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# PHILOSOPHY IN INTERCULTURALITY

The present treatise can be understood as an apology of multiculturalism, which at the present times of globalization fills the gap left empty by the absent humaneness. Regardless of multiculturalism's self-view as some sort of reality,<sup>1</sup> the questions are "in truth" raised *elsewhere*. Namely if we move from multiculturalism as ideology, value and humanism to interculturality,<sup>2</sup> which

93

<sup>1</sup> Slavoj Žižek, for instance, claims "that the problematic of multiculturalism — the hybrid coexistence of diverse cultural live-worlds — which imposes itself today is the form of appearance of its opposite, of the massive presence of presence of capitalism as *uni-versal* world system: it bears witness to the unprecedented hegemonization of contemporary world" (Žižek 1997: 46). However, we shouldn't forget that the shift to the left margin of this scenery ("to question the concrete existing universal order on behalf of its symptom", Žižek 1997: 50) is itself enforced by the very "multicultural logic of capital". For Derrida (1992), it is Europeanness in general that is subjected to the order of capital, first and even foremost its spirituality and philosophy. What resists this subjection, however, is the multilayeredness of language and philosophy as the activity of language (hermeneutics). Speaking from the perspective of philosophy can imply speaking from the perspective of the capital; likewise, philosophy doesn't function as the transfer of the capital; rather, it reveals the spirituality of meditation and mediation.

<sup>2</sup> The differentiation between interculturality, multiculturality and multiculturalism is related to the limitation of the philosophical field of research to the constitutive meaning of interculturality. The latter needs no philosophical grounding, which, however, doesn't imply that it is neglected in advance; it can be the subject of culturological, sociological, politological, ethnological and any other inquiries without prior hermeneutic constitution. Philosophically speaking, the work that

opens up in the possibility of *mutual encountering and understanding within cultures and among cultures* in an era of the negation of *unity in culture* and affirmation of *cultures through difference*; the latter, however, is far from immune to their nivelization and nihilization. In other words, philosophy in/of interculturality has become relevant in the *impossibility of founding culture as centre*, which first of all undermines *tradition and the value of Europeanness*, and consequently all other cultural and civilization circles of our planet. Today, it is part of global circularity, involving as its basic component the *mixing of cultures regardless of traditional possibilities of their mutual encountering*. All it needs is patterns liable to modern displacements, placements and replacements: as long as they provide constant profit. Culture is progressively understood as the *competence of productive replacements of nature* rather than as

comes to mind in this respect is Charles Taylor's *Multiculturalism and 'The Politics of Recognition'* (1992). The *preliminariness* and *a priority* of the philosophical discussion of interculturality presupposes the circling of philosophy in interculturality and vice versa in that philosophy experiences itself as passing through a meaningful dimension of intercultural *intermediacy*.

Cultural studies are readily inclined to emphasize the American origin of multi-culturality viz. multiculturalism, and the European origin of interculturality, where either the former or latter cultural model is affirmed. However, this calls for special attention since today's condition witnesses worldwide replacement and displacement of cultural "patterns", which is why multiculturalism is generally becoming more and more accepted as a paragon of virtue for the humanities. Uncritical transfers of multiculturalism to philosophy leads to worldview constructivism, which assumes the presupposition that fundamental mixing of cultures or taking over various cultural patterns can result in a new highest quality of humaneness; obviously, it still assumes the ground of Man and Culture despite its preferring plurality to unity. For philosophy of interculturality, the categories of plurality and unity are no longer of central importance since they are both medially conditioned by *mutual encountering and understanding*.

*Multicultural identity* as a relevant topic of both American and European cultural, political-sociological and socio-philosophical discussions has to consider, from the hermeneutic perspective, the *intercultural situation*. Situational mutual encountering and understanding proves to be the fundamental characteristic of interculturality. This underlines the *perspectivist nature* of all intercultural concepts and the interpretative nature of intercultural comprehension in general since every mutual encountering of cultures, or within a culture, implies something that transcends factual cultural settings through the shift into the other. Interculturality can be a perspective of culture because it endeavors to define culture itself in its perspectivism.

In order to avoid constructivism in the constitution of the meaning of intercultural intermediacy, one needs to take into account hermeneutic circularity, which deploys philosophical determinations of interculturality itself as the activity of interculturality with Europeanness as its meaningful correlate.

It should be further observed that the distinction between the intercultural and multicultural is conceptual rather than evaluative in nature. Interculturality should acknowledge multiculturalism if it is to avoid any ambition of singularity, especially provided that it is a culture made possible by perspectivism.

