

# Paul Ricoeur's Mystery of Hermeneutics and Identity

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## **Abstract**

*The study is a reflection on the phenomenological hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur which is based on the selected issues entangling the mystery of hermeneutics in relation to identity. It delves into hermeneutics -- its kind, characteristics, and various relevant topics such as the role of philosophy, theology, biblical/sacred writing, history, culture, media, relation between the text-author and the reader-interpreter, human identity and character, love and justice, ethics and morality, law and command and the like. In a comprehensive manner, it also analyzes the phenomenological hermeneutics of Ricoeur exploring into the interpretation on the mystery of hermeneutics on the self and identity i.e. the human person who is created into the "image of God" capable of giving love, justice and embracing the fullness of hermeneutics of the self that was perfected in the "image of Christ." The human person is the entire project that journeys toward meaningful existence concretized by man's search for ultimate happiness. It is a movement towards fulfilling the character, nature or essence of his being. It is a process of turning one's being into its becoming. This project called humanity is a path that every person must walk on to attain his end. No one can escape this project.*

*Keywords: philosophy, Paul Ricoeur, hermeneutics, identity, poetic imperative, fusion of horizon, justice, love, hermeneutics, mystery of hermeneutics, mystery of identity, imago Christi, imago Dei*

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Paul Ricoeur, analytic and reflexive, shows philosophical passion for hermeneutical mediation of the text that centers on the character of justice and love in order to bring out transcendence -- the identity of the human person reflected in the image of Christ. The text as medium and object of interpretation is treated phenomenologically. A thorough discussion of Ricoeur, beginning from his philosophical inclination and background, interlinked with Edralin's (2013) implicative reflection on Ricoeur's Hermeneutics provides clarity to the hermeneutical understanding of the personhood of man which forms the whole

concept. The study is entangled by the mystery of hermeneutics which reveals the mystery of identity of man in the end.

## **2.0 Methodology**

The study focused on the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur. It started with a description on his philosophy as phenomenology (i.e. study of what presents itself) of hermeneutics (i.e. interpretation on the meaning of a thing/symbol) and it was then expanded onto different areas of studies and human interests using Ricoeur's mystery of hermeneutics and ended with the identity of man having its definitiveness in the identity of the

“image of Christ.” In the process, the philosophic study was actually hermeneutics on the mystery of the “phenomenological hermeneutics” of Ricoeur (i.e. interpreting and understanding the meaning of what presents itself).

#### Objectives

The study centered on the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur and, it specifically defined, his kind of philosophy in the field of phenomenological hermeneutics and related it to different areas of human studies, which at the end, identified the mystery of man using hermeneutics in the spirit of Ricoeur’s philosophy.

### 3.0 Results and Discussion

#### The Mystery of Hermeneutics: The Mystery of Identity

Ricoeur (1978) asked: *What is man?* The wisdom of asking answered the mystery of hermeneutics unveiling itself in the process - man’s self-understanding of unspoken words. Ricoeur affirmed that all writings and readings, including scriptures, are merely answers to the question of man’s identity. The possibility of communication between human and divine is through human symbol; the most common form man uses in communication is through language. The scripture is understood through deeper interpretation of text. While man encounters God through the text, a man’s identity is gradually revealed as an image of God (Gen. 1:27).

#### Hermeneutics as Autonomic and Complex

Ricoeur, convinced of autonomy of philosophy, insists that writer and reader i.e. man existed out of time, space, event and history considering culture, belief, tradition, custom, philosophy, religion and way of life (Reagan, 1986). Thus, human interest on

