

THE HERMENEUTIC INTERPRETATION AND UNDERSTANDING OF MEANING AS THE PRECONDITION OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL COGNITION, AND THE TRANSLATIONAL TRANSFORMATION OF REALITY

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Abstract

Language is a system of signifiers, and of the concepts signified by them; concepts which, as de Saussure has shown, are delineated by the relations between the semiotic signs which constitute language. Thus, understood as a system of concepts, then as Wittgenstein, Quine and Derrida *et al* recognized, language delineates the *thoughts* and *understanding* which it constitutes. Moreover, insofar as Hermeneutic Phenomenologists such as Heidegger recognized, and as cognitive psychologists such as Ames, and the Gestaltists, have demonstrated, our concepts mediate even our most basic perceptions, then language mediates, and thus delineates, our very *experiences of the world* also. While insofar as Hume, Husserl and others have revealed that we can have no knowledge of a *Noumenal, or quasi-Noumenal, world of "Things-in-themselves"* existing beyond, outside or independently of the *phenomenologically* or empirically given world of "*Things-as-they appear*" to us in such experience – not even, contra Kant, *that* such a world exists – then clearly, in shaping our experiences, language, in addition to shaping our mental world, shapes our empirically given world also.

Consequently, just as there is no way of insuring that even our basic physical and mental experiences and observations in one language have the same significance or meaning as, and are thus isomorphic with and unproblematically translatable into, those of another, and concomitantly just as there is no way of insuring that the experiences of subjects from different linguistic communities, of even the *ostensibly* "same" objects or events, correspond to each other – although interestingly enough, in accordance with Popper's notions of falsification, we can, upon occasion at least, come to know that they do not – there is no way of insuring that different linguistic communities inhabit the same world. Indeed, there is, as we shall see, every reason to believe that they do not, and *that differences in the different conceptual schemes of different languages not only result in the translational transformation of meanings, thought, and understanding, but in the translational transformation of empirical reality.*

Keywords: Hermeneutic, Interpretation, Linguistic, Construction, Reality

THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL BRACKETING AND REDUCTION AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF A COMPLETE REDUCTION

Recognizing that many, if not most, of the problems and paradoxes confronting epistemology, and our associated claims to knowledge, arose from unwarranted assumptions and unverifiable inferences, Edmund Husserl therefore resolved to refrain from all such assumptions and inferences, and instead to give a “presuppositionless description” of the “things themselves” as they appear in or to our immediate (phenomenal) experiences. Thus, in contrast to those who, *inferring from the relative continuity and resemblance or similarity, displayed within and between some of our relatively changing, interrupted and different experiences, that they are appearances of continuously existing, self-identical, objects, existing outside, or beyond our experiences* (Hume, 1967, p. 187-218, esp. 206 & 215), Husserl, like Hume, resists such inferences. Consequently, unlike those who, as a concomitant of the aforementioned inference, subscribe to some form of thoroughgoing dichotomy, or Dualistic division, between appearances and reality, between our experiences of objects, or “things-as-they-appear” and “things (or objects)-in-themselves,” etc. supposedly existing outside or independently of these appearances or experiences, Husserl recognizes the self-evident fact that we cannot, even in principle, have an immediate or direct empirical experience of any realm of objects as existing independently of or beyond our experiences; that “...the “objective (understood in this way) ... is a theoretical – logical substraction ...of something that is in principle not perceivable, in principle not experienceable...” (Husserl, 1970a, p. 127 My addition in parentheses) Consequently, he suspends judgment upon, or brackets (the *epoche*), the existence of all such objects, on the grounds that they are empirically problematic. (Husserl, 1962, p. 95-100 & 1970b, p. 22-42)

Thus, building upon Hume who, drawing our attention to the fact that “...the doctrine of the independent existence of our sensible perceptions is contrary to the plainest experience,” (Hume, 1967, p. 210-11) maintained that “there can be no principles either of the understanding or fancy, which leads us directly to embrace this opinion of the double existence of perceptions and objects...” and (Hume, 1967, p. 211) that “the only existences, of which we are certain, are perceptions, which being immediately present to us by consciousness, command our strongest assent...” (Hume, 1967, p. 212), Husserl councils a *Phenomenological Reduction*, namely that we refrain from all assumptions, inferences or speculations concerning the existence, or otherwise, of a quasi-*Noumenal* realm or world of “things-in-themselves” outside or beyond our experiences, and instead restrict ourselves to providing a “radically empirical” or supposedly “presuppositionless description” of the “things themselves,” which is to say “things-as-they-appear” in or to immediate *Phenomenal* experiences or perceptions¹.