*compensation* for human natural deficiency. One cannot underestimate the consequent subordination and appropriation of human senses with the provision of artificial organs, which is already looming on the horizon. Accordingly, the media organization of cultural offer and demand is more and more acutely present. This *cultural mixture*, manipulative in its essence, should be taken for granted in its facticity and actuality, which basically decentralizes both the locus of culture and human being's rootedness in culture. If we are today no longer certain as to what culture is, and if we are more and more inclined to deem superfluous every discussion on the crisis of culture, which ever so essentially determined the bearings of the 20-century intellectuals and artists; if, furthermore, every engagement in elitist culture on the one side and mass culture on the other continually loses its meaning, this can hardly be understood as a *confused necessity*, which is our common trait, but unlikely to be fully recognized in the near future.

In endeavouring to open up the possibility of this determination, we should, from the very beginning, limit ourselves to a *constitutive discussion of the meaning of philosophy within the intercultural*. However, can we actually locate the starting point of this discussion insofar as we recognize the absence of central locus in culture, and with the time of constituting culture *qua* centre already behind us? Where there is no origin, nothing can originate. The awareness of the final end obstructs the originality of initiation. Or we could say that there is *medial disclosedness* opening up, a certain in-between, *intermezzo* or *interlude*, played out precisely in the dimension of interculturality. In this sense it is possible to *constitute* the philosophical meaning of interculturality *through the opening up of this intermediacy*. This of course requires deflecting attention to the relationship *between* philosophy and culture, to their mutual conditioning, which has proved historically constitutive for the *Europeanness* as meaningful "variety in unity". It should be further observed that, for interculturality, the supposition of a plurality of cultures as opposed to a single culture is not in any sense a constitutive one. One should accede to multiculturalism's claim that there is no *single* culture and that there are only *cultures*. However, it does fail to recognize that, in affirming the pluralism of cultures, it *simultaneously* denies this *medial locus*, that which mediates plurality in its transposition between one's own and the alien. It is not enough to distinguish between the one and the many, the uniform and diverse; what it takes, rather, is to acknowledge the *difference in-between*.

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There is no plurality without difference (differences are only secondary!). If we formulate the difference only as plurality of differences, there is no difference any more. The One therefore enters the game *amidst the difference*. Of course, this is far from being an (onto)logical fact; it is, rather, a *hermeneutic determination* that needs to be developed in the dimension of intercultural midst, and which, so to say, pushes philosophy into interculturality. It is from this point on that insight can be gained into today's multicultural situation, featuring both the striving for diversity and its abolition (without differences).

Accordingly, "philosophy of interculturality" cannot be equated with "intercultural philosophy", insofar as the latter endeavours to discuss *common* philosophical issues in various cultural and civilization milieus on the basis of *confronting* various methods, epistemologies and strands of thought. This implies the recognition of the philosophy's determination by contemporary interculturality. However, it tends to rather easily forget the *meditative role* of philosophy in the *common midst* of inter-culturality. This is evinced in contemporary philosophy by the revelation of *difference qua difference*. That which is common lies in the difference.

96

Philosophy of/in interculturality therefore views itself on the very level of *difference*, and thereby differs largely from multiculturalism, which argues for a plurality of cultures and against the unity of one culture, acknowledging various levels of the difference (cultural, class, sex ...). Taken philosophically, this opposition is the one between the pluralism of truths and the monism of the truth. However, it is one thing to deny the possibility of one truth and quite another to claim that there is no truth; the latter is closely related to the experience of nihilism, evincing the *crisis* of Europeanness; *i.e.* difference and differentiation. This brings about various modes of behaviour in the midst of the culture, no longer stemming solely from the crisis of the centre but also from the distinct midst. Philosophy of/in interculturality embraces the critique of culture as centre, too; but it also claims its right for the *open midst* of intercultural mutual encountering and understanding. The midst is anything but the centre; it is brought about through the *differentiation* rather than unification. In this way, the "common midst" can be grasped without consorting to the unified centre. This is why intercultural mediation deems important not only the acknowledgement of what cannot be unified but also the transcending of indifference into a wakefulness for the difference, which doesn't simply raid over otherness; rather, it recognizes in it its own limitations and closedness, usually

covertly at work exactly in the jargon of generalized philanthropy, which cherishes the human being but is intolerant of (certain) people.

