, the cultural message and the ideology manifested through the text's linguistic structures in a way that reflects the translator's understanding of the paracontextual components that invisibly inform the meaning of the text. In such a case, the process of translation tends to be interpretative rather than linguistic. The translation should communicate a comprehensible and clear message to the receiver without being unfaithful to the original text. "The speaker guarantees that her utterance is a faithful enough representation of the original: that is, resembles it closely enough in relevant respects " (Sperber & Wilson, 137). Therefore, the translated text becomes relevant to the reader. Gutt writes:

> "the principle of relevance heavily constrains the translation with regard to both what it is intended to convey and how it is expressed. Thus, if we ask in what respects the intended interpretation of the translation should resemble the original, the answer is: in respects that make it adequately relevant to the audience—that is, that offer adequate contextual effects; if we ask how the translation should be expressed, the answer is: it should be expressed in such a manner that it yields the intended interpretation without putting the audience to unnecessary processing effort. Hence considerations of relevance constrain both the intended interpretation of the translation and the way it is expressed, and since consistency with the principle of relevance is always context-dependent, these constraints, too, are context-determined" (107).

In his article 'Reader Response and Reception Theory,' Leo Tak-Hung Chan suggests that the hermeneutic theory of translation draws unrivalled attention to the importance of the reader in the translation process. The translated/interpreted text is mainly directed towards its contemporary audience: it is brought from the past to fit the realities of the present. Therefore, if it is incomprehensible to the modern reader, it is no longer a living text that can communicate a clear message—it is converted into a dead object separated from its contemporary world. Defining the nature of the audience can help us understand the associations between the language of the text and its modern world. The audience is the fabrication of its modern reality and the language of the text represents a major part of that

reality. It is constituted and reconstituted through its contemporary world. The process of language development and change is controlled by its sociocultural reality. Gadamer writes:

> "Linguistic tradition may have less perceptual immediacy than monuments of plastic art. Its lack of immediacy, however, is not a defect; rather, this apparent lack, the abstract alienness of all 'texts,' uniquely expresses the fact that everything in language belongs to the process of understanding. Linguistic tradition is a tradition in the proper sense of the word—i.e., something handed down. It is not something left over, to be investigated and interpreted as a remnant of the past" (*Truth and Method*, 407).

In *Language and Linguistics: the Key Concepts*, R. L. Trask explains that the hermeneutic linguistic tradition explains the characteristics of the language of traditional and ancient texts. It approaches these linguistic traditions from a unique perspective, seeing in their lack of immediacy and the archaic nature of their language a linguistic advantage—the language of the traditional text adapts itself and renews its meaning in relation to the progress of history and the changing nature of its receiver; the language in itself does not impede our understanding of the traditional text. The issue remains as to how the translator can be hermeneutically trained to understand and interpret this archaic language—the problem lies mainly in how to identify the nature of those elements that always affect the language and make it change over time. Jifi Levy writes:

> "In translation there are situations which do not allow one to capture all values of the original. Then the translator has to decide which qualities of the original are the most important and which ones one could miss out. The problem of the reliability of translation consists partly in that the relative importance of the values in a piece of literature are recognized. (qtd in *Translation and Relavnce*,113)

The translation process is intertwined with the process of understanding in the production of a transformable text. What is a transformable, however, is not the text itself but its language. The process of language transformation is controlled by many factors. When translating a traditional work, the translator cannot capture all of the values implied in the original text. Rendering clear the paracontextual components implicit in the original text is a major issue with regard to the translation process. This resurrects and refreshes the old language of a traditional text at different times and at different places: "In the form of writing, all tradition is contemporaneous with each present time" (Gadamer, 392). The translator of a traditional text oscillates between the present and past when choosing between meanings—whether to choose a meaning fit for the past

or the present realities of a text; whether to present the metaphorical meaning of a text or its direct and flat meaning; whether to present the authorial intention of a text or its meaning as understood by a modern reader. It is a complicated issue that has generated a multitude of analyses on translation. Katherine Reiss writes:

> "Torn out of its original social context - now a historical report and also translated as such = informative text; Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* - satire on contemporary social ills = expressive text with an operative secondary function; today only recognizable in this function by the experts specializing in this period; for the ordinary reader (also of the original) - a fantastic adventure tale = expressive text.)" (170).

In her book, *The Translation of Children's Literature: a Reader*, Gillian Lathey argues that the process of translating a traditional text may produce different translations for the same source text with the language playing only a minor role in defining its meaning. In translating *Gulliver's Travels*, the translator oscillates between whether to translate it as a political satire critiquing the eighteenth century political system, or as a kind of adventure tale written for children. Paradoxically, the language of the novel may generate several interpretations and translations. The novel can be translated/interpreted as a political satire that indirectly criticizes the corruption of English society during the eighteenth century. In the same vein, it can be interpreted/translated as a fantasia, an exotic and unreal work of art read for recreation and amusement. In this case the translation process involves questions of critical interpretation and historical study of the world of the text. A hermeneutic theory of translation should be used in order to bring to light what is hidden from the contemporary reader and this may help him/her understand ambiguous and unclear parts of the text.

Notorious for its lack of immediacy, the language of a traditional text has to be rendered immediate and fresh: its meaning is shaped through connecting the lost ties between the past context of the text and present experience. The incomprehensible language of traditional texts can be made intelligible and clear when they are incorporated into their broader present context.

The hermeneutic theory of translation is mainly concerned with deciphering the secrets of a text's language. The archaic language of a traditional text loses its original meaning with the passage of the time because meaning is related to historical context: it communicates an old message taken from the past that may largely be inconsistent with the modern world in terms of values, habits, traditions, tools and civilization.

Many of the tools, artifacts and cultural values that dominated in the past have completely disappeared from the modern world and this causes serious issues of misunderstanding, misinterpretation and mistranslation of traditional texts. Gadamer remarks that:

> "But it is true of everything that has come down to us by being written down that here a will to permanence has created the unique forms of continuance that we call literature. It does not present us with only a stock of memorials and signs. Rather, literature has acquired its own contemporaneity with every present. To understand it does not mean primarily to reason one's way back into the past, but to have a present involvement in what is said. It is not really a relationship between persons, between the reader and the author (who is perhaps quite unknown), but about sharing in what the text shares with us. The meaning of what is said is, when we understand it, quite independent of whether the traditionary text gives us a picture of the author and of whether or not we want to interpret it as a historical source" (*Truth and Method*, 409-10).

Translating a traditional text has little to do with learning about the intentions or thoughts of the original author of a translated text. Authorial intention should not be given a heavy emphasis when translating a traditional text, that is, it should not be regarded as the sole avenue for translating such a text because it no longer belongs to its author—it belongs to its world. The language of a traditional text no longer belongs to its own linguistic world in the present time, since the meanings of these words are in the stream of history—flowing along with the river of time. Reiss writes:

> "Language is (among other factors) a temporal phenomenon and thus subject to the conditions of time. This also applies to language in written texts and therefore to these texts themselves, a factor which is significant for translating"(170).

In her book, *Language and Tradition in Ireland: Continuities and Displacements*, Maria Tymoczko contends that the translator does not repeat the old meaning of a traditional text, but he/she provides it with a contemporary understanding. The temporal nature of language motivates the translator to adapt a traditional text to current reality. Sometimes, the temporality of the language leads the reader to misunderstand the classical text—the reader may no longer make sure that their understanding of the language found in ancient written texts is true and accurate, or not: "We need only to recall what Plato said, namely that the specific weakness of writing was that no one could come to the aid of the written word if it falls victim to misunderstanding, intentionally or unintentionally" (Gadamer,

395). The major task of the hermeneutic translation approach is that it verifies whether the language of the original text is correctly understood before it is offered up to translation. According to Gadamer, the language of a traditional text represents a serious challenge for translators. He has this to say:

> "As we have said, all writing is a kind of alienated speech, and its signs need to be transformed back into speech and meaning. Because the meaning has undergone a kind of self-alienation through being written down, this transformation back is the real hermeneutical task. The meaning of what has been said is to be stated anew, simply on the basis of the words passed on by means of the written signs. In contrast to the spoken word, there is no other aid in interpreting the written word. Thus in a special sense everything depends on the 'art' of writing. The spoken word interprets itself to an astonishing degree, by the manner of speaking, the tone of voice, the tempo, and so on, and also by the circumstances in which it is spoken" (*Truth and Method*, 411).

