






## ARTICLE

# Philosophical Thinking and the Project of Methodological Transformations: From the Perspective of the Hermeneutic Questioning Horizon

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## ABSTRACT

By employing an archaeological and genealogical approach, this study seeks to unearth the structure of hermeneutic discourse, exploring the unsaid within the systems that form concepts as unique entities. From this perspective, the role of hermeneutics, is greater than merely exploring the depths of texts to decipher their hidden meanings; it is a search within the zones of silence and absence where the correspondence between apparent and hidden meanings, and even between contradictory and oppositional ones, is negated, and where difference, multiplicity, and possibility prevail. Thus, the hermeneutic act becomes an ambitious project within philosophical spheres, or rather, the ambition of philosophy itself, to transcend its own standards and claims to possess certainty/the ready-made, aiming to reinterpret itself through the strategy of an ever-renewing question about the truth of man in this existence. This is a question that goes beyond the capacity of the transcendental or contemplative reason, which seeks to grasp essences and natures. This is perhaps what makes hermeneutics, as it is the case with speculative philosophy, a philosophy that aims to grant human beings the possibility of understanding their self in terms of their being. As hermeneutics is the foundation of the hermeneutic mind project, it is a return to the beginning: a return to the original project of rationality in philosophical thinking, namely, the question and interpretation of existence.

**Keywords:** Philosophical Thinking; Hermeneutic Mind; the Questioning Horizon; the Hermeneutic Age; Interpretation of Existence

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# 1. Introduction

By following the course of critical knowledge in Western thought, hermeneutics, though its origins go back to the interpretation of religious texts before it later became a theory in the interpretation of literary texts, has its roots in philosophy which is the very conceptual framework within which the term was coined as a problematic concept. According to Deleuze and Guattari<sup>[1]</sup>, when philosophy is considered as a field of creating concepts with its own perception of understanding existence, man, or mind, it does not get more than a question, which is seen as the core of philosophical knowledge and as a gateway to the innovation of concepts. Accordingly, when hermeneutics adapts the question to its own epistemological system, that is, when it becomes an epistemological approach, it turns into a mode or a method of intellectual thinking that is related to interpretative methodologies that are based on the principles and bases of its creation within the system of knowledge through deconstruction and analysis. Thus, difficulty may lie in presenting concepts and terms together with their epistemological systems and conceptual frameworks.

The concept of philosophical thinking has three main objects of study which include: ontology, epistemology, and value theory<sup>[2]</sup>. Ontology explains questions about what: what is studied in science, or what is the nature of what is studied. Epistemology explains questions about how: what is the process of acquiring knowledge, what things must be considered to obtain true knowledge, what is called truth and what are its criteria<sup>[3]</sup>. The object of epistemology study is to question how something appears, how we know it, how we distinguish it from others, so that it concerns the situation and conditions of space and time regarding something<sup>[4]</sup>. Axiology is the science of values. Axiology basically discusses the relationship between science and values, whether science is value-free and whether science is bound by values.

As long as hermeneutics is a constant return to philosophy and an ardent desire to seek all that is obscure and hidden, not for the sake of holding or catching it, but rather for maintaining its aims or what it has been named after, namely its being as an everlasting wonder and endless openness, it will always remain as long as philosophy remains a source of questioning and an eternal search for the truths and cores of things or texts. The questioning horizon, when

addressed from a hermeneutic perspective, is primarily a question linked most and foremost to philosophy itself and the essence of its existence through questioning both the self and the other for the establishment of the different or the other as a response to the ready-made and standardized thought that defines philosophy as a logic, a law, a doctrine, a value, or a research in the political and the ethical, towards all that is creative, spontaneous, significant, absent, or impossible.

Accordingly, the issue or problem being addressed through this study is not merely a presentation of ideas in a sequential way, nor a succession of episodes of philosophical practice from a historical approach that is limited to a chronological display of events. It is rather an archaeological and genealogical approach<sup>[5]</sup>, whose only concern is the search for the possible or the unsaid within the systems of coining concepts by considering them as unique in their existence as well. This does not mean seeking meaning for the meaningless or falling into the abyss of nihilism, where concepts become purposeless, but rather, interpreting what already exists for the sake of reinterpreting and presenting it in a different image, showing the multiplicity of its meanings and the incompleteness of the absolute and eternal scene.

