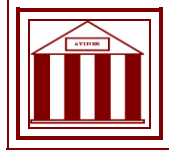


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*Words-for-World: Language,
Hermeneutics and the Cosmos*

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Words-for-World: Language, Hermeneutics and the Cosmos

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Abstract

By distancing itself from the Janus-faced remedies sought by the Cartesian logic of differentiation between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, this paper sets out to interpret the central importance of language as a world-forming experience. With an interdisciplinary focus positing a primary emphasis on Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenology, the role of *the symbolic* -language or the ‘big Other’- within Lacanian psychoanalysis and the debates on ‘identity’ and ‘alterity’ in contemporary political philosophy, this paper questions the future possibilities of expounding the hermeneutic horizons of linguistic experience as an alternative prospect for cosmopolitanism interpenetrating both particularity (immanence) and universality (transcendence). Accordingly, with an interpretative focus on the Deleuzian critique of representation throughout the course of modernity and by underpinning the centrality of the Derridean notion of *différance*, this paper discusses whether it is possible to further the humanitarian Idea of Ludwik L. Zamenhof’s Esperanto movement, with a proposition for a symbolically effectuated *dispositif*, the hermeneutic translation-machine, which simultaneously produces *words-for-world*.

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Word(s) and World(s): A Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Hermeneutics in its most common definition refers to the general methodology of interpretation. Etymologically derived from the Greek word *hermeneuein*, hermeneutics refers to a mode and modality of ‘exposition which brings tidings because it can listen to a message’, for, ‘prior to every interpretation, the hermeneutical manifests itself as “the bearing of message and tidings”’ (Grondin, 1994, 104).

The *logos* of being and becoming, which is fundamental to hermeneutic interpretation underpins the unending disclosure of the world through words.¹ Whereas the dialectical basis of hermeneutics reveals the primary role of the movement, the event-structure of experience articulates the phenomenological basis of hermeneutics. Within this context, the event can also be read *via* the system of understanding as a world-forming experience. Within this context, ‘language is the fundamental mode of operation of our being-in-the-world and the all-embracing form of constitution of the world’ (Gadamer, 2004, 3).

As a critical dispositif of the disclosure and interrelatedness of word(s) and world(s), language inaugurates the interpenetrative process of the double dialectic of the self and the other while providing the systemic structure of understanding. Within the form of ‘being-with-others’ in the world, ‘language is a medium where *I* and world meet or, rather, manifest their original belonging together’ (Gadamer, 2006, 469). Although each language has a particular kind of immanence in its inner form, the universal transcendence of language is also constitutive.

The relational disposition of the *logos* of being and becoming depends on the dialogical character through which not only the realization of the self but also the reciprocal encounters with the other prosper. The all-encompassing frame of language for hermeneutic phenomenology comprises both particular and universal aspects of the interpretation of being and becoming. It does not only disclose the immanent forms of the *ipse* (self), but also unveil the transcendent and categorical structure of the encounters with the *other*.

The meaning of being and becoming through the experience of the world underpins the necessary articulation of language as a critical mediation of the modes and modalities of intrasubjectivity and intersubjectivity. Regarding the centrality of language in human subjectivity, hermeneutic perspectives primarily mention the diversity, contextuality and practical interrelationality of symbolic experience. Hermeneutic approaches on the relation between word and world might be read through two distinct notions of interpretation: Gadamerian ‘strong hermeneutics’ and Nietzschean ‘weak hermeneutics’ (Smith, 1997, 24).

Although weak and strong hermeneutical modes and modalities of linguistic interaction are diverse, symbolic efficacy of diversity qua utterances is of primary

¹ The term *world* within hermeneutic phenomenology of language refers to the interpenetrative centrality of meaning and interpretation. It (re)presents both the horizon of oneness as belonging and the leitmotif of experience as not only *Erlebnis* (experience) but also *Erfahrung* (historical experience). Accordingly, ‘as a horizon phenomenon “world” is essentially related to subjectivity, and this relation means also that it “exists in transiency”. The life-world exists in a constant movement of relative validity. The concept of the life-world is the antithesis of all objectivism. It is an essentially historical concept, which does not refer to a universe of being, to an “existent world”. In fact, not even the infinite idea of a true world can be meaningfully created out of the infinite progress of human historical worlds in historical experience (*Erfahrung*)’ (Gadamer, 2006, 239).

importance for all accounts. Accordingly, either in its strong or weak version, the practicality of linguistic experience underpins the interpenetrative negation of particularity and universality, or, immanence and transcendence, rather than the isolationist tautologies of reflective consciousness. Within this context, hermeneutic phenomenology of the interrelatedness of word and world reinforces the reciprocal conditions of symbolic effectuation by great sensitivity to the diversity and *différance* of language games.

