

Interview (MINI) - Generic Version for Disease, Illness or Symptom reference interview. The differences are also easily visible...

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Clear enough, what we face here is an exceptional research, innovative both in methodology and as an investigation on a national level. As far as I know, at least, there is no other research of such scope published in Romania, therefore I consider its publication absolutely necessary and timely, not only because of its subject matter, but also on account of its high standard and the profoundness of the analyses. Which will definitely encourage and inspire new researches.

Translated by Emese Czintos

Deconstructing the Mechanism of Interpretation – Review –

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In Hungarian academic life, especially among the researchers of the humanities, the activity of the Hermeneutic Research Group is already a well-known issue. Even if constituted as a workgroup only in 2012, the collaborators have the experience of many years of cooperation and scientific interaction with each other. The book I want to write about (*Szót érteni egymással. Hermeneutika, tudományok, dialógus – Understanding each other. Hermeneutics, science, dialogue*, edited by István M. Fehér, Zsuzsanna Mariann Lengyel, Miklós Nyíró and Csaba Olay, Budapest L'Harmattan, 2013) is one of the latest results of the group's continuity and work, containing studies based on papers presented at a conference, organized by the Research Group in May 2012 in Budapest. As the editors themselves wrote in the book's introduction, these researchers try to approach philosophical hermeneutics, attempting to relate to one of the greatest philosophical turns of the 20th century, developed following the traces of Hans Georg Gadamer: the hermeneutic turn of philosophy.

According to this turn, interpretation and understanding become the main problem of philosophical hermeneutics, and not just in the historical sense. Far away from limiting itself to the analysis of texts approaching the problem of interpretation, philosophical hermeneutics define interpretation as a required attitude, not only when we are reading classical texts for instance, but in every type of human activity. The greatest innovation of this hermeneutic turn is to put in the middle of the research the way man

communicates with others and to define man as an understanding and interpretative being.

Related to this philosophical tradition, the studies of the book try to reinterpret several problems of the history of philosophy, contemporary society and connections between philosophical hermeneutics and other scientific fields. It is a rich and interesting palette of themes and topics that one can find in this book at almost 500 pages, organized by the editors in three main sections, each of them having a representative title for the problems approached.

The first chapter is titled *Hermeneutics -- understanding – lingual nature* and contains seven studies, texts of István M. Fehér, Lilla Bauer, Miklós Nyíró, László Bognár, Andrea-Laura Kiss, Zsuzsanna Mariann Lengyel and János Kelemen. The common aspects of these studies are related to Hans Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics: to the main concepts of the dialogue and conversation, hermeneutic openness and well-meaning, deconstructive suspicion. It would not be possible to present here each study thoroughly; I will choose the ones that seem the most interesting to me. Of course, this selection is a subjective one, based on my points of interest, and not a qualitative selection regarding the quality of the materials.

István M. Fehér's study begins with the explanation of the terms chosen for the translation of Gadamer's *Verständigung* in Hungarian and succeeds to explain why the "understanding each other" seems more appropriate than the "making understand". This part of the study is a testimony of how language cannot be separated from the tradition, the history and the mentality of the ones who speak, a proof of the fact that philosophy, as every other scientific field and communication generally, has to deal with the challenge of the so called "untranslatable". The second part of the study is an interesting case study, concerning Gadamer and Derrida's meeting in Paris. Fehér M. provides the hermeneutic analysis of this debate, based on the printed versions of their dialogue (the original version of the verbal dialogue was not recorded, and the printed studies are more than just the reproductions of the debate/dialogue which actually happened between the two philosophers in 1981 in the Parisian Goethe Institute. Based on Gadamer's conception about the dialogue, referring to understanding as an interactive process, the study wants to provide an answer to the question: was Gadamer's and Derrida's debate a deaf's speaking, or was it an "understanding each other"? As we can read, understanding each other doesn't suppose necessarily an agreement with the other speaker, but it supposes the agreement concerning the problematic, questionable points. It also supposes an openness to the other and an intention to understand his difference, his foreign nature, the so called well-meaning of the interpreter. If we define understanding in these terms, we can say that as much as possible, Gadamer and Derrida understood each other, without giving up their philosophical conceptions and the premises of their own systems (the idea of dialogue in Gadamer's, the idea of deconstruction in Derrida's case). For better explaining this kind of hermeneutic approach of the dialogue, the study has another interesting part, between the two I just mentioned, which presents some of Immanuel Kant's ideas about the rhetorical situation of the dialogue, expressed in *The Critique of Pure Reason*, very similar to what Gadamer sustains in his *Truth and Method*.