The issues of translation can be clearly seen when translating ancient written texts. The written words are not only alienated and changed when transformed from speech into writing, but also when transferred from the past to the present.The paralinguistic elements of speech contribute to making the message of the speaker clearer to the interpreter, as he/she can understand the meaning from such things as facial expressions, tone, speed of speech and intonation; this is totally different to communicating through the written medium and the difficulties of communication and understanding are further complicated when the message being communicated belongs to a different time, alien culture and distinct social reality from those of the modern reader.

In *Diachronic English Linguistics: an Introduction*, Lilo Moessner indicates that the hermeneutic theory of translation is mainly interested in studying the causes of transformation, the changes that occur to the language of traditional texts and how the meaning of the language changes when it is handed down from generation to generation. The written word becomes isolated from its author and its past as it undergoes a constant process of change and fluctuation, which cannot solely be governed by history or culture. This is different to the spoken word, which can be clearly understood in relation to its speaker and the context in which it is spoken. The translator attempts to rehabilitate and restore the loss in meaning when translating and the quality of his/her translation can be measured on the basis of his/her ability to restore these lost elements when the transformation process occurs.

In *Word and Object*, Willard Quine presents a hermeneutic vision for studying the meaning of words and argues that the translation process remains indeterminate. The meaning of words is unstable, liquid and changeable. The translation process not only centers on matching expressions across different languages, but also focuses on transferring the thoughts, ideology and cultural soul manifested in the original text to the target text. The meanings of traditional texts cannot be perceived from merely consulting dictionaries, but must be derived from real-life and surrounding context—its behavioral dispositions, both physical and verbal. Quine has this to say:

> "the power of a non-verbal stimulus to elicit a given sentence commonly depends on earlier associations of sentences with sentences. And in fact it is cases of this kind that best illustrate how language transcends the confines of essentially phenomenalistic reporting. Thus someone mixes the content of two test tubes, observes a green tint, and says 'There was copper in it.' Here the sentence is elicited by a non-verbal stimulus, but the stimulus depends for its efficacy upon an earlier network of associations of words with words; viz., one's learning of chemical theory. (9-l0).

Quine explains that language represents the sociocultural realities of its society: it coincides with its belief system, its prevalent modes of thinking and its cultural practices. Thus, the translator should understand the language of a foreign text in light of these elements. In his article, 'The Problem of Meaning and Linguistics,' Quine admits that language is a true representation of its world. Ludwig Wittgenstein argues that language is a social practice: in *Investigation*, he states that it "ain't what you say, it's the way that you say it, and the context in which you say it. Words are how you use them" (150). For Peter Winch, the "criteria of logic are not a direct gift of God, but arise out of, and are only intelligible in the context of ways, of living or modes of social life. It follows that one cannot apply criteria of logic to modes of social life as such" (l00). The text always adapts and changes itself to be consistent with the new modes of life of the present time; otherwise it will 'die.' Winch further explains that "ideas cannot be torn out of their context in that way; the relation between idea and context is an *internal* one. The idea gets its sense from the role it plays in the system" (107).

Winch emphasizes that the translation process is a contextual act: the meanings of the words used cannot be fixed without studying them in the larger context in which they are embedded. As such, the social context of the original text has to be reconstructed in order to obtain its meaning. Adhering to the principles of hermeneutic translation, the translator depicts something unreal, invisible and even magical which cannot be objectified

into fixed moulds of thought. Winch states that the language of a traditional text is comprehensive in that it represents an expanding conceptual framework that covers the regenerated world of the text, the context and the translator.

When the translator has the skill to conceive of this expanding nature of the language, its conceptual framework and its invisible characteristics, he/she is able to render its meaning accurately into the target language. In this way, the translation process takes place between two invisible worlds that share relatively similar universalist concepts—though the orthographic features of words are different, the concepts behind them are almost identical. The process of translation aims to reconstruct the social background of the original text without ignoring the process of linguistic transfer, which occurs conceptually. Language is the start and end point in the process of translating: "In order to express a text's meaning and subject matter, we must translate it into our language. However, this involves relating it to the whole complex of possible meanings in which we linguistically move" (*Truth and Method*, 414). The text is made to speak through an act of interpretation that is brought to reality through language—there is a kind of a mutual relationship between language and translation. According to Wittgenstein, language is closely related to the world, history, culture and society. This view of language is opposed by Alasdair MacIntyre who distinguishes between linguistic aspects of meaning and cultural and contextual aspects. He further claims that concepts related to words in different languages do not necessarily correspond, especially when each language belongs to a distinct cultural realm. When translating across different cultures, different languages are often quite distinct in terms of the conceptual meanings they convey.

Steiner underscores the idea that the very term language seems to be controversial and has various meanings. It includes the language of the translator, the language of the text, the language of the context and the target language in translation. However, the language can be considered to be the final product of the process of understanding undertaken by the interpreter/translator. It can be represented in the thoughts implicit in the text and these can be understood differently from translator to translator. It can be embodied in the world of the text or even in the very personal understanding of the translator. For this reason, there is no authentic or final translation/interpretation of a traditional text: each translation/interpretation is related to a certain situation, the hermeneutic situation, which is based on how the translator perceives the language.

The hermeneutic situation is a useful perspective for defining the invisible and transformable nature of language: as a traditional text moves

from the past to the present, it is subject to different situations and encounters different worlds. Such a constant movement makes texts interact with a changing world leading to the generation of new meanings across time and space. The hermeneutic translation process makes understanding clear and tangible and penetrates deeply into the content of the translated text—language is a part of it, not just a means of rendering it. Gadamer writes:

> "Indeed, language often seems ill suited to express what we feel. In the face of the overwhelming presence of works of art, the task of expressing in words what they say to us seems like an infinite and hopeless undertaking. The fact that our desire and capacity to understand always go beyond any statement that we can make seems like a critique of language" (*Truth and Method*, 419).

Gadamer emphasizes the failure of language to provide us with corresponding equivalence:

> "When a person lives in a language, he is filled with the sense of the unsurpassable appropriateness of the words he uses for the subject matter he is talking about. It seems impossible that other words in other languages could name the things equally well. The suitable word always seems to be one's own and unique, just as the thing referred to is always unique. The agony of translation consists ultimately in the fact that the original words seem to be inseparable from the things they refer to, so that to make a text intelligible one often has to give an interpretative paraphrase of it rather than translate it. The more sensitively our historical consciousness reacts, the more it seems to be aware of the untranslatability of the unfamiliar. But this makes the intimate unity of word and thing a hermeneutical scandal. How can we possibly understand anything written in a foreign language if we are thus imprisoned in our own? (*Truth and Method*, 420).

Language is not merely a system of signs used for communicative purposes; it is also a way of life. People use language as a means of living in the world and each language is interrelated to its own culture to such an extent that cultural differences create linguistic differences. Culture and tradition represent the greatest part of the paracontextual elements of traditional texts; these contribute to reshaping the meaning of a text and its understanding. Therefore, each language maintains its own forms of cultural privacy, which distinguishes it from the other languages of the world. These differences are exemplified in culture-bound elements, cultural markers, names of traditional items, names of traditional instruments, names of specific social occasions and celebrations, religious

words, local idiomatic expressions and so on: "Again, language does not exist apart from culture, that is, from the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determines the texture of our lives " (Sapir,221). In this way, language is imprisoned in a jail of its own, specific culture.

In his book, *One Language for the World*, Mario Pei explains that language is closely associated with its particular worldview—it is a reflection of its own culture. Therefore, language is loaded with the cultural ideology and politics of its world. The concept of difference is clearly reflected in language—language acts as a vehicle for the culture, art, folklore and social realities of a people. When translating a text, the problem of linguistic understanding can be considered a minor issue compared to other problems stemming from cultural transfer—worldviews are ultimately different across languages. The hermeneutic theory of translation attempts to put forward acceptable solutions to the problems of translating traditional texts, which are culturally loaded. A local language cannot see what is beyond its own narrow culture; therefore, cultural difference between languages poses a serious challenge when translating: "The cultures of people find reflection in the language they employ: because they value certain things and do them in a certain way, they come to use their language in ways that reflect what they value and what they do" (Wardhaugh, 222). Gadamer has this to say:

> "The work of understanding and interpretation always remains meaningful. This shows the superior universality with which reason rises above the limitations of any given language. The hermeneutical experience is the corrective by means of which the thinking and reason escapes the prison of language, and it is itself verbally constituted" (*Truth and Method*, 420).