From the hermeneutic view on the intercontextuality of linguistic experience, a proposition of words-for-world might expand Wittgenstein's notion of 'the primacy of intentional language *use*—*whether* consensual *or* agonistic in orientation' (Smith, 1997, 104). Words-for-world might be regarded as an empty place for heterogeneity, multiplicity and diversity. In effect, it is a proposition for the dissemination of a cosmopolitan *ipse* which is neither particularly immanent nor universally transcendent, but rather, a subjective and ontological interiorization of difference against the totalizing signs of certainty.

In its Lacanian sense, 'what characterises the human world is the *symbolic function* – a function that intervenes in all aspects of our lives' (Homer, 2005, 36). Such method of symbolic reduction enables us to interpret the 'obsessional inversion and its isolating processes' and the later phase of 'alienation, which dates from the deflection of the mirror *I* into the social *I*' (Lacan, 1968, 75) in an interpenetrative continuum. The role of the *symbol* within the cosmos is of primary importance, for, the symbolic matrix of being and becoming refers to the dialectic experience of the *ipse* in-between the particular and the universal. The symbolic order, in its Lacanian definition, therefore does also underline that '*each human being is in the being of the other*' (Lacan, 1988, 72).

Symbol is a contextual determinant of not only the signal but also the process of signification. Hence, rather than implying empty configurations, *symbols* inaugurate an interpenetrative connexion between the signal and its signification (de Saussure, 1983). The significance of the language, therefore, is to be primarily read via the symbolic praxis of dissemination, or at best, the process of distributing a shared meaning. This is not a matter of speaking the same language, rather it is a matter of the symbolic effectuation of meaning as a shared practice. At this point, the difference between language and speech might be read through their varying characteristics regarding the question of particularity and universality. Within this context, whereas language (*langue*) refers to the particular and immanent form of diversity and difference among human beings, speech (*parole*) underpins a universally shared and disseminated form of human activity (Derrida, 1997, 230).

In its Derridean sense, language could be defined as 'a structure -a system of oppositions of places and values- and an oriented structure' and a matter of 'polarization', for, 'its orientation is a disorientation' (Derrida, 1997, 216). This notion of language does primarily convey the interrelationality of interpretation and meaning as a critical leitmotif of diversity. The locus of the hermeneutic phenomenology of a cosmopolitan body, hence, might be first regarded as a proposition for generating the meaning of the lived experience of being and becoming in the world.

On the other hand, the spatiotemporal experience of being and becoming is closely associated with the contexture of 'meaning'. In effect, meaning refers to the twofold experience of movement, proximity and presence in the life-world: 'the meaning of being as presence and the meaning of language as the full continuity of speech' (Derrida, 1997, 70). At this point, by reference to the centrality of interpretation, meaning could be understood through its relationality and contextuality. Within this

framework, meaning, as the primary linguistic source of interpreting the world, denotes the necessary diversity and heterogeneity of the historical and lived experience of the self.

The meaning of being-in-the-world might, accordingly, be discussed through the possibility of reciprocal interpretation generated by pure and undistracted present moments. Movement of the language underlines the spatiotemporal element of particular situations and multiple differentials. The spatiotemporal ontogenesis of the cosmopolitan body, accordingly, could be differentiated from the foundational notions of universality or from any essentialist orientation on particularity. At this point, spatiotemporality of the lived experience qua language is primarily linked with the actual and systemic effectuation of *différance*. Hence, within this context, the spatiotemporal efficacy of meaning generated by *différance*¹ might be seen as a critical reflection of the originality of speech (Derrida, 1973, 130). On the other hand, Derridean notion of *différance* might also be read as a horizon of interpretation, which does primarily arise from the spatiotemporal irreducibility of thought and experience. The world and the word are woven together through the lived experience of the self and the other. Within this interpenetrative aporia of subjective experience, whereas particularity denotes the contexture of immanence and duration of affective affirmation, universality connotes the transcendent image of thought. Language, as a dialectic form of experience, interpenetratively underscores the dialectic reciprocity of particular immanence of affection and universal transcendence of categorization. In general, language could be described as the world-forming experience (cosmos) of the self, not only as a perceived phenomenon of affection (ethnos) but also as a conceived milieu of recognition (demos).