Hermeneutics, by its nature as a philosophy of concept formation, perpetually reopens the question of interpretation, thereby preventing its crystallization into a fixed method, doctrine, or logic. Instead of addressing the time of signs and things as a linear time that can vanish and move towards an awaited end, it is rather a matter of addressing a hermeneutic time, which is a circular time that is constantly threatening hermeneutics by reinterpreting itself. This circular logic is the savior of both hermeneutics and philosophy from the duality of appearance/reality or essence/accident. The hermeneutic practice, then, becomes creativity in the in-between zone, between actuality and potentiality, or the zone of non-truth or non-meaning, where the different, possible, and indefinite dwell. Following this, the role of hermeneutics is more than exploring texts for deciphering their hidden meanings or attaining their depths. This is a quest into spaces of silence and absence, where the resemblance and congruity between apparent, hidden, or even contradictory meanings dissolve, allowing difference, multiplicity, and possibility to dominate.

Accordingly, the interpretive act becomes an ambitious project in philosophical spheres, or rather, philosophy's very

own ambition to transcend its standards and claims of possessing certainty and readiness, to reinterpret itself through the strategy of the ever-renewing question about the truth of man in this existence. It is a question that exceeds the capacity of transcendental and contemplative reason, which seeks to grasp essences and natures. This is not impossible for the hermeneutic mind, where the question shifts from “What must we do to understand?” to “How can understanding be possible?”. This is because the hermeneutic project’s aim is to put everything or every certainty into question, including the human being in existence, as a being who questions, interprets, and understands. This is perhaps what makes hermeneutics a philosophy, as is the case with contemplative philosophy, aiming to give the human being a possibility to understand himself in terms of his being. As hermeneutics is the foundation of the hermeneutic mind project, it is a return to the original project of rationality in philosophical thinking, which is the question or interpretation of existence.

Hermeneutics, contrary to what it might be thought, is not a restoration of the past or a revival of origins for the sake of dominance and the right of ownership, but rather a rediscovery of the constants of this past or origin, not for maintaining or acknowledging their eternity, but for interpreting or uncovering them by disclosing their hidden central discourse within the fabric of language, which is the field of difference and diversity. The ambition of hermeneutics in questioning the origins and beginnings lies in opening a questioning dialogue with texts in their initial interpretation time to establish a new and different interpretation, which is the outcome of a dialogue and fusion of the horizons of interpreters in the past with those of their counterparts in the present hermeneutic time.

## 2. Hermeneutics and the Questioning Horizon

The major transformations of philosophy in its way of seeking truth have opened the door for reshaping its tools of thinking and breaking the constraints imposed by the contemplative and transcendent givens. The hermeneutic mind was indeed the savior and guide that has borne the responsibility of leading the philosophical thinking caravan in the journey of searching for being and existence, through questioning, dialogue, interpretation, and understanding as a reading activity

in which the self or being is rediscovered. The relationship between the self and its subject in the philosophical tradition, in its scientific version, i.e., with epistemology, relies on the principle of the stability of the self and, consequently, on the surrounding knowledge and truth. The existence of this self seems to be determined and given in advance, and so are things and truths. This is what restrains philosophy from fulfilling its aims, including thinking and the continuous creation of concepts. According to the philosopher of being, Martin Heidegger, being interested in philosophy or in the matter of thinking is not enough, as we rather must be ready to engage in thinking.

The transformation in philosophical thinking does not lie in the inability to think. As what has been achieved by hermeneutics by keeping the existing controversy between the self and the subject through the form of questioning and dialogue has opened the door to a new era in the history of philosophy and science together. This is the phase of understanding and questioning truth in the human sciences. The decline of epistemology, or the philosophy of science, was well apparent in the rise of this philosophical revolution under the leadership of the hermeneutic mind. This was well embodied in Heidegger’s words when he said that science does not think, which is due to its course and methods that prevent thinking in the way of thinkers<sup>[6]</sup>. Things and truths are not given or presented as constant entities that have achieved perfection which makes them free from interpretation or deconstruction, as is the case with epistemology in its view of the self and how to stimulate its activity. Following Ricoeur, “The positing of the self is the first truth for philosophy, at least in that vast tradition of modern philosophy, which begins with Descartes and develops with Kant, Fichte, and the whole reflective current of Continental philosophy. For this tradition (which we are here considering as a whole before distinguishing among its principal representatives), the positing of the self is a truth that posits itself. Incapable of being either verified or deduced, it is simultaneously the positing of a being and an act, a form of existence and an operation of thought<sup>[7]</sup>”.