Lilla Bauer's following study assays also the difference between well-meaning and deconstructive suspicion, but not just from the point of view of the particular case of

Gadamer's and Derrida's meeting. The study wants to be a more general description of this relation, analyzing it in the common, every-day thinking. Interesting conclusions are drawn up: the well-meaning, the good intention, philosophical or not, is always suitable of suspicion. In other terms, man will always question the sincerity of good intentions, but seems to never question the sincerity of hostility and malice. This kind of thinking supposes a specific ontology, the one exposed in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, which sees humans in a deficient mode of Being, and this study shows us how every-day language covers this same idea about the interactive living and the human condition.

Further, Miklós Nyíró's paper intends a reinterpretation of Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, beyond the classic assessment related to the human sciences, in the light of some ideas expresses in Gadamer's early dissertation. Another interesting study, written by László Bognár, shows how the metaphysical tradition of the increase of Being starts to function as a living tradition in the *Truth and Method*. After giving a short historical description of the metaphysics of the increase of Being (from antiquity to theologians of the Middle Age and even Heidegger's deconstruction), the author explains that the bringing-to-life of this tradition is owing to the hermeneutic phenomenon and not because of some method that could guarantee its authenticity.

The second chapter of the book is titled *Approaches – hermeneutic phenomenology* and integrates six studies, written, in the following order, by Péter Varga, Anna Jani, Sándor Krémer, Tibor Schwendtner, Dezső Csejtei and Tamás Ullmann. All of these studies discuss philosophical hermeneutics (mostly the one elaborated by Heidegger), or its relation with the phenomenological antecedent (Husserl's phenomenology) or consequent thinking systems (Gadamer, Ricoeur).

I would refer here to the final study of this chapter, Tamás Ullmann's interesting approach to Paul Ricoeur's conception about the metaphor. What he sustains is that Ricoeur's theory represents in fact a change of paradigm and was elaborated as a reaction to Heidegger's conception and against the structuralist and post-structuralist theories about the metaphor. The main idea of Ricoeur's conception is that by understanding the function of the metaphor, we understand in fact the way how language operates. More than that, Ricoeur thinks that the creative power of the metaphor manifests at the third level of the text (the first being the level of words, the second the level of the phrase). He speaks about the referential character of the metaphor, which means that metaphor is more than just an instrument of making visible some reality which wasn't visible before that, metaphor, at this level, recreates the reality. The study explains why Ricoeur introduced the concept of the “metaphoric truth” and how he managed to pass over the classic theories which described metaphor by the replacing function and the analogy. In this dynamic conception metaphor becomes a predicative relation and the main concepts of its functioning are not the replacement and the analogy, these two being replaced, according to Ricoeur, by the interaction and the tension. Further, the study presents the theories which influenced Ricoeur's conception (the relation between Ricoeur's theory and the “tenor-vehicle” concepts of I. A. Richards, for example). As we can read, Ricoeur describes the tension inside the metaphor by questioning the classic approach supposing that the two parts of the metaphor (tenor and vehicle) present similar issues. He thinks this similarity is not necessarily required, but the two parts must be compatible for having a sort of “similar behaviour”, in other words tenor and vehicle are not completely different meanings and

their relation comes naturally, it is not just imposed from the outside. According to Ricoeur a good metaphor is always between the complete similarity and the total difference. To be able to avoid the reduction of the metaphor at the level of the language and also to avoid the conclusion that the entire reality is a created, metaphoric one, Ricoeur had to introduce another concept, namely the *iconic function* of the metaphor. This means that metaphor has an iconic nature, yet, more than just representing reality (as images do), it is between the semantic and the figural. Metaphor seems to be a sort of dynamic transition from the purely lingual sense to the iconic representation, between the iconic function of images and the describing function of the language. This explains why it is so difficult to understand its nature. As we understand it from Ullmann's study, Ricoeur acknowledged this difficulty and intended to resolve it by introducing the concepts of the productive imagination and the "metaphoric schema". As Ullmann says, Ricoeur gives to the metaphor the character of the event, for him metaphor means a new type of relation between the language and the world. Yet, as any philosophical innovation which has to fit into some philosophical system, this innovating conception has its own lacks and they are very well pointed out in the last part of this study. First, because this iconic aspect seems to concentrate on the poetical metaphor, ignoring other fields as philosophy or scientific thinking, second, because it reduces the creativity of language only to the metaphor (excluding other ways of expression, metonymy, for example).

