# CULTURAL DIVERSITY, LINGUISTIC HOSPITALITY AND ETHICAL REFLECTION IN PAUL RICOEUR'S HERMENEUTICS OF TRANSLATION

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## ABSTRACT

*Translation is never just a neutral communicative instrument to connect different linguistic communities or a disinterested process of transmitting messages. The act of translation has an additional ethical value in its function as a model to regulate the interaction between individuals and cultures. The bond of translation, according to Paul Ricoeur, with the inherent narrativity of the acts of recollecting and forgiving further reinforces the dialogicality that characterize translation as an act of exchange. He considers translation as a paradigm due to its mediating role between a diversity of languages and as a controlling metaphor in constructing a European ethos that calls for mutual recognition. This paper aims to investigate the employment of the potentialities of translation as an ethical act in mediating adverse cultural claims and reducing resistant cultural behaviours. Thus, the ultimate question to be addressed in this study is whether translation has the capacity to serve as a universal model in surpassing the limits of the nation-state to promote a more plural and democratic civil society.*

*Keywords: Linguistic hospitality, desire to translate, work of translation, narrative identity, alterity.*

## PAUL RICOEUR'ÜN ÇEVİRİ HERMENEUTİĞİNDE KÜLTÜREL ÇEŞİTLİLİK, DİLLERİN KONUKSEVERLİĞİ VE ETİK DÜŞÜNÜM

## ÖZ

*Çeviri asla yalnızca farklı dil topluluklarını birbiriyle bağlantılandıran yansız bir iletişim aracı ya da bu topluluklar arasında dilsel mesajların iletimini sağlayan tarafsız bir süreç olarak kavranamaz. Çeviri edimi, bireyler ve kültürler arası etkileşimi düzenlemede bir model işlevi yüklenebilmesi sebebiyle fazladan bir etik değere de sahiptir. Paul Ricoeur'e göre çevirinin hatırlama ve affetme edimlerine içkin olan anlatısallık ile kurduğu bağ aynı zamanda bir değiş tokuş ilişkisi sayılabilecek çeviriyi karakterize eden söyleşimsellik özelliğini de pekiştirir. Ricoeur, çeviriyi çeşitli diller arasındaki dolayımlayıcı rolünden dolayı bir paradigma olarak görür ve onu karşılıklı tanıma ilişkisini merkeze alan bir Avrupa ethosu*

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*inşasında denetleyici eğretileme olarak düşünür. Bu makalenin amacı, ahlaki bir eylem olan çevirinin sahip olduğu olanakların karşıt kültürel iddiaları dolayımlama ve birbirine direnç gösteren kültürel davranışların gerilimini azaltmakta kullanılmasını soruşturmaktır. Böylelikle, bu çalışmada irdelenecek nihai soru çevirinin daha çoğulcu ve demokratik bir sivil toplumun teşvik edilmesi için ulus-devletin sınırlarını aşmak yönünde evrensel bir model sunma kapasitesine sahip olup olmadığıdır.*

*Anahtar Sözcükler: Dillerin konukseverliği, çeviri yapma arzusu, çeviri işi, anlatısal özdeşlik, ötekilik*

## 1. Introduction

Philosophers who are concerned with the practice of translation mainly seek to employ it as a means to comprehend the nature of generation and transmission of meaning, to grasp the essence of understanding as a linguistic act, and to elaborate on the methodological aspects of interpreting texts in general. As Angelo Bottone succinctly points out, a philosophy of translation does not aim to instruct on translation in a straightforward manner, but rather, it learns from those who translate by problematizing what seems obvious and taken for granted in the linguistic transfer of messages (2012, p. 72). Especially hermeneutic philosophy, as a peculiar discipline concerned with understanding the concept of 'understanding', has always been in pursuit of models to conceptualize the personal act of comprehension, and hence its interest in translation. Hermeneutics starts with the notion of the individual (either as a meditating subject, a receiver of textual messages, or a translator of texts) as a historical person, who is in search for ways to be oriented within the surrounding social world, to comprehend other people, to interact with them and act in the society. So as to move beyond a naïve process of understanding, as Schleiermacher suggests, the hermeneutic process of interpreting has to be knowledgeable about a text's "conditions of origination, its situational background, and its placement within a larger text type entity" (qtd. in Stolze, 2010, p. 142). Therefore, a hermeneutically informed translator has always to keep in mind that he is mediating between the historical contexts of the foreign (original) text and his own. Any sort of objectivist methodology can never excuse the translator to ignore his personal historical 'horizon' while translating a text. The translator's awareness of his own horizon of experience is

not an obstacle for him before penetrating into unfamiliar horizons in the translation process; on the contrary, it generates the possibility of a genuine understanding and an enlargement of the translator's perspective. Thus, different cultures and frames of experience get into contact thanks to the translatorial act, in a 'fusion of horizons' in Gadamerean terminology, even enabling the translator to be a part of the foreign linguistic and cultural system rather than leaving him as a mere mediator between two entities (Stolze, 2010, p. 145).

Paul Ricoeur, as a hermeneutic philosopher, has always been interested in the act of translation as chiefly manifest in his works explicitly dealing with the subject, such as *On Translation*, together with some accompanying articles and lectures. No matter how limited the number of these texts is in comparison to the bulk of his corpus, it could be asserted that his other works that are concerned with textual and narrative hermeneutics are also applicable to the study of translation as philosophically illuminating efforts concerning the linguistic, textual and conceptual dynamics at work in the practice of translation. Another significant vein of contribution to the study of translation by Ricoeur could be classified as his approach to translation as a paradigm in setting contact with alterity. Translation, as Lisa Foran posits, is implicitly a background concern throughout most of Ricoeur's works as he philosophizes on the relation of the self to the Other, further advocating the necessity of the Other in the constitution of the self (2012, p. 75). The inevitability of translation for the existence and improvement of a mother tongue should be grasped in the same parallel, with a view to appreciating the function of foreign cultural-linguistic resources in an understanding of one's own cultural-linguistic context. Furthermore, the practice of translation is already loaded with an ethical value since an encounter with alterity cannot be solely apprehended on an epistemological basis, but it requires moral attitude towards the Other as well. Translating consists in deciding on possible ways to connect with a foreign meaning such as acts of receiving, interpreting, judging, appropriating and etc. In doing so, the translator as a hermeneutic subject also seeks to maintain the identity of his self and culture through this process of change and exchange. Once he channels the foreign into his own cultural sphere, he acts as a gateway for the entrance of transformative forces into his

