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Cognition and Hermeneutics: Convergences in the Study of Translation

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Translating Practices: Situated Bodies between Cognition and Expression

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Abstract: Practices correspond to a multitude of performing acts that articulate themselves in interpretation and entail circumstantial and cultural features. Considering that different sets of practices involve bodies with distinct backgrounds and diverse ways of expression, the assimilation or rejection of practices assumes to some extent translation, insofar as it requires intermediation between and among conflicting cultures. Particularly in situations marked by colonization, one is inclined to reproduce not only the hegemonic language but also its corresponding practices, often leading to a concealment of other possibilities of articulation. The capacity of translating practices involves, consequently, finding an adequate way of expression, one that understands hegemonic practices and their meanings, but which nevertheless also conveys a unique voice corresponding to one's situation and marginal practices. It also requires attention to meanings that operate at a pre-predicative level—because practices are based in prejudices that cannot be completely manifested—and to their affective or emotional correlation. The chapter suggests that a complementary discussion of 4EA cognitive science and hermeneutics provides a conceptual base to approach translating practices, insofar as embodiment, affectivity, situatedness, language, and historicity play a key role in these theories. It concludes by exploring the potential of feminist, postcolonial, and decolo-

nial studies, in delivering a political basis to understand how these processes of translation assume a situated body.

Keywords: Hermeneutics, Performance, Postcoloniality, Decoloniality.

1 Introduction

Communication occurs in various levels, for example through verbal language, non-verbal expressions such as gestures, and cultural production. Understanding this variety of expressions and relating to them involves a process of translation, one that distinguishes itself from that which seeks a word-for-word correspondence. This article focuses on a broader conception of translation, one related to expression through practices and the foundation of its interpretation upon one's situation. The accent on everydayness is due to the fact that translation is not taken here as a special situation of technical translation, but as a practical activity in which culture and history are mediated in one's day-to-day affairs.

However, practices are not politically neutral, which means that neither are processes of translation. Translation plays a significant role in everyday practices, particularly in contexts in which hegemonic views are critically discussed; by hegemonic views I mean views that tend to prevail as true without further reflexion. Although sharing some commonality, 4EA cognition and hermeneutic theories shed light in distinct ways on the translational aspects of these practices. Considering that one's situation relates to one's embodied interaction with other beings, 4EA cognition theories stress corporeality and affectivity as necessary components of meaning in one's practices. Conversely, because practices are interpretively oriented, as they are founded on one's facticity and are historically directed toward a horizon of possibilities, they should be taken as hermeneutical phenomena.

In this sense, hermeneutics broadens the sense of embodiment, insofar as it encompasses pre-predicative and non-thematic layers of meaning. Inasmuch as every judgment is supported by several prejudgments, which are relevant to interpretation, although in a non-thematic way, a proposition or a statement is not the unique realm in which meanings are elaborated. In a given situation, what is understood as meaningful is not only a thematic object (the focus of my attention, for example a pen), but also and necessarily the background from which the object stands (for example, a piece of paper, the table, the chair in which I'm sitting, the surrounding sounds, the temperature regulated by the air conditioner, the light coming from the lamp), which remains non-thematic (not thematized by my attention). By the same token, practices present thematic and non-thematic dimensions, although these dimensions exceed the kinds of physical examples given above.

From this hermeneutical and 4EA cognitive perspective, the notion of being situated emerges at the crux of the matter, for it expresses not only an embodied apprehension that co-constitutes the world, that is, the meaningful totality corresponding to one's openness to being (see Heidegger 2001), but also the awareness of pressing matters that correspond to the historical singularity of each interpreter. Hence, in order to understand translational processes in everyday practices one needs to clarify the way affectivity, language, embodiment, historicity, and politics yield meanings.

In order to provide a discussion of translation in everyday affairs, this article presents the following plan. The first section discusses some aspects of 4EA cognition theory with especial focus on the problem of embodiment. It connects the affective side of embodiment with Heidegger's hermeneutics, although making visible important discordances be-

tween 4EA cognition and the Heideggerian approach to situatedness, particularly the latter's radical account of historicity, but also its failure to assign a central role to the body. In the wake of this argument, I explore the notion of prejudice as a distinguishing trait of being situated. Because being situated involves historical issues that require an analysis of the structural propagation of dominion and violence, the third section addresses feminist, postcolonial, and decolonial studies. My essay concludes with an evaluation of the potential of 4EA cognitive science and hermeneutics to illuminate aspects of translation in everyday practices, and suggests that in postcolonial circumstances, embodied interpretations may explore the in-between of cultures and provide unexpected meanings.

2 4EA Cognition and Hermeneutics

One way to find a unity among the many approaches to the 4EA concept of cognition is by taking them as critiques of a brain-centered theory of mind: in rejecting the shortcomings resulting from an intracranially centered and computational process of cognition, proponents of 4EA cognitive science highlight the coupling between brain, body, and environment. Accordingly, they engage with phenomena such as the extension of body cognition, the role of affectivity and being situated, social cognition, the technological shaping of the mind, and the embodiment of language in learning processes.