What impedes understanding and interpretation is not language itself, but the cultural influence which gives words their specific meanings and unique significance. A reader can cognize things more easily in his/her own culture, however, the translator may face difficulty when thinking beyond his/her own culture. The hermeneutic approach to translation explains how cultural difference can be bridged when translating a traditional text. Gadamer writes:

> "Certainly the variety of languages in which linguistics is interested presents us with a question. But this question is simply how every language, despite its difference from other languages, can say everything it wants. Linguistics teaches us that every language does this it in its own way. But we then ask how, amid the variety of these forms of utterances, there is still the same unity of thought and speech, so that everything that

has been transmitted in writing can be understood. Thus we are interested in the opposite of what linguistics tries to investigate" (*Truth and Method*, 420).

According to the hermeneutic approach to translation, the different languages of the world have the capacity to articulate similar linguistic concepts because of the universality of human thinking and feeling—language is a private and specific channel used to communicate universal thoughts and feelings and though languages are known for their own specificity and privacy, they also reflect the unity of universal human experience. Decoding any linguistic structure rests upon the idea of understanding and interpreting its paracontextual elements, which can be converted into abstract and comprehensible thoughts. Gadamer writes:

> It is obvious that an instrumentalist theory of signs which sees words and their concepts as handy tools has missed the point of the hermeneutical phenomenon. If we stick to what takes place in speech and, above all, in every dialogue with tradition carried on only by the human sciences, we cannot fail to see that here concepts are constantly in the process of being formed. This does not mean that the interpreter is using new or unusual words. (*Truth and Method*, 421)

The hermeneutic theory of translation is at variance to the instrumentalist theory of signs, which holds that there is a direct relationship between a word and its meaning. According to hermeneutics, each word is in a constant process of change. Semantic shift is a common linguistic phenomenon that traces the change in meaning of words over time—the meaning of a word is not fixed, but dynamic and changeable. Thus hermeneutics pursues those elements that change the meanings of words across times and cultures. This may bring us to the important understanding that words are hollow and meaningless signs and derive their meanings from their external reality.

According to instrumentalist theory, the linguistic concept of language focuses on the form of the word and sees a direct relationship between the meaning of a word and its concept: "Is the idea of form still appropriate here? Is language a symbolic form, as Cassirer calls it? Does this take account of the fact that language is unique in embracing everything — myth, art, law, and so on — that Cassirer also calls symbolic form?" (*Truth and Method*, 422). Not only does the reader or translator concentrate on language, but he/she also focuses on the thought, values, ideology and cultural impact implicit in it. Traditional texts represent both the ancient historical experience of the text and the present world into which the text has been relocated: "The hermeneutical experience is

exactly the reverse of this: to have learned a foreign language and to be able to understand it—this formalism of a faculty—means nothing else than to be in a position to accept what is said in it as said to oneself." (*Truth and Method*, 459).

The translator possesses competence in two languages or more, however, his/her life, value system, thoughts and ideas are expressed through his/her own native language—his/her entire world exists in the form of this language. The translator has to transfer the value system of the source language to the target language. The problem of language transfer lies in the capacity of the translator to discern the overlapping and intertwined historical experience and the mutual cultural impact of the source language and the target language. In this condition, the translator has two opposing identities: that of his/her own culture and that of the alien culture. He/she has to be able to place these different, and often antagonistic, values on an equal footing.

Robert L. Thomas in 'Modern Linguistics Versus Traditional Hermeneutics' highlights the relationship of modern linguistics to traditional hermeneutics:

> Modern linguistics" is the chosen title for an emerging field of studies that has potential for radically affecting many long-held principles of biblical interpretation. Though it so recent that it does not yet have widespread-agreed-upon terminology, the discipline has adopted some terms that may not be familiar to most.Phonology" refers to the elementary sounds of language (phonemes), "morphology" to the smallest meaningful units of language (morphemes), "syntax" to the formation of phrases and sentences from these smaller units, and "semantics" to the meanings of morphemes and words and various ways to construct larger units. "Discourse" is a structural portion of language longer than a sentence" (24)

Thomas explains that the tools of understanding, interpreting and translating adopted by modern linguistic theories differ from those applied by the hermeneutic theory of translation. According to the hermeneutic theory of translation, a traditional text includes contextual, paracontextual and textual elements. However, the theories of linguistics are mainly concerned with tracing the textual and linguistic elements of a text. The theories of modern linguistics adopt a distinct concept of language from that one adopted in the hermeneutic approach. Modern linguistics uses distinct linguistic terminology for analyzing, understanding and translating all types of text. It employs phonology to study the sounds of language, known as phonemes. It uses morphology to refer to the smallest meaningful units of language, known as morphemes. Syntax is used to study the structure of phrases and sentences built from these smaller units.

Semantics is employed to study the meanings of morphemes and words. Discourse seeks to understand the broader structures surrounding sentences. Thomas goes on to argue that modern linguistics has its own singular vision of understanding traditional texts—it highlights the association between the faculty of human thinking and one's own physiological potentialities in producing sounds, the final product of which is seen in words, sentences, paragraphs and discourse.

In this way, the language produced is viewed as having little to do with external reality, being a natural product of our own cognitive faculties and with no external influence shaping our articulation of language. Modern linguistic theories of translation overlap with the traditional hermeneutics of Schleiermacher and Dilthey. Moisés Silva argues that:

> "I take it as a valid assumption that the interpreter approaches any text with a multitude of experiences (filed away with some degree of coherence) that informs his or her understanding of that text. I further assume that it is impossible for the interpreter to evaluate the text without the point of reference provided by those presuppositions. But I believe just as strongly that the interpreter may transcend, though not eliminate, that point of reference. This can be done not by assuming that we can set aside our presuppositions in the interest of objectivity, but rather by a conscious use of them. The moment we look at a text we contextualize it, but self-awareness of that fact opens up the possibility of modifying our point of reference in light of contradictory data" (148).

Modern linguistic theories agree with the hermeneutic theory of translation that any translation should start from an analysis of the background of the original text, which shapes the translator's understanding—this background contains presuppositions or points of reference. The translator cannot escape these points of reference when translating a traditional text. The same view is held to be true in modern hermeneutic translation theory, which contends that the translator cannot transcend such a point of reference, but he/she can avoid its negative effect through being aware of its bias. The linguistic theories of translation neither explain how the translator can be conscious of this point of reference, nor how it can be avoided. Cotterel and Turner refuse to accept the idea that there is the possibility of providing an unbiased translation of a traditional text; they suggest that as "the criticism goes, the Cartesian or Baconian ideal of 'objective' exegesis, an exegesis that is unaffected by the world of the analyst, is unattainable. Every attempt to define an author's intended meaning actually only discovers a meaning which is somehow related to 'meaning for me'" (59).

Traditional hermeneutics believes in the idea of providing an objective translation and understanding of a traditional text by capturing its authorial intention through a psychological reconstruction of the author. This viewpoint is repudiated in the modern hermeneutic trends of Heidegger and Gadamer whose ideas are largely consistent with modern linguistics: "There is no generally recognized psychological theory which is adequate to explain all that is involved in language acquisition, competence, and performance" (Nida, 77).

The idea of understanding starts unconsciously from the concept of predisposition, namely presupposition. The acquisition of language is related to a kind of unconscious interaction between the world and language. A child does not acquire language through education, but through listening to his/her surrounding environment—language is a part of the world. Therefore, focusing only on understanding the linguistic structures of a traditional text is inadequate for providing a comprehensible, clear and accurate translation. In his book, *From Linguistics to Hermeneutics: a Functional and Cognitive Approach*, Pierre van Hecke explains that modern linguistics admits that the original meaning of a traditional text is hidden and invisible, and needs to be inferred. This concealed meaning can be inferred linguistically and reconstructed hermeneutically: "Incorporation of preunderstanding into interpretative process directly violates the fundamental tenets of grammatical-historical interpretation and its goal of discerning the meaning of the text intended by the author and as understood by the original reader" (Thomas, 29).