own culture. The translator's cultural context is then challenged to remain open to such external effects while simultaneously insisting to stay the same. Hence, translation needs to be handled with an ethical perspective "as long as the desire of translating corresponds to an active dimension, a doing, an acting in the world," including a production of values and pleasure (Bottone, 2012, p. 72). Ricoeur, with good reason, is concerned with translation as a model for ethical reflection on the relationship between the self and the Other, the same and the different. In that respect, his reflection expands in the direction of conceptualizing the proximity of the self to the Other as well as the fundamental otherness within the self. This study aims to investigate the way Ricoeur formulates the model of translation with reference to a set of concepts central to his ethical reflection, such as the multiplicity of languages, linguistic hospitality, desire to translate, linguistic responsibility and etc. Ricoeur's reflection also promises to address the tragic sorts of encounter with alterity as well as it anticipates the rise of an international *ethos* based on the healing power of translation both as a tool and as a model for the exchange of narratives and memories between traumatized communities. Finally it is also within the scope of this paper to envision translation as a humane practice as long as it is concerned with Ricoeur's ultimate aim of aligning the translational act with such basic human qualities as vulnerability, capability, forgiveness and responsibility in accounting for the ontological features of man.

## 2. Diversity of Languages, Plurality of Cultures

Ricoeur starts off with reconsidering Wilhelm von Humboldt's basic presumption of the infinite diversity of languages. According to Humboldt, it is justifiable to speak of a universal 'language' belonging to the entire human race[2] (based on the human capability to speak) whereas, at the same time, it is equally correct to contend that there is an irreducible plurality of 'languages' that belong to national communities, functioning by the principle of individualization in harmony with the general structures of human

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[2] George Steiner, in *After Babel*, posits that Humboldt's philosophy of language conjoins Montesquieu's environmentalism, Herder's nationalism and the post-Kantian dictum of an active human consciousness equipped with the potential to shape the perceived world. According to Steiner, Humboldt is also the first one to underline the adverse effects of language on man, referring to its external identity and alienating power on man, which could do violence to man, besides the inward and the expressive aspect. See Steiner (pp. 85-86).

language (1836/2011, p. 143). It is due to the fact that men speak many languages on the face of the earth instead of a single language that there is translation. However, Ricoeur believes that this presumption is also an enigmatic one since such radical multiplicity proves useless and harmful for human communication by sidestepping the Darwinian measures of usefulness and adaptation for survival. This heterogeneity should be traced back to the myth of Babel, which accounts for the linguistic catastrophe that has generated "'scattering' on the geographic plane and 'confounding' on the communication plane" (Ricoeur, 2004/2006, p. 12). This scattering brings forth the dissimilarity of languages in the phonetic, lexical, and syntactic levels, leading to an ultimate jamming of communication between different language communities. Therefore, paradoxically, Ricoeur believes that the multiplicity that presents the ground for the possibility of translation is at the same time the exact reason for conceiving it as impossible *a priori* (2004/2006, p. 30). The multiplicity of languages is not only a manifestation of the plurality characteristic of human cultures but also an indication of human vulnerability due to a lack of apprehension in an encounter with the Other's language. It is again the duty and the aim of translation to overcome this lack and establish human proximity.

Thinking on the practice of translation, Ricoeur recognizes both external (interlingual) translation and internal (intralingual) translation as equally legitimate points to start with. The former approach is advocated by Antoine Berman in *The Experience of the Foreign* and the latter by George Steiner in *After Babel*. Ricoeur takes the first route, which allows him to reflect on the relation of the peculiar to the foreign and hence to test Humboldt's claims on diversity. However, he follows this path only to reach a junction with the second route which treats translation as the interpretation of any meaningful utterance within a single speech community. He agrees with Steiner's proposition that "[t]o understand is to decipher," (Steiner, 1998, p. xii) and further with his assertion that "[a]ny model of communication is at the same time a model of translation" (Steiner, 1998, p. 47). This approach equates translation in the broadest sense with restatement and paraphrase in every day speech, which denotes to say the same thing in other words with a possible increase in the original expression's import. Translation as restatement, however, is never a matter of saying something with the

same meaning, as Denman notes, but "to say something new, which is meant to do the same meaning," and hence a more responsive sort of reinventing utterances or texts (2012, pp. 158, 160). As a consequence, Ricoeur's method entails tackling with the difficulties of internal translation in one's own language as informed with the paradoxes inherent in the translation from one language to another. Put in other words, he seeks to bridge the sort of understanding created by the interlocution between the members of different linguistic communities (foreigners) and the one between the members of the same community (everyday others). By doing so, he underscores the much ignored fact that "[t]here is something foreign in every other," alluding to polysemy and ambivalences inherent within the same speech community (Ricoeur, 2004/2006, p. 25).

The imperfections of natural languages and their liability to create misunderstandings in everyday use cannot be eliminated or compensated for by recourse to a perfect, universal language. Since such recourse would ultimately terminate the very peculiarities and the living force of a natural language, the substitution of an artificial language for natural diversity is unacceptable. This is revealed, as Ricoeur argues, by a focus on the processes of internal translation. Steiner's motto, 'To understand is to translate', never simply denotes converting internal translation as a supplement for external translation, but it also refers to the irreducible multiplicity of the genuine signifying processes inherent in a living language. Therefore, language's propensity for enigma, abstruseness and non-communication that entails interpretation, evident in internal translation, further includes "the one to oneself relationship in the *secret*" (Ricoeur, 2004/2006, p. 28; original emphasis). Consequently, untranslatability stems both from the radical dissimilarity of languages to one another and from one's relationship with the ineffable in one's own language. In other words, one's relationship with the language of the foreign is also mirrored in one's deeper incapacity to relate the secret, the hermetic and the repressed to oneself in his mother tongue.

Translation assumes difference specifically between languages and generally between the self and another. As O'Neill (2012) argues, translation requires differences and dissimilarities to exist and function while it simultaneously needs some common origin among languages, as expressed by Walter Benjamin in his theory of 'kinship'. Based on both difference and kinship, the capacity

to translate from one language to another indicates the possibility of transferring meaning "without totally prejudicial and, above all, entirely irreparable semantic loss," which should also be "postulated more fundamentally as an *a priori* of communication" (Ricoeur, 1992/1996, p. 4). For any dialogic interaction to occur, inexorable plurality and impenetrable solitude must be balanced, as the two polar extremes in the relationship between languages. The remedy for radical heterogeneity is translation itself, which should protect this fundamental multiplicity in return. That is to say, in repressing heterogeneity to enable communication, translation should neither construct the other (the source text) as an impenetrable alterity nor collapse the other into selfsameness and homogeneity (collapse the source text into the target text). Translation as a humanistic practice should adopt the movement "from plurality to intimacy," (2001/2007, p. 28) suggests Ricoeur in his introduction to *Reflections on the Just*, signalling an ethical model beyond the sphere of languages as such. This delicate balance in the labour of translation, emblematic for various sorts of relations with alterity, is then formulated in Ricoeur's words as "safeguard[ing] distance in the proximity" (2004/2006, p. 29), as the only possible way to promise an overcoming of the scattering and confusion after Babel.