Conversely, a distinct and older tradition—considering that despite its many predecessors 4EA cognitive science properly arises only at the turn of the millennium—reaches similar outcomes, from Friedrich Schleiermacher's hermeneutical connection between feeling and language to Don Ihde's material hermeneutics (see Robinson 2013, Don Ihde

2001). Although 4EA cognitive science and hermeneutics constitute different branches of knowledge, with their own vocabulary and methodologies, they share a set of interests and mutual influences, including, for example, the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Because Heidegger is influential to 4EA cognition and was himself a hermeneutic philosopher, I present some aspects of his theory in order to lay the basis for a further discussion of the situatedness of translation practices.

4EA theorists often acknowledge Heidegger's being-in-the-world as an alternative to internalist conceptions of mind. However, they almost exclusively pay attention to *Dasein*'s relation to the totality of equipment, which appears in one of the first instances in which the notion of world is discussed in *Being and Time*. Shawn Gallagher, for example, explicitly likens such an account to James J. Gibson's concept of affordance (see Gibson 1979)[1]: "To use Gibson's term, the affordances offered by door, desk, chair, computer, and so on, are implicit in the way that I interact with them—they are ready-to-hand, as Heidegger […] says" (Gallagher 2009: 39). Gallagher's analysis is correct to the extent that in *Being and Time*, cognition—in its traditional sense—is a founded mode of *Dasein*'s existential structure of being-in-the-world.[2] In Heidegger scholarship, this is sometimes called the pragmatic aspect of his philosophy. Nevertheless, it also leads to an oversimplification of *Dasein*'s ontology to simple pragmatic

1 See Robinson's article "The Affordances of the Translator" in this issue.

2 Heidegger distinguishes the primordial mode of being-in-the-world from activities that depends on it, such as scientific knowledge, which is in turn called a derivative or founded mode (see Heidegger 2001: 66-90). This is sometimes stated as the primordiality of existence over theoretical explanations.

engagements. Gallagher's reading is indebted to this pragmatic interpretation, as he concludes that Heidegger falls short of a circuit of pragmatic relations that encompasses every aspect of being-in-the-world: "That is, others appear as engaged in pragmatic contexts similar to (or different from) our own. This analysis leaves little room for more direct and personal relations such as those based on emotional or even biological attraction" (ibid.: 42).

But such a reading neglects the importance that Heidegger concedes to affective phenomena, which are conceived from an ontological perspective as moods/ attunements and dispositions. In *Being and Time*, one reads that anxiety (*Angst*) is a basic disposition (*Grundbefindlichkeit*) that is not determined by any pragmatic context, in contrast to fear, which is an attunement (*Stimmung*) directed to a detrimentality within a context of involvements (Heidegger 2001: 179). Besides the 1927 *magnum opus*, the central role of attunements is easily found in his other writings, despite the different goals and concepts they entail. Boredom (*Langeweile*) belongs to the context of Dasein's analysis (Heidegger 1995), while joy (*die Freude*) and sorrow (*die Trauer*) appear in his meditation on the history of being (Heidegger 2013: 188), as well as the so-called grounding-attunements (*Grundstimmungen*), such as deep wonder (*Er-staunen*), deep foreboding (*Er-ahnen*), startled dismay (*das Erschrecken*), reservedness (die *Verhaltenheit*), and deep awe (*die Scheu*) (Heidegger 1991).

However, despite the importance of such writings, they do not offer a detailed analysis of Aristotle's notion of *pathē* (usually rendered as emotions), upon which Heidegger develops his theory of dispositions and attunements. The lecture *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy* conjoins a theory of moods, language, and situatedness, following—but also re-reading—Aristotle's rhetoric in terms of a hermeneutics of

facticity. Because this 1924 lecture course provides a hermeneutic ground on which to understand cognitive processes related to embodiment, language, affectivity, and social interaction, a discussion of some of its passages may be useful.

A characteristic note of 4E cognitive theories is the displacement of an explanation of brain-centered processes to bodily and environmental processes. From the vantage point of language, this means a pragmatic stress on the relevance of speech acts, rather than on descriptions. Rhetoricians are predecessors of this theory, as they conceived language in terms of persuasion. In his discussion of rhetoric, Heidegger addresses the impact that language has in everyday affairs. Heidegger starts his analysis of Aristotle's rhetoric by taking the statement *zoon logon echon*—usually translated as "man is a rational animal"—in another direction, inasmuch as he renders *logos* by language. While discarding the "rational animal" meaning as derivative, Heidegger interprets Aristotle's sentence as not only indicating the human being's capacity to say something, but also the corollary, namely the capacity for that human being to hear itself, and also hear what is said by others—as Heidegger puts it, this is a "letting-something-be-said-by-others" (Heidegger 2009: 76). This dynamical play completely differs from the descriptive language viewpoint, as it focuses on how persuasion works. Heidegger states that "human beings are with one another in the mode of encouraging, of persuading, of exhorting" (ibid.), activities that are possible as long as one hears. In turn, one does not hear merely by taking notice of sheer sounds, but rather, by understanding meanings in situated and engaged contexts. In other words, "he [*Dasein*] does not hear in the sense of learning something, but rather in the sense of having a directive for concrete practical concern" (ibid.). Heidegger and the whole rhetorical tradition conceive language as related to situated

existence, to relevant circumstances in a given occasion. In this regard, language appears originally in specific concerns and expresses one's fore-understanding of a situation. In turn, this fore-understanding is already attuned and anticipated in a pre-theoretical apprehension of a totality of meanings. An attunement is not something that one may add to an understanding, but a basic way of openness, in which beings are understood in a non-thematic and pre-reflective way.