In his book, *Lexical Semantics and Diachronic Morphology,* Carola Trips contends that there are areas of difference and conflict between the linguistic and hermeneutic modes of interpretation and understanding. These points of difference are found in the following areas: diachronism and synchronism; the conceptual framework of words; synonyms; syntactical expressions; authorial intention; historical consciousness; the fusion of horizons; precision; and discourse. Modern linguistics avoids the diachronic study of words and terms used in traditional texts. The diachronic study of a word attempts to uncover the meaning of the word at a specific historical time. In addition, it traces the lengthy process of its semantic change over the course of time. However, modern linguistics focuses on the synchronic study of words—the meaning of words in their usage at the current time. *In Language Structure and Translation*: *Essays*, Nida denies the idea of understanding meaning through tracing the historical development of words. In this way, the meaning of a traditional text should come to agree well with its surrounding contextual elements. Textual ties to the past are ignored as the meaning of the text is considered

to have little to do with the historical study of its words—the idea of conceiving of its meaning is based on restoring its linguistic meaning in its present context. Nida explains it clearly in the following:

> "Etymologies, whether arrived at by historical documentation or by comparative analysis, are all very interesting and may provide significant clues to meaning, but they are no guarantee whatsoever that the historical influence is a factor in people's actual use of such linguistic units" (262).

The modern reader cannot be sure what history has played a role in shaping the meaning of a word or not. The linguistic approach holds that understanding the meaning of words by tracing them historically cannot be scientifically verified. In *Course in General Linguistics*, de Saussure argues that "the linguist who wishes to understand a state must discard all knowledge of everything that produced it and ignore diachrony. He can enter the mind of speakers only by completely suppressing the past. The intervention of history can only falsify his judgment" (36).

Modern linguistics pays little attention towards studying the words used in a text in their historical context; this is contrary to modern hermeneutics, whose fundamental tenet is the study of words from their historical perspective. The importance of the historical study of the words used in traditional texts is the restoration of the lost cultural consciousness of a past world that is unknown to the modern translator. The modern translator does not have a cognate cultural consciousness to a traditional text and its words—when translating a traditional text from a present worldview one may well misinterpret and misunderstand its 'pastness.' The translator has to reconstruct the text's history in order to bring its past historical experience into the present time, without downplaying the importance of its past interpretation. According to modern linguistics, the relationship between things and objects in the world is a matter of meanings and senses and yet it both is arbitrary and random. However, modern hermeneutics states that the relationship between things and objects and their meanings is reciprocal.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HERMENEUTIC TRANSLATION: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Studying classical Arabic texts involves studying religious traditions, pre-Islamic poetry, prose, dialects, culture-bound elements and culturally-loaded texts. In his book, *The Journey from Texts to Translations: the Origin and Development of the Bible*, Paul D. Wegner explains that traditional and classical texts are those texts whose original receivers and their cultural and historical contexts are different from present readers and the contemporary context. The linguistic medium has undergone remarkable changes: a large number of classical words have acquired new connotations, changing the original meaning of a text—the possibility of capturing the original meaning of a traditional text is uncertain.

Different translation theories have been applied to the translation of a wide variety of genres of traditional text. Roman Jakobson in his article 'On Linguistic Aspects of Translation' explains that the message communicated through the translation process is always incomplete—linguistic equivalence never totally communicates the full message of the original text. He proposes an intralingual approach as a method for understanding and interpreting the old language of a traditional text by translating it in the same source language—an interpretation in the same source language for making the text comprehensible and clear.

According to Jakobson, there is always something missing and incomplete in a translated text and he offers the word 'cheese' in English as an example. This word is not identical to the Russian word or code-unit 'syr' since the latter does not include the concept of cottage cheese. When linguistic language's terminology fails to provide an accurate and precise translation, the translator has to resort to using loan-words, loan-translations, neologisms or semantic shifts. Jakobson's substitution policy at the level of the word is not sufficient to provide a good translation and the translator ends up in a vicious cycle of word substitution. The primary problem does not lie in the linguistic rendering of a word, but in the cultural influence that changes the meaning of the word across time.

In his book, *Toward a Science of Translating*, Nida argues for a dynamic equivalence that can fill the cultural gap between two different languages. This dynamic equivalence adheres to the cultural standards of the target text and is a way to adapt the source text to the culture of the target text. However, the translation process is limited to rendering the text word for word. Nida focuses on the translation process in the context of the target text and ignores the context of the source text, despite it being essential for providing an accurate and clear understanding of meaning. Without a hermeneutic understanding of the context of the source text, the resultant translation may amount to a misrepresentation and distortion of the original text.

In *Translation, Linguistics, Culture: a French English Handbook*, the two translation strategies of Vinay and Darbelnet for handling the issues that arise from culturally embedded and traditional texts are discussed—one is direct and the other is an oblique strategy. They assess the problematic of translating culturally embedded texts in terms of 'structuralism parallelism' and 'metalinguistic parallelism'—these direct and oblique strategies deal with the syntactic, lexical and stylistic aspects of a text. One important parallelism ignored by this theory is that of cultural parallelism. Itamar Even-Zohar proposes an approach for rendering traditional texts that considers the translation process to be a bridge between cultures. Translated works should imitate the original literary work and mimic the forms of literary texts in the target language, which has to be culturally and linguistically manipulated in order to be relevant to the target cultural system and its aesthetic and poetic forms. In this way, translation is employed as an act of representation of the original text in the target language. Zohar writes:

> "The idea that semiotic phenomena, i.e., sign-governed human patterns of communication (such as culture, language, literature, society), could more adequately be understood and studied if regarded as systems rather than conglomerates of disparate elements has become one of the leading ideas of our time in most sciences of man. Thus, the positivistic collection of data, taken bona fide on empiricist grounds and analyzed on the basis of their material *substance*, has been replaced by a functional approach based on the analysis of *relations*. Viewing them as systems made it possible to hypothesize how the various semiotic aggregates operate" (10).

According to Zohar, the translation process of a text has to focus on the whole system and align the translated text to its surrounding reality. Cultural, linguistic, historical and social elements should be taken into consideration when translating a literary Arabic text into English. Furthermore, "being placed in this way in a larger socio-cultural context,

'literature' comes to be viewed not just as a collection of texts, but more broadly as a set of factors governing the production, promotion and reception of these texts" (Baker, 177).

Adopting Zohar's theory of translation can prove helpful in handling the problems of translating traditional texts: "Translation is no longer a phenomenon whose nature and borders are given once and for all, but an activity dependent on the relations within a certain cultural system" (Zohar, 51). The following steps for the translation of traditional Arabic texts appear essential in rendering a traditional text: firstly, the translator has to apply an intralingual concept of translation in order to understand and interpret vernacular speech, ancient terms and expressions whose meanings and cultural connotations are ambiguous and clumsy in classical Arabic. Secondly, he/she has to study the role of cultural influence on the texts being translated. This cultural influence traces the historical and social changes, and their association with the development and change in meanings of the words. Thirdly, the translator has to determine whether archaic words are fixed and static in meaning or changeable over time. Fourthly, the translator should adapt the translated text to fit the poetic and literary forms of the target culture. Finally, the process of translation should not be confined to the search for linguistic equivalence, but rather the translator has to render his/her text against the grains of an entire tradition and culture. The translation process should operate from the smallest unit to the largest unit and vice versa—what is not clear in the smaller units can be revealed through the larger ones etc.

A major problem confronting translators applying Zohar's theory is how they can make sure that their understanding of a classical text is true. The translator may fall into the trap of misunderstanding traditional expressions due to a lack of knowledge or ignorance of the historical, socioeconomic and cultural conditions surrounding a traditional text. Said Faiq argues that:

> "Misunderstandings are said to derive from incompatibilities in the processing of media which carry them: languages. Yet misunderstandings are not only the products of linguistic incompatibilities per se but of cultural ones as well. This means that misunderstandings generally occur in particular social structures, particular histories, and prevailing norms of language production and reception. All these can be said to make up the ingredients of the culture and the ideology subsumed within it. Culture involves the totality of attitudes toward the world, toward the events, other cultures and peoples, and the manner in which these attitudes are mediated. In other words, culture refers to the beliefs and value systems tacitly assumed to be collectively shared by particular social groups and to

the positions taken by the producers and receivers of texts, including
translations, during the mediation process" (1).