### 3. The Task of Translation

Together with the Humboldtian affirmation of the diversity of languages, it is also the ethnolinguistic theories of Benjamin Lee Whorf and Edward Sapir that pointed at the non-superimposable character of different linguistic systems, taking for granted the relativity, heterogeneity and a consequent untranslatability of languages. In this case, Ricoeur formulates two possibilities: translation is either impossible in principle if the diversity of languages is radical, or it is a practical possibility since there is and has always been translation throughout history thanks to merchants, travelers, ambassadors and etc. (Ricoeur, 2004/2006, p. 14). So, any inquiry into the practice of translation should firstly reconstruct the *a priori* conditions of this practice because translation is always an act, a "doing, in pursuit of its theory" (Ricoeur, 2004/2006, p. 32). There are two apparent versions of the solution to establish an *a priori* that would make possible a theory of translation, both of which Ricoeur is equally critical. The first one is the search for a pre-Babel origin of languages claimed by Gnostics as well as by Walter

Benjamin in the form of a 'pure language' in his essay "The Task of the Translator".[3] The second option is a quest for the transcendental codes universally underlying all language structures, as historically accounted in Umberto Eco's *The Search for the Perfect Language (The Making of Europe)* and partly advocated in Noam Chomsky's theory of generative grammar. For Ricoeur, both versions are bound to fail and the practice of translation cannot benefit either from a nostalgia for an original language or from a systematic reconstruction of a universal artifice. The gap between the universal and the natural (empirical) languages is insurmountable and a totally exhaustive account can never be given of how all spoken languages with their peculiarities could be derived from a perfect language. Furthermore, there is no historical consensus on how a perfect language could establish the equivalence between the sign (language) and the thing (world), leaving no room for arbitrariness in their connection. Seeing no point in elaborating on the idea of untranslatability, Ricoeur decides to handle what is 'paradigmatic' in "the indefatigable work of translation," that is the ceaseless historical effort of mankind in liaising languages with one another through translation (2001/2007, p. 24).

Ricoeur leaves aside the theoretical 'translatability-untranslatability' debate to go beyond a speculative dead end and moves towards the 'faithfulness-betrayal' pair as a more practical alternative. The question being whether the translator should be more faithful to the source language or the target language, Ricoeur focuses on the two sides of a resistant relationship by drawing from Schleiermacher's most noted two-piece paradox: 'bringing the reader

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[3] Ricoeur critically considers Benjamin's advocacy for a 'pure language' as nostalgia for an originary language. However, Derrida, also suspicious of the benefits of a homogenized 'language of truth', believes that Benjamin's effort to unravel the kinship between languages and to reveal an origin, in fact, implicates the interaction between the 'modes of intentionality' each language has. In "De Tours de Babel," Derrida alleges that since something is intended through each language and no language can attain its intentionality without relating to another language, languages ply, co-deploy and co-operate in their intentional modes. This, for Derrida, is indeed what Benjamin inherently wants to express; and Benjamin's 'pure language' is not a universal one in the Leibnizian sense, but can rather be defined as "the being-language of the language," which connotes a unity that posits no self-identity. See Derrida (1985) (pp. 200-202). For a further discussion of Ricoeur's possible misinterpretation of Benjamin's argument on 'pure language', see O'Neill (pp. 132-133).

to the author' and 'bringing the author to the reader' (2004/2006, p. 4). Schleiermacher, in his essay "On the Different Methods of Translating," engages with the question of bringing the reader of the translated text to a complete understanding of the original work of the author without forcing the reader out of the sphere of his mother tongue.[4] The same problem, as Ricoeur accounts, is also reverberated in Franz Rosenzweig's definition of translation as 'serving two masters' at the same time, the one being "the foreigner in his strangeness," and the other "the reader in his desire for appropriation" (Ricoeur, 2004/2006, pp. 22-23).

One eventual formulization of this tension is also designed by Antoine Berman, who problematizes the resistance of the text to be translated in reciprocity to the resistance of the language of reception, highlighting the Freudian overtones of the term 'resistance' (Ricoeur, 2004/2006, p. 8). It is in this mediating role of the translator between two masters lies the test of translation. Ricoeur regards translation as a battle fought on two fronts including a two-part 'resistance', whose psychoanalytic connotation leads Ricoeur to a comparison of the term with the Freudian 'work of remembering' and 'work of mourning'. As Richard Kearney notes in his introduction to *On Translation*, Ricoeur's use of the Freudian notion of 'working through' (*Durcharbeitung*) puts an "emphasis on the *labour* character of translation [that] refers to the common experience of tension and suffering which the translator undergoes as he/she checks the impulse to reduce the otherness of the other, thereby subsuming alien meaning into one's own scheme of things" (2006, p. xv; original emphasis). The work of translation and the work of recollection are equivalent efforts in their shared fear of (or hatred against) the foreign and in their nervousness for self-sufficiency. Analogous to the resistance against the work of remembering, the resistance against the work of translation on the

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[4] Reflecting on the translator's task of making the author and the reader meet, Schleiermacher, formulates the two sides of the paradox as follows: "Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader toward him. Or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author toward him. The two roads are completely separate that the translator must follow one or the other as assiduously as possible, and any mixtures of the two would produce a highly undesirable result, so much so that the fear might arise that author and reader would not meet at all." See Schleiermacher (p. 149).

part of the reader may appear in the form of a refusal of the foreign material to infiltrate and threat the identity of his mother tongue. This resistance is as strong as the probable resistance on the part of the foreign language in its claim of untranslatability and its refusal to be incorporated into the language of reception. According to Ricoeur, the work of mourning corresponds to a liberating acceptance of the loss of meaning in any process of translation and a renunciation of the idea of a perfect translation, which would ultimately ease these two sorts of tension. It is only thanks to such a renunciation of an absolute linguistic equivalence that there arises the possibility of 'happy' translations (Ricoeur, 2004/2006, p. 10). Hence follows the idea that betrayal is an inevitable aspect of the practice of translation and the Ricoeurean dictum that, rather than to any idiom, the real faithfulness is to language itself and in fact to its "capacity for safeguarding *the secret* contrary to its proclivity to betray it" (Ricoeur, 2004/2006, p. 28; emphasis added).