A similar approach is formulated by Klaus Dockhorn in his critique of Gadamer, stressing the connection between hermeneutics and rhetoric, between understanding, affection, and persuasion. He characterizes Hans-Georg Gadamer's interpretation of Schleiermacher, whose hermeneutics is depicted as mainly psychological, as one-sided. In his argument Dockhorn likens hermeneutics to rhetoric, showing how understanding is affectively motivated. In the following passage, Dockhorn disputes Gadamer's depiction of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics as "turning away from the grammatical-rhetorical position to the psychological" (Dockhorn 1980: 168) and, consequently, as disregarding the state of mind of historical consciousness:

> I cannot completely agree with this opinion, because in the process of interpretation, Schleiermacher does appear to recognize the ontological inclusion of the interpreter using considerations from rhetoric. When Schleiermacher speaks about the "holy scriptures and their connection with the given," when he says that these communications are "poetic and oratorical"—"and what could be closer to the latter than dialectic"—and when he declares that piety with its "suffering side" is a "devotion," a "letting one's self be moved by the whole that stands over against one's self," as "the being moved and determined of one's self by the subject-matter," which "forms your existence into a specific moment," then he means precisely that feeling of utter dependency, that pious feeling that accompanies and transcendentally regulates all reflection as a pre-judgment. Are we not facing here something that comes very close to Heidegger's

> "fore-having," "fore-sight," and "fore-conception," at least in its content? (Dockhorn 1980: 168-69)

Although Dockhorn accepts that Schleiermacher represents a shift away from the rhetorical roots of hermeneutics, he does not concede that this means a complete dismissal of rhetorical affect, as the shaping of understanding by feelings is clearly stated in the above quotation. A similar connection between hermeneutics and rhetoric is stressed by Heidegger that, unsurprisingly, describes Aristotle's *Rhetoric* as "the first systematic hermeneutic of the everydayness of Being with one another"—in *Being and Time* (Heidegger 2001: 178), just a few years after the lecture on Aristotle's rhetoric. Considering that Heidegger shares with Aristotle common assumptions regarding their conception of language, the distance between contemporary cognitivism and Aristotle also applies to Heidegger: "Aristotle did not narrow down the domain of the emotional *pathē* into the group of object-oriented emotions with a high complexity, that are favoured by the cognitivists" (Pott 2009: 78). Nevertheless, if "Aristotle makes it clear that 'cognitions' (beliefs, thoughts, judgments) initiate the emotional response and are the necessary and in some cases even sufficient conditions of emotion" (ibid.: 72), then the Heideggerian view distinguishes itself not only from the cognitive account, but also from the Aristotelian view of emotions, as long as in Heidegger's ontology dispositions and attunements are not derived from cognitive assumptions. More precisely, the parallel between Heidegger and cognitivism is not so easily framed, because dispositions and attunements work on a pre-reflective level, one which corresponds to a fore-understanding and a pre-predicative discourse. On this level, there are meanings, but they are not those of objective statements. The grounding aspect of dispositions and attunements clearly appears in this passage:

> Insofar as the pathē are not merely an annex of psychical processes, but are rather *the ground out of which speaking arises, and which what is expressed grows back into*, the pathē, for their part, are *the basic possibilities in which being-there itself is primarily oriented toward itself*, finds itself. The primary being-oriented, the illumination of its being-in-the-world is not a *knowing*, but rather a *finding-oneself* that can be determined differently, according to the mode of being-there of a being. (Heidegger 2009: 176; italics in original)

The phenomenological account of meaning acknowledges a predicative level of expression in which language may specifically be used to meet scientific knowledge requirements. However, such a level depends on a pre-predicative layer, a broader horizon out of which the predicative horizon may appear. Prior to any theoretical selection, one's understanding projects meanings from a non-thematic background, according to one's being-historical constitution. This historical project relates to the finite circumstances in which one is situated, that is, to one's having-been. Because of one's facticity, one already has a view of something (Heidegger 2009: 93) that guides one's concern in the world.

Summarizing this preliminary analysis, we may see affinities between 4EA cognitivism and a hermeneutic account such as the Heideggerian one, particularly regarding their mutual critique of the primacy of intracranial processes, their emphasis on a collective and embodied notion of language, and on the relevance of the affective dimension in the constitution of meaning. However, any closer investigation sees irreconcilable issues in their philosophical projects. Particularly, Heidegger's concept of meaning, which stresses the pre-predicative domain—the proper realm of dispositions and attunements—has no parallel in cognitivist theories. Conversely, Heidegger does not provide further analysis of embodiment, although dispositions and attunements do play a key role in his thought (see Aho 2009). In fact, Heidegger makes implicit

use of the rhetorical thesis that says that performances/deliveries in discursive and practical relations are emotionally embodied.[3] Apart from their specific terminology, this is also the core of the proposal of some 4EA scholars.[4] In the next