Philosophy in the intercultural does not only “dwell”, but is primarily *active*. Still more, in its origin, philosophy is *inter-cultural activity*. According to Ichiro Yamaguchi, intercultural philosophy is a “dynamic process” (Yamaguchi 1997: 11), in which we draw near *the Other* from the distance of *the common*. This nearness and distance establishes interculturality *somewhere in-between, in the medial position*, which should first be sought for. And it is this very quest that determines the *spiritual* dynamics of its establishment. From the perspective of philosophy of interculturality, this proves to be no mere invention because such a quest for *intermediacy* and *midst* has been historically directly related to the spirit of philosophy ever since the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, which proved essential for the formation of European *intercultural ethos*.<sup>3</sup> “What is attacked deep down today is the instinct and the will of tradition: all institutions that owe their origins to this instinct violate the taste of the modern spirit — At bottom, nothing is thought and done without the purpose of eradicating this sense for tradition. One considers tradition a fatality; one studies it, recognizes it (as “heredity”), but one does not want it. The tensing of a will over long temporal distances, the selection of the states and valuations that allow one to dispose of future centuries — precisely this is antimodern in the highest degree. Which goes to show that it is the disorganizing principles that give our age its character.” (Nietzsche 1930: §. 65) Taken philosophically, the crisis of tradition as the identity crisis implies that plurality cannot be grasped in its unity; accordingly, diversity is drowning in the pool of indifference, where it is no longer clear what is one’s own and what belongs to the Other, and where ultimately the *Alien* is more and more liable to entering the twilight zone against the purity of one’s own. On the other hand, we tend to stick to all that is new and different, while on the other hand the fear of intrusion of the Alien and unknown is constantly growing. This is the most dangerous trap of intercultural philosophy, namely that it understands itself on the basis of plurality and diversity of interpretations *viz.* traditions supposedly at our disposal, without rational esta-

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<sup>3</sup> Com. Gadamer (1989). In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle offers an insurmountable insight into the mean in human being’s comportment, reaching the heights in concluding remarks on the phenomenon of friendship. This can quite justifiably be considered the place of origin of philosophy of interculturality, never to be repeated on the same level of credibility and intensity in the history of philosophy until Husserl’s research work on intersubjectivity and Heidegger’s determinations of *Dasein* as the caring being-in-the-world.

blishing of any *inner relationship with tradition*. Through the prevalence of the illusion of being outside and beyond tradition, as well as through a growing belief that it is far better for interculturality to have no *locus* in tradition, we are facing a situation of the very midst of interculturality slipping through our fingers. Philosophy of/in interculturality is situated in tradition itself as the *medial transference and mediation of the revealing in difference* rather than in the interpretation of tradition viz. traditions.

“Cultural” differences thus always appear in the background of tradition and in the historical foreground. And getting rid of both the background and foreground renders the mediation of these differences impossible. In this sense, tradition doesn’t belong solely to past history; rather, it opens up the very event of the midst of interculturality. It takes place amidst one’s own and the alien. What is common in it doesn’t function as a unifying but as a differentiating agent. It is the mid dimension rather than central result. Such hermeneutic differentiation proves of utmost importance for intercultural thinking, which is understood as emancipation from tradition, grasping its essence from the very same tradition.

98

Given the crucial presuppositions of interculturality as a process, in which the common approaches the alien, we should avoid ignoring the *standpoint of our own tradition, from where* we approach the alien. Furthermore, on the way towards the alien, we are called to first find what is our own. Spoken in the spirit of the famous Hölderlin’s saying in his letter to Böhlendorf: “Yet what is familiar must be learned as well as what is alien.” The process of interculturality acquires its real dynamics and fulfils its purpose only after our directedness towards the alien brought us back to what is our own. In this process, what is allegedly our own may very well belong to the alien and vice versa. What is important here is that the *difference*, which forms tradition between the two, doesn’t get obliterated. Still more, Hölderlin’s saying can even be understood as the *spirit of Europeanness in general, finding the common in search of one’s own from out of the open alienness*.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> This is also indicated by Günther Figal within the context of the possibility of historical translation of modernity: “One’s own and the alien belong together, though not in such a manner as to push away the Other of ourselves into the sphere of the alien and thus become “concrete” in our ownness. In contrast to Hegel, Hölderlin doesn’t think it possible to capture the past alien into presence by recognizing it as its prior history. Particularly because presence develops from the past, it remains alien to it, since the development is simultaneously transformation, restructuring and a shift. What

The key component of this original presupposition of interculturality is that its fundamental and exemplary qualities need not be looked for within the alien; rather, they are continually found *in advance* in one's own, without setting them *in the central position* or *as the centre*, and likewise without setting them aside on the *marginal position*.