¹ “Radical Empiricism” stands in contrast to the “Naïve Empiricism” of philosophers such as

As Henry Margeneau succinctly articulates this stance:

It is wholly unwarranted to start a theory of knowledge with the ontological premise characterizing the spectator-spectacle distinction. If experience, on proper analysis invests this distinction with meaning, we are ready to accept it, but even then only as a property of the content of experience, actual or possible. I do not deny that the tree in front of my window is a real tree – real in a sense to be clarified – a tree which can be seen, touched, climbed, or felled. I refuse to perform the leap from this tree to another entity behind it, an entity which “causes” me to have these experiences. (Margeneau, 1959, p. 47)

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF A COMPLETE REDUCTION: THE CONCEPTUAL MEDIATION OF EXPERIENCE

However, although Husserl has thereby avoided all inferences and assumptions or preconceptions concerning the existence of experience transcending objects-in-themselves, or *appearance transcending “reality,”* careful attention to the phenomenologically reduced realm of experience reveals that, so far from experiencing what William James notably referred to as a “...blooming, buzzing, confusion” of *incoherent* impressions or sensations, I nevertheless continue, as ever, to experience what Hume has dubbed “bundles of perceptions” which, united by their *continuity and similarity*, appear to me as objective unities and events. Indeed as Husserl himself has pointed out, “I do not see color sensations, but colored things, I do not hear sensations of sound, but the song a woman is singing etc.,” (H. Lubb in Luckman, 1978, p. 108 quoting Husserl, 1913, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 374) and “...in immediate givenness, one finds anything but color data, tone data, other “sense” data ... instead ... I see a tree which is green; I hear the rustling of its leaves, I smell its blossoms etc.” (Husserl, 1970a, p. 233) A fact which, given that Husserl has insisted that we suspend judgement upon or bracket (the *epoche*) the supposed existence of a realm of objective “things-in-themselves”, would seem to imply that – as per the Kantian insight that the *sensible* is inextricably intertwined with the *intelligible* – our otherwise immediate and diverse impressions or sensations have been conceptually unified or mediated; that even our *supposedly* most fundamental *perception* of the apparently most basic data are always interpreted and understood in terms of our (*pre*)conceptions. In which case, as Merleau-Ponty points out, “The most important lesson which the [phenomenological] reduction teaches us is the impossibility of a complete reduction.” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. xiv)

Locke and others, who while they claim to be empiricists, insist that they know of the existence of “things-in-themselves” which is to say objects existing outside and beyond experience, which as such stand in direct contrast to Husserl’s “things themselves” which are, as such, precisely and only what is given or appears to or in experience.

Indeed some have rightly detected, in Husserl's later work, notably *The Crisis of European Philosophy and Transcendental Phenomenology* (Husserl, 1970a, p. 127), elements of hermeneutic interpretation. And while this is widely held to be the result of his attempt to reach some form of rapprochement with Heidegger's hermeneutic view, in fact as far back as 1900, and long before Heidegger came on the philosophical scene, Husserl was already well aware – as given the contribution of Schleiermacher to scriptural interpretation, not to mention that of Dilthey and other hermeneuticists to the social scientists, few German scholars of the time could not have been – not only of the role of hermeneutic interpretation in textual exegesis, but of its wider application also.

For instance, as he explicitly states as early as *Logical Investigations* (1900):

The grasp of understanding, in which the meaning of a word becomes effective, is, in so far as any grasp is in a sense an understanding and an interpretation, akin to the divergently carried out "objective interpretations" in which, by way of an experienced sense-complex, the intuitive presentation ... of an object... arises. (Husserl, 1970c, p. 309)

And again, "Sensations, animated by interpretations, present objective determinations in corresponding percepts of things..." (Husserl, 1970c, p. 356)