Heidegger’s saying that “science does not think” is an epistemological reaction to the pillars of philosophical thinking established by the philosophy of knowledge. As science claims to possess or fully present truths without any defects, and as long as it has the tools to test the validity

of its hypotheses, it ignores the fact that knowledge cannot exist except within the mind. If proof means progressing through suggestions related to the given question, starting from appropriate principles and through sequences of mental procedures, then the attempt to prove something and the desire to establish it are never done by judging according to a higher epistemological rule. This is mainly true when the thing to prove only manifests to the point that it can reveal itself, while simultaneously remaining in the shadows.

Science is inherently limited to proving what is apparent and observable; it cannot incorporate or interpret the hidden. This contrasts sharply with the project of philosophical renewal championed by thinkers like Heidegger, who called for contemplating that which cannot be proven or measured—specifically, everything that withdraws and remains concealed from the human being. Heidegger adds that we do not respond in an appropriate way to something that manifests itself only in a way that makes it appear in the same act by which it disappears, unless we impose on ourselves the rule of letting what manifests itself appear in its own non-disappearance. Thinking relies on this abstract manifestation that reflects how humans process their thoughts. Ideas can be demonstrated by deducing them from the principles and axioms we possess. However, the things that we can truly uncover are not numerous, which means that though things can be revealed through an act that invites them to come to us, manifestations are still rare.

This manifestation is an inherent act of thinking. As the self draws closer to the subject, in perception and interpretation, it starts to get rid of its illusions and normative judgments. It is a kind of provocation for this self to step onto the hidden existential truth. For Heidegger, the provocation of the realist is considered the pillar stone in building reality. This provocation, however, can enigmatically separate the human being from what he means and advances to. This act of approaching gets away from human beings because it hides from them. The act through which what needs to be thought about withdraws and hides can be more present for us than anything present. There is no room for doubt that what withdraws in this manner moves away from us, but at the same time carries us with it and attracts us to it in its own way. Though what withdraws seems to be completely absent, it is no more than a deceptive appearance. It remains present in a way that makes it attract us so that we notice it sooner or

later, or maybe never. What withdraws has already provided us with access, and when we attain the act of disappearance, we find ourselves moving towards what attracts us as it disappears, Heidegger subsequently confirmed this in the work cited above.

The methodological procedure presented by the Heideggerian thesis makes the process of the being achieving its beingness possible. In contrast, epistemology claims that things or facts are presented in a complete and final image, and it is the duty of the self, which is the source of awareness of these things, to try to develop the process of understanding related to the relationship of this self with the subject of knowledge. But how can it do that while it claims stability, constancy, and the attainment of perfection or epistemic transcendence? Thus, following the Hegelian project, the self has no choice but to transform into a subject so that it can interpret itself and establish a more intimate relationship with knowledge or with the subject, but this does not mean closing the system and putting an end to the controversy between the self and the subject as Hegel (1770–1831) did. By doing so, there would be no communication between the self and the other, and the self would be caught in the prison of systems. This is what Karl Marx later relied on in criticizing Hegel's philosophy, considering that the Hegelian dialectic is upside down<sup>[8]</sup>. This may be the reason behind our emphasis on the philosophical nature of hermeneutics, for it is not merely a technique (*Kunstlehre*) that is limited to understanding the views of the other. Hermeneutic thinking absolutely knows that every understanding of the other or alterity requires an aspect of self-criticism. The one who seeks understanding does not claim to have control over a superior position but rather admits that his assumption of truth is something whose level of credibility can be tested. This test is essential in every understanding, and therefore, every understanding plays a role in shaping the awareness of the true function of history<sup>[9]</sup>.

The hermeneutic mind's aim is to prove the transcendence of understanding or knowledge as an epistemological problem that is restricted to finding connections between the systems of knowledge and their mechanisms and the laws of reason. Perhaps this is what led the theoreticians and scholars in the field of Hermeneutics—who differentiate between the two terms Interpretation and Hermeneutics—to reject the objective methodological conception. For if the act of Inter-

