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**Interpretation and the Problem of the
Intention of the Author:
H.-G. Gadamer vs E.D. Hirsch**

by
Burhanettin Tatar

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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Preface

George F. McLean

This work is especially momentous. At the turn of the millennia the process of globalization brings into intersection not only economic forces, but politics and, underneath all, cultures. Samuel Huntington is not wrong in pointing to this level of interaction as the most fundamental and decisive.

If then we are to escape the prospect of continued and deepening conflict it is necessary to envisage ways in which cultures can evolve without losing their continuity and interact without loss of identity. To find the answer to this question where must one look?

Just as many democracies are rooted in a document or declaration of principles such as a constitution, cultures are rooted in the basic religious commitments of their people. Often these are grounded in a sacred text to which fidelity is of the greatest moment. Perhaps nowhere is this more appreciated and lived than in Islam. Indeed, the pattern of its social dynamics is closely related to issues involved in reading the sacred text in contemporary times.

For this the work of H.G.- Gadamer can be of special interest. His thought has done much to clarifying the sense of cultural heritage and tradition. Thus, his work promises to provide special insight into the relation between fidelity to the text and the cultural heritage of a people.

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) is in the process of publishing the three related studies by Islamic scholars.

The first is *The Authenticity of the Text in Hermeneutics* by Seyed Musa Dibadj of Iran. This focuses on the text itself, but moves from protecting this from the human reader to insight into the way in which the reader can enable the being of the text to emerge in time.

The second is the present work by Burhanettin Tatar of Turkey, *Interpretation and the Problem of the Intention of the Author*. The third volume, yet to appear, is a study in depth of the issue of relativism and how this can be avoided while recognizing the role of the reader.

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy honors these scholars. In our day there is no more important service than theirs to Islam and to humanity as a whole.

Foreword

The significance of hermeneutics for Islam has been appreciated increasingly by many leading scholars in both the Muslim and the Western world for the last decades. The works of the late Professor Fazlur Rahman in the line of Schleiermacher and Betti, and those of M. Arkoun in the line of deconstructionism, have been the most influential hermeneutical studies. Besides, in criticizing the historical Islamic tradition, the feminist movements in the Islamic world often follow J. Habermas in his critique of ideology. Most of the traditional methods of interpretation of the Qur'an do not seem aware of the modern hermeneutical problems as well as the new approaches; their adherents often approach hermeneutic studies mistrustfully.

To my knowledge, the question of author's intention, a specific hermeneutical problem, is far from being a subject of hermeneutical inquiries in Muslim world at present. However, it is well known that the problem of the intention of God has been playing a practically determinative role in both political and legal interpretations of the Qur'an throughout the history of Islam. Nonetheless, it has not thus far been taken into account as a theoretical problem of interpretation.

For a modern scholar, the significance of the problem of the author's intention lies mostly in the problem of textual identity. It can be argued even that the basic difference between modernist and traditionalist views of Islam should be sought in the problem of textual identity. Though these problems above have not yet become a subject to the theoretical debates in Islamic world, they constitute the background of the dispute over the issue of fidelity to the text between the modernist and the traditionalists. Whether textual identity (and hence the fidelity to text) lies in the author's intention or not appear then to be decisive issue which the scholars must tackle with.

Since the intention of the author cannot be taken as something present at hand in the process of interpretation, the problem of the historicity and temporality of text becomes decisive whenever the author's intention is discussed. Due to the increasing challenge of the Western world view to the traditional Islamic view, the Muslim consciousness of time and history has changed. Accordingly, whenever the emphasis is put either on the past or on the present, the author's intention and then textual identity is assumed to be objectified either in the past (traditional) or present (modernist) understandings of Islam. The significance of the concept of tradition as the historical continuity of textual meaning lies in overcoming this one sidedness of the traditionalist and the modernist approaches.