Husserl was then cognizant from early on that, as Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology was *later* to explicate more fully, something akin to the hermeneutic interpretation, and thus the *translational understanding*, of a text as *signifying* something or other was also involved in the *seeing* of certain experiences as *appearances* of some thing, or phenomenal "object," or other. As he later put it "...The objective is precisely never experienceable as itself.... Many conceptual intermediaries are often involved..." (Husserl, 1970a, p. 129). A view not uncommon within his intellectual culture. As Einstein, for instance, informs us that:

...the formation of the word, and hence the concept "ball," is a kind of thought economy enabling the child to combine very complicated sense impressions in a simple way... Mach also thinks ...the formulation of scientific theories ...takes place in a similar way. We try to order the phenomena to reduce them to simple form, until we can describe [*and explain and predict we might add*] what may be a large number of them with the aid of a few simple concepts. (Einstein in Heisenberg, 1971, p. 64-5)

AN OBJECTION RAISED

The fact that we don't experience a "blooming, buzzing confusion" of diverse and changing impressions or sensations is well recognized by

phenomenologists. Thus as Maurice Merleau-Ponty affirms, “Pure sensation ... corresponds to nothing in our experience...”, “...there is no experience of sensation...” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 3 & 7). A view reiterated by Jean-Paul Sartre, who asserts that “...we never in ourselves encounter that phantom and strictly subjective impression which is sensation...”, “...the notion of sensation ... does not correspond to anything which I experience...” (Sartre, 1956, p. 314 & 315) Rather, Sartre insists “...always I am conscious of ... objects” (Sartre, 1956, p. 312). However this fact is, of course, something of a “double edged sword” as it were. For while, on the one hand, this may be taken as indicative of the conceptual mediation of experience, as Merleau-Ponty has most perceptively pointed out, this same fact, according to which we do not experience such diverse and changing sensations but rather objective unities, renders the claim that this is due to the conceptual or interpretive mediation of diverse sensations, empirically problematic. Thus, as he explains, it is certainly true that:

Once perception is understood as an interpretation, sensation, which has provided a starting point, is finally superseded, for all perceptual consciousness is already beyond itself, the sensation is not experienced and consciousness is always consciousness of an object... Pure sensation ...is an illusion... (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 37)

Consequently:

To the world of opinion, perception can appear as an interpretation. [*On the other hand*] For consciousness itself, how could it be a process of reasoning since there are no sensations to provide it with premises, or an interpretation, because there is nothing prior to it to be interpreted?” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 37)

In other words, if, as Husserl *et al* correctly noted, we do not experience sensations *per se* but (phenomenally coherent unities or) “objects” etc., then while this *might* be taken as evidence for the fact that we are always *actively* deploying interpretive (pre)conceptions, and thus constituting “objective” unities out of (phenomenal) sensations, given the absence of such sensations there is no “starting point” of undifferentiated experiences whose eventual appearance as objective unities would necessarily imply such conceptual mediation or interpretation. Indeed given that we no more experience undifferentiated sensations than we do *quasi-Noumenal* objects or “things-in-themselves,” then in light of Husserl’s recognition that we are *unable to rule one way or the other* regarding the *existence or otherwise* of experience transcending objects or “things-in-themselves” (the *epoche*), it is equally plausible to take the fact that all of our perceptions display an “objective” unity as indicative of their actually being appearances or reflections of just such objects existing “in-themselves”.

OBJECTION ANSWERED: FROM PHENOMENOLOGY TO THE HERMENEUTICS OF PERCEPTION

Notwithstanding the success of this refutation however, there is ample *empirical* evidence of the role of *interpretive conceptions and preconceptions*, and thus of the language in which they are constituted or embodied, in structuring our *perceptions; a role which so far from being indirectly inferred from the fact that we experience objects etc. rather than sense data or sensations, is directly experienceable.*

Turning, for instance, to the well-known *Gestalt* experiments in cognition, the “Duck/Rabbit” experiment demonstrates that two people with the same retinal impressions may see different objects, while the inverting lenses experiment demonstrates that two people with different retinal impressions may see the same thing². While if someone who only perceives, the “rabbit” for example, is told that the picture may also be seen as a “duck,” s/he will then often be able to see the “duck.” Thus, without invoking *undifferentiated sense-data, pure sensations* or the like, this example nevertheless clearly demonstrates that, so far from being *passive* reflectors of already predetermined and determinate objectivities, we *actively* participate in the conceptual or linguistic structuring and constitution of these objectivities. As Michael Polanyi affirms, “...the mind actively participates in our sensory awareness of things,” (Polanyi, 1958, p. 296) that “...what we see ...depends very much on the way we make sense of it.” (Polanyi, 1958, p. 20). The perception of a rabbit being *re-translatable*, which is to say *understood and thus seen*, as the perception of a duck.