There is no central culture, just as there are no marginal cultures; cultures are determined only in their relation to the tradition of intercultural midst, eventuating among them in the manner of their opening up and closing off. The closing off of cultures isn't just some sort of negative facet of marginal cultural provinciality. In times of absent central culture, when culture as the centre is found missing, the very understanding of "provinciality" has also undergone considerable changes; since it is perhaps the only guarantee for maintaining the *provenance* of culture. With theoreticians of globalization stressing the relevance of local aspects, we are, taken interculturally, facing an *interim situation*, when the local has yet to be discovered. By gaining insight into it, the provenance of culture loses its appearance of provinciality. Having already found its locus, it has to do all it can to defend it from the intrusion of the alien.

99

These starting points of intercultural thinking can of course be objected by all those who argue for the centrality of one's own culture, arguing against the danger of decentralization in the alien, as well as by those who, in the every name of interculturality, often undermine and even deny the meaning of their own culture, supposedly drawing away from making contact with the alien. This is why I believe both these viewpoints are wrong, especially in view of the abovementioned presupposition of interculturality; and what is more, it is both these standpoints, which have helped keep much alive the crisis of European coexistence. The latter has brought about much clearer evidence of the *loss of the centre*, which is distressing for the individual "self" and even more so for the community of the "we". The vivid history of the 20th century witnessed radical attempts at compensating for this loss with nationalisms and interna-

needs to be experienced is this: we should "learn" about the alien in order to be able to understand one's own." (Figal 1996: 128). Jacques Derrida (1990) destructs the assumption of Europe's own openness, since it is not capable of opening itself to what is not and never will be Europe. Holding the view of European multicultural identity, this of course holds water; but matters are indeed different regarding intercultural midst, which first calls for construction if we are to speak about the outer-European as such. Com. also Waldenfels' reflection on *Europe* in "view of the alien". (Waldenfels 1997: 131—144)

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tionalisms on both the political left and the right, resulting in obvious failures and devastating catastrophes. It is none other than the renewed reflection on the Europeaness that reveals the meaninglessness of the philosophy of interculturality, which understands itself as the desired reinstating of the lost centre, be it as the recognition of identity or diversity, as a return to or keeping away from the originarity, cultural transformation with this or that or no goal in view. All this would ultimately lead to ignorance and non-understanding of the *Europeaness* as a possible correlate of interculturality. And it would also be the grist to the mill of all objections to Eurocentrism. Even as “good Europeans” (Husserl 1989: 39)<sup>5</sup> we are far from being able to avoid losing our bearings until we get situated in the intercultural midst, which, however, is not the locus of the return to the centre with its originarity and purpose; *rather, it is simply a world, in which we are finding our bearings and which we are searching for, we are losing ourselves in and we don't care for ...* This is why we could say that, even though it is inappropriate to discuss it in terms of centrality, there exists for the intercultural midst an adequate middle with an internal and external horizon of culture adhering to it.

**100** The difference between the middle and the centre, between the midst of interculturality and the locus of culture should not only be emphasized but also developed *as the difference* of philosophy of/in interculturality. And it should be well kept aside from the *philosophy of (establishing) culture* as the distinctive trait of the philosophy of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In justifying its factuality, the latter often conflicted with the possibility of philosophy as unrealizable within the framework of a specific culture. However, it does open up the intercultural dimension of individual and common existence, in which only cultures can develop their identities. But then again, interculturality is not any culture or even planetary techno-scientific civilization, which today raises high expectations. Still, these expectations can turn out futile unless there is nothing *in-between*. Philosophy of/in interculturality thus does not collapse into a culture; on the contrary, the tension of the relationship *between* philosophy and culture perseveres as an indeterminate intermediacy.

We should, however, be careful not to let the intercultural midst coincide with the quest for the lost centre, even if the latter proves no longer one-sidedly Eurocentric. Because philosophy's drawing closer from “distant cultures” is

<sup>5</sup> This phrase can be found already in Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*.