pretation is confined to reducing the apparent meaning to the latent meaning, and metaphor to truth, then Hermeneutics strives to grasp what the Being performs in this existence, as an interpretation of this endeavor, viewing it as an ontology of understanding. This, however, is pursued through the path of Epistemology, which serves as a critical potential allowing its adherents to scrutinize the knowledge related to understanding and subject it to critical questioning, debate, and interpretation. This is achieved by defining the limits of its premises and delving into the origins of its formation, observing and discovering the Being's essence (Dasein's being) within these boundaries. These boundaries, through the process of Becoming, or Transformation, have transformed into signs of absence and traces whose features have been obliterated, leaving nothing but Interpretation/Understanding as a procedure that relies on the medium of language to question/dialogue with those perished and vanished features. The ultimate aim is to establish a new and distinct understanding in the present time, one that supports the principle of diversity within the fields of knowledge, affirming that every interpretation is nothing but a struggle of interpretations<sup>[10]</sup>. This is what stands behind its fall into the abyss of eclecticism and the illusion of scientific objectivity. The hermeneutic mind's role lies in proposing an ontological alternative as a successor to the scientific method that has revealed its incapacity in discovering the hidden aspects of the discourse of truth and in asserting the inaccessibility of truth and the infinity of its meanings. As it aims to make the knowing self-capable of evaluating itself by transforming it into a subject of knowledge. It is only through revealing what withdraws that we are who we are and who we become. Our essence is indeed this act that points (*Zeigen*) and refers. We exist to the extent that we point to what withdraws and recedes. By pointing towards it, the human being becomes the being those points. The human is not first a human and then, perhaps by chance, a pointer in addition to being human. Rather, humans are primarily such because they are attracted to what withdraws and moves towards it, and through this very act, they point to the withdrawal. Their essence, then, is to be pointers of this kind, as mentioned by Heidegger.

What has been added by the hermeneutic mind to philosophy is the aspect of ontological analysis, which, through the means of the game of question and answer, permits the self and the truth or the reality to multiply into several selves and

diverse truths with never-ending interpretations, respectively. Interpretation, being an infringement upon the text, may lead to deconstruction. At this point, the search for meaning is bypassed in favor of delving into the layers and structures of the discourse, or reading into the silence and voids of the speech. This process reveals the text's mechanisms for producing meaning, its procedures for establishing truth, or its ploys for concealing its own self and authority<sup>[11]</sup>. It is a type of existence where consistency is nullified, rules and standards disappear, the pure transcendent origin withdraws and never returns, and only the multiple and separate can appear. Its identity becomes, in its very nihilism, the impossibility of always being 'itself' without change, transformation, fluctuation, or the impossibility of identifying with its own self and image or remaining in its permanent essential nature. The being is, above all, an 'event' or an 'incident,' and every event is surrounded by change and transformation, and its essence appears in its ambiguity, multiplicity, or fragmentation.

### 3. The Ontological Turn of Hermeneutics

The mode of knowledge in the Western mind, as influenced by the philosophy of science, has been replaced by a focus on the mode of existence through the philosophy of analysis. There has been a shift from relying only on scientific technique and research accuracy. It is a shift from an attempt for establishing the foundations of comprehensive universal laws for a pure eternal knowledge, the spread of the culture of conformity and similarity between the thing and its significance, and constructing a knowing and transcendent self that has reached the degree of perfection in acquiring knowledge, which is free from deficiency or absence, to the authority of imagination, art, beauty, and interpretation, where the text multiplies to other texts, the truth or the meaning becomes truths, and the question turns into a game where the answer becomes a new question for an answer or a question and a postponed truth or meaning until a later time. Epistemology, then, was founded on. In short, epistemology is found within agreed-upon scientific and objective frameworks that require editing, addition, or supporting. On the other hand, hermeneutics marks the beginning of a fresh model, introducing a new perspective or the integrating a new game<sup>[12]</sup>.

What is salient in this methodological transformation of the Western mind, from a mode of knowledge to a mode of existence, is that hermeneutics came to crystallize the Husserlian propositions in phenomenological philosophy. This was achieved through its revolution against scientific methodology in the humanities, where it reduced humans to mere mathematical equations and subjects of nature, and through its call for approaching the self to the subject through Husserl's famous dictum: "return to the things themselves," away from any external influences or value judgments that had preceded the existence of the things themselves. It also made the self, in accordance with the principle of methodological suspension or bracketing, get rid of its subjectivity and the illusions of transcendence dominating it, so as to be able to engage in knowledge to get awareness of the perceiving or interpreting self and the surrounding things or truths. Indeed, the self, as it is, perceives itself and is aware of its existence as an interpreting self.