the text can be influenced by religious and cultural affiliation. In interpreting text, both the milieu of the writer and the context of the text should be identified so that the interpreter will arrive at an objective but practical interpretation that is relevant to his own milieu. Although he speaks of pure philosophy but biblical literature has utmost importance. It reflects far greater human realities such as problem of evil in moral sphere and of God in spiritual sphere. Understanding the history enveloping a writer’s writings is tedious for the reader. But the reader can freely make his own interpretation of the text, even the secret religious motivation of the writings. Although, one is responsible to view the context of the text and the life of the writer who originally put meaning into his writing, the reader has the freedom to bring new meaning befitting the current milieu and historicity of existence that he, himself, may find in the writing which makes the text alive at present. Philosophical matters are worthy of rational discourse which all human beings are capable of. Hence, religious beliefs have to be kept, so this free enterprise of reason must prosper. Religious beliefs can become bias; thus, the philosopher makes use of bracketing to safeguard philosophical innocence.

#### Hermeneutics as Symbolical and Mysterious

Ihde supports the description on Ricoeur’s Philosophy as phenomenology of hermeneutics (Hall, 2007). This leaves mystery to Ricoeur as a philosopher - to his works, writings and hermeneutics. The use of symbol still maintains the mystery of hermeneutics. No one can exhaust the mystery of the symbol, neither the reader-interpreter nor the writer who leaves mystery in his writings, are free to have their own interpretation.

The text hides the mystery of man that readers exert effort to understand in hermeneutics. This is the question and the mystery Ricoeur left in his writings.

### **Hermeneutics as Phenomenological and Free-Enterprise**

Ricoeur was convinced of the autonomy and independence of philosophy as a human discipline (Reagan, 1996). Instead of theological interpretation, Ricoeur puts emphasis on understanding biblical text by phenomenological hermeneutics (Fodor, 1995). Many times, theological interpretations of scriptures are not free from Magisterium. Thus, it resulted to limiting the mystery of hermeneutics. When interpretation of biblical or profane text is limited, room for mystery of meaning loses its state. Freedom for interpretation is a reason for treating even biblical text through phenomenological hermeneutics. He affirms a hermeneutics that is free from dogma and approaches more current forms of narrative theology which "speaks to" that requires understanding and in the process approaches are varied, the interpreter utilizes and the object i.e. the religious symbols remain mysterious because they carry in themselves the enigma of interpretation (Klemm, 1993). Thus, hermeneutics is a free-enterprise using economic term. However, no matter how one exhausts all possible manners of interpretation, understanding human condition would still remain ambiguous (i.e. the reality of ambiguity that man is). More so, because the truth is bound in the word spoken to man. The text carries ambiguity which maintains its mystery because it covers meaning and truth.

### **Hermeneutics as Harmonizing and Projective**

Narrative identity makes possible the balance

and harmony between two modes of being (activity and passivity) in man (Ricoeur, 1992). Man is seen as both being and becoming based on Heidegger (Stumpf&Fieser, 2005). Thus, the interpreter cannot simply seize the totality of man because man is not only permanent (being) and can be slipping away in the constancy as moving (becoming). Narrative identity is a description of the interpreter towards man at present but in so doing, time is running by itself and what lapses is no longer recorded. Hence, narrative identity cannot capture the whole man but only the present moment. There is a blank space left unknown by way of narrative identity making man a mystery unto his own self.

### **Hermeneutics as Integral and Ultimate**

The human person is a total project towards a meaningful existence defined by his search for ultimate happiness. It is a movement towards fulfilling the character, nature or essence of his being (Ricoeur, 1986). It is a process of turning one's being into its becoming. This project called humanity is a path that every person must walk on in order to attain his end. No one can escape this project because it is needed so that man is not alienated from the mode of his own being. While the initial, basic and yet ultimate quest in life is to identify one's own being by answering, among others, the question, "What is man?" Such question in itself is already difficult to know. The next logical question in life which again no one can escape, to ask is, "What is man's end?" Reaching these questions of becoming and being, heightened the mystery of interpretation. It is delving deeply into unfathomable water that is mystery itself – the mystery of person which all interpretations are ultimately defined.