Cosmos, Translation and the Function of Language

Cosmos has generally been regarded as the humanitarian *sumum bonum* of the disclosure of the world. Although mostly being asserted as a universalist orientation vis-à-vis a humanitarian *sensorium commune*, or regarded either as a procedural or moral kingdom of ends, cosmos might also be defined as a complex aporia of being and becoming. In effect, cosmos, as a matter of the allagmatic ontogenesis of individuation, primarily denotes an open horizon of spatiotemporal experience, or a daily praxis of a symbolic *habitus*, which reveals not only the ‘sense of one’s place’ but also the ‘sense of the place of others’ (Bourdieu, 1989, 19).

Cosmos inaugurates the symbolic contexture of systemic dispositions in-between the own-world and the with-world, not only as a matter of identification and universality, but also as a critical leitmotif of the transductive interiorisation of alterity and particularity. As this point, referring to the critical dispositif of the cosmos of being and becoming, the complex aporia of language might be stressed as a symbolic system constituted by significant distinctions.

The function of language is a critical leitmotif of the philosophy of communication (Wittgenstein, 1953). Besides the applicability or functionality of language in life and among communication, the notion of meaning could also be grasped as an

¹ Derrida’s emphasis on the concept *différance* denotes the relation between meaning and linguistic significance as a matter of the spoken language. In its Derridean context, ‘*différance*’ is a complex essential characteristic of signs, being composed of (a) an actual difference which makes the sign possible, but which can be instituted and understood only in terms of (b) other times and circumstances in which the instituted difference *systematically* appears (Garver, 1973, xxiv).

interpenetrative permutation, rather than a contra-proposition. Accordingly, phenomenological meaning, symbolically generated and transposed qua language, is the world-forming experience of the self and the other in the world.

Within its Cartesian definition, as a principle medium and function of the subjective experience of the world, language denotes an *a priori* rational determination (Descartes, 1984). On the other hand, *langue* (language) and *parole* (speech) could be seen as two diverse sources of analysis in linguistics. While *langue* is related with the abstract differential system of interiorisation qua language use (between a signifier and the signified), *parole* underpins the ephemeral actuality of individual utterances (de Saussure, 1983). Language and parole are associated with the empty space of symbolic effectuation, which is inaugurated through the unbending interrelatedness of the sense and the nonsense, or, the conscious and the unconscious.

At this point, nonsense could be defined as a basis that traverse, resonate and ramify multiple heterogeneous series of differences while, at the same time, underpinning their multiple disjunctions (Deleuze, 1990, 66). On the other hand, in its Deleuzian understanding, sense is defined as effect: 'it is not an effect merely in the causal sense; it is also an effect in the sense of an "optical effect" or a "sound effect", or, even better, a surface effect, a position effect, and a language effect' (Deleuze, 1990, 70). Language, within this respect, might be regarded not only as the experience of an open and unending disclosure of the world, but also as a *dispositif* of difference, diversity and heterogeneity which is also a critical question of the philosophy of translation.

The philosophy of translation has always been associated with the double dialectics of the self and the other in the world. On the one side of this double dialectic, an open horizon of particularity and the potentia for différence forms the mode of being-in-the-world. This dynamic horizon conveys the immanent void of the spatiotemporal experience of the subject through which translation has become to inaugurate the being of the *ipse*, or in general, the own-world. On the other side of the double dialectic of translation, the horizon of universality reinforces the condition of intersubjectivity and transcendence. This second permutation accentuates the movement of the *ipse* in the world, and the reciprocal experience of the other. The locus of universality, therefore, is a transcendent form of disclosure qua becoming through transductive dispositions. Translation transposes the immanent particularity of the own-world into the intersubjective experience of the other in the with-world.