3 In classical rhetoric, emotions and dispositions are bodily related and connected to the way some content is delivered and apprehended. Aristotle offers a treatise of embodied emotions and dispositions in Chapter II and links them to delivery (hypokrisis) in Chapter III, as in this statement: "It is a matter of how the voice should be used in expressing each emotion" (Aristotle 2007: 1403b; see also Robinson 2016; Gabbe 2016). A development of such issues may be found in Cicero, who speaks of delivery in terms of the "language of the body" (Cicero 2001: 197, III, 222), and in Quintilian, whose account of delivery explicitly encompasses the language of gestures, tones, and looks: "All emotional appeals will inevitably fall flat, unless they are given the fire that voice, look, and the whole carriage of the body can give them (Quintilian 1979: XI, III, 2). Onsberg (2008: 1203) sums up the inceptual link between rhetoric, delivery, and embodiment in the following manner: "As rhetoric originally was closely tied to the oral presentation of a speech, delivery, understood as the best management of voice and body, was naturally of interest to the art. Thus, in the traditional rhetorical system, the so-called rhetorical canon, delivery made up the fifth and last part (Greek hypokrisis, Latin action or pronuntiatio)." Further associations between delivery, emotion, body, and non-verbal persuasion may be found in Austin (1806), Bulwer (1974), and Carruthers (2010).

4 Consider, for instance, Giovanna Colombetti's statement (2018: 574): "It seems correct to say that the mind is not emotional in the sense of always undergoing some emotional episode—if we understand the latter as intense experiences categorizable as 'happiness,' 'fear,' 'surprise,' etc. But if we consider that there is much more to affectivity than episodes of this kind, then the claim that the mind is inherently affective immediately appears more plausible. Non-emotional affective states may include at least moods (feeling cranky, bored, upbeat, up or down, having the blues, etc.), long-term dispositional sentiments (love, hate, etc.), and motivational states (desire,

section, I develop the notion of being situated and explore its outcomes to the notion of historicity.

3 Being Situated and the Pre-Thematic

The idea of being situated proves to be the kernel of Heidegger's hermeneutics of facticity. He develops the notion of hermeneutical situation in one of his earlier writings and explains that every interpretation depends on a previous understanding related to an initial position of, a direction, and a scope of looking (see Heidegger 2002: 111–13). Therefore, being situated is the hermeneutical concept that correlates modifications in the circumstances of our situation in the world with distinct interpretations. However, circumstances do not only refer to the place where I stand, or to particular people who are talking to me, to the weather, to the moment of the day, but also to the places I have lived, people I have met, pressing political and ethical issues, that is, to subject matters that become historically relevant to me. Gadamer describes the facticity of this historical being as "the principle of history of effect" (Gadamer 2006: 298), for being situated entails multiple effects that act on someone's interpretation. Being aware of relevant circumstances does not lead to stringent criteria and knowledge, but rather, to a sense of finitude that understands that every judgment or view is based on prejudices—as the result of a history of effects—that may or not confirm themselves in reality. These prejudices concern every aspect that structures the world, from values to science.

"*The prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgments, constitute the historical reality of his being*", says Gadamer (2006: 278;

hunger, pleasure, pain, etc.)." See also Chemero (2009), Griffiths/Scarantino (2009), and Colombetti (2014).

emphasis in original). If that statement is right, then the condition of cognition is historically prefigured, insofar as any engagement with a being or an event is from the outset already opened in some perspective by our historical being. A prejudice is not necessarily wrong, as its meaning is projected by our structure of fore-understanding. Because Heidegger and Gadamer both see as dogmatism the attempt to invalidate the agency of our prejudices, their historical accounts embrace the many aspects of being situated.

Because what is historically transmitted is mostly carried out unthematically, prejudices supersede methodical procedures that want to eliminate them. From a hermeneutical standpoint, prejudices are not subjected to elimination, as they are constantly arising according to our historical being. Moreover, hermeneutics does not limit itself in stating the connection between understanding and facticity, but it highlights the productivity of prejudices in our existence. It is by means of prejudices that I recognize a subject matter in its historical dimension, as related to a set of events and beings. In some cases, I may have a distorted perspective about a subject, due to a hasty acceptance of prejudices. In other situations, it is due to the existence of determinate prejudices that I am able to see things in a totally different perspective. Without ignoring the first point, I would like to explore carefully the second one, especially in its political potential.

Meanings are irreducible to theoretical dimensions of our existence, as they are expressed and performed by our bodies. In this regard, embodiment has an inevitable political aspect, one which is prior to what people normally understand as political activities, for it encompasses, according to the above discussion, pre-reflective and pre-predicative realms. In other words, being situated "in the flesh of the world" (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 84) means that one has already

taken into consideration a set of practices, endorsing, refusing, or elaborating it in other forms of significance. To be pervious to this complex of embodied practices in a situated being is to be properly open to historicity. Any expression manifests an embodied situatedness and, therefore, a unique perspective regarding the world. Understanding this uniqueness—not in the psychological sense of empathy with a person, but as establishing a genuine dialogue with him/her—involves interpretation and mediation. A dialogue with the other entails an openness to a different system of practices, which has no complete equivalence in the way I live.