Happy translations are the ones that dismiss the translation process as an agonistic task and that re-take it as a search for equivalence without adequacy between the original and the translated texts. Since there is no third text, or rather an objective measure, that would demonstrate the identical meaning expected to pass from the source text to the target text, there is only a non-adequate correspondence between the two. In other words, in the absence of total adequacy, there is only a 'supposed equivalence' between the source and the target texts, and this equivalence cannot be founded on an identity of meaning (Ricoeur, 2004/2006, p. 22). The idea of equivalence without identity does not refer to a presupposed equivalence between two texts that pre-exists the practice of translation; but rather, it refers to a sort of equivalence that is produced or performed through the translation process.

### 4. Ethical Implications of Translation

Translation is an ethical paradigm in its mediating function for Ricoeur. It fulfills this function involving both the interpretation of meaning in one's own language and the transfer of meaning from one language to another. As Scott-Baumann (2009) asserts, this mediation is a way to arbitrate between conflicting versions of reality, which consistently reflects Ricoeur's overall attitude concerning hermeneutic philosophy in *The Conflict of Interpretations* (p. 106). Mediation being the raison d'être of translation, translation should serve as a paradigm for the encounter with alterity and a

model of dialogue for the clashing perceptions of reality. Richard Kearney, in like manner, underlines translation's basic role as a 'transfer of understanding', which "entails an exposure to strangeness" (2006, pp. xvii-xviii).

Antoine Berman, in his much acclaimed *The Experience of the Foreign*, mainly argues that the practice of translation is a dialogue where one culture establishes a relationship with the Other and through which it both comes to know itself better and becomes liable to transform itself. Translation as a task is always something more than mere communication; it indicates both the transfer of the foreign into one's native language and the test, or the trial, of the foreign in one's native culture. Berman designates an 'ethical aim' for the act of translation, which he formulates as "to open up in writing a relation with the Other, to fertilize what is one's Own through the mediation of what is Foreign;" and this aim is quite the opposite of the ethnocentric structure in every culture that narcissistically yearns to be an unadulterated whole (1984/1992, p. 4). In contrast to what he considers 'bad translation' – that systematically negates the strangeness of the foreign work – 'good translation' is eager to host the foreign, welcoming the possibilities for a critical reflection on one's own cultural reservoir while, at the same time, trying to appropriate (to make its own) what the foreign culture offers. So, translation acts as a process of cross-breeding between cultures, which ultimately works to decenter the claims of ethnocentric purity. In that sense, Ricoeur contends that Berman's ethical aim in translation, which is manifest in a desire to know the Other, is "grafted onto this curiosity about the foreigner" (2004/2006, p. 32). It is this curiosity and desire which, in the end, serves to 'potentiate' the original text and simultaneously makes possible the enrichment of the receiving culture.

The desire to translate, also alternatively phrased by Berman as "the drive of translating" (1984/1992, p. 7), cannot be comprehended only with reference to the constraints the translator undergoes and to the usefulness that is expected of the translated text. This desire always expresses the additional wish to be in touch with the foreign and hence for an expansion of one's linguistic and cultural horizons. It connotes a dialogicality between the self and the Other that cannot be measured merely by the pragmatic gains to be yielded by the act of translation. This desire "seeks to transform the

native language through a confrontation with non-native" languages and therefore to render one's own language more flexible, playful and even more pure (Berman, 1984/1992, p. 8)[5]. The desire to translate, being exemplary of the labour required to overcome the practical difficulties in the practice of translating, thus also bears a moral significance with recourse to the wish to push a language's limits further and to know the Other deeper in a host language (Ricoeur, 2001/2007, p. 27). This urge is connected to the test of the foreign as it is hosted in a native tongue and necessitates meditation on the experience of the foreign by the members of the native linguistic community. This desire is even evident in the need to re-translate due to dissatisfaction with the already present translations in a language, particularly of great texts like the scriptures and the classics like Homer, Shakespeare, Cervantes and etc. To retranslate, being the most concrete affirmation of the never ending insistence on translating almost as an imperative, brings forth a two-fold meditation on such issues as the receptivity of a language in the face of the foreign, the new role(s) that the foreign may attain in the target culture, and the consequent change within the recipient culture as to the ethical attitude towards certain texts. Therefore, translation, and more specifically retranslation, posits an ethical injunction that essentially enjoins to stay open to a critically deliberated exchange with the foreign with a view to ruling out a pure appropriation of the Other within one's own culture. This injunction is inherent in the ambivalent task of the translator, which Berman expresses as "to force his own language to adorn itself with strangeness, and to force the other language to transport itself into his mother tongue" (1984/1992, p. 5).

Just as there is no uncontaminated and untranslated language, Foran underlines with reference to Ricoeur and Derrida, there is neither a pure self nor an absolute Other (Foran, 2012, p. 80). In fact, the relational idea of the self formed in an inescapable contact with the various sources of otherness is among Ricoeur's major concerns as early as in *Oneself as Another*. In the final study of this seminal work, titled "What Ontology in View?" his philosophical anthropology deals with a polysemy of otherness inherent within the self. He designates the fundamental sources of this internal otherness

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[5] For a similar discussion on 'the desire for the foreign' and a 'kinship with foreign existence,' see Schleiermacher (pp. 151-152).

in the form of a triad – the body, the other person, and conscience – which is also inevitable for the constitution of an ethical human subject.[6] The ethical aim and the desire to know other people are already dependent on this fundamental requirement of the self for a mediation of the Other to know and to reflect on itself. Translation, in like manner, is a source for the self and for one's own culture to know itself through the mediating function of the Other, of a foreigner who is a constituent component of oneself. In that sense, Ricoeur alludes to Hölderlin's motto preaching the necessity for an Other in educating and configuring oneself: "What is one's own must be learned as well as what is foreign" (Ricoeur, 2004/2006, p. 21). Having said this, it should also be noted that translation mediates two unfamiliar cultural and historical horizons to enable their communication by bridging the gap between them, and it still maintains their irreducible difference so as not to end up collapsing one into another. It is actually this gap and difference that generates meaning in general and makes translation possible.