anything but immune to “centricity”. We are constantly in the danger of yielding to the temptation of understanding interculturality, in a heartfelt desire for cultural creation, as a restorational culture *between* or even *beyond* cultures; like the one advocated by Max Scheler with his thought of the world epoch of the balancing out (*Ausgleich*) between “Europe and the three great Asiatic centres, namely India, China and Japan, as mediated through Islamic world”. (Scheler 1976: 139) A “powerful background” for such pretensions can be found in the tradition of the subjectivist formation of culture, which gained its momentum in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, culminating at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in its own deformation in the meaning of the *crisis of European culture*. Since its very beginning, “cultural philosophy” has been primarily a *crisis concept*. Despite the painful experience of European wars and totalitarianisms of the 20th century, the discussions on the common European culture still fail to set aside this critical conception on the level of preventing the destruction of culture or cultures, and even less so on the level of the constitution of the midst of interculturality. The latter still hasn’t entered the area of political and social programmes, and has but rarely been tackled philosophically, particularly given the strong conviction that it can be successfully replaced by informational communication combined with the media culture. The crisis has transformed into *hypocrisy* of its own kind, which of course never attracts enough media attention, which is caught by the “fugitive crisis”, the “Balkan crisis areas”, “mad cows”, “dioxins” etc. Rather, it has been pushed far into the background of explicit or implicit being fed up with culture. If hypocrisy is an untackled issue particularly worthy of attention, this does not imply that we are not under its influence. We are exactly under its sway in the very discussion of what *in truth* constitutes *intercultural encountering and understanding*.

This hypocritical indifference in intercultural encountering does not only imply that we as Europeans have poor knowledge of ourselves or that we are unwilling to know one another (both on the axis of East-West and that of North-South), that we have no common identity traits, that we failed to grasp our European essence, to use the “basic” philosophical jargon. The fact that we as Europeans are — as is often repeated, “poorly informed” about each other — is an issue of *our “habitual” outlook and insight into matters and “culture”*. Despite the potential and potent omnipresence of electronic media, our “perception of reality” is more and more grounded in objecting *all that cannot be appropriated by our habitual view*. In other words: our world is being progressively formed and determined by *one and the same “perception of reality”*,

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which sees only (to) itself regardless of any habit. It is exactly the supposedly “habitual view on matters” that is destroying the tradition of habits, which is taken for granted as one’s own. Faith is likewise primarily our own faith. We thus have self-evidently at our disposal what is habitual “for us” without even reflecting on the possibility of re-appropriating our habits. Us is us and that is all there is. This “us is us” perception of reality is a crucial obstacle in enabling the *real perspective of intercultural encountering and understanding*, since it neither stems from nor approaches the habitual, which is not bound by anything and at the same time bound to the *inability of truth*. The consequence of this is the absence of the question as to the possibility, or rather impossibility of truth. This if-truth-be-told-we-no-longer-care-for-truth attitude actually best purports *our* truth as well as the fact that there is nothing *between* us (and others); that there is no real frankness or mystery.

**102**

The hypocrisy of Europeanness in truth is therefore an issue for the very *activity of philosophy* insofar it unites in itself the tradition of Being and that of freedom; or, to put it another way: *tradition is freedom of attachment/detachment*. The hermeneutic disclosure of intercultural midst is closely related to prominent philosophical issues of “Being” and “freedom”, together determining the *language* and the *world* of human *existence* in the sense of fundamental original habits. It is misleading to believe that we already have at our disposal the world and language, in which culture is historically expressed on the basis of habit. This belief is primarily an expression of the Will to Will, fundamentally undermining common existence on Earth. Undoubtedly, there are a number of languages, reaching beyond into the common, which does after all make possible mutual understanding of the same. It seems that, in this way, a common world is being created and that we speak a common language.

What clearly supports the idea that the same can be understood in various manners and that it is variety that opens up the common, is the language of philosophy. Despite its reaching the universal, philosophy has become rooted in individual cultures, bringing along an extraordinary intercultural language of the world, which fills human existence both in the sense of Being and freedom. In this regard, philosophy is not just “formal” argumentative language; by uncovering the truth it already speaks from within the openness of the world. This should indeed be emphasized if, according to R. A. Mall, intercultural philosophy is to ground itself on the presupposition that “the ultimate philosophical insight, truth in its singularity has so far never been attained by anyone

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and never shall be” (Schneider et al. 1997: Foreword). Obviously, this claim addresses the philosophy, which strives to ground all experience on the basis of one, *i.e.* first and last truth. However, the *spiritual oneness* differs largely from *functional oneness*. Such a view on philosophy as grounding the single truth could well stem from today’s functional unification of experience, most clearly evinced in the mass media. Although it actually cannot be denied its plurality, we shouldn’t argue for its indifference to all that matters. To the contrary, by keeping open the search for truth, philosophy essentially differentiates between and transcends each and every cultural rootedness.