4 Plural Performative Bodies

Feminist, postcolonial, and decolonial studies are among the chief theories that discuss the interdependency between discourse, body, and politics. They do not limit themselves to offering an analysis on how practices are constituted, but rather, they address underlying assumptions of these practices in order to make room for new possible ways of being. In these theories, the body has a central significance, as it bears marks of violence—in many forms of control and domination—which appear as normal because they are grounded in hegemonic discourses that propagate them. Conversely, it is by bodily performances that other possibilities of being are displayed and rendered capable of providing a critique of their normalization.

Embodiment is a historical process. It corresponds to a trajectory of performances, inasmuch as any bodily expression takes place in a social and communal realm.[5] Bodies ex-

5 Robinson (2003: 82) stresses the performative unity between language and embodiment: "Language, then, is performed in and through and by the body. We make decisions about what word or

press inscriptions of power, but also possibilities that are non-reducible to hegemonic norms. As indissociable from political and cultural contexts, bodies are intrinsically plural, while reflecting distinct performative trajectories in the world. As Donna Haraway states, "Situated knowledges are about communities, not about isolated individuals" (Haraway 1988: 560). Plural bodies communicate in manifold ways. Each expression presents some singularity, although the possibility of one's autonomy and self-understanding over one's own body is not the result of a mere individual decision, but a confrontation to a lesser or a greater extent with hegemonic norms. Embodiment is accordingly one's process of self-understanding in order to acquire a singular voice, a process that, as stressed by cognitive 4EA critiques, is not "intracranial" but corporeally performed in a social world. The difficulty of having a voice that is heard also appears in Donna Haraway proposal of a feminist theory: "We seek those ruled by partial sight and limited voice—not partiality for its own sake but, rather, for the sake of the connections and unexpected openings situated knowledges make possible" (ibid.: 560). Political and cultural restraints are inscribed on the body, and that inscription expresses the affirmation or the denial of certain values. This is true for Haraway's theory, but also for postcolonial and decolonial theories that see people from peripheral countries suffering the drawback of always

phrase to use with the help of somatic markers. We remember what words and phrases mean, not just their denotations but their connotations and collocations and implications, with the help of somatic markers." In turn, Mona Lilja (2017: 346) underscores the uniqueness of bodily performativity: "By doing so, a number of patterns will be explored that explain how/why bodily performativity exceeds linguistic performativity, and how the gatherings themselves signify something in excess of what is being said."

needing to confront assumptions that represent colonial or hegemonic views in order to express themselves.[6] This may lead to a displacement of meaning, which does not entirely belong to the language that represents the hegemonic view, but which also does not fit the original language of a colonized country. Because embodiment is expressive and linguistically enacted, its understanding necessarily involves translation. Therefore, as stated by Haraway, "Translation is always interpretive, critical, and partial" (ibid.: 589), because it refers to multiple situated bodies instead of one abstract and universal body. Considering that situations never completely coincide, one understands the other's expressions solely by means of an ongoing process of translation—as will be discussed in the next section.

Another gesture that expands the politics of embodiment is provided by Judith Butler. By contrasting "bodies that matter" to "abject bodies," she analyzes the politics that makes some bodies live and leaves other bodies to die. While

6 Although postcolonialism and decoloniality have much in common, they emerge as autonomous theories, whose scholars often represent distinct geographical locations and work different temporal frameworks (see Bhambra 2014). Among the many aspects of postcolonialism, one may conceive it as a multifaceted critique of metaphysical, ethical, and political issues, such as identity, race, gender; as a literary theory that challenges representations of "colonized or formerly colonized as inferior"; and a theory whose "post-" indicates both discussions after colonialism and a critique of the persistence of colonialism in the present (see McEwan 2019: 24). Conversely, Mignolo (2018: 81) defines decoloniality as follows: "Decoloniality, as I am posing it here, does not imply the absence of coloniality but rather the ongoing serpentine movement toward possibilities of other modes of being, thinking, knowing, sensing, and living; that is, an otherwise in plural. In this sense, decoloniality is not a condition to be achieved in a linear sense, since coloniality as we know it will probably never disappear."

making clear that this critique is not restricted to the violence that is inflicted on women, she takes the abject as a biopolitical notion that refers to "uncountable and unaccounted for" bodies—those who systematically suffer violence and whose lives are permanently at risk (Butler/Athanasiou 2013: 29). According to Butler, "However, to prevent any misunderstanding beforehand: the abject for me is in no way restricted to sex and heteronormativity. It relates to all kinds of bodies whose lives are not considered to be 'lives' and whose materiality is understood not to 'matter'" (Butler et al. 1998: 281). On the other hand, one may confront the political category of the abject by means of performances in which the body appears. "Yes, performativity does take place when the uncounted prove to be reflexive and start to count themselves, not only enumerating who they are, but 'appearing' in some way, exercising in that way a 'right' (extralegal, to be sure) to existence. They start to matter" (Butler/Athanasiou 2013: 101). Embodiment synthesizes, in a way, political and historical concerns, as the body stands for other bodies. For Butler, then, "one is not simply a body, but in some very key sense one does one's body, and indeed, one does one's body differently from one's embodied predecessors and successors as well" (Butler 1997: 404).