There is no doubt that it was thanks to the Husserlian phenomenology that epistemology no could no longer impose its strict methodology on the humanities. The self has the chance to discover things and phenomena in their authentic existence, and all the self has to do is to interpret them<sup>[13]</sup>. Despite the fact that phenomenology suggests a new method for pursuing truth in the humanities via its principles of suspension, reduction, and intentionality, hermeneutics rejects this quality except within the framework of the procedures and the limits it has set for achieving understanding or practicing interpretation. Hermeneutics, in its search for absolute truth or knowledge, has exceeded the limits and measures that have been placed by modern scientific methods. In fact, the hermeneutic phenomenon is not a matter of method but rather the establishment of human experience in the world through the understanding and interpretation of texts. This is what the sciences of the mind are concerned with, using modes of experience outside of science, such as philosophical experience, artistic experience, and the experience of history itself. Within all these combined modes of experiments, truth can manifest, which is beyond the capabilities of the methodological procedures offered by the exact science. This is because the method in these sciences becomes an end in itself, justifying the efficiency of its procedural capabilities and its dogmatic empirical premises. Consequently, the text or the piece of art becomes merely a natural phe-

nomenon expected to achieve invariable truths and results, as Wilhelm Diltthey sought in his project of expanding the field of hermeneutics, which is to establish an "organon of the sciences of the mind." This, as suggested by Gadamer, can be negated, and the existence of any technique for understanding is questioned<sup>[14]</sup>.

Scientific objectivity can act as a methodological way of seeing things and can reveal the latent truths about things and facts; however, it fails to apply the same principles to the humanities. It is proved to be incapable of making them open to experimentation and observation and of separating the self or setting aside personal judgments while claiming to attain objectivity. Following Heidegger, the hidden subject cannot be forced to display, even in the best circumstances where it is deeply and clearly perceived. Therefore, nothing can be done except wait until that which must be thought about comes to us and be revealed. This waiting is an initial phase where understanding is formed and grows until it reaches its extent in a second phase. This is the act of interpretation, i.e., testing consciousness and vision in the dialogue of the self with its subject. Heidegger adds that waiting does not mean in any way evading and getting away from thinking from time to time but rather means directing our gaze towards all directions and within what has been thought about in search of the unthought that is still hidden there. As it is only with such waiting that we are practicing thinking and moving towards 'what must be thought about. However, in this movement and direction, we may deviate from the path so that we are no longer concerned with responding to that which must be cared for.

Hermeneutics is not a science of interpretation but an art of it, since truth in art is relative and cannot be physically embodied. Accordingly, interpretation cannot be described as a science, nor can it be said that a given interpretation is correct and that another is wrong, good, or bad. As Todorov puts it, "[...] interpretation is no longer true or false but rich or poor, revealing or sterile, stimulating or dull<sup>[15]</sup>". Thus, interpretation is the possible reading of the text, as long as the text contains only symbols and signs, presenting itself as an artistic structure that refers only to its internal or artistic logic. It is the logic of language that makes things within its system linguistic entities whose lives depend on the functions they perform within the world of the text. Language is a creative force that, when it speaks of things, transfers them

from the system in which they exist to the system where they become a statement. When it speaks of things, it recreates them anew. It imposes on the things it speaks of, first, an existential rupture that separates them from what they were, and second, a qualitative transformation that moves them from a system where they represent material forming their meaning to a system where they perform their meaning. Things have no choice but to submit to this. Language does not say things but rather says its visions of things. It is not a mirror, and neither are things. If it is said that language lives its existence in a dialectic with reality, expressing it, falsifying it, or entering and possessing it, this indicates the dominance of language over it, transforming and recreating it into composition, formulation, and creation. The observer who contemplates it might think that reality, with all its things, is a creation of its creations, or that it is its eternal word that never ceases to create its meaning and never stops generating its connotations<sup>[16]</sup>.

The statement that ‘the meanings of words must be preserved’ echoes the ideas of the advocates of classical criticism in France, led by Raymond Picard. Each word has only one meaning, which is the true meaning. As it is asserted by Barthes, “the word has only one meaning: the right one. This rule illicitly engenders a suspicion, or, what is worse, a general trivialization of metaphorical language: sometimes it is purely and simply forbidden [...] sometimes it is rendered ridiculous by a more or less ironic attempt to take it literally<sup>[17]</sup>”. Thus, the text does not aim to reveal things or truths, but rather works to make them signify within its own system, taking the reader or the interpreter as a witness to that, “because the goal of literary work,” for Barthes, “is to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text.” The reader rewrites the text and recreates it in another form, and this type of text is called ‘writerly texts’ (*Textes Scriptibles*) as opposed to consumable texts, or ‘readerly texts’ (*Textes Lisibles*), those texts that are consumed by a single reading and die immediately<sup>[18]</sup>.