### 4.1. Linguistic Hospitality

Ricoeur uses the term 'linguistic hospitality' to point at such a desire to deal with meanings other than one's own without ever expecting to perfectly bridge the gap. He defines it as an act "where the pleasure of dwelling in the other's language is balanced by the pleasure of receiving the foreign word at home, in one's own welcoming house" (Ricoeur, 2004/2006, p. 10). This sort of hospitality may tangibly pose an instance of the move from plurality, or a diversity of languages, to intimacy, or a clear and reciprocal understanding in dialogue. Linguistic hospitality, Ricoeur suggests, may serve as a comprehensive model for all instances of understanding. Hospitality as a model for understanding is justified by the absence of an objective third-person perspective over the source and target languages; and thus, it calls for the renunciation of the ideal of a perfect translation. In other words, linguistic hospitality marks a passage from a perspective of authority to that of a welcoming of languages. The act of welcoming is a matter of accepting the challenge of living together with the Other as a guest in just terms. Translation, and language in general, in this case may also

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[6] For a full ontological and ethical discussion of Ricoeur's triadic schema of the forms of otherness within selfhood, see Ricoeur (1990/1992) (pp. 317-356).

be taken as a gift from the Other because, as Foran quite accurately posits, it is in the language of the Other that a new world is given to me and it is thanks to it that I am allowed to give what is mine to the Other, guaranteeing the connection of the individual with the communal (2012, p. 77). Happiness, which is achieved by a turn from mourning for a perfect translation to an acknowledgement of the impossibility of such an ideal, also exists in linguistic hospitality in the form of a happiness of translating. This hospitality and happiness eliminates any sort of fear or hatred of the foreign (Ricoeur, 2004/2006, p. 23).

A language discovers its potentialities and limits through linguistic hospitality. In other words, it discovers itself as another, in the presence of the challenge and resistance coming from a foreign language. Translators are agents who welcome this challenge and expand the potentialities of their own language by practically testing the foreign. They are the ones to internalize the labour of translation within their mother tongue, meaning that translators are the ones capable of seeing their own languages as an Other from an external vantage point. It is therefore Ricoeur's basic premise that translation is as necessary for the constitution of a language as the Other is essential for the constitution of a self. Ricoeur, in that sense, advocates a Derridean attitude in establishing reciprocity between the self and the Other, in eliminating the dominance of the self on the Other, and in displacing the dominance of the original text on the translated text as a copy.[7] Both the source text and the target text are mutually indebted to one another and neither of them are mere donors or receivers of the gift of translation. They rather share an essential and mutual bond in that there is no self-understanding without the mediation of the Other. Neither the source culture/text or the target culture/text can attain self-understanding unless they engage with each other, which is a projection of Ricoeur's replacement of the sovereign, idealist subject by an "*engaged self* which only finds itself after it has traversed the field of foreignness and returned to itself again, this time altered and enlarged, 'othered'"

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[7] In "Des Tours de Babel," Derrida cancels the binary opposition between the original and the version, namely the original text and the translated text. The translated text is not a reproduced image or a copy of the original text. Accordingly, he does not conceptualize the translator as the 'indebted receiver' who is subject to the gift of the original. Rather, he asserts that the original is the debtor in its essential 'demand' to be translated. See Derrida (1985) (pp. 179-180).

(Kearney, 2006, p. xix; emphasis added). Furthermore, Ricoeur also seeks to extend the range of this bond of linguistic hospitality, and offers a 'translation *ethos*', which would echo this gesture of hospitality at the cultural and international level.

### 4.2. Translation as a New *Ethos* for Europe

In his article "Reflections on a New Ethos for Europe," Ricoeur is concerned with presenting a liberating ethical model and an alternative political imagination for Europe which would not repeat the flaws and the structures of the nation-state at the supranational level. His main aim is to look for better ways of integrating 'identity' and 'alterity' within the European political organization and public sphere. For such an end, he offers three models, which are also interrelated among themselves: 1) the model of translation, 2) the model of the exchange of memories, 3) and the model of forgiveness.

Ricoeur welcomes linguistic plurality together with the given fact that Europe is ineluctably polyglot. However, he also speaks of two dangerous situations that would raise a threat to this plurality, which are either the triumph of a great cultural language as the sole medium of all communication among European nations or an emergent risk of incommunicability through a withdrawal of each culture into its own linguistic tradition (Ricoeur, 1992/1996, p. 4). Ricoeur offers the model of translation as a protector of the linguistic diversity in Europe and as a guarantor of the ethical vision required to sustain the diversity of cultural resources. He emphasizes the Humboldtian model of linguistic diversity which would home various sources of otherness as a guest and favours an ethics of living together. Therefore, he firstly underscores the necessity for translators, bilinguals, and the teaching of at least two living European languages (including the ones that are not in a culturally dominant position) at the institutional level. However, what is more significant takes place at the spiritual level, which refers to a process of the transference of the mental universe of one culture to another, including its customs, fundamental beliefs, convictions and etc. This model of translation is basically meant to address the problems posed by the construction of Europe as an organization and of European identity as a cultural entity. The mutual exchange and enrichment of distinctive cultural resources in the act of translation between the original language and the receiving language assists European political imagination as a regulating idea.

The second model that is essentially related to the first one is the exchange of memories. Similar to the model of translation, the exchange of memories between two cultures or nations entails the translation of "a foreign culture into the categories peculiar to one's own," which would presuppose an awareness and acceptance of the ethical and spiritual categories of the Other's cultural milieu (Ricoeur, 1992/1996, p. 5). By memory, Ricoeur means something more than merely the psychological faculty of recollecting and preserving the traces of the past. Namely, he refers to the idea of the 'narrativity' of memories and to the fact that recollection needs narratives to function at the communal level of language. At this level, individuals and cultures articulate their identities within the stories they tell of themselves and others. In other words, it is how the Other narrates my actions as well as my own account for my actions that determines my identity. 'Narrative identity'[8] indicates the type of identity constructed in relation to the way one's life story is told by himself and by others. Insofar as one's life story can be told and retold each time in different ways by oneself as well as by others, the narrative identity of a subject is not the identity of an unchangeable individual substance or of fixed personal traits. Narrative identity is a dynamic sort of personal identity as it is endlessly made and remade within stories, personal and public, revolving around oneself and others. What eventually comes to the fore is the fact that one's life story is always intertwined with the stories of Others. My life narrative is a portion of the life stories of my significant and distant Others. In that respect, narratives help us to translate and interpret our own experiences to ourselves in a day-to-day basis while simultaneously they are instruments of translating oneself to others. Memories are accumulated around a narrative identity that is constructed within a narrative account of one's life story; and these narratives in return demand translation.

According to Ricoeur, it is phenomenologically impossible for one to know another's mind from within; hence memories and life experiences are not transferable from one mind to another

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[8] The fifth and sixth studies in Ricoeur's *Oneself as Another*, titled respectively as "Personal Identity and Narrative Identity" and "The Self and Narrative Identity," problematize the concept of narrative identity in relation to temporality, permanence and change in time, sameness and otherness, and ethical engagement. For a thorough analysis, see Ricoeur (1990/1992) (pp. 113-168).

(1992/1996, p. 7). However, it is thanks to narratives and translations that we could move, one more time, from speculative untranslatability to practical translatability as well as from a plurality of memories to an intimacy of the exchange of narratives. Owing to this capability, we could attest to another's point of view to the world.