Indeed, proceeding to a more general level of cognition, Arthur Koestler has noted that:

If you hold the index finger of the right hand ten inches, and the same finger on the left hand twenty inches, in front of your eyes, you see them as being of equal size, although the image on the retina of the one is *twice as large* as the other. People moving about in a room do not shrink or grow in size – as they should – because we *know* that their size remains constant ... the photographic lens has no such built-in mechanism, it will honestly show the left finger twice as large as the right, and the sunbathing girl’s [*sic*] foot stretched out towards the camera as a case of elephantiasis.” (Koestler, 1981, p. 78)

² A subject, looking through “inverting lenses” which inverts his/her retinal impressions, with the consequence that objects on one’s left initially appear to be on one’s right, and *vice versa*, eventually mentally reverses the images so that s/he in fact perceives things the “correct” or same way round as a subject who is not looking through such lenses. (See Kuhn, 1970, p. 126-7)

Thus, as Merleau-Ponty insists, while:

It is frequently said that I restore the true size on the basis of the apparent size by analysis and conjecture. This is inexact for the very convincing reason that the apparent size... is not perceived by me... Thus there is no deciphering ... because the alleged signs are not given to me separately from what they signify. (Merleau-Ponty in Lawrence and O'Connor, 1967, p. 33)

Or, to put the same point in terms of Merleau-Ponty's previously cited formulation, there are no "premises", or pre-interpretive experiences – which in this case would presumably be the perception, in the first instance, of an apparently larger right index finger, and an apparently smaller left one, or apparently shrinking and apparently growing people – which would reveal our *subsequent* "perception" (of the fingers as being of the same size, and of the people as being of stable size) to be the products of interpretation. Nevertheless however, even absent such "premises", clear evidence of the interpretive nature of my perceptions is provided by the fact that, *despite distinct and demonstrable differences* (in the aforementioned circumstances) *in the sized of the retinal impressions* caused by the left and right index finger, and by people moving closer and more distant from me in a room, these are "seen" or "perceived" by me as being of fingers of equal size, and as of individuals remaining the same size.

In sum then, if simply *all* perceptions are conceptually, which is to say linguistically, mediated or interpreted, we no more experience pre-interpretive sense data than "a world of objects-in-themselves" existing outside or independently of experience. And this being so, it is *prima facie* impossible to determine whether the fact that we experience "objects" rather than sensations is the result of an active interpretive structuring of sense data into objective unities, or of our experiences passively reflecting a world of experience transcending objects. Nevertheless, conflicts in our perceptions, such as those evidenced by the aforementioned *Gestalt* experiments, as well as disparities between our immediate (retinal) impressions and what we perceive to be the case just allude to, reveal our perceptions to be conceptually, and thus linguistically, mediated, and therefore undeniably the product of interpretation.

Moreover, while, as per the example immediately above, the fact that we do not experience the individuals moving about the room as shrinking or growing in size, is indicative of the role of our (pre)conceptions – of our "knowing" that their size remains constant as Koestler expressed it – in mediating our perceptions – Ames and his school have conducted an experiment where, conversely, the pre-conceptual mediation of our perceptions is precisely revealed by just such growing and shrinking.