### **Hermeneutics as Active and Generative**

Gadamer's fusion of horizon speaks of historical connections between past and present. By connecting the past, there exists a tension that consequently affects the present. Ricoeur called this fusion of the past and present as effective-history (Ricoeur, 1988). Thus, tradition which separates a temporal distance between the past and the present, through fusion reveals an active and generative movement of significance. When there is a gap between past and present, there shall be dead interval and disconnection of reality. The historicity of reality and human being's search for truth is an onward movement. The fusion of horizon makes man in the state of development. However, connecting and fusing this temporal distance is again an ambiguous act for the interpreter.

### **Hermeneutics as Reflexive**

Ricoeur attempts to establish a relationship between narrative understanding and self-understanding. In the course of application of literature to life, what we carry over and transpose into the exegesis of ourselves is the dialectic of the self and the narratives of everyday life (Ricoeur, 1991). Literature pictures and reflects life. Any attempt to interpret the text is an attempt to understand life and ultimately the mystery of selfhood, thus, reflexive. This power coming from the text and its understanding sends a mysterious impact into the character and life of the reader-interpreter.

### **Hermeneutics as Christian**

Ricoeur (1992) also includes the power of the cross, basis of his ethics which consists of two movements: horizontal character with respect to creation and vertical character with respect to God

based on Baruch Spinoza. The horizontal character of his ethics respects the law and principle of creation that governs the universe. This ethical principle consists of respect to the value of life, of man and his fellowman, the cosmos and the entirety of creation. The vertical character of his ethics respects divine principle or God's law. This ethical principle consists of respect to the Creator, origin and end of creation – God.

### **Hermeneutics as Unitary and Ideal**

The ideal of life is the attainment of happiness attested by Socrates known for his wisdom. However, happiness could never be attained with life scattered. Narration organizes them into an intelligible whole (Ricoeur, 1986). Thus, a narrative unity of life is required in order to attain happiness and peace (Nabert, 1969). A narrative unity of life leads to self-understanding. Understanding of the self, of one's character and identity in its entirety leads to an enlightenment which directs person to meet his end and ideal meaningful life leading to happiness.

### **Hermeneutics as Responsive and Optimist**

The theology of hope establishes ground of two-fold: religion of promise and presence (Ricoeur, 1974). The ambiguity and vacuum which the character of faith and hope brings puts real challenge in believing. Again, faith is a matter of choice, an exercise of freedom which one cannot escape the call to responsibility, thus, making hermeneutics responsive. The future is at risk, no assurances which resound Kierkegaard's concept of faith -- a leap into the dark (Aquino, 1992). The gap between present and future is what the believer, the optimist who is open to reality and transcendence, tries to bridge. Thus, biblical text

carries this ambiguity which the reader should understand in the text interpretation.

### **Hermeneutics as Historical and Universal**

Ricoeur addresses responsibility as moral imperative directed to future that is beyond the bounds of individual actions and intentions. This principle of responsibility is not simply a moral response at present but also has tremendous implication in the future (Jonas, 1984). This “new categorical imperative” puts a fresh concept on human action to carry with it effect towards future humanity. As such, humanity can be seen as connected string beginning from the first parent: Adam and Eve whose actions truly affected modern human beings and even future humanity. The “Fall of Man” made by Adam and Eve really included the whole of humanity in their mere act of sinfulness. Thus, there is such thing as original sin whose effect is generative and universal for man. If the effect of an evil action is generative, then, human good action has a generative effect too. This is the reason why there is such thing as resurrection, redemption, restoration and providence.

Unless, man brings back his consciousness in history and recognizes his mistakes in the past from where he fell and tries to correct it at present by doing what is good, proper and right that he can stand once again and walks through his journey destined for the future of humanity. In the interpretation of the reader from reading of the text, he must be equipped with the vision to look towards the future because text can be the key towards the mystery of human existence, of the journey called humanity. The interpreter should be able to include the future in the meaning that he puts on the text. Vision, therefore, is part of the attitude the reader should put on his interpretation

of the text in order to unravel the hidden mystery carried by the text.