One should look for the identity of text not in terms of one of the dimensions of time or history but reversely in the historical continuity of the text, yet without falling victim to a Hegelian absolutism. Even though the Islamic notion of unity (*tawhid*) when taken adequately is the identity within difference, nonetheless, it has been approached mostly from an absolutist (transcendental) perspective. Consequently, the problem of the authority of interpretation has had negative practical impact within Islamic societies. It is not surprising that the authoritative interpretation of the Qur'an has been viewed by many believers to have attained God's intention as far as possible.

However, when the temporality of the human experience of textual meaning is conceived properly, the notion of the being of the text comes to foreground and interpretation (and author's intention) disappears within it. Then, the identity of text and the author's intention are inspected not by way of a subject-object ontology, as did F. Rahman, but in a continuous dialogue between past and present. When the historical (transcendental) and historical (temporal) are separated on behalf of objectivity, falling victim either to absolutism or to radical relativism become unavoidable. An adequate way to overcome these problems can be found in the notion of finitude

of human experience, which approaches eternity within temporality, and the transcendental within concrete events.

Introduction

Following Heidegger's hermeneutics of Dasein, Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method*¹ sheds a new light on the problem of author's intention and interpretation by calling attention to the ontological dimensions of understanding. It emphasizes the fact that interpretation is basically an experience of the truth of the text. From this ontological point of view, it claims that to approach the problem of interpretation as a problem of method is to miss the point at the outset since method is too confining an idea to capture the uniqueness of the historical experience of the truth of the text.

Gadamer's critique of the scientific ideal of objectivity in the humanities also reveals the presupposition lying behind the intentionalist arguments for author's intention. For purpose of objectivity, to restrict the being of the text to author's intention seems untenable for the primary function of meaning refers not to the mind of the author, but to the truth of the subject matter (*Sache*) brought to light in language. Hence, the unity of language and subject matter is the locus of truth as uncoveredness.

The ontological dimension of meaning and language provides a way for Gadamer to reject the reductionism of the intentionalists. Language is not a tool for human subjectivity, but constitutes a transcendental ground within which past and the present can have a genuine dialogue or living conversation. "Language fulfills itself and has its proper fulfillment only in the give and take of speaking, in which one word yields another, and in which the language that we bring to one another and make familiar to one another comes alive."²

Even though Gadamer emphasizes the dynamic structure of the linguistic horizons within which past meaning claims truth, his critics charge him with radical perspectivism. According to his critics, Gadamer's hermeneutics does not provide a genuine standpoint from which the past text can be understood in its objective meaning. In their view, to take the interpreter's perspective as the starting point is to distort the past meaning which can be understood only if one reconstructs the original horizon within which the meaning was originated.

Therefore, according to intentionalists, author's intention (horizon) must be the only basis for correct interpretation. Obviously, as this argument indicates, the intentionalists share the same view with perspectivists in that meaning is dependent on perspective. However, they differ from the perspectivists by contending that it is possible to suspend one's own perspective and assume another's. But, how is it possible to bridge the gap between two distinct and supposedly alien perspectives?

The intentionalist argument for the possibility of suspending one's own horizon presupposes that the reality of history is not a constitutive property of human understanding and of horizon. Even though meaning is dependent on perspective, this does not mean that the human mind is historically conditioned. The human mind (individual consciousness) has a privileged (distant) standpoint with respect to the reality of history and language conventions. It transcends the boundary drawn by tradition (social consciousness).

In holding this the intentionalist arguments accept the priority of the individuality of human being over its social character. We can find the same presupposition behind the idea of method. The application of method in human sciences is based on the assumption that the object to be investigated exists essentially in its individual or atomic character.

However, this assumption reflect the paradoxical situation in the intentionalist or objectivist perspectives with respect to meaning. Their presupposition that meaning must be understood in its

atomic (isolated) character affect their understanding of past meaning. If so, how is it possible to argue that one has to suspend one's own presupposition in order to understand meaning