Faiq contends that problems of misunderstanding result from linguistic
incompatibilities and cultural disparities—the different social structures
and distinct cultural values of different times inevitably lead to a condition
of misunderstanding. Distinct social structures and cultural values shape
the language and provide it with its life and meaning. Though cultural
change is slow, it accelerates the process of linguistic change. In his book,
*The Geography of Translation and Interpretation: Traveling between
Languages*, Rainer Schulte argues that traditional texts identify with their
geographical borders. These geographical boundaries contribute to forming
the unique characteristics of traditional and classical texts. Such
geographical boundaries are exemplified in the phonological and cultural
differences between placesthat result in problems of misunderstanding for
outsiders. These geographical boundaries create a special world based on
distinct socioeconomic realities. Such spatial-socioeconomic realities mean
that traditional terms and expressions have totally different connotations
from modern standard Arabic.

Not only does the translation of traditional and cultural texts require
linguistic understanding, but also a comprehension of the spatial realities
of these texts. Octavio Paz claims that "translation is the principal means
we have of understanding the world we live in. The world is presented to
us as a growing heap of texts" (154). Tymoczko expounds the problematic
issues arising from translating traditional texts in the following:

> "There are often, in fact, massive obstacles facing translators who wish to
> bring the texts of a marginalized culture to a dominant-culture audience:
> issues related to the interpretation of material culture (such as food, dress,
> tools) and social culture (including law, economics, customs, and so forth),
> history, values, and world view; problems with the transference of literary
> features such as genre, form, performance conventions, and literary
> allusions; as well as the inevitable questions of linguistic interface. For all
> these reasons the information load of translations of such marginalized
> texts is often very high—in fact it is at risk of being intolerably high.
> Because neither the cultural content nor the literary framework of such
> texts are familiar to the receiving audience, the reception problems posed
> by marginalized texts in translation are acute" (47).

Isolating traditional terms and expressions from their external reality
and cultural context may result in them being misinterpreted and
mistranslated. The first step towards translating traditional terms and
expressions is a focus on rendering the spatial realities in which a

traditional text has been produced. Traditional texts travel across a changeable historical landscape, moving forwards, not backwards, as the past becomes fused to the present—a traditional text has to be understood in terms of its present and vice versa. In this way, language represents and reflects its own culture and tradition. In *Between Languages and Cultures: Translation and Cross-Cultural Text*, Anuradha Dingwaney and Carol Maier emphasize that another problem arising in translating traditional terms and expressions is represented by culture-bound elements. A culture-bound element refers to items, tools, instruments, proper names, food items etc. related to a specific culture and specific time. The problem of translating culture-bound elements is twofold. Firstly, how can the translator deal with the cultural and historical specificity of these elements? Secondly, how can these culture-bound elements resist the progress of time and not acquire new meanings that muddy the issue?

   Cultural specificity makes it difficult to render into English cultural terms embedded in a traditional text because there is no cultural equivalence in the target language. As such, the translator is confronted with incompatibilities when translating culture-bound elements: "All texts reflect the period of time and culture when they were written" (Oittinen, 13). In his essay 'The Translation of Culture-Bound Elements into Finnish in the Post-War Period,' Hagfors explains that the issues of translating culture-bound elements and terms rest upon their historical and cultural specificity—they are articulated at certain historical moments to fulfill a temporal-cultural need. They demonstrate the cultural values prevailing at a period of time and for this reason, they are semantically multilayered:

> *The Wind in the Willows, Pelle Svanslös* and the books by L.M. Montgomery are all stories which reflect the social problems and situation of their own times. In such stories, the use of culture-bound elements such as proper names and food items is one way of demonstrating not only into which culture the story is set but also creating an atmosphere that reflects the values prevalent in that culture and period of time. When such a book is translated into another language, the translator and publisher have to decide whether they want to imply these same values for the target text readers, or whether they want to make adaptations to the text in order to fit it better into the target culture. The older and more foreign the source text, the more seriously the translator and publisher have to consider these questions. If the culture-bound elements in the translation of such a text are foreignized, is the reader able to really put his/her soul into it and identify with the characters? On the other hand, if the cultural references of a story set in a specific culture and time are domesticated, does the book lose a part of its charm (118).

These texts mirror their own time and culture and this is evident in their representations of particular social and historical experience. The translator of a classical text has to go back to the times in which it was written and he/she has to read and understand the culture-bound elements in terms of their past historical relevance. As such, "every book is a journey to a particular time and place" (Ottinen, 9) and "there is no escape from cultural loads that represent certain ethnic, linguistic and political groups" (Faiq, 3), therefore, translating such a text necessitates calling back to its historical experience and surrounding cultural values. The problems that arise in translating culture-bound elements can be summed up in the following:

> "In actual fact, non-standard verities such as slang pose various problems in cultural transition and faithful translation as well. Cross-culturally, it is difficult to find parallel social sets (i.e. culture-specific situations such as British pub conversations, rap song lyrics or hooligan fans yells of support). Cross linguistically, it is difficult to find similar modes of expression (i.e. repertories of private languages such as idiolects, dialects, sociolects, etc). Furthermore, it is difficult to cope with non-standard varieties, as they are often used to create an extremely rich range of effects (e.g. expressiveness, pretentiousness, faddishness,etc), which are overtly problematic for the translators" (Mattiello, 66).

The problems of translating culturally specific elements embedded in traditional and ancient texts can be categorized under the following headings: cultural incompatibilities, linguistic unconventionalities, culture-bound elements, short-lived terms and ambiguous and ambivalent expressions. In addition, a major problem is the possibility of misunderstanding.

Venuti argues for the use of a process of domestication and 'foreignization' as a strategy for translating traditional texts. He explains that manipulating the source text leads to a cultural transference of traditional and classical terms without losing their original sense. Translation involves a rebuilding and reconstruction of a source text into a target language—the process of reconstruction should be consistent with the values and norms of the target culture as this process is an adaptation of a source text to a target text. Venuti writes:

> "the reconstruction of the foreign text in accordance with values, beliefs, and representations that pre-exist in the target language, always configured in hierarchies of dominance and marginality, always determining the production, circulation, and reception of texts. […] Whatever difference the translation conveys is now imprinted by the target-language culture, assimilated to its position of intelligibility, its canon and taboos, its codes and ideologies. The aim of translation is to bring back the cultural other as

the same, the recognizable, even the familiar; and this aim always risks a wholesale domestication of the foreign text, often in highly self-conscious projects, where translation serves an imperialist appropriation of foreign cultures for domestic agendas, cultural, economic, political" (qtd in *Cultural Encounters*, 12).

According to Venuti, the translator resembles the artist who portrays a natural scene or image—this portrait is not identical to the original scene since it is a copy. The translator depicts such an image in his/her mind before transposing it into his/her 'portrait.' This process of mental depiction requires the deconstruction of the original image, followed by a process of reconstruction. The process of reconstruction should follow the norms and canons of the target language as the translator has to manipulate the source text to fit the original text—the process of recalling the cultural and historical background of the source text has to be coupled with a process of adaptation. Such a cultural adaption focuses on the target text rather than the source text and links the problems of rendering a traditional text to the capacity of the translator to bridge the cultural gap between the target text and the original text.

It is evident that many questions remain unanswered: how can the translator make sure that he/she avoids misunderstanding and misinterpreting a traditional text? How can the translator address the issues arising from translating colloquial oral expressions and terms, which are often non-standard and apt to change rapidly in meaning? How can the translator communicate strange words to contemporary generations? Does he/she render them from a contemporary worldview or from a past viewpoint? Accordingly, this present study proposes the hermeneutic theory of translation as a strategy for addressing the issues that arise in translating traditional texts. The development and change in meaning of traditional terms and expressions are subject to the impact of different social and cultural elements. There are various factors that accelerate the process of semantic change in traditional terms and expressions. Al-Raghib Al-Isfhani, a historically prominent linguist of classical Arabic, argues that synonyms can only be offered convergently in the Arabic language—these synonyms can be derived at a narrow scale as they belong to the same linguistic environment. He explains that the process of deriving such synonyms has to meet the following requirements:

A. There should be a relative condition of identification and coincidence in meaning between a word and its synonym.
B. The synonyms have to belong to the same narrow linguistic environment as the word.