The singularity of embodiment is also accentuated in Barbara Sutton's postcolonial approach. In her analysis of Argentinean women during 2002–2003, Sutton discusses the correlation between embodiment and political resistance through the expression *poner el cuerpo*. According to her,

> *Poner el cuerpo* overlaps somewhat with "to put the body on the line" and to "give the body," but it transcends both notions. With respect to political agency, *poner el cuerpo* means not just to talk, think, or desire but to be really present and involved; to put the whole (embodied) being into action, to be committed to a social cause, and to assume the bodily risks, work, and demands of such a commitment.

> *Poner el cuerpo* is part of the vocabulary of resistance in Argentina, and implies the importance of material bodies in the transformation of social relations and history. (Sutton 2007: 130)

Each community develops its own ways of expression by means of which an understanding is elaborated. In this regard, *poner el cuerpo* is not just a reference to the body, but an interpretation of politics from the viewpoint of a situated body, which has already cognitively apprehended relevant circumstances motivationally oriented to action. It entails performance, therefore, as the body is simultaneously a site of resistance and a horizon of possibilities. In the situation analyzed by Sutton, these bodies involve distinct pathways related to the roles they achieve in the communal life.[7] Only by considering these bodies in detail is one able to acknowledge the richness of their expressions and to apprehend the subtleties of their performances. Only then is one capable of putting oneself in conversation with these people and understanding the meanings they ascribe to their embodied expressions, as well as to tortured and disappeared bodies (see Sutton 2007: 134). Although diverse in their performative traits, each woman in Argentina committed to resistance relates to the spectrum of dictatorship and the bodies that were not allowed to survive. The expression *poner el cuerpo* is not solely a dictum, but a dispositional trigger by means of which people share and defend a political view. In this regard, embodiment is not

7 These women were diverse in age, socioeconomic background, and life experience. About half of them were activists, including feminists, lesbian rights activists, labor organizers, *piqueteras* (picketers), members of *asambleas populares* (popular assemblies), communal kitchen organizers, and members of human rights groups and organizations promoting the rights of AfroArgentines, indigenous peoples, Latin American migrants, women in prostitution, and people with disabilities (see Sutton 2007: 130–31).

a concept restricted to the way a person manifests itself in the world, as it always means an interrelated and communal world, in which bodies affect and are affected by other bodies. This dispositional pre-understanding, which entails different levels of bodily consideration, also includes bodies that are not here anymore.[8] Postcolonial and decolonial accounts of the body enable us to think historical connections that are inscribed on and enacted by bodily performances. Moslund illustrates the singularity of bodies that experience effects of colonization in this fashion:

> Certainly, postcolonial resistance emerges out of an embodied or lived experience of imperial productions of space: the bodily and mental experiences of physical conditions like slavery, racial abuse, divisions of labor, displacement, et cetera, give rise to various forms of opposition to the abstract ideas and suprasensory ideologies behind a particular organization of any place and its interhuman relations. The body is already understood or taken for granted as at the base of it all. (Moslund 2015: 26)

From this perspective, one may state that the Argentinean notion of *poner el cuerpo* is rooted in a communal cognitive pre-understanding about the several violations people have suffered through colonization. It entails a comprehension of a given situation, in which one is aware of these circumstances while putting oneself in risk, as a body that works as an obstacle in order to interrupt a series of violent events.

This is not to say that the concept of performance is restricted to political confrontation. Although sharing some of

8 Such as the "disappeared bodies" in Argentina and other countries of Latin America. Another relevant aspect of absent bodies is the treatment of the dead. Our relation with past people entails forms of embodiment that manifest our understanding of dead bodies and our attitude toward them, such as rituals of burial and commemoration, and the creation of categories of beings associated to their bodies, such as tombs, relics, and cemeteries. See Ruin (2019).

Butler's views, Saba Mahmood disagrees to a certain extent with the former's view of embodiment, as it seems to present a limited vision of performance. Mahmood argues against her that agency is not reducible to "resistance to relations of domination," but rather there are other acceptable ways of subjectivization.[9] In Mahmood's work with the Egyptian women's mosque movement, she realizes that piety and shyness, virtues cultivated by those women, lead to different ways of self-understanding and expression, forms of embodiment and action based on a certain notion of discipline that differs from Butler's claim to resistance. Instead of simply refusing the importance of resistance, Mahmood is rather arguing that processes based on passivity—as a phenomenological category that embraces "the sedimented and cumulative character of reiterated performances" (Mahmood 2001: 216)—should also count as forms of performance and subjectivization.

5 Performative Practices in Everyday Translation

Having examined hermeneutical and cognitive aspects of embodiment, namely, the dispositional constitution of meaning, the pre-thematic aspect of the interplay between body, language, and interpretation, and the historical constitution of the body and its performative potential, I now proceed to an investigation of the relevance of being situated to the topic of

[9] See Mahmood (2001: 211): "Despite Butler's acknowledgment at times that agency is not to be conceptualized as 'always and only opposed to power' […], her theorization of agency (as much as her demonstrations of it) are almost always derived from, and directed at the articulation of resistance to social norms and the subordinating function of power."

translation. As I am mostly interested in everyday translation, I examine how the politics of body in decolonial contexts is relevant to this process.