### **Hermeneutics as Moral and Ethical**

Ricoeur views ethics as “teleos” the be-all and end-all purpose of human action towards the good (Hall, 2007). Morality comes as a moment of obligation or responsibility recognized and actualized in the quest for the good life. Ethics encompasses morality. The reader then must reflect through his interpretation this quest for the meaning of life in manner of recognition and ultimately by means of good human action as fulfillment in this quest for meaning. Thus, unknowingly while the writer intended to influence the life of his readers through the text, the reader tries all his best to transmit this original meaning of the text in the present through proper understanding of the writing.

### **Hermeneutics as Absolute and Divine**

The hermeneutics of testimony arises in the confluence of two exegesises—the exegesis of historic testimony to the absolute and the exegesis of the self in the criteriology of the divine (Ricoeur, 1980). His attitude towards the divine, the absolute takes the height of an act of consciousness itself and the deepest level of historical understanding on how the absolute is present and active in human spatio-temporal relation all throughout. The signs of the absolute’s self-disclosure are at the same time signs in which consciousness recognizes itself. The recognition of the absolute and the divine based on historic testimony corresponds to the recognition of self-consciousness.

This implies that while an interpreter recognizes the presence of the divine in the events of human history as well as the symbols present in a sacred place or a profane object becoming sacred in the eyes of a believer, a man of faith; this recognition of the divine from the secular happened because an individual becomes conscious of his own self as conscious to his relation to the absolute. Without this relation to the absolute, historic testimony and signs would mean nothing as well as the act of consciousness including of itself. Consciousness recognizes such relation between the self and the absolute. This mystic and ambiguous kind of relation between the interpreter and the text is what he wanted to bring about because the connection between the two is what gives power to the text. Neither the text nor the interpreter radiates meaning by itself that is distinct and separate from each other. While the text carries meaning and the interpreter has ability to give meaning, without the connection between the two, everything would be meaningless.

### **Hermeneutics as Earthly and Heavenly**

Ricoeur basing from the Gospel portrayed the condition of animals and man on earth and the heavenly kingdom to come (Tannehill, 1975). There were two realities; first, the reality between animals and human existence; second, the reality between earthly and heavenly kingdom. In the genius of Ricoeur, it is not only in the text that figures of speech such as stories, essays, narratives, parables, metaphors etc. can be used, but also between the subject and object of interpretation. This relationship between the subject i.e. the reader-interpreter and the text representing the mind and intent of the writer-author that he is apt to. The reality of the reader-interpreter is and may

be different from the reality of the author-writer which is represented by the text. The historical immersion or collision of realities or banging of the minds and fusions of horizons make possible such ties, connection and relation which creates new meaning and significance in the light of literary interpretation in the sphere of hermeneutics.

### **Hermeneutics as Loving Rather than Duty-Binding**

Ricoeur has a broad concept of creation which is positively beneficial to everybody. He looked at creation to include not only man but also other creatures such as animals, plants, and the environment. In fact, the height and extent of creation is when the self opens itself towards other creatures, other man or fellowman, and Totally Other or God. These and all constitute his idea of creation. While there exists moral duty or responsibility to respond to a moral call towards others which may be one's fellowman or other creatures or created beings; there is greater than morality, the supramoral, i.e. the love of neighbor which integrates and consists of the love for all creatures (Ricoeur, 1995). Thus, solicitude, affection, passion, response, respect, love and admiration hinge on the relation between an individual and the other which represents fellowman and/or other creatures. The attitude of the interpreter in treating the text is very important because the degree of passion he exerts on the text reflects the degree of value and significance imported by the said interpreter. In the same way, the love given to one's neighbor equates with the love given to all other creatures. Here lies the connection and constitutive unity of creation. Creation encompasses the extent of reality. In the same manner, there exists universality in the character of

creation. Creation becomes the principle of unity among all. Thus, the text in itself carries with it the character to unite. There is universality in the text. And this universality of the text is a reflection of humanity. This, again, is the mystic and ambiguity of hermeneutics.