C. The word and its synonym should belong to the same historical period.
   Thus, synonyms belonging to the ancient or historical time of the
   distant past can no longer validly give meaning for a present time word
   (*author's trans.*, 70).

These synonyms have to be taken from the same period of time in
which they were used, as they have to belong to the same narrow local
culture. Therefore, the issue of using synonyms in Arabic, especially in
translating historical and classical texts, is a thorny issue and brings about
problems in translating traditional texts. The translator is faced with a
further difficulty in understanding the language of a traditional text where
the application of the intralingual approach to translation is unfounded
because simplifying or paraphrasing the archaic and ancient language
through resorting to more comprehensible and commonplace synonyms is
meaningless. Some classical words and expressions are not clear, or are
incomprehensible, and require interpretation of their meaning
intralingually in Arabic. However, the synonyms have to be taken from the
same narrow environment and the same historical period. This suggests
that intralingual translation, on its own, is an insufficient translation
strategy—explaining and interpreting within the same source language is a
complicated process that has to take into account various factors, apart
from purely linguistic ones. The intralingual translation approach is an
instrumentalist approach that struggles to deal with the ambiguity
characteristic of traditional texts. It does not provide a comprehensive
method for dealing with the invisible elements of a text, which constitute
the major challenge in interpreting/translating traditional texts.

Abu Ali al-Farisi, a famous historical linguist of classical Arab, denies
the existence of synonyms in the Arabic language. The following old
story, narrated by Abu Ali Al-farisi, may clarify his thinking:

"While he had been in the presence of Saif Al-Dwala at Halab with a
gathering of Arab linguists, Ibn Khalwya, a famous classical Arab linguist,
said that 'he knew more than fifty synonyms for the word 'sword.' Abu
Ali Alfarisi replied to him that he knew only one name, which was the
word 'sword' itself. However, the other fifty names were not synonyms,
but characteristics and qualities given to the sword, which became
common synonyms for the word 'sword' with the passage of time. For
instance, the Arabic word *saif* (sword) is known as 'Yamani' (Yemeni)
and 'Mohand' (Indian)" *(author's trans.*, 150).

In his book, *A Semantic Study of the Arabic Language*, Anis argues
that 'Yamani' is not another name for a sword, but a quality attributed to
it, meaning that the sword was manufactured in the Yemen. With the

progress of time, this quality has been converted into a name or synonym. 'Mohand' meant that the sword was manufactured in India and over time this became a new name, rather than a quality. Such linguistic phenomena are often seen in the language of traditional texts. Accordingly, when bringing a traditional text from the past to the present, the translator confronts the problem of semantic shift—ancient words acquire new connotations that may be completely different to their original meaning or the intentions of the original author.

In *Translation: an Advanced Resource Book*, Hatim and Munday contend that the intralingual concept of translation is no longer valid for translating traditional texts—it fails to deal properly with the phenomenon of semantic shift, which contributes to lexical meanings changing over time. Traditional words may become archaic or meaningless in the present time. The question remains as to how the translator can explain or find synonyms for meanings that no longer exist in the present? Meaning here is interrelated to changing value systems and new socioeconomic realities, which are affected by new cultural modes of thinking.

Hatim and Munday argue that semantic shift is not the only issue that faces translators of traditional texts—there is also the problem of homonyms. In *Homonyms: Why English Suffers*, Robert Chrisman describes a homonym as one word that may have two or more distinct meanings. These words may have the same sound (homophones), have the same spelling (homographs) or both, but do not have related meanings. According to Anis, homonyms are common in Arabic. For example, in formal Arabic *al-ard* means (earth); however, in local (dialect/colloquial) language, it means *al-thokam* (flu). A further example is provided by the word *zakat* originally meaning 'growth and increase'; it also refers to the fifth pillar of Islam—mandatory alms imposed on each reasonable Muslim to be handed out to poor fellow Muslims before *Eid al-Fitr* (marking the end of the fasting month of *Ramadan*). *Alghroub* means 'sunset,' but in traditional Arabic it means *aldalaw* (bucket). Eid Mohammed Altayeb states that the existence of homonyms in Arabic is due to a number of factors:

A. Dialectical semantic difference: each dialect uses its own lexis with different meanings from other dialects. For example, *dana* means *kid* in one dialect and *disease* in other Arabic dialects.
B. Figurative use of words: the word for *eye* "ayan" means an organ of sight in classical Arabic, but in modern Arabic it means *spy* or *envied*.
C. Borrowing: *alhoub* means *love* in Modern Arabic language and *jar* in traditional Arabic, this is borrowed from Persian.
D. Language development and change: in classical Arabic, *da'm* has two meanings, the first is *to support* and the second is *to push* and *to*

> *dagger*. The second meaning has developed from the Arabic word
> *daham*, which is phonologically derived as *da'am* (*author's trans.*,
> 140).

Altayeb argues that the major difference between classical Arabic and
modern standard Arabic is that a great number of modern standard Arabic
terms and expressions are metaphorical derivations from classical Arabic.
Accordingly, understanding classical terms involves revisiting the
historical context in which the original word was produced. However,
recovering the ancient meaning of such words is an abstruse task. Classical
words are subject to semantic shift in their journey from the past to the
present. Throughout such a journey, the meaning of classical words
changes. Arabic is rich with examples of this semantic shift: it abounds
with words whose contemporary meanings are totally different from their
meanings in the pre-Islamic era and in classical Arabic. These words are
only accessible in archaic dictionaries, which are no longer valid for the
contemporary period. Ancient words, which are no longer used, have been
resurrected in everyday speech with new meanings.

   He explains further that these metaphorical and metonymical
differences rest upon creating new connotations and unprecedented
significations fit for the time. For example, the word *rass* literally means
'head,' however, it can be used metaphorically in Arabic as follows: *ras
al-jabal* (top of the mountain) and *ras al-sharaka* (the head of a company).
The statement *al-om torda waldaha men sadraha* can be translated
literally as follows: 'the mother nurses her child from her chest.' In
Arabic, the word 'chest' is a metaphor for 'breast' and represents a source
of kindness, love, containment and warmth. Accordingly, it can be best
rendered in English as 'the mother nurses her child from her breast.'

   Anis explains that the cultural roots of traditional Arabic words are
inevitably fostered by their local environment. The metonymical use of
modern Arabic expressions has a twofold effect: it generates new meaning
and fixes the new meaning in the collective mind of speakers with the
passage of time. However, when metonymical modern Arabic expressions
are rendered into English, the translator finds himself/herself oscillating
between the original meaning of the word and its metonymical meaning in
the present. The main problem lies in how the translator should decode the
metonym of the modern expression and isolate it from its classical origin.

   The figurative meaning of the word is its marginal significance and the
original root of the word is its central significance. Central significance
refers to the ancient meaning of a word and its commonly accepted
meaning—these can be found through consulting dictionaries. Its marginal
significance refers to the metaphorical or figurative meaning of a word,

which may be an accepted meaning among members of a small community and related to a dialect or as a culture-bound element. Words of marginal significance pose a serious challenge to those who are interested in translating traditional Arabic texts into English. For example, the central significance of the Arabic word *battah* is to 'knock someone down.' The noun of this word is *mabtouh*, the apparent meaning of which is 'someone who has been knocked down.' However, the contemporary meaning is different to its central significance and its dictionary meaning—'someone who is injured in his head.' Anis argues that the marginal significance of a word is mainly associated with its modern usage. What is remarkable about this is that the marginal significance of the word *mabtouh* has been converted into its central significance and become formalized in Arabic. As such, resorting solely to Arabic dictionaries will limit the translator's ability to get at the real meaning of a word. This in turn results in mistranslating the Arabic meaning into English—there is a significant difference between 'someone injured in his head' and 'someone knocked down.' Further examples that highlight the serious problems of translating traditional Arabic expressions include the Arabic word *baikh*, an informal Arabic expression, meaning 'silly.' However, formally this word means 'to calm down or be extinguished' as in 'John calmed down' and 'the fire was extinguished.' The contemporary meaning of the word *baghdada* is 'coquetry,' which is considered a feminine word. However, this word originally meant 'civilized' as Baghdad was the exemplar of civilization and advancement in the early Islamic state. The word *qomash* originally meant 'barbaric people, bad-natured people.' However, the contemporary meaning of this word is 'cloth.'