In a similar vein to Ricoeur, Mona Baker, in her *Translation and Conflict*, gives an account of the formative and transformative potential of narratives through a cultural and sociological perspective in dealing with the conflicts between the personal and communal narratives of various individual or collective subjects.[9] The clash between the personal and the institutional narratives or between adverse narrative communities gives rise to a tension that is political and ethical in nature, in such diverse cases as war, immigration or social mobilization. This conflictual nature of identity formation amidst agonistic narrative practices render, for Baker, flexibility to the narrative identities of subjects that are rooted in a plurality of narratives. In that sense, such narrative plurality may potentially challenge the fixed narrative images or narratively consolidated dogmatic views that an individual or a collective subject has of itself and of the world. Conflicting narratives can either assist one to open up to change or, conversely, force him to isolate himself within the limits of a narrative community (Baker, 2006, p. 21). The power of narratives both to reproduce and contest the existing power structures underscores the political import of narratives and makes them an important discursive tool in the negotiation of conflicts. Translators and interpreters as language mediators consequently "play a crucial role in both disseminating and

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[9] Mona Baker presents a typology of narratives, drawing on the works by Margaret Somers and Gloria D. Gibson on social theory and narrativity. She speaks of four main categories of narratives with reference to their different functions: *Ontological* (personal) *narratives*, *public narratives*, *conceptual* (disciplinary) *narratives*, and *master narratives*. The first category of narratives includes our personal stories that we tell ourselves about our personal history and our place in the world. To the second category belongs the shared, collective narratives that construct a group identity of a narrative community. The third category refers to the stories and explanations that scholars designate about their objects of inquiry. The fourth category contains the narratives that historically determine the agents of an entire age such as progress, rationality, globalization and etc. For an analysis of these narrative categories, see Baker (pp. 28-49).

contesting public narratives within and across national boundaries"
(Baker, 2006, p. 5). Especially in the age of globalization, translation
is essential for all individual or collective subjects to legitimize their
versions of historical events and to publicize their political demands
that cannot be met by local authorities. Accordingly, Baker contends
that translation is not merely a by-product of social developments or
simply a consequence of the physical movement of people and texts
from one place to another, but rather it is the very process that
makes possible such developments in the first place (2006, p. 6).

Once the entanglement of stories in the interpersonal and
intercultural level is granted, there is no doubt for Ricoeur that the
identity of an individual as well that of a people is not a fixed entity
but the identity of a recounted story. The possibility to revise the
same story based on an act of recounting differently paves the way
for a 'plural reading' of a shared past. The 'founding events' of a
cultural past, which are already frozen within the collective memory
due to the embalming effect of a series of commemorating practices,
are reconsidered thanks to such an effort for plural reading. This
effort is never hostile to the historical reverence of certain founding
events; rather, it emphasizes the diversity of the ways to re-interpret
them. Besides, a plurality of perspectives towards cultural memories
and national histories in a dialogue between two cultures have an
emancipatory effect, firstly, as they are subjected to a cross reading
of two interacting parties. Secondly, the dead parts of life that have
been stuck in rigid traditions are reinterpreted and liberated. The re-
appreciation of traditions owing to a transference by narrative
exchange of memories and translation leads to the emancipation of
"the unfulfilled future within the past" that is unveiled after a critical
reading of traditions (Ricoeur, 1992/1996, p. 8). Thus, interpretive
traditions are re-enlivened to create a mutual recognition between
(supposedly adverse) cultural communities. The European ethos
Ricoeur seeks requires the democratization of the traditions through
an openness for diverse interpretive practices and the establishment
of a public space for discussions between various interpretive
communities.

Etienne Balibar (2001/2004), a political philosopher from a
Marxist background, tries to designate a more inclusive idea of
European citizenship in the post-national phase of historical
transformation, also taking into account transnational initiatives, in
*We, The People of Europe?* With a scope of the democratization of the

European public space, he describes Europe as a gathering of 'worksites' where new aspects of democracy are developed locally, which in return could also work out as a global model. In the chapter titled "Difficult Europe: Democracy under Construction," he defines four worksites of democracy that concern different structural problems: the question of justice, the convergence of trade union struggles, the democratization of borders for immigrants, and the language of Europe. The worksite of language has to do with the construction of a public sphere that should transgress both the closed totality of any specific idiom or the hierarchy of state languages so as to leave more room for multicultural practices and intercultural exchange. Therefore, he clearly asserts that "the 'language of Europe' is not a code but a constantly transformed system of crossed usages; it is, in other words, *translation*" (Balibar, 2001/2004, p. 178). The idea of translation as a practice should be extended for Balibar from the linguistic to the cultural level. Translation is not only a paradigm for an access to various codes of communication but also an ethico-political model as a means of cultural resistance against any communitarian ideal of identity based on national-languages.[10]

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[10] In "Europe: Vanishing Mediator?" within the same volume, Balibar, drawing on Frederic Jameson's article on Max Weber, points at Europe's capability to mediate conflicts and historical processes between nations essentially by exploring its own fragilities and indeterminacies, which would imply the transitory nature of its mediating role. Translation, with regard to the group of languages and linguistic skills taught, should serve both the sphere of labour (immigrants and workers) and the sphere of culture (artists, intellectuals). The 'vanishing' nature of the mediator is quite the same for Balibar with that of the translator's intermediary role. This transitoriness guarantees the non-monopolistic and democratic attitudes of the translators and organic intellectuals. Therefore, the need for such intermediaries is not overshadowed by the threat of them turning into authorities. They are expected to disappear once they fulfil their mediating function. See Balibar (2004) (pp. 234-235).

Angelo Bottone (2010) notes that Balibar and Ricoeur mainly meet in making the practice of translation an *ethos* for Europe with reference to a more inclusive model of citizenship, a more democratic public sphere, and a need to go beyond nation-states. However, Bottone alleges that 'vanishing' is not an essential characteristic of the translator as a mediator, and it is clearly in disagreement with Ricoeur's idea of subjectivity. In other words, Balibar is wrong according to Bottone, from a Ricoeurean perspective, since there would be no mediation without identity. See Bottone (2010), 21-23.