### **Hermeneutics as Economic**

This concern opens onto the second line of enquiry in the articulation of the economy of the gift, that of revelation. Ricoeur offers two instances in support: the giving of the Torah and the Christology of Atonement (Hall, 2007). He sees revelation as an economy of gift. Hermeneutics is economic in the sense that it is an account of the story of God's love revealed through the sacred text and the tradition. It is also an account of system and ordering of creation through the Torah, God's laws and commandments. Lastly, it is also an account of redemption, repayment for the sins of mankind and creation after the Fall of Creation as expressed by the Christology of Atonement. The Torah constitutes a narrative history of liberation, thus, an expression of God's love for the Israelites. The Cross symbolizes the narrative history of Jesus' suffering. Thus, an expression of God's love to all mankind through Christ is the gift of son-ship. Revelation should be seen as an act initiated by God towards man in order for him to recognize the identity, character, will and gift-offering of the Creator, thus, a gift. There were focal points in the narrative of human history that God manifested Himself most especially for man in certain space-time-event relation. It only requires recognition in order for man to capture the meaning, significance and gift bestowed by God's revelation. God speaks to man through revelations. It is a call that requires response from man. God can speak through the

text and it takes a special faculty from man in order to recognize that it is God who speaks and what does God want to say. The ambiguity, however, of revelation in terms of hermeneutics would be how could the reader-interpreter know whether it is God who speaks. How could it be that the writer-author of the text God, Himself or his representative? How could the transfer of representation and authority possible between God and his representative possible to write the revelation? These and many more are possible questions to ask for in terms of revelation. And all the burden and ambiguity of hermeneutics in matters of revelation shall be under the responsibility of the reader-interpreter.

### **Hermeneutics as Revealing and Redeeming**

The introduction of the idea of redemption places the revelation of divine activity, conceived within the compass of the economy of the gift, in the interstices between a beginning characterized by the symbol of creation and an end characterized by final reconciliation (Hall, 2007). Ricoeur's idea of revelation again shows universality. He looked up to everything with strings of connections, thus, a narrative history, the economy of revelation. The economy of revelation began with creation, the genesis, the alpha, however, along the way in the process of time due to disobedience, ignorance and pride, angels rebelled against God while man sinned, the Fall of Man and the Fall of Creation. With this condition, there is nothing left but hope that creation be redeemed, thus, the Redemption through Restoration since God cannot interfere with man on matters of freedom and exercise of freewill that would run in contrast to these gifts of faculty given in creation and that God cannot put man, angels and all other creatures into extinction and recreate again because this would run



contrary against the principle of creation (Moon, 2000). Redemption (i.e. the end, the omega), the final reconciliation is only possible following the process of restoration in accordance to the principle of creation. There shall be no evil in the end of the narrative history in the economy of salvation because all creation shall be redeemed through restoration. Hence, there shall be final reconciliation between creation and kingdom of God. This “teleological” part of hermeneutics further complicates the ambiguity and burden left onto the shoulder of the interpreter.

### **Hermeneutics as Restoring Creation**

The purpose of religion is to restore on man the faculty to act on the good principle in determining his action (Kant, 1960). Restoration of the faculty of man to act on good principle would mean restoration of the whole man in the process of time in the religious sphere. Man is naturally good and is predestined as his end, the good. Thus, God is the genesis, the beginning of creation and also the finality of creation. God is the Alpha and Omega of faith and of revelation. Evil and the Fall of Man and of Creation is temporary and still can be corrected and be turned into good by way of restoration beginning from human faculty, human nature, the whole of creation, and restoration of the good principle (i.e. the principle of creation). Restoration, redemption of man and of creation can happen through the power of the text by way of divine revelation and pious interpretation in order for man to live a morally and religiously good life that would lead him to God and his kingdom, the alpha and omega point of creation. Again, this mysticism adds to the complexity of hermeneutics.