Many contemporary words deviate from their original meaning in formal Arabic as their meaning has changed over time. This change occurs alongside the changing socioeconomic realities of each society. In other words, there is a clear reciprocal relationship between language and the world. Purely linguistic theories of translation are not valid in translating culturally informed texts. Even resorting to Arabic dictionaries to understand traditional Arabic words is inadequate for providing us with the contemporary meaning of the words in a text—they are changeable, liquid and their present meanings may be totally different from their classical meanings. At the level of the text, the process of understanding does not rest upon deciphering linguistic structures or understanding lexical meaning; traditional texts are defined by their invisible elements, which shape their contemporary meaning in the consciousness of a modern reader. Without bringing these invisible elements to light, a true understanding or accurate translation of such a text cannot be guaranteed.

The translation process is no longer an act of linguistic transfer across different languages or different cultures or worlds. It is an act of speculation, mediation and understanding. The conditions of 'true' understanding should be understood before translating these kinds of texts—the translator needs to be cognitively trained in the art of understanding. The translator's role is not limited to rendering a text, but also to resurrecting it and providing it with new life. This new life should be consistent with the contemporary world in order not to be too alien or strange to contemporary reality. Mohammed Ibn al-Anbari explains that Arabic discourse interprets itself hermeneutically—the smaller parts can be understood from the larger ones and vice versa. Arabic texts cannot be interpreted from just reading their parts, but should be read in light of the entire Arabic tradition. At first sight, the reader may be confused by the ambiguity of a given word that signifies several meanings; however, after reading the whole text, the reader can reach a final meaning of the word. Bassnett argues for the effectiveness of hermeneutic theory in translating traditional texts:

> "Translation always involves forms of reconstruction. It is not possible to translate a text of any kind without a complex process of reading, rereading, reworking, rethinking, reshaping, and ultimately, rewriting. The audience for whom a translation is intended will, most likely, have no access to the original, and will therefore be dependent on the translator to give them a sense of what the original contained. Yet inevitably, the translator, as the product of his or her own time, will add, consciously or unconsciously, elements that the original author never even conceived of, elements that may be due to linguistics constraints, given that no two languages are ever identical, or to stylistic or genre shifts, or, most likely to audience expectations" (10).

The process of translating a traditional text draws heavily on prejudiced thinking, which can be mitigated by understanding linguistic hermeneutics. All understanding is rooted in language, but it is impossible to achieve an objective interpretation—the intellect cannot circumvent the trap of prejudice. Humans cannot escape the influence of prejudice even if they claim to do so because the effect of historical consciousness makes them unconsciously adopt prejudiced thinking. Subsequently, the process of interpretation/translation is best designated as a subjective one, and hence the process of translation differs from translator to translator.

The hermeneutic theory of translation can present logical and acceptable solutions to the problematic issues that arise in translating traditional texts. For example, the translation of traditional Arabic proverbs generates a number of problems of translation and applying linguistic theories of

translation may produce superficial translations, which do not depict the contextual and paracontextual elements constituting the real meaning of the text and a deeper sense of the proverb. Accordingly, the hermeneutic approach is suggested in translating the following Arabic proverbs. Translating the Arabic proverb, لاتفرح بسرعة امك علي التنور into English, the translator is not faced with any problem on a linguistic level. The language is simple and the words can be easily rendered into English. The question posed is this: can linguistic equivalence provide us with the intended meaning of the proverb? A purely linguistic approach translates this proverb as 'Do not feel happy about your mother's quick performance at the oven.' This translation appears meaningless and does not communicate any kind of message to a Western reader. It also has nothing to do with the core value of the proverb, which is intended to communicate a clear and intelligible message to the addressed party.

Accordingly, a cultural interpretation of this Arabic proverb is needed—the proverb has to be understood and interpreted within its broader context. The historical and socioeconomic realities associated with the text have to be investigated prior to translating it. In this proverb, the speaker is warning the listener about the risks of being overly optimistic or from extending his/her expectations beyond normal limits. The historical context in which this proverb was produced is a prerequisite for providing a true and precise translation. In this context, the addressee may feel pleased at the expectation that his/her mother is preparing a delicious meal for a few moments time. However, summoning up the historical context in which such a proverb was said can help us provide a true translation and this can communicate the core message of the original text without misrepresenting it. The historical context in which this proverb was said relates to scarcity of food and the lack of essential ingredients for cooking a good and delicious meal. As such it speaks of the mother cooking a meal very quickly because of a lack of resources.

Simple linguistic equivalence is irrelevant, unnecessary and does not communicate the invisible and hidden message of the proverb. The intended meaning may be revealed to the members of the Arabic speaking community, as it is a common saying with a clear association and a recognized situation. The English receiver lacks these cultural elements that would help reveal the ambiguity in meaning and clarify it. The task of the translator is neither simple nor easy because he/she has to transfer the paracontextual elements of the source text to the target text. Unseen elements and invisible cultural notions must be translated into obvious elements and visible cultural notions in order to deliver a precise and clear meaning to the receiver.

The wisdom of this saying is that one should not raise one's expectations to high and unachievable levels as this will lead to disappointment. The translator has to presuppose the historical background of the text, which can be achieved through understanding the contextual situation out of which the proverb was born and used. Furthermore, the translation process needs to be culturally and linguistically adapted to the target culture. The translator has to search for an English equivalent which conveys the same concept as the Arabic. One possible translation of the above-mentioned proverb could be 'blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed' (Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs).

Translating the following proverb, امدحن وخذ عبائتي, the translator has to avoid using the linguistically equivalent or literal translation, 'praise me and take my cloak.' This proverb is similar to the modern Egyptian saying لقيني ولا تغديني. In most idiomatic translations, this proverb is translated as follows: 'I'd rather be well received than well fed (better warm welcome than being invited to lunch).' This translation is far beyond the authorial intention or the true meaning of the saying. This saying urges the addressee to welcome a guest warmly. The proposed method for translating is to search for an English proverb that communicates a similar message. Thus, it can be translated as: 'First impressions are the longest-lasting' (Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs).

'He is as tall as palm tree, but he is as foolish as the kid' would be the literal translation of the proverb الطول طول نخلة والعقل عقلة صخلة. However, this translation is void of any poetic language and does not agree well with the cultural values of the receiver as 'the kid' is not the same symbol of foolishness in English culture. It does not convey a clear or understandable message for the reader, as it does not render the true meaning of the proverb. A proposed equivalent in English could be 'a little body does often harbor a great soul' or 'little things please little minds' (Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs). The hermeneutic theory of translation can provide solutions to several issues that arise in translating traditional Arabic texts. The cultural gap between a historical text and present reality can be resolved through using Heidegger's concept of existential translation. According to Heidegger, an authentic translation has to reflect its Being and its surrounding temporal world. Since the world is temporal, traditional works have to be retranslated from time to time in order to be made comprehensible to contemporary readers.

The issue of semantic change can be resolved by using Gadamer's concept of prejudiced understanding. The translation of a traditional text has to be adapted to the present. The translator cannot be detached, consciously or unconsciously, from his/her circumstantial realities, and

these inform his/her understanding and vision of the translated text. Texts travel across time and space and adapt themselves linguistically and culturally to new places and different times. Linguistically, words develop diachronically to acquire new meanings that fit the reality of their present time. Culturally, old values are overtaken by modern ones that fit with new spatial and socioeconomic realities. If adaptation does not occur, such texts become meaningless objects: *out of place and out of time.*

The traditional text is transformative—it is not rigid or fixed. The only place for a static and fixed text is a museum where antiquities are kept to remind us of our past. Traditional texts can enlighten our minds and cultivate our souls; religious texts can elevate our behavior and thinking and help refine our confused contemporary lives. When texts become isolated from their world, they lose this lofty goal of enlightenment and elevation.