Translation is an activity that occurs amidst the "flesh of the world," in the midst of the different ways in which the body expresses itself and is understood. Nevertheless, as I discussed earlier, each expression is rooted in an understanding of one's being-in-the-world, in a practical elaboration of one's concern. In feminist, postcolonial, and decolonial theories, the body is simultaneously conceived as the site of inscriptions of power as well as the *locus* in which resistance and other lifeforms become possible. Since translation is historically embodied, it has to do with a situatedness, with a singular perspective, that expresses meanings and relates to the way one receives these manifestations. Translation mediates cultures and times; it also situates itself among a bodily understanding of the world, the reception of the other's bodily expressions, and an ongoing formation of meaning. Lilja resumes this arrangement of bodily connections as follows:

> With the above in mind, not only are relationships between bodies and bodies, or how bodies move, central issues when discussing emotions, but the relationship between bodies and representations must also be considered important (images, texts, etc.). This is because the repetition of signs is what allows others and objects to be imbued with meaning and emotional value – a process that is dependent on histories of association. (Lilja 2017: 346)

This process of sedimentating meanings is inseparable from the history of its constitution and affective tonalities. In regard to places affected by colonization, the repetition of signs maintains a worldview and its related forms of expressions. This naturally leads to the problem hinted in the previous section, namely, the difficulty experienced by people who have been systematically subjected to domination in finding their

own voice and expression, because the marks of violence are inscribed on their bodies.

Hence, translation cannot be conceived apart from a history of power and subjection. At the beginning of process of colonization, translation was mainly used in processes of domestication. Robinson (2014: 10) describes this moment as enacting a double bind of translation, namely, communication and subjection: "Not only must the imperial conquerors find some effective way of communicating with their new subjects; they must develop new ways of subjecting them, converting them into docile or 'cooperative' subjects." This double direction of translation, which communicates, but also aims at domination throughout the process, shows that this linguistic experience has historically favored colonial interests, as it is not equally determined. People who have suffered the effects of colonization live between a culture that has been imposed as normal, and a repressed one, which is frequently limited to secondary situations. This leads to a predominance of one culture over another, but also over the characteristic forms of language and cognition of the latter, which suffer a process of marginalization.[10] This colonial impact is not the only factor that structures one's cognitive understanding of the world, but it is an important one. In fact, being situated in colonized countries frequently involves a split relation to language, for one needs to master at least one hegemonic language apart from the standard language and local dialects of the country. The intercultural interchanges lead to a revaluation of the role of translation, which becomes a constitutive aspect of our existence rather than a mere technique belonging to communication affairs. Robinson de-

10 Concerning the topic of power differentials, see Jacquemond (1992) and Robinson (2014).

scribes the shift that researchers of translation have proposed in postcolonial studies:

> Translation in this context is no longer merely a semantic transfer operation performed on verbal texts by a few highly trained professionals with linguistic and cultural skills related to more than one national or regional culture; it is the basis of much ordinary day-to-day communication (Robinson 2014: 29–30).

A translational term more suitable to these circumstances is hybridization, because it acknowledges that one rarely deals with just one language and, consequently, with just one culture in postcolonial contexts. In these situations, one works with hegemonic languages in some circumstances, while in other cases expressing oneself in another language. Bachmann-Medick (2006: 36) states that "This translatedness of cultures, often referred to as 'hybridity', shifts the notion of culture towards a dynamic concept of culture as a practice of negotiating cultural differences, and of cultural overlap, syncretism and creolization." Hybridity is not a special case in places exposed to colonization, but the rule. In a sense, in these situations one is always a mediator, as one realizes the ineffectiveness of both languages in expressing in its entirety contents of meaning that are experienced in everyday life. Assuming that language and perception are intrinsically related, the way one expresses and understands others' performances defines the mode in which one constitutes meanings.

From a decolonial viewpoint, practical affairs involve a tension between languages that cannot be solved by artificial procedures, for it is endemic to the medial character of people that live in a hybrid culture. The way one expresses a matter in another language involves its translation into another corporeality, from gestures and facial expressions to tonalizations and, of course, words. This process is far more complex than just making equivalences between systems of language,

for it unfolds itself articulating affectivity, historicity, and interpretation in a situated body.

Language channels a bodily understanding of the world and, according to postcolonial theories, it also sets boundaries that, in some contexts, may turn out to be "natural" assumptions that are historically constructed. Considering that in postcolonial contexts these assumptions lead to a bodily integration with a prevailing culture that sets the range of normality, other forms of bodily expression constitute a challenge to hegemonic and naturalized views of embodiment.

A body that is not already expressing something in a determinate way is inconceivable, just as it is unthinkable to consider a performance without a particular arrangement of bodies. In this regard, theorists of political performance like Judith Butler reenact in the realm of the politics of body and gender the old rhetorical canon that says that bodily phenomena, such as gestures and one's posture in a certain activity, are events of persuasion.[11] Performances are bodily expressions that manifest one's dispositional understanding of the world, while affirming certain aspects of existence and values that may generate tensions with predominant assumptions and behavior. As attuned expressions, performances do not only reveal the peculiarity of one's position in the world, but also enact a conflict with other perspectives—in particular with hegemonic views. Because performances are always attuned to one's situation, they are bodily forms in which one elaborates language within a historical community and with which they establish a dialogue. This is the basis for considerations of everyday translations, which were already mentioned in the context of postcolonial discussions.