### **Hermeneutics as Transcendent and Religious**

With the idea of theonomy, Ricoeur sought to articulate a power outside the self which founds freedom, and in doing so he intentionally blurred the line between moral philosophy and theology: Reflection on religion actually starts out with a meditation on radical evil, and continues with an examination of the conditions for the regeneration of a moral subject (Ricoeur, 1986). Without delving into the complexities of distinguishing religion and philosophy of religion, this paragraph simply focuses on religion which has no other object than the regeneration of the moral subject (i.e. the restoration and inauguration of able moral subjects). And whether it is in the sphere of philosophy and theology, still, connection between man and God is possible. Thus, he did not use his time looking into the dividing wall that distinguishes the two. What is important is how man, the subject, after his fall restores his original nature. In matters of exercise of freedom for rational beings like man and angels. According to Scheller, God becomes powerless based on the interference that becomes contrary to the very principle of the gift and faculty of freedom endowed to rational creatures. God only hopes that his rational creatures endowed with freewill and intellect could be able to reflect and find from this narrative history and economy of revelation where he falls and upon recognition of error begins to stand and restore his original nature by way of the economy of redemption through the process of restoration in accordance to the principle of creation which is universal and applicable to all creatures.

### **Hermeneutics as Romantic**

Ricoeur talked about love command (Rosenzweig, 1985). Love has inherent power in



itself. Thus, many times one would speak about the "power of love." The commandment of love only comes from the One, God - the Perfect Love. Love by itself is self-compelling although it respects the person and one's freedom. Direct expression of love comes from the lover to the person being loved. In fact, it comes first before the word expression "I love you." It is a first-hand experience and state of the person. The word expression, verbal expression, physical affection expression and all other expressions come too late which he called simply as declaration of love. Love therefore happens first within the inner core being of the person-in-love. This implies that the literary text is already a declaration of love. It comes as a second-hand experience and so its interpretation too. The writer-author's state and mode of being can only attest into this first-hand experience of love. This aspect is again another point of mystery in the sphere of hermeneutics.

### **Hermeneutics as Reciprocal**

Ricoeur (1995) differentiated the golden rule and love command. The Golden Rule followed the logic of equivalence taught by Jesus and Confucius in the ethical level. This reciprocal character of human action can be interpreted merely as basic to interpersonal relationships. The love command, however, goes back to the original and truest meaning of love as an intended goodness offered by one person towards the other, be it friend, relative, associate, and to the least extent enemies. Thus, has one-way-character or movement. Love command has unconditional, un-expecting reciprocity and sacrificial character. Again, the Parable of the Good Samaritan fits this idea of love command. The literary text also consists both characters in terms of hermeneutics. The interpreter can sacrifice

his own view and understanding by being true to the original purpose of the text based on the context and worldview of the writer. However, the interpreter can interchange his worldviews with the worldview of the writer. This again is an aspect of mystery in hermeneutical interpretation and understanding of the text.

### **Hermeneutics as Practical**

The Golden Rule following the logic of equivalence is only in the level of justice which is the minimum of love. This kind of love in the hyper-moral level "enters the practical and ethical sphere only under the aegis of justice. The character of love command that does more-than-justice given unconditionally and sacrificial is in the hyper-ethical level which runs more than and even counters to the rule of justice (Ricoeur, 1995). Hermeneutics is practical since it is concerned on human action, basically, on the moral-ethical level of justice to supra-moral or hyper-ethical level of love. Thus, the reader-interpreter's attitude towards the text may give what is due to the original meaning and purpose of the text based from the point of view of the writer-author or may give more than what is due to the text and the writer-author's purpose by sharing his world-view. Thus, it is bringing fresh and lively character to the text. This is again part of the mystery of hermeneutics.