In this case, Ames' cognitive psychologists constructed a trapezoidal room, with one pair of parallel walls, one of which is twice as *long* as the other, and both of which are at 90° to the front wall, thus making the far end of one (e.g. left) twice as far from the front wall of the room as the other (e.g. right). Furthermore, the back wall is also trapezoid the further distant (e.g. left) side being *taller* than the other. Mirrors and/or pictures, and tiles etc., which are normally rectangular, but in this instance, are in fact trapezoid (and thus capable of suggesting perspective) are placed in the room in such a manner as to have the effect of making the left and right side of the room to be of equal length, and, along with the trapezoid back wall, making the two back corners of the room when observed from the front of the room, appear to be of equal heights. Consequently, although when two people of equal size stand, one in each back corner of the room, the one (e.g. on the left) is twice as far from the observer as the other (on the right), and therefore makes a retinal impression on the observer which is much smaller than that made by the other (e.g. on the right), the observer, who perceives the room to be oblong, and of uniform height, concomitantly takes both people to be equidistant from her/him. Accordingly, s/he interprets the difference in the size of retinal impressions not, as in Koestler's example above, as indicative of the person's relative distance from him/her, but on the contrary as indicative of the person's height; one person (e.g. on the left) therefore *appearing* to be much smaller than the other (e.g. on the right). And when the two people simultaneously exchange places by walking across the back of the room, each to the opposite back corner, one (moving from left to right) *appears* to be growing in size, while the other (moving from right to left) *appears* to be shrinking! (Ittelson, 1952)

Conversely, "Ames and his school have shown that when a ball set against a featureless background is silently and rapidly inflated (by an air hose obscured from the observer by the ball itself) it is seen as if it retains its size and is coming nearer," for the reason, as Polanyi explains, that on the basis of most of our past experiences we "...construct [] a universal interpretive framework that assumes the ubiquitous existence of objects, retaining their size and shape..." (Polanyi, 1958, p. 96) The apparent challenge to this assumption caused by the inflating ball being overcome by regarding the change in size as a mere *appearance*, thus again highlighting the interpretive nature of our "perceptions". However, returning to the ball example, the experimenters then demonstrate to the observer that what s/he previously interpreted as an *apparent* increase in size due to the ball's *approaching* was in fact a *real* increase in size due to its *inflation*. Consequently, when the now fully inflated ball (suspended by thin, and therefore invisible, wires) is slowly propelled, at uniform speed and with a linear trajectory, directly towards the observer, who has adopted the inflation "framework" or conception, s/he interprets, and thus "perceives" the now *apparent* increase in size of the ball due to its *approaching*, as a *real* increase in size due to its continued *inflation*, rather than "perceiving" the ball as approaching.

As we can see from the above, and indeed any number of other potential examples, the interpretive nature of our experiences, which is to say the conceptual mediation of experience, is in no way necessarily *inferentially* dependent upon the empirically *problematic* claim that we would otherwise experience pure sensations, but is, to the contrary, directly exhibited by our perceptions themselves.

LANGUAGES' NON-ISOMORPHIC CONCEPTS AND TRANSLATIONAL TRANSFORMATION OF REALITY: LINGUISTIC UNTRANSLATABILITY AND COGNITIVE INCOMMENSURABILITY

Now assuming that we do *not* regard these concepts, which mediate our experiences or perceptions of objects, as having “fallen from the sky” as Derrida would put it, which is to say as deriving from Platonic or quasi-Platonic realm of transcendental absolutes, but rather – as de Saussure has shown, and Derrida has affirmed – as originally *constituted*, just as they are given to us, by the “linguistic” (broadly construed as semiotic) systems of signs, or language, which *signify* or *delineate them*³, then “Consequently... (as Habermas has observed) even perceptions already occur in the dimension of semiotic representation,” (Habermas, 1987, p. 97-8) and as such derive their meaning or significance from the concepts or language which mediates them. Indeed as Merleau-Ponty affirms:

...perception is just that act that creates, at a stroke, along with the cluster of data, the meaning which unites them—indeed which not only discovers the meaning *which they have*, but moreover sees to it *that they have* a meaning ...perception is understood as interpretation... (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 36)

In which case, given that the *semantic* concepts or meanings, and the *syntactical* or systemic relations which constitute them⁴, that are operative in one language are not isomorphic with those in another, then just as – as anyone with a passing familiarity with more than one language can attest – thoughts and ideas etc., not to mention nuances thereof, which are articulable in one language are not *necessarily* articulable in, or translatable into, another, so too, consequently, *perceptions* mediated by the concepts of one linguistic community may be different from those mediated by the concepts of another

³ Thus while “The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound-image...” (Saussure, 1959, p. 66. See also 67) “Whether we take the signifier or the signified, language has neither ideas nor sounds that existed before the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonetic differences that have issued from the system” (Derrida, 1982, p. 10-11 quoting Saussure, 1959, p. 120. See also Derrida 1973, p. 140, Saussure 1959, p. 113 & 117-18 and Derrida 1981, p. 18).