Another interesting study of this chapter is Dezső Csejtej's presentation about the problem of the landscape in philosophy, showing how landscape was approached in the history of philosophy and how philosophical hermeneutics managed to change modernity's thinking about the problem. Focusing on Simmel's and Heidegger's points of view, with the aim of drawing a new ontological approach to the mentioned philosophical problem, the study arrives at the conclusion that the philosophy of the landscape, in the ontological approach, is based on a sort of "in the mood for...", and this mood, according to the author, is the adoration, the devotion to the landscape. The study also integrates some very timely considerations about tourism and lets us think about the global problems we have today, because we haven't respected our environment enough.

The last chapter of the book, titled *Cross-positions – Hermeneutics and Science*, contains studies which are a kind of applied hermeneutics in the fields of poetry, literary aesthetics, theology, social sciences, sociology, economics and even the domain of law. The studies of this chapter are written by Csongor Lőrincz (about the relation between the inner word and Gadamer's concept of dialogue), Zoltán Kulcsár-Szabó (an interpretation of Hans Robert Jauß's thinking in the light of his specific personal history), Csaba Olay (analyzing the concept of interpretation in Taylor's philosophy), Erzsébet Szalai (a sociological-hermeneutical research about the socio-economy of Hungary after the changes of 1989), Lilla Ignácz (about hermeneutics and law and the debate between Gadamer and Betti), Ildikó Veres (studying the philosophy of Being, the relation between subject, authentic being and truth in Béla Hamvas's works) and Csaba László Gáspár (a paper approaching the anthropological concept of religion and, more generally, the major forms of human thinking: common thinking, philosophy, science, religion).

As I intended to show, this book deals with a lot of interesting topics, studied from an interdisciplinary point of view, with methods provided by philosophical hermeneutics. It is a rich, colourful and instructive lecture for philosophers and

researchers, succeeding to draw an accurate image of how hermeneutics can be useful in social and human sciences. It shows the situation of hermeneutic research in today's Hungary and, in addition, the possibilities and limits of philosophical hermeneutics (for instance, the limits of dialogue, language and understanding). The book *Szót érteni egymással. Hermeneutika, tudományok, dialógus* can be useful and interesting not only for those who are in contact with some area of human or social sciences, but also for readers seeking to understand something about social life, human nature, human interactions, understanding or self-knowledge. As I never intended to give an exhaustive description of this book, I tried to show just a few interesting topics and conclusions, so I let the readers discover more details about the problems approached, asking them to play the role of the interpreter onwards.

**Lack and Hungarian Philosophy
– An Essayistic Review on Ildikó Veres's Book –**

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Keywords: Hungarian philosophy, 19th-20th century; Karl Böhm, Béla Brandenstein, Béla Hamvas; philosophy school of Cluj; József Halassy Nagy; history of philosophy

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It is not incidental that the conjunction “and” appears in the title of this review.

It is not there just to avoid a seemingly more scholastic titling such as “The concept of lack in Hungarian philosophy” or its “history”, etc. No: this conjunction stands there rather to connect questions and questionable things. So it is in fact a question itself.

The problem of lack has been a permanent concern of philosophy ever since “ancient times”, whether it was called *steresis* by the Greeks or *privatio*, *deficientia* by the Romans. It is such a central and unsettling affair that we could even say, paraphrasing Schopenhauer: If lack did not exist..., man would probably hardly philosophize at all. Or, for that matter, would hardly do anything...

It is a different question that philosophy – not only on its secondary levels – mostly “relates” (and not *refers*) to lack as something that should not be merely and primarily filled up or filled in – meaning: accepted or thought of as an existential challenge – but eliminated or removed – meaning: denied, exceeded – in the direction of a conceptual “completeness of being”, “lack-lessness”, “completeness” (absolute) – that is, lack of problems and questions – which of course always proves illusory. So, just like “lack” itself, the challenge of deficiency, its “philosophy” is always questionable.

Not less questionable is, however, the affair of “Hungarian philosophy” or “national philosophies”. This has mostly made its way through the agora of culture in