Accordingly, by reference to its double dialectics, the dynamics of translation might be primarily outlined as an endless combination of 'being' and 'becoming' that does implicitly or explicitly reinforce the spatiotemporal experience of the (own/with)world. Through the double dialectic of translation, being and becoming unveils the interpenetrative negation of dialogical encounters between self and other. Within this context, 'being for the other' and 'being in the other' is much of what could be termed the philosophy of translation' (Baltrusch, 2010, 115). In effect, referring to the dialectic exposé of the unending interrelatedness of being and becoming, and inaugurating an empty space beyond signs of certainty regarding the reciprocal being and becoming of the self and the other, translation might be seen as an open horizon of the in-between both as Idea and as praxis.

According to Walter Benjamin, translation is a mode of 'expressing the central reciprocal relationship between languages' (Benjamin, 2007, 71-72). Within this context, Quine's (1960) 'radical translation' or Davidson's (1984) notion of 'translation by interpretation' might also be reckoned as critical propositions considering not only the centrality of understanding and interpretation but also the significance of the linguistic disclosure of the world through the use of words. Within

Davidson's context of ontological interpretation and spatiotemporal linguisticity, or translation, 'understanding does not primarily involve translation but rather an interpretation that relates words to the world' (Dresner, 2006, 156).

In effect, thoroughly associated with the subjective experience of the world, translatability might be regarded as an open horizon of interaction and communication, which is effectuated 'as a space for intervention, that preceded both individual languages and all translation phenomena in terms of linguistic and semiotic becoming' (Baltrusch, 2010, 118). Throughout the interrelated context of translatability, the dialectic interplay between intentionality and meaning is of critical importance. Nevertheless, within this dialectic collaboration, 'whereas the meaning-function is certainly intentional, it is not *a priori* certain at all that the mode of meaning' (de Man, 2002, 87).

The dialectic interplay between the translatable and the untranslatable is a reflection of encounters between the particular undecidability of immanence and the transcendent representation of the universal signs of certainty. This double dialectics underscores the ontology of immanence and transcendence. It is closely associated with the spatiotemporality of the lived experience. The particular memory of subjects lived experience, hence, has always been a critical aspect of the words for world. Accordingly, the proposition for the hermeneutic translation machine might be regarded as an imaginary idea asserting to enlarge and multiply the horizon(s) of interpretation qua symbolic effectuation without discarding the '*lieux de memoire*' (Nora, 1984).

The Translation Machine: Towards a Hermeneutic Interlingualism

Could it be possible to grasp an all-encompassing humanitarian meaning, and, above all, discuss the possibility of a cosmopolitan reciprocal interpretation through which the subject is affiliated regardless of diverse forms of immanent identification? Might Zamenhof's Esperanto movement be seen as a basis for a cosmopolitan Idea of a universal language or parole? These questions might be illustrated by reference to two critical points. First, the Idea of a universal parole might be seen as a proposition that reveals the interiorisation of difference. As the immanent basis of diversity within the contexts of particular languages, the construction of a transcendent parole might provide a strong cosmopolitan reciprocal understanding. Second, language might furthermore be deemed as an experience of polarization. Accordingly, the second orientation affiliated to the proposition for a hermeneutic translation machine might be regarded as an argument beyond the unipolarism of any particular language. This point denotes the necessary condition of resisting sameness and identicalness, and underscores the survival of difference and heterogeneity.

As a critical point of discussion in interlinguistics, Esperanto might be seen as a potential dispositif of generating a transcendent meaning of a cosmopolitan linguistic experience. On the other hand, the main motives of the emergence of Esperanto might mainly be seen as moral and idealistic, rather than being linguistic or economic (Token, 1997, 74). Nevertheless, the very idea of Zamenhof's Esperanto movement has generally been defined as a meditation of cosmopolitan idealism, mainly based on a humanitarian utopia.

Among other instigations for an artificial world language such as Volapük, Ido, Occidental, or Interlingua; Esperanto attracted a considerable attention, but acquired a limited community of speakers (Pool, 1991, 79). Besides referring to a transcendent and symbolic effectuation of cosmopolitanism via language, Esperanto's another

critical claim has been its emphasis on cultural neutrality (Fettes, 1991, 209). Rather than underpinning the universal or artificial context of its orientation on linguistic transcendence, the role of Esperanto might be seen with respect to the opportunity it provided as regard to generating a reciprocal symbolism of meaning for world communication (Tokin, 1990). As a matter of fact, it has also evoked discussion that Esperanto might be used as ‘a black box language in machine translation’, or as an apparatus for ‘automated text processing’ (Tokin, 1997, 81).