Interpretive practice, however, though it lacks the logic of scientific methodology, possesses the logic of question and answer. This is achieved by performing a dialogue with the text through its gaps and levels of absence, where texts or heritage are found together with the first readers and interpreters. The text, then, as it presents itself as a subject for interpretation, means that it is posing a question to the

interpreter. Therefore, interpretation always contains an important reference to a posed question. Understanding the text means understanding this question. This produces what has been previously explained as the ‘hermeneutic horizon’. According to Gadamer, this horizon now appears to us like a ‘horizon of questioning,’ within which the semantic direction of the text is determined. It is as if the logic of question and answer, according to the Gadamerian approach, is a strategy to open the door to multiple interpretations, as long as the question directed to the text multiplies into questions and problems. This is because the text does not provide an answer or a meaning except in the form of a question or a pleasure to an endless sequence of questions, leaving the answer or the meaning delayed for a while. Through these questions and interpretations, the text multiplies into texts or circles, by which it creates its artistic truth and forms its own being.

This dialogue with the text, following the logic of question and answer, also teaches us the logic of listening to the other or to the text. Our habits in reading and interpretation must be changed. Instead of the interpreting self-remaining the centre of the interpretive practice, analyzing the text and interrogating its meanings according to its conceptual devices and procedural tools, the text or the language is rather let to express itself and reveal its being, through which its infinite world is discovered. This also helps the interpreting self in discovering its own being and finding itself in this world, the text’s or the language’s world, or the ‘being there’ (*Dasein*), as Heidegger calls it. To let the interpreting self be subject to this world, or to be caught in its traps, does not necessarily mean falling into passivity or forced submission, where it loses its ability to embody its existence, not as a passive self, but as an active one. It is, rather, a dialogue in which the process of connection or disconnection is relied on, as is the case with the mystic who resorts to striving and disconnection from reality until he realizes connection with the spiritual world. It is a procedural submission in which the self firstly achieves understanding and allows the text or the language to be itself, i.e., to be a text or a language whose truth is revealed. Secondly, we change our habits and ways of looking at the text or the language and in the act of reading or interpretation. Thirdly, we are moving as selves towards the text to discover our being. If we are, from Heidegger’s point of view, finding ourselves attracted in this way in a

movement towards what attracts us, then our being has been marked by this ‘movement towards...’ and since we have been marked in this way, we show what withdraws. If we are who we are, it is only because we show what withdraws. Heidegger points out that Our essence is precisely this act that points and refers; we are to the extent that we point to what withdraws.

#### **4. Hermeneutics is the Art of Understanding**

It is appropriate to say that there is no technique for understanding through which we can grasp the meaning or retrieve the original meaning, if it exists, as claimed by epistemology or the empirical sciences with their dogmatic empirical view. Ancient Arabic scholars were aware of this issue when they distinguished between understanding and knowledge. Understanding is the knowledge of the meanings of speech, specifically when it is heard. Therefore, a person is said to be poor in understanding when he is slow to grasp the meaning of what he hears. Hence, a non-Arab does not understand the speech of an Arab. It is not permissible to describe God as understanding because He knows everything as it is in its eternal state. Some have said that understanding is used only in speech. As in the saying, I understood his speech, but not in: I understood his going and coming, which is rather: I knew that. Abu Ahmad bin Abi Salma, may God have mercy on him, said that understanding can be in speech and other forms of expression, such as gestures. As when we say, I understood what you said, and I understood what you gestured to me. Sheikh Abu Hilal, may God have mercy on him, said that the original meaning is what was mentioned first, and understanding was used in gestures because gestures function like speech in indicating meaning<sup>[19]</sup>.