Sharing a similar set of sensibilities with Ricoeur as to the democratic potentials inherent within the practice of translation, Balibar (2009) stresses the need for translation as a regulating model for the 'deterritorialization' process manifest in the endless circulation of humans, goods, capital, and information in the European space in an age of globalization. Due to a relativization of the function of national boundaries and of the idea of sovereignty following from such deterritorialization, Europe itself becomes a 'borderland' according to Balibar. This idea of borderland welcomes the plurality of subjects within the European civic space as diasporic and nomadic subjects, which contests the idea of the rootedness of subjects. It also brings forth a multiplicity of political spaces that would stretch the idea of European citizenship towards a more equalitarian state. The rise of conflicts in relation to the ceaseless circulation of power and cultural representations in the civil society entails a model for the European political space that would welcome conflicts and help to tackle with the problems in constructing multi-cultural societies. Balibar expresses his belief in the model of translation as follows:

> I have become more and more convinced that this conflictual model of the process of translation (which, as opposed to the technological representation of the network of global communications, we might call the *philological model*, where differences are neither denied nor absolutized, but subjected to the political and historical practices of translation) at the same time *provides an instrument* (not sufficient, to be sure), and features a *regulating ideal* for the political handling of the issues of "multi-culturalism" (2009, p. 208; original emphases).

Balibar speaks of a certain incapacity of Europe to come to terms with its domestic multiplicity, namely the non-European, the migrant, and the alien. This internal diversity, or rather the otherness within the self as Ricoeur would call it, is also constitutive of the European culture (the self) and should be acknowledged rather than enclosed in cultural ghettoes or reduced to cultural stereotypes. In a 'borderland,' according to Balibar, "opposites flow into one another," (2009, p. 210) and therefore the Other (the alien) is indiscernible from oneself; consequently, a common European public sphere is

only possible with the flow of ideas, discourses, and translations into and over one another (2009, p. 213).

Can these models of ethical and political import - translation and the exchange of memories – be extended over to all intercultural and international relations? Ricoeur is positive about this possibility. Basically, he sees a future *ethos* of European and world politics on condition that we benefit from the capacity of these models to teach us how to heal and reconcile with ourselves and Others. Put differently, as Kearney suggests, these models will be actualized when we learn to translate our own wounds into the language of Others and the wounds of the strangers into our own language so as to reach a mutual acknowledgment of our vulnerabilities (2006, p. xx).

### 4.3. Trauma, Mourning, Forgiveness

Following the models of translation and the exchange of memories, the third model Ricoeur offers for a European *ethos* is the model of forgiveness. It is a special form of revising the past, a mutual revision indeed, due to the entanglement of life stories and a consequent intermingling in the formation of narrative identities. The act of forgiving motivates the exchange of narratives with a focus on experiences and stories of suffering, which appear either as endured suffering or as suffering inflicted on Others (Ricoeur, 1992/1996, p. 9). The woes caused by the cruel history of Europe, containing religious wars, wars of extermination, ethnic cleansing and etc., could only be eased by a re-examination of one's own stories, entangled with the narratives of Others. Hence, Ricoeur (1992/1996) suggests that there emerges a new "understanding [of] the suffering of others in the past and in the present," which functions as a corrective to the pains inflicted by the cruelty of the past (p. 10).

The exchange of memories and narratives through translation brings us one more time to the experience of the foreign. This act of exchange eventually yields an empathy with the suffering of the Other. However, forgiveness always entails something more than mere empathy, and it exceeds moral and political categories that function by the principle of reciprocity. Ricoeur insists that forgiveness belongs to the order of charity or of the economy of the gift, which refers to an endless surplus that rule out the basic logic of reciprocity at work, for instance, in the exchange of goods.

Forgiveness as charity, therefore, is a 'poetic' act rather than a 'political' act. Yet, one should never forget that it does not abolish the debt belonging to the inheritors of the past, but just eases the pain of the debt. In other words, forgiving is never based on forgetting but on an unforgetful patience. Such patience could bring a cathartic effect to the victims of trauma or of unforgivable crimes once they manage to force the offender for a complete understanding of what he/she committed only through an explicit expression of the wrongs done (Ricoeur, 1992/1996, p. 10). There is no indifferent or easy forgiveness, and it always requires the right time to forgive. A future *ethos* for Europe towards integration is then only possible through translation, shared narratives and a shared inclination to heal the ills of European history by forgiving.

Derrida (1997/2001) claims that forgiveness should depart from that fact that *there is* 'the unforgivable'. If one forgives the forgivable, forgiveness disappears since the unforgivable is the only thing that calls for forgiveness: "forgiveness forgives only the unforgivable" (p. 32). Ricoeur (2000/2004) affirms Derrida's assumption with underlying reference to the Judeo-Christian moral tradition, and emphasizes that forgiveness is unconditional, exceptional and without restrictions (p. 468). Under these circumstances, forgiveness is a miracle. Here is once again the speculative impasse: Forgiveness is theoretically impossible but there *is* forgiveness on the practical level as well as love, friendship and wisdom. There are historical examples of people forgiving their offenders, without recourse to vengeance. Here, the parallel with translation is obvious once it is remembered that translation as well is impossible *a priori* but possible *de facto*. Survivors of trauma, mass violence or atrocities share a group identity around a cultural experience of victimization that is, in fact, 'unshareable' (Humphrey, 2002, p. 112). It is this humane side of socializing suffering through sharing the unshareable that opens the gates for forgiveness and calls for translation. Put it differently, translation shares the same structural features with forgiveness in their common effort to pass from a speculative impossibility to possibility through practice. In addition, translation is among the chief narrative practices that makes it possible to share the unshareable, the unrenderable, the secret by an actual transference of testimonies, life stories and the historical accounts belonging to the survivors of trauma. Translation and forgiveness can therefore lead individual and collective subjects

to what Ricoeur (2000/2004) calls 'happy memory' by aiding them to maintain a balance between forgiving and forgetting, a much desired balance justified by the etymological relation between *amnesty* and *amnesia* (p. 501).

Another shared feature between translation and forgiveness is their common requirement to function on a supra-institutional and global level of practice. Just as translation provides the circulation of a narrative exchange that transgresses the restrictions of national boundaries and institutions, forgiveness as well should go beyond the juridical institutions and those of the nation-state (Derrida, 1997/2001; Ricoeur, 2000/2004, p. 469). Globalisation of forgiveness is a call for a universal urgency and duty of memory that would require repentance and self-accusation beyond the mediation of any national institutions since no third party can forgive one person in the name of another. Forgiveness has to remain heterogeneous to the juridico-political order so as not to lose its purity. Nation-state with all its institutions, as the mediating third party between the offender and the victim, always pursues strategical calculation and political deliberations in offering national reconciliation or amnesty with a view to the reconstitution of the national whole (Derrida, 1997/2001, p. 40; Humphrey, 2002, p. 99). Whenever forgiveness is meant to serve for such strategic actions or for some final end other than itself, such as to establish normality or to facilitate healing, it ends up being normative and loses its moral implication, its exceptionality and thus its purity. Such calculated transactions, as Baker (2006) asserts, would eventually assist the victor to impose their own patterns and force their official versions of the historical reality on the abundance and heterogeneity of victims' testimonies and narratives (p. 51).