It is for this reason that the reflection on the philosophy of interculturality cannot be introduced with the definition of the concept of culture, however necessary it may appear, arguably providing some sort of solution to the crisis of culture. Although definitions may well be available, we should not fail to notice how many of them but affirm the ongoing process of culture “from one crisis to another”. What matters here is *the difference* in that today the comprehension of interculturality determines the concept of culture rather than the other way round. This is the key philosophical presupposition of interculturality, embracing even the philosophical standpoint as an essential element of its formation. If philosophy denies its standpoint, it reveals its own inferiority exactly in not being ready to accept any arguments; of course the same denial would take place if philosophy were to accept uncritically any string of argumentation. In philosophy, arguments aren’t there for their own sake, but can only come about in the light of the *critical light of truth*. Thus, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Edmund Husserl came to recognize in *phenomenology* the possibility of philosophical seeing as well as its horizon in general, which proves especially interesting for philosophy in interculturality in that it makes possible the openness of truth in mutual encountering and understanding in the world, beyond the apparition of the pluralism of truths and monism of truth. In developing his philosophical doctrine, Husserl himself set the philosophical presupposition of interculturality<sup>6</sup> and his followers have already contributed several important theories of interculturality.

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<sup>6</sup> G. Strenger (Strenger 1998: 168) may deny Husserl “intercultural thinking”, which he finds impelling for today’s situation; however, he thereby uncritically equates the possibility of intercultural philosophy with the philosophical reflection on interculturality. A much more consistent treatise on this issue can be found in R. Cristin (1997), who draws from Husserl in his articulation of the relationship between European inter-identity and phenomenology of interculturality.

Originally, philosophical issues on interculturality are related to those of intersubjectivity, as raised by Husserl at a later stage of his phenomenology, and later further developed by his student Martin

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Generally speaking, we could say that the raising of the issues of interculturality by the philosophy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was inevitable, which can be deemed crucial evidence. Phenomenological standpoint lies hidden in the very mode of arguing made possible on the basis of simple self-presencing of phenomena through the structure of “something *as something*”. There remains a question as to how a philosophical method is able to also embrace cultural or intercultural content. The philosophical method is always a method of *approaching something*; it is never just a formal procedure. Phenomenologically, this methodical aspect gained clear evidence in Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, where the phenomenologicality of the phenomenon is addressed as the “distinctive way in which something can be encountered” (Heidegger, 2004: 54; com. Komel 1998), which is, taken hermeneutically, always already entwined situationally in the understanding or mutual understanding.

*Mutual encountering and understanding* “methodically” paves the way for philosophy of interculturality, insofar it lets the world “*speak for itself*”. This actually translates into “politics of recognition” (Taylor 1992), since experience as such is not grounded and understood in the unity of a single truth; to the contrary, we always enter the open truth of experience, the truth as openness. This is an intimation of the *varied* eventuating of the worldhood of the world, which needn’t deny itself the *commonness* of the world; the latter is now revealing itself as the self-denial of the difference, which preserves the midst in its openness. Culture formation takes place only in *mutual encountering in the world*, where the world opens up as the *midst of encountering*, as the mediacy of interpersonality. This obviously implies that culture arises already on the level of mutual encountering, which opens the world in its interpersonal mutual encountering and understanding.

The redirection of the treatise on culture to the intermediacy of mutual encountering and understanding on the basis of hermeneutic standpoint raises the question as to the manner in which this redirection co-constitutes the historical dimension of Europeanness. Taken philosophically, Europeanness is the origin of intercultural encountering and understanding rather than some sort of substantial basis of common cultures. This of course doesn’t imply the negation of

Heidegger, who transformed the issue hermeneutically in the sense of being-with. However, these issues are far from being bound by the issue of intersubjectivity insofar culture is understood from the midst of the perspectival openness of the world rather than solely on the basis of the constituted horizon of intersubjectivity viz. being-with. We cannot experience mutual encountering and understanding if there is nothing — or everything for that matter — between us.

historical foundations of common European existence, which were the key determinations — be they good or bad — of its geography. However, these determinations remain obscure unless *the horizon and the ground* are constituted from the midst as the intercultural midst of *the world*. Intercultural evidence of culture reveals itself from within the midst of the world as the ground and horizon of mutual encountering. The language of the world is a possible mode of encountering Europeanness in its culture and of other cultures, which was already established by philosophy at its very beginning in ancient Greece (com. Held 1998) And it is none other than philosophy which is capable of keeping distance from the hypocrisy within the open truth of mutual encountering and the revealed world of mutual understanding.

*Translated by Janko M. Lozar*

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