11 As explained in footnote 2.

In places affected by colonization, one is constantly intermediating between and among cultures that conflict in everyday affairs. In these situations, translation is not so much a special case as it is a common proceeding. It consists of different sets of practices, practices that are diverse because they involve bodies that have another background and that express themselves distinctly. Unlike technical translation, dispositional tones play a key role in rendering meanings in everyday translation. Affective strata co-constitute our engagement with the world in the deepest sense of attuning it with a factical understanding of our communal being. In everyday translation, affectivity connects us to some meanings relative to a given worldview, while simultaneously moving us away from others. In this regard, Lilja (2017: 345) stresses the relevance of affectivity in the formation of communities, particularly when these emotional traits result from a history of colonization: "Just as emotions connect people, they also define who does not belong. Feelings of love and hate are emotions that are crucial for the nation and for determining who 'fits'." Therefore, in such postcolonial contexts the naturalness of using determinate terms to express and translate certain practices is frequently marked by a tacit assimilation and reproduction of hegemonic values. In this sense, translation may reassure holders of current and hegemonic worldviews, but may also give voice to other forms of being and, consequently, to distinct ways of belonging.

The aforementioned expression *poner el cuerpo* is an example of affective cognition. It gathers together people with different backgrounds and constitutions that are affectively directed toward an idea. This sets in motion or puts in play a unique sense of belongingness based on our understanding that distinct bodies and their histories place demands on us. A proper translation of such an expression requires a media-

tion that does not erase its role in contemporary social movements in Argentina, and which is simultaneously intelligible to the reader or audience. As we've seen, Sutton (2007: 130) states that "Poner el cuerpo overlaps somewhat with 'to put the body on the line' and to 'give the body,' but it transcends both notions." While the first meaning stresses the risk of being there, for instance, as in a demonstration, the second one indicates that it involves a willing act. It expresses the aim of interrupting an act of violence as one's body "stands for" others, while putting oneself at risk. Consequently, to reiterate, "poner el cuerpo means not just to talk, think, or desire but to be really present and involved; to put the whole (embodied) being into action, to be committed to a social cause, and to assume the bodily risks, work, and demands of such a commitment," as Sutton explains (2007: 130). A translation of this expression will inevitably miss some of these meanings. From the operational and domesticated literal sense of "put the body" to more careful translations like "to put the body on the line" and "to give the body," it is clear that it is not just a matter of linguistic equivalences, but choices that convey more properly practices that give rise to a certain expression, or rather cover and dismiss them.

Let's consider a situation: if a community in another country influenced by Argentinian social movements and with similar purposes wants to reenact this expression in its own context, it would not be sufficient to render it literally, as it requires encompassing most of the several aspects above mentioned. Moreover, it should also bring up experiences of its own community, and their related forms of expression. The translation should be as powerful to this community as was the original expression to Argentinians, in such a way that it may also connect people affectively, and capable of driving them into action, while evoking the community's own histo-

ry. In this process, a critical awareness of hegemonic terms and schemes of interpretation—as much as it is possible—is advisable, inasmuch as they are insensible to differences.

This account of translation entails a hybridity—irreducible to a mere combination of languages—that arises from a historical engagement with different sets of practices and their hierarchical arrangements of relations. Therefore, it is not just a matter of dealing with disputing systems of practices, but primordially of destabilizing hegemonic structures in order to make room for practices that have their importance denied and have been and are being made invisible. The choice of words, sentences, and other embodied ways of conveying a meaning cannot be restricted to literal correspondences, for this process also manifests hermeneutic tensions between practices that have their own historicity. In everyday translation in decolonial contexts, the capacity for exhibiting these tensions in the way one renders something is fundamental. Contrary to the idea that translation is a smooth passage from one language to another, in which the difference of another language vanishes, I suggest that this process, in postcolonial contexts, generate tensions and displacements that work as indexes of practices that cannot be completely assimilated.

6 Final Remarks

Practices are not phenomenologically intelligible without structures that make their constitutive details visible. Despite their references to distinct philosophical traditions, 4EA cognition and hermeneutical theories are accounts that provide nuanced connections among body, language, historical belonging, and politics, specifically in contexts emerging out of colonization. In these cases, translation is a common activity,

as one has always to mediate among cultures and decide the use of terms and expressions that confirm or deny determinate values. Even in trivial affairs, discourses and other bodily expressions reinforce or undermine structures of domination that convey cultural colonization. This creates a battlefield, in most cases unnoticed, in which meanings propagate hegemonic views at the expense of marginal cultures and forms of life. Unexpected uses of the colonizer's terms in order to displace them and destabilize their original framework, or a straight refusal of the colonizer's terms, while replacing them with terms that emerge from other historically embodied forms of life, are strategies of dismantling colonization. Translational decisions in everyday practices entail a tacit understanding that relates to the way one is attuned to the world by means of an embodied performative communication with others. In these performances, translation exhibits a historical character, as it relates to historical issues connected to one situatedness. One's attunement is not so much that which apprehends meanings differently, according with one's facticity, but primordially the basis upon which other forms of expression are generated. In this sense, the choice of an expression in the target language may not just render an original meaning, but it may also subvert and create other meanings, while exhibiting a gap between languages and practices.

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