### **Hermeneutics as Dynamic**

Ricoeur (1995) sees a dynamic encounter between golden rule and love command provided that character of interpretation is not the tendency towards selfish- utilitarian character of logic of equivalence but rather possesses character of the logic of superabundance. If the tendency of interpretation follows the logic of equivalence or

justice rather than love, then, the movement of relation runs in static opposition. However when the movement of interpretation gives way to love command rather than the Golden Rule, a dynamic encounter exists between these tendencies of interpretation. Thus, the text only has power when the reader-interpreter integrates his world-view and his present context, the *Sitz-im-Leben*, in his interpretation of the literary readings that results to the resurrection of the text. Thus, this again is part of the mystery of hermeneutics.

### **Hermeneutics as Defining and Breaking-Through**

The self is capable of judging, recognizing and responding in conscience to the "word," the sacred text. Furthermore, an enlightened conscience recognizes in himself freedom and autonomy in his articulation of faith. Thus, in the confession of faith, the reader-interpreter asserts his world-view and understanding of things in the spirit of hermeneutics his interpretation towards the mediated and symbolic structure that of the sacred text (Ricoeur, 1995). The call to conscience, specifically, for a Christian reader-interpreter is to conform his own very self, character and identity to the "image of Christ" (Rosenzweig, 1985). And as Christian, the reader-interpreter must give preference, respect and recognition to the love commandment because it is the highest commandment and it is compelling as a law because the love of God is at the height of all laws and commandments. Thus, scripture says, "love God above all things and secondly your neighbor as yourself Mt 22:37-38; Jn. 13:34-35." More so, the final test of faith is "love your enemies (Mt 5:44)." Clearly, the love commandment comes first before the golden rule. However, the power of the

scriptural text especially for Christians is to turn their personhood, character, and identity to the very "image of Christ." This is the greatest mystery of hermeneutics.

### **4.0 Conclusion**

The mystery of hermeneutics based on Paul Ricoeur lies in the resurrection/revolution of the text, where there exists a fusion of histories, contexts, world-views, realities, experiences, perspectives and horizons between the reader-interpreter and the writer-author mediated by the poetic texts as objects and symbols of interpretation. The resurrection of the text can only happen when the reader-interpreter includes his present world-view and context, the *Sitz-im-Leben*, which brings new life into the text. The kind and attitude of interpretation given by the reader-interpreter should not only to give justice to the writer-author and the objectivity of the text which has self-serving, utilitarian, perverse and static opposition tendencies but rather to give more than justice, the logic of abundance, the love command which has unconditional, sacrificial and noble tendencies in order to create a dynamic encounter between the two. More than this dynamic encounter and relationship between the reader-interpreter and the writer-author mediated by the poetic texts as object of interpretation is the revelation of the mystery of character and identity of personhood. Initially, the attempt to identify the writer-author through his writings and ultimately this hermeneutical act of interpretation results to the unveiling of the character and identity or personhood of the reader-interpreter. In his attempt of interpreting the text, it is his person, character and identity that the reader-interpreter unveils and reveals (Edralin, 2013).

Moreover, these characteristics of hermeneutics as phenomenological, analytic, reflexive, autonomic, complex, symbolical, mysterious, free-enterprise, harmonizing, projective, integral, ultimate, active, generative, Christian, unitary, ideal, responsive, optimist, historical, universal, moral, ethical, absolute, divine, earthly, heavenly, loving, economic, revealing, redeeming, restoring creation, transcendent, religious, romantic, reciprocal, practical, dynamic, defining, breaking-through give light to what is hidden and obscure in the text as the medium but the identity of the person be it the reader-interpreter or the writer as its reflexive goal. Furthermore, the power of the scriptural text, especially, for Christian reader-interpreter is to turn their personhood, character, and identity to the very "image of Christ." This finally is the greatest mystery of hermeneutics.

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