Thus, understanding is basically related to grasping the meaning of speech within its context of use or its speakers’ original intentions. Consequently, a person who does not understand may misinterpret, deviating from those intentions. This is acknowledged by hermeneutics and many contemporary critical theories, which view every act of interpretation as an overinterpretation<sup>[20]</sup>, given that the author creates and then metaphorically dies behind their work. There is a persistent struggle between the world of the text and the world

of the reader or the interpreter, who can draw the text into his own world, which results in a misinterpretation or a misuse of texts. Secondly, understanding is related to speech, whether literal or symbolic, linguistic or non-linguistic, like gestures, namely anything that can carry meaning and thus be interpreted. This makes understanding tied to the moment of interpretation itself, not to the historical moment when the text was first produced. Following this, it is clear how difficult, if not impossible, it is to recover the original meaning. This contrasts with knowledge, which, according to Abu Hilal’s words, is linked to the original time and historical context of the thing. This is what hermeneutics in its Gadamerian or Jaussian version tries to achieve through the concept of historicist reading as a critical activity. Understanding, in this context, means knowing everything about the work at the moments of its creation, reception, and interpretation, together with the culture that shaped it or the context of use that formed its existence and had a role its spread and popularization. Thus, when knowledge of the thing or the meaning is achieved, understanding is realized, but when this is not possible, as is often the case, understanding is hindered or misinterpreted.

For this reason, Abu Hilal, in another setting, has distinguished between truth and meaning as he did with understanding and knowledge. Meaning is not the reconstruction of the reality of the thing itself, but rather the intention of the reading or the interpretation. Abu Hilal explains how meaning is the intention that makes the statement take one form instead of another, and the meaning of speech in language may be what was intended to be said. While truth is what is placed in the statement in its proper place. This is why Abu Ali, may God have mercy on him, said that the meaning is the intention towards what is intended by the statement, making the meaning an intention because it is a source. He said that Allah Almighty must not be described as ‘a meaning’ because meaning is the intention of our hearts towards what we intend by the statement, and the intended is the meaning. Allah Almighty is the intended, not the meaning. Meaning, then, is different from truth. In other words, meaning does not result in a specific intention or truth. Therefore, truth always remains that elusive moment from meaning, which is chasing it. Following Abu Hilal in saying, “I meant Zaid with my speech,” is like saying, “I intended him with my speech,” and this does not mean that Zaid is truly intended



with his existence. This indicates that his mention was intended and the news about him was desired, not himself in person. Meaning, then, is confined to the statement, not to what is intended. It is also possible to say, "The meaning of a statement is such," but not to say, "The meaning of a movement is such." In saying, for example, "Your visit to a certain person's house has no meaning," means it has no benefit intended to be mentioned by words.

Thus, interpretation is the multiplicity of meaning in the text, while truth is those shadows of meanings or indications that the reader or the interpreter evokes through the cracks of the text and areas of deviation, where the text falls silent or shifts with its interpreter to reconstruct or reshape the truth of the text or its signifiers, not the intended truth or indication. Consequently, the circle of truth expands, and the scope of meaning narrows, as it is linked to a specific moment with a reader or an interpreter and ends as soon as the act of interpretation stops with the individual reader(s) or interpreter(s). In contrast, truth remains that unattainable meaning that is hoped to be embraced or reached and then grasped. Abu Hilal maintains that the truth has been expanded in a way that meaning has not. This is why it can be said, "Everything has a truth", but it cannot be said, "Everything has a meaning." It is also possible to say, "The truth of the movement is such," but not to say, "The meaning of the movement is such." This is because they called bodies and accidents meanings. However, that has expanded, and expansion is restricted to its place of use and does not go beyond it.

This fusion—the expansion and multiplicity of the text's truth without strict definition—is achieved when the intentions of the readers or interpreters intersect with a specific moment of understanding. When this moment is over it is replaced by an endless series of other moments or interpretations. Everything disappears except what the reader or interpreter has produced in terms of meaning and what the text has established and intended to conclude with the readers or interpreters, within the framework of what is known as the intentions of the text or its infinite truth. Hilal Al-Askari well distinguishes between the indication of speech and the indication of proof. He sees that the indication of proof is the testimony to the correctness of the statement, and the indication of speech is the presence of the meaning in the mind without testimony to its correctness, unless some

speech includes the indication of proof, thus testifying to the correctness of the statement. Some speech includes the indication of proof, and some does not. Every proof can be demonstrated through speech just as every meaning can be conveyed through it. The name is an indication of its meaning, not proof of it, and likewise, the guidance of the path is an indication of it, not proof of it. Thus, the effect of the indication of speech is different from the effect of the indication of proof. Al-Askari confirmed this in the work cited above. It is as if the indication of proof is the apparent or manifest level of truth or its primary meaning, which some consumerist interpreters claim to be the desired truth from the act of interpretation, making it the beginning and end of interpretation, and with it, the text dies and disappears without return. This is known as apparent interpretation or explanatory reading that explains the text in search of its objective truth. Thus, the indication of proof is the objective or scientific interpretation as long as it testifies to the correctness of the speech, while the indication of speech is the interpretive reading, because, although it brings forth the meaning, it does not testify to its correctness.

