

# EDITORIAL

The present volume of *Crossroads. A Journal of English Studies*, entitled *Translational Hermeneutics*, contains various and diverse texts, and yet all of them might be reduced to a common denominator, namely the status of translation as seen within the paradigm of hermeneutical philosophy. The volume is dedicated to translation; however, translation is here seen in one of its broadest dimensions: as the activity of humans in the world, and not simply as a linguistic transfer from the source into the target language. All of the papers included in this volume relate to a relatively new subdiscipline of Translation Studies, that is, translational hermeneutics.

By presenting alternative ways of defining the act of translation, translational hermeneutics – whose theoretical foundations were established by Friedrich Schleiermacher, Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer – concentrates on the central figure of the mediating process of translating, namely, the translator. The main proponents of this subfield of Translation Studies are usually associated with German scholars: Radegundis Stolze, Larisa Cercel or John Stanley, although it should be underlined that the popularity of the hermeneutical approach to translation is growing across the globe. Their main aim is to develop and exchange ideas with relation to the use of the most fundamental tenets of the hermeneutical philosophy of language within the study of translation. The relationship between translation and hermeneutics should be of no surprise to anyone. Both are concerned with the same issues, namely, understanding, interpretation, language and meaning. Besides, hermeneutical philosophy focuses on the individual as a person embedded in social and historical relations, a person who seeks to orient themselves and understand the world in which they belong. It is also worth referring to Richard Palmer who as early as in 1969 – just 9 years after the publication of Hans-Georg Gadamer's *opus vitae*, *Truth and Method*, on which to a large extent contemporary hermeneutic approaches to translation capitalize – drew our attention to the reciprocity of translation and hermeneutics by emphasizing in his work entitled *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger* that contemporary hermeneutics finds within translation theory a specific “reservoir” for exploring hermeneutical issues, and that the problem of translation is, generally speaking, a fundamental question for hermeneutics (Palmer 1969: 33). In Poland, however, the hermeneutical approach is so far rather marginalized and neglected. Thus, with this issue of the journal, we hope to bring translational hermeneutics closer to those scholars from Central and Eastern Europe who are particularly interested in the interdisciplinarity of translation, with particular focus on its close relationship with philosophy.

The following issue presents seven papers dealing with various aspects of the relationship between translation *per se* and hermeneutics. The volume opens with Douglas Robinson's article in which the author argues for reading translational semiotics from a hermeneutical perspective. The author puts forward a stereoscopic reading of two texts published separately: Juri Lotman's

*Культура и взрыв* and its English rendering *Culture and Explosion* performed by Wilma Clark, and suggests which implications such a reading may exert on the realm of translingual writing strategies, among others.

The following two papers comprise successful attempts to analyze certain ideas behind philosophical hermeneutics in relation to methodology and, broadly speaking, translational practice. The first one by Radegundis Stolze is dedicated to the intricacies of a very complex notion within Translation Studies, namely, translation competence, which is here undertaken from a hermeneutical standpoint. As the author rightly suggests, in the process of understanding a text, the translator is always guided by the phenomenological nature of the act of communication, whereas in the process of creating a target text, it is rhetoric which determines the way the text is formulated. By referring to hermeneutical points of orientation as illustrated by an example taken from the *Financial Times*, the author convincingly demonstrates how the notion of dynamic translation competence functions.

In the second paper, Mohammad Ali Kharmandar, capitalizing on certain notions within cognitive science and narratology, seeks to construct a unified methodological, textual tool based on Ricœur's narrative hermeneutics, which could then be applied in a so-called practical translational analysis. By putting forward a cognitive-existential dimension and a lingual/semiotic dimension frameworks, the author shows how six fundamental principles of translational hermeneutics as designed by Stolze could be juxtaposed with Ricœur's extended translation theory. The author also suggests some implications of the methodological project for translation pedagogy.

In an article by Fatima Zohra Chouarfia, the concept of translational decisions has been explored, with a particular emphasis put on translation for politics. By analyzing a few samples within political discourse as illustrated by Obama's Cairo speech delivered at Al-Azhar University, the author attempts to discover what factors might exert a significant impact on the translator's decisions while rendering texts belonging to the domain of politics.

Mohammad Ali Kharmandar in his paper entitled *A Hermeneutic Critique on George Steiner's Hermeneutic Motion in Translation* is concerned with presenting a critical approach to Steiner's theory. Choosing hermeneutics as a methodological and interpretive standpoint, Kharmandar attempts to determine to what extent Steiner's ideas contained in his work can be practical. By analyzing in detail all chapters of *After Babel*, the author of the paper seeks to underline the most problematic themes that Steiner undertook, as well as highlighting the main weaknesses of the philosopher's views of translation.

The last but one paper comprises an interview conducted by Larisa Cercel with Radegundis Stolze, who is regarded by many as the main representative of translational hermeneutics. The interviewee answers questions relating to the nature of translational hermeneutics as a separate subdiscipline within Translation Studies, its prospects and research paradigm. The volume closes with Beata Piecychna's review of one of the latest outcomes of the 'translational hermeneutics enterprise': *Philosophy and Practice in Translational Hermeneutics* published in 2018 by Zeta Books.

We sincerely hope that this issue of *Crossroads* will contribute significantly and meaningfully to the development of not only Translation Studies as such but also one of its subdisciplines, that is, translational hermeneutics. It is also to be hoped that the volume not only will open new paths to explore, but also inspire other scholars within the translational paradigm to engage in an ongoing dialogue where hermeneuticists are at their best, where the passion of meaning and truth is the force which conquers sheer mechanistic applications of the method.

Guest editors  
*Radegundis Stolze*  
*Beata Piecychna*

## References

Palmer, R.E. 1969. *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.