Conclusion

Hermeneutics is not only an approach to interpretation, but also a methodology of understanding. Its principles should be used to hermeneutically train the ability of the interpreter or translator to provide a renewable and transformative understanding of any given text, which should be largely consistent with the reality of the present time. It starts from a premise that the interpretation or translation of any given text has, and requires, a correct understanding. When a translator starts translating a text, he/she does not cast doubt on his/her understanding as he/she will naturally trusts the wisdom of his/her own understanding. He/she also unconsciously focuses on the linguistic issues of the text, which may impede comprehension. This also applies to critically reading a text where one struggles to put one's preconceived ideas under scrutiny or investigation. Readers are used to taking the validity and reliability of traditional texts for granted without reevaluating their ideas or considering their truthfulness. Such a misreading will inevitably lead to problems of misinterpretation and mistranslation. Our understanding of a traditional text must be permanently placed under examination. The reader should not mentally surrender to previous understandings of a tradition, as one has to consider the historical and cultural gaps that result from the text and context undergoing a relentless process of change.

The hermeneutic tradition of interpretation is heterogonous and varied; however, it can be considered an integrated approach to interpretation/translation, which contributes to developing the understanding, interpretation and translation of traditional texts. The hermeneutic interpretation and translation of a traditional text involves the following phases: linguistic interpretation, psychological interpretation, existential interpretation and prejudicial interpretation. Delving into the process of translating or interpreting a traditional text, the translator has to proceed through the above-mentioned phases of interpretation in order to gain a holistic vision of the text—focusing on the linguistic understanding of traditional and literary texts is not sufficient to give their true meaning. The text is written in language, but the language itself cannot provide the reader with the full meaning of a text—textual content needs to be related to its contextual framework. Therefore, isolating the language of a text from its context hampers the reader and stops him/her from realizing an

accurate and precise understanding. The language represents the structure of a text, but it is those contextual elements at issue that are its soul. Resurrecting a text from the ashes of 'dead' history requires us to learn how to make its invisible elements visible again—the contextual and paracontextual elements—that help reproduce the text at different times.

The problems of linguistic interpretation are further complicated when transfer is made between different languages belonging to different cultures. Since the translator is not an original part of the world of the source text, he/she will be faced with a wide variety of translation problems, mainly centering on the concept of understanding—his/her understanding will be impeded by the external and internal elements that go beyond his/her cognitive, intellectual and cultural context. Therefore, the translator should summon up a psychological and technical interpretation. It is suggested that this psychological or technical understanding fills in the gaps that result from the shortcomings of pure grammatical understanding. The translator attempts to travel back to the historical period of the original writer and envision the writer's cultural and socioeconomic realities. The translator attempts to articulate the original author's ideas and thoughts—grasping the authorial intention of a text requires one to recall the living experience of the author through a process of mental transfer. The concept of mental transfer contends that mental experience is almost identical from person to person. The translator/interpreter, however, develops a rigid, classical understanding of a traditional text that is largely inconsistent with the realities of the modern world and its modern reader. Accordingly, a new concept of interpretation has been presented here in order to address the issues that surround the traditional text in the present. Since the psychological reconstruction of authorial intention and mental transfer seek to summon up the past historical context of a text, there is an urgent need to learn how to address the present context of the text in order to make its translation relevant and intelligible to a modern reader.

This study suggests that the concept of existential interpretation may be a convincing solution to translating a traditional text in light of its present context. This starts from a premise that traditional and literary texts are self-revealing, indefinite, enduring and eternal. The meaning of a text is, to an extent, universal, and this can be obtained through highlighting the connections between a text and its present world. This translation process cannot be reduced solely to mental exertion as a means to understanding a certain phenomenon. Rather, this approach explores the existence of the text in the world—the translator neither understands nor translates what is written, but is primarily concerned with the message

communicated through the text to the world, how it is received and how this process feeds back into the text: the translator/interpreter engages with a traditional text from a present time worldview.

This study provides a logical methodology for translating a traditional text in the light of its present actualities; such a text, whether religious or literary, often addresses moral, cultural and contemporary problems facing modern man—a remarkable feature of traditional texts is their continued validity over time and space. Only seeking to translate or interpret a text according to its past tradition distorts and misrepresents the knowledge found in it and makes it incompatible with current value systems and contemporary modes of thinking. Focusing only on the historical context of a traditional text makes of it an antiquity fit for a museum. In this way, a traditional text loses its primary message as a means of enlightenment and guidance; it has to be made congruent with the changing realities of modern life.

If the message of a traditional text is at variance to current reality, it becomes seen as irrelevant, inapplicable and irrational. The problems of translating traditional texts are not just linguistic and cultural ones, but also ethical and ideological. The translation process becomes an ethical and ideological act committed to drawing relevance between the modern world and the content of a historical text. The translator deciphers the ambiguity of the text through a comparison of its meaning and its reflection on the 'ground' of reality: its meaning should be reflected through its equivalence to the real world.

For those who are interested in literary criticism, comparative literature and translation, this study seeks to highlight that the process of translating a traditional text is not only limited to analysis of its linguistic and contextual elements, but also to the value system, prevalent modes of thinking, ideology and feelings of the writer—the paracontextual elements. Our knowledge of a text does not rest solely on its textual meaning, but upon how the world can receive this meaning and then feed it back into the text itself. The translator does not translate the text, but he/she engages with the world of a text in order to derive meaning from the world, not from the text.

The translator/interpreter should be fully aware of the characteristics of a traditional text before translating it. Classical works of art are eternal, transformative and fluid. Their power lies in their unending spiraling through history and their constant fusing with the present; it is necessary, therefore, to interpret a text in the light of its present time context while not ignoring its past reality. There is a reciprocal relationship between a work of art and its historical context. A classical text travels across time

and space and on its journey encounters different times and new worlds. Every generation of readers understands such a travelling text anew—in terms of prevailing norms, cultural values and socioeconomic conditions. Therefore, obtaining the real meaning of a text has little to do with the authorial intention or content of a text.

Translating a traditional text cannot be done without prejudiced thinking. Hermeneutics as a theory of translation does not aim to overcome the idea of prejudiced or biased interpretation—this would be impossible to realize. The translator/interpreter cannot detach his/herself from the conditions of his/her society and the influence of his/her own tradition. The translator should develop the skills necessary to enable him/her to distinguish between 'false' and 'true' authority. False authority is found in the misconceptions that prevent the translator/interpreter from having an objective and unbiased understanding of his/her text. The translator can avoid falling into this trap by critically examining a text and questioning its validity. The past realities of a text become fused with its modern realities and translating a traditional text should not downplay the original context of a text at the expense of placing it in its contemporary reality. Once a reader can distinguish between false and true prejudice, he/she may be able to present a logical interpretation of a classical text that remains congruent with its contemporary world.

This study has its shortcomings, some of which are due the broad nature of hermeneutics, which makes it difficult to cover all the relevant issues in a single book. Developing hermeneutic rules for translation is an exhaustive task that requires wide reading in modern Western philosophy, coupled with the study of modern linguistic theory and linguistic theories of translation.

This book is one small step towards dealing with the problematic issues of interpreting and translating traditional texts. Engaging with the principles of hermeneutic translation requires a deep understanding of the overlapping connections between language and hermeneutics. Discerning areas of disparity and similarity between hermeneutics and linguistic theories requires extensive and comprehensive analysis and this cannot be covered fully in a single study. As such, this study describes the general theoretical differences between the linguistic theories of translation and hermeneutics without going into the kind of detail that would need many volumes to cover.

Recommendations

- Traditional Arabic texts should be retranslated from time to time. Such texts are changeable and transformable and they derive their meaning from contingent realities. Adhering solely to a classical meaning downplays the impact of contextual and paracontextual elements on the development and transformation of meaning, leaving the message of a traditional text unintelligible to the modern reader. A traditional text always engages with the contemporary values and modern ethics that surround it and addresses a modern reader whose value system, culture and socioeconomic milieu are different to those of the historic reader.
- Translators of classical Arabic texts should be well-versed both in traditional Arabic culture and the socioeconomic and cultural realities of the present time.
- The dictionary meaning of many traditional Arabic words should be reevaluated and reconsidered in the light of the present connotations conveyed by terms and expressions and not in the light of their historical denotation, as the meaning of classical words changes over time and space.
- A traditional work should be understood in light of its entire tradition—this helps to reveal the obscure and ambiguous parts of a traditional text.

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