Instead of the artificial construction of a transcendent and universal language, an apparatus going beyond the tautology or hegemony of signs of certainty, the hermeneutic translation machine, might inaugurate the dialogically reciprocal grounds between the sign and the signifier through the sound-image. With the employment of the translation machine, by simultaneously providing an intersubjective meaning, in that sense, the act and ideality of cosmopolitan being and becoming might be interpenetrated. Within this context, the hermeneutic translation machine could be comprehended as an apparatus of coding and encoding the meaning of belonging-together, as well as a means of transposing diverse and multiple dispositions of the world qua words and speech acts.

The dialectic interplay between the immanent and transcendent permutations of language, hence, could be detailed as a proposition for a linguistic multiplicity which denotes ‘a virtual system of reciprocal connections between ‘phonemes’ which is incarnated in the actual terms and relations of diverse languages’ (Deleuze, 2001, 193). This proposition for symbolic coding and reciprocal axiom, might stipulate new ways of generating the meaning of being-in-the-world and could open the hermeneutic horizons of a cosmopolitan body. It may also surpass the unipolar lines of a universal lingua franca with the multipolar flows of symbolic experience via unendingly open and disclosed distribution of meaning generated from the particular significance and diversity of the word. This imaginary proposition of the *words-for-world* might additionally intermediate both particularity and universality as an alternative means for the interconnectedness of the immanent and transcendent modes and modalities of subjective experience.

Another critical point to be emphasized at this point is the Idea and praxis of language as an interpenetrative contexture of immanence and transcendence, which simultaneously denounce order and disorder in dialectic negation. Language, as the interpenetrative continuum of word and world, denotes the reciprocal expression of the potentia and Idea of the dialectic system of I-Self and the Other and constitutes the processes of implication between perceived and conceived spatiotemporal experience of the lived world. With regard to the role of language, the proposition for a hermeneutic translation machine underscores that the ‘structure of the other and the corresponding function of language effectively represent the manifestation of the noumenon, the appearance of expressive values -in short, the tendency towards the interiorisation of difference’ (Deleuze, 2001, 261). However, it is worth mentioning here that the circle of representation within the mimicry of modernity is a critical point of discussion regarding the question of the interiorization of difference.

In its Deleuzian sense, representation in modernity is a heteronormative modality of a single center, which ‘fails to capture the affirmed world of difference’ (Deleuze, 2001, 55). In effect, the hermeneutic proposition for a translation machine is an argument primarily derived from the critique of not only the mimicry of modernity but also the proposition for a meta-language which has always been vulnerable to be symbolically effectuated through a unipolar hegemony. With its focus on the interlingual and interpenetrative structure of the words-for-world, hermeneutic proposition underpins

the double dialectics of translatability as a critical *dispositif* of hearing the other (Derrida, 1985, 33).

Words and world, within this reciprocal interpenetration accentuates the modes and modalities of presence and thought not only by enhancing the ontogenesis of individuation but also by defining social formations as ‘machinic processes’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, 435). Therefore, the proposition for a hermeneutic translation machine is also related with the question of utensil. Although, at one point, this proposition is inspired by the instrumental and functional fundamentals of interlinguistics, it might be discerned from the teleological, substantialist or essentialist definitions of language.

It is worth mentioning here that this proposition is principally concomitant to ‘the question of the meaning of instrumentality, of the meaning of functioning, and of the functioning of meaning’ (Derrida, 1997, 332). The hermeneutic translation machine, accordingly, questions the ideality or singularity of event and body. In effect, with an hermeneutic and psychoanalytical delineation of the Deleuzian concept of the (un)conscious body, the relation between the sign and the psyche could be defined as a critical leitmotif of generating the meaning of the world, not merely as a transcendent common sense of humanity, but rather as a humanitarian and cosmopolitan interiorisation of multiplicity, difference and alterity.