⁴ If then, as structuralist linguists such as Saussure and, following him, Poststructuralists, such as Derrida, have argued, words are defined, as in a dictionary, by their relations to other words, to which, to come full Hermeneutic Circle, the same applies, then clearly, as we can see affirmed in the preceding footnote, and as the structuralist mantra would have it, “Syntax generates semantics”.

linguistic community. That is to say that just as *linguistic “observations”* made in one language may not be exactly the same as, or correspond to, those made in another, so too the conceptually, and therefore linguistically, mediated, *empirical “observations”* of one linguistic community may not be exactly the same, or correspond to, those of another such community. Thus, *just as semantic meanings may undergo translational transformation between different languages, so too may empirical experience.* In which case then, given that our world, so far from being known to exist “in-itself” or independently of our perceptions or experiences, is, on the contrary, empirically constituted by or in these very perceptions or experiences themselves, then it follows directly that different linguistic communities may inhabit different worlds.

To put it otherwise, just as with literary hermeneutics where, as Heidegger has noted *vis a vis* textual interpretation and/or translation:

...when one is engaged in ...textual Interpretation, one likes to appeal [*beruft*] to what “stands there”... (yet) one finds that what “stands there” in the first instance is nothing other than the obvious undiscussed assumptions [*Vormeinung*] (i.e. theories or pre-conceptions) of the person who does the interpreting. (Heidegger, 1962, p. 192, my addition in rounded parentheses)

Likewise, with our perceptions or experiences, and thus with the empirically given material world, as Heidegger has also pointed out:

The greatness and superiority of the natural sciences during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries rests in the fact that all the scientists were philosophers. They understood that there are no mere facts but that a fact is only what it is in the light of the fundamental conception, and always depends on how far that conception reaches. (Heidegger in Krell, 1978, p. 247-8)

Clearly then, as Habermas insists “...even the apparently ultimate data resolve themselves ...into interpretations,” (Habermas, 1987, p. 97-8) and what Nietzsche referred to as “the myth of immaculate perception” is thus dispelled forever.

FROM THE PHYSICAL WORLD TO THE MENTAL WORLD

And like our *understanding* of linguistic utterances, as well as our *sensory experiences* of the world of physical objects etc., so too our *non-sensory experiences*, such as our feelings or emotions are also conceptually mediated or shaped. After all, while it may not have been uncommon for young English ladies in the 19th Century, especially if familiar with the novels of Jane Austin and the like, to experience “melancholia,” concomitantly with the increasing obsolescence of the term, and corresponding loss of prominence of the concept, such melancholic feelings would also seem to be very much less in evidence in the 21st Century. It is therefore the different concepts available

and/or prominent within different languages, and “language communities,” which would seem to account for what Rom Harre (1989) has identified as *The Social Construction of Emotions*. Clearly then, as Polanyi, as previously noted, put it, “...what we see or feel depends very much on the way we make sense of it.” (Polanyi, 1958, p. 20) And as with non-sensory experiences, presumably no less so with our dispositions to which our sensory and non-sensory experiences, thoughts and feelings give rise.

CONCLUSION

In sum, it would seem that not only our concepts or ideas, and thus our non-sensory thoughts and understanding, as well as our non-sensory feelings or emotions, and therefore our dispositions, but also indeed even our sensorially experienced or empirical world, are all mediated, and thus delineated or shaped, and thereby ultimately constituted, by language; for, as Derrida has claimed, “*There is nothing outside of the text*” (Derrida, 1976, p. 158). From which it clearly follows that just as ideas, thoughts and understanding conceived in one language may not necessarily be unproblematically translatable into, or concomitantly conceivable or understandable, in another, so too, also mediated as it is by our concepts, the life-world (*lebenswelt*), – understood *here* at least to include not only our non-sensory ideas, thoughts, understanding, feelings, emotions and dispositions, but also the empirically given material world – inhabited by one linguistic community, may not be unproblematically conceivable or indeed perceivable, by another. While even if the life-world of one linguistic community is not entirely incommensurable with that of another, the understanding and perception of one by the other will, as with the attempt to understand another, foreign, language, most surely undergo a certain *translational transformation*.

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