## 5. Conclusions

Upon what has been discussed, it can be deduced that knowledge is in a constant transformation and that the claims of self-withdrawal and the isolation of its achievements prevent the human being's ambition to be free from any authority that stands as a barrier between him and his dreams of attaining the far ends of the world and of exploring the hidden aspects of this existence and all that has not been disclosed. Hermeneutics, by considering it as the philosophy of questioning and the art of understanding, remains within this new world away from the framework of the ready-made thought that seeks to standardize knowledge. Interpretation, in the Gadamerian manner, was able to move away from the texts it was dealing with, be they sacred, artistic, or intellectual texts, to engaging with the very subjectivity of this engagement itself, becoming closer to the essence of the question itself, and further from the format of answers to questions, or questions of answers. Interpretation is its own text and intertextuality. Nothing enters, separates, or connects between the two boundaries except interpretation itself. At this peak, as Safadi maintains, interpretation moves

towards its vast space. It cannot entirely depart from normativity except by accompanying its full history, which is metaphysics. Its true distinction from being a mere doctrine or a rationality that replaces another rationality or doctrine, according to the rhythm of metaphysical epochs, is that for its being an interpretation, it brings an alternative to doctrinism in its entirety. However, one cannot recall what has not been thought of without also recalling what has been thought of itself. Interpretation is an anti-metaphysics whose most significant distinction is that it knows itself to be so. It does not depart from what differs from it except to re-present it in an identical way to itself and different from it at the same time.

Contrary to the reactions of knowledge against all that is metaphysical in the light of these epistemological transformations, hermeneutics does not consider itself as a subsequent era to metaphysics nor surpassing it either by removing or excluding it. It is, rather, still living in its initial era, expert at penetrating its sanctities, intruding on its intimacies, and detecting its buried questions under its great Platonic fantasies, from which no doctrine was safe, and some of them have even adopted them as their highest guide, as is the case with modern rationality. Hermeneutics discovers the questions of metaphysics that are hidden under the cover of its totalizing answers. It may approach the realm of the question, glimpse it, and proclaim it but refrains from practicing it whenever it is about to commit the claim of grasping its first indication. Thus, hermeneutics, in its being an attempt to revive the ancient philosophical question, persistently attempts to systematize deconstruction, whether in a Nietzschean or a Derridean way, in a completely unsystematic way. It dissipates the fear of becoming, its disdain, as well as rising above it by creating and forming paradigms that transcend its surfaces; then, paradigmatic differentials within its very immanency, especially with the flow of the human sciences, including psychoanalysis, linguistics, sociology, anthropology, etc. Hermeneutics has proven its epistemological and ontological specificity and the universality of this specificity over that infertile and unknown land, expanding between physical determinisms and metaphysical and mystical dogmatisms, in which the myths of the human sciences have grown and flourished, covering it with their new methodological techniques<sup>[21]</sup>.

Consequently, the internal conflict within hermeneutics stems from two theories. The general theory, driven by an objective tendency, seeks a correct interpretation that is entirely free from transformation or variation. While the second one, which has thrown itself into the embrace of language, that solid corner, is searching for the essence of understanding in this existence. This latter believes that understanding or interpretation is an event happening within the process of history as an existence travelling in the time of language and dwelling in its complicated paths, carrying with it the human being, that typically historical being, the questioner and responder, the master of the art of dialectic and dialogue, in search of an understanding or interpretation that connects him to his original time, where he once resided, not to embrace or regain it through force. It is rather like a dialogue or a fusion of horizons, by considering it as an interpretive consciousness in the present time; the hermeneutic time, where the kingdom of the beautiful is established and understanding triumphs as a universal ethic practiced by the being as a sustainable behavior, living with and for others as the happiness through which he reaches his ultimate end and designated fate. No matter how much knowledge advances, by fluctuating and transforming, whether, as Greisch expresses, it is philosophical or theological, the mind has marked its entry into its hermeneutic era<sup>[22]</sup>, where knowledge is only valid as understanding and interpretation or as an interpretive struggle in which interpretation triumphs as the art of questioning *par excellence*.

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## Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

## Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available upon request.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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