As a critical *dispositif* of generating an interpretative meaning of being and becoming qua language, hermeneutic interlingualism, might be considered as a critical means of individual and institutional discourse (Pool & Fettes, 1998), or, as an open ‘horizon of significance’ (Taylor, 1991) regarding the unending interrelations between diversely and heterogeneously perceived, conceived and symbolically effectuated linguistic experiences of the world. Accordingly, the proposition for a hermeneutic translation machine denotes ‘the impossibility of an absolute metalanguage’ (Derrida, 1996, 22). According to the hermeneutic phenomenology of language, the reciprocal interpretation of both particularity and immanence, thus, could be brought further by disseminating the critical *dispositif* of *différance* through which the linguistic system of heterogeneity prosper. In effect, rather than insisting on a metalinguistic proposition, through the lenses of both weak and strong hermeneutics, ‘an immanent structure of promise or desire, an expectation without a horizon of expectation, informs all speech’ (Derrida, 1996, 21).

With its nominal orientation to an unendingly open horizon of dialogical encounters in-between self and other in the world, the proposition for the hermeneutic translation machine might be regarded as an argument on an imaginary mechanic system going beyond the Archimedean fulcrums and Janus-faced dichotomies sought by the idea of Enlightenment. This proposition might be developed as an all-encompassing critique of the expectation of completeness in modernity, which reflects *the deafness of the hearing ear*.

In its potentia for reciprocal understanding and tendency to genealogical critique, the proposition for a hermeneutic translation machine, might be seen as an argumentative discussion for thinking of a linguistic apparatus of an extrinsic mode and modality of the cosmopolitan body. It may inaugurate the necessary delineation of the reciprocal understanding of being-in-the-world, by hermeneutically disclosing and interpenetrating diverse and multiple permutations of the sense and the nonsense, the unconscious and consciousness, in general, the immanent and the transcendent, particularity and universality, body and ratio, or, *res cogitans* and *res extensa*.

Conclusion

The prospect for a unified, transcendent and universal world language has always brought forth the question of the domination and hegemony of a single culture and politics (Mazrui, 1976). This possibility of linguistic singularity and hegemony might be mentioned as an homogeneous system of the meaning of the world, or as a political lingua franca spread across the world as in the form of a *Pax unilogos*. Instead of this unipolar proposition, the locus of a hermeneutic translation machine is the maintainability of the multiplicity, diversity and heterogeneity of world languages while spreading the idea of différance through the interpenetration of particularity and universality, as *modus operandi*. As a critique of the universal hegemony of a single natural or artificial language, this argument underpins the reciprocity of meaning and denotes the technolinguistic philosophy of generating an alternative meaning of being-in-the-world qua interpretation and deconstruction.

In effect, a hermeneutic or deconstructive critique of the stereotypical, unipolar and mono-normative application of the politics of *Pax unilogos* could mark and deconstruct the regime of truth that historically canonize and distort any possibility for heterogeneity and diversity. This critical question of the ontological normativity of a hegemonic universality, hence, could be primarily seen as a metastasis of the symbolically effectuated logic of *idem* or sameness qua the mimicry of modernity. Accordingly, saying in Bhabha's words, 'to judge the stereotyped image on the basis of a prior normativity is to dismiss it, not to displace it, which is only possible by engaging with its effectivity' (Bhabha, 1994, 67).

Accordingly, the elaboration of a hermeneutic techno-interlingualism, positing a pluralist emphasis on the open and unending interrelatedness of the self and the other, might be regarded as a *potentia* for generating a heterogeneous meaning of being-in-the-world. Although, techno-interlingualism might also be criticized as an anti-humanistic approach, the perception of language as a hermeneutic dispositif of being and becoming could provide an interpenetrative horizon between techno-interlingualism and linguistic pluralism. Throughout this elaboration, the double dialectic of translatability effectuated through a hermeneutic *dispositif* might provide the expansion of the cosmopolitan and humanitarian 'horizon of significance' (Taylor, 1991).

As a conclusion, the trace of difference and alterity, as a hermeneutic problem of the interrelatedness of the self and the other in the world, is closely linked with the notion of the disclosure of the horizon of reciprocal interpretation as a phronetic and active mode and modality of openness to the 'story of the other' (Ricoeur, 1996, 7). This hermeneutic orientation, even in the form of weak or strong hermeneutics, might provide alternative modes and modalities of humanitarianism and cosmopolitanism by suggesting the interpretative interpenetration of immanence and transcendence, as well as, universality of identity and historical particularity of difference.

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