Forgiveness, specifically as Ricoeur elaborates on it as the third step in his triadic model for a European *ethos*, aims at a healing effect, yet without falling into the pitfall of yielding its purity and exceptionality to strategic thinking within the confines of the nation-state. However, the nature and the conduct of the act of forgiving still has to be kept adjusted with the paradigm of translation, rather than with the purely medical metaphor of healing. As Humphrey (2002) suggests, translation as both a metaphor and paradigm is always more inclusive for the comprehension of the nature of forgiving in the sense that it includes the communicability and the mutual

recognition of pain (between two parties) in contrast to the elimination of suffering inherent within the sterile medical metaphor of healing (pp. 111, 114). So, translation cannot be regarded merely as one of the components of the triad in Ricoeur's ethical model. It is also the controlling paradigm within the entire triad with a function of balancing the just distance between the self and the Other in the exchange of memories. It further fulfils the function of saving the act of forgiving from collapsing into a strategic, political calculation and from being reduced to a uni-dimensional metaphor of healing as an exorcism of pain.

### 4.4. Vulnerability and Responsibility

The diversity of languages reflects the basic structure of the human condition and it is a sign of vulnerability. What surfaces in this diversity is actually the plurality that characterizes human societies and the inherent polysemy of otherness within the human individual, as accounted for in Ricoeur's *Oneself as Another*. In that respect, translation is a must in understanding the foreign as well as comprehending the Other within oneself. Translation, as Kearney (2006) comments, is an epitome of the journey from oneself to the Other, which never fails to remind us the finitude and contingency of the human self as well as all languages (p. xix).Translation is a sort of dialogue since languages demand translation to communicate with one another. The dialogic structure or the addressivity of all languages, in Bakhtin's terms, justifies a dialogic consideration of translation as well. Ricoeur employs the inherent dialogicism in the act of translation to reveal the ethical dimension of the exchange of meanings, views and attitudes between the self and the foreign.

After renouncing the absolute vantage points and the idea of perfect translation, the idea of imperfection and deficiency are what naturally follow from a radical diversity and polysemy. Mourning the loss of absolutes, which makes translation possible at the first place, reveals the fallibility of the human condition and crystallizes the limitations of human beings in such an essential sphere of human action as language and communication. Translation, in like manner, is always incomplete just as language itself is cast into an endless cycle of reproducing itself, as expressed in the Humboldtian notion of *energeia*.[11] The fragility of translation is manifest in the ever

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[11] Humboldt (2011) claims that language is never an end product (*ergon*) but an activity (*energeia*). Accordingly, it is actualized in speech and discourse, which

recurring need for retranslations. The need to retranslate implies the fact that translation, by definition, is an unfinished task as the gap between the source culture and the ever renewed recipient cultures creates new sets of meanings and interpretations every time. However, translation as the epitome of the fallibility of man is also the passage to capability in that it forces and encourages man to set new bonds with various sources of foreignness each time. Furthermore, thanks to translation, man discovers the potentials of language that is at his disposal whenever he desires and achieves human contact with the unfamiliar. Translation is the basic tool for the human subject to create, modify, affirm and respond to meanings through linguistic contact, which defines an essential capability belonging to human existence.

The use of the potentials of language further directs man from an anxiety of failure to a principle of hope. As explained above, Ricoeur (1992/1996) believes that a retrieval of the unemployed potentialities and the unkept promises from the past, by the work of memory and the act of translation, opens up a universe of creative alternatives for building a future. Remembering and translating create a space for the actualization of the unfulfilled dreams of the past. Furthermore, they bring a narrative and linguistic attentiveness to the experiences of pain and suffering, which would encourage subjects to testify to the tragic events of the past.  As Ricoeur (2001/2007) notes, the cultural identities of human beings from diverse cultural backgrounds can be "protected against the return of intolerance and fanaticism only by a mutual labor of understanding for which the translation of one language into another constitutes a noteworthy model" (p. 248). In Ricoeur's ethical thinking, translation as a metaphor and a practice helps to create a paradigm of tolerance both in everyday experience and for philosophical thought. It flourishes a culture and a hermeneutics of tolerance in its assistance to overcome negativity and prejudice in dealing with intersubjective and intercultural differences. As Scott-Baumann (2009) asserts, Ricoeur's hermeneutics designates translation as "a responsible ownership of language" and as "a rich source of responsible action towards others" (p. 108). Therefore, it is in and by the act of

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always stamps language with an absence of totalization and incompleteness.  See Humbolt (138).

translation that the irreducible otherness of the other person/culture is respected in consequence to the acknowledgement of the irrefutable otherness of the other (source) text.

### 5. Conclusion

In Ricoeur's hermeneutic philosophy, translation is both a model and a practice of mediating identity and alterity. It demonstrates the universality of language as a human capability (*le langage*) that is expressed within the diversity of human languages (*les langues*). However, this is never a nostalgia for a pure or original heavenly language in the mystical sense. Rather, Ricoeur constantly emphasizes the communicative function of living languages and their dialogic interaction with one another in forming, justifying and criticizing convictions. Language in general, and translation in specific, is always a matrix of discussions, connections and confrontations. In that sense, translation teaches the virtue in affirming differences rather than affirming one's identity by negating the Other. This affirmation of difference both presents a passage to a democratic *ethos* and a phenomenological perspective to meditate upon the roots of otherness within the self. As Scott-Baumann suggests, translation is a paradigm to enable one to reflect on himself and the Other at the same time (2009, p. 111).

Ricoeur also agrees with Steiner's dictum that to understand is to translate. Once translation is recognized as a task of saying something in other words or as a function of retelling narratives differently, every individual or collective subject, more or less, is a translator of itself. Furthermore, translation is an unending process in history that paves the way to a dialogical transformation of values, judgements and regimes of discourse.

Translation, in Ricoeur's thought, is a part of the general human capability to mediate between differences. It is a necessary skill to mediate and tolerate differences in contrast to the violence done by indifference to different selves, cultures and languages (Scott-Baumann, 2009, 113). Translators are thus ethical agents on the contrary to being passive transmitters of meaning from one language to another. They are the facilitators of a process of mutual recognition between languages and cultures. Translators, in Foran's words, are "conferrers of meaning" and producers of equivalence between two texts, which cannot be presupposed priorly but can only be performed through the act of translation (2012, p. 85). It is Ricoeur's contribution, in partial agreement with Derrida and

Balibar, to speak of the necessity to get beyond the confines of the nation-state with reference to the practice and model of translation. He promotes the extension of the spirit of translation to an international level as an ethical model of universal hospitality. Ricoeur's ultimate call to extend this model of mutual recognition from being a European to a universal *ethos* echoes the Kantian paradigm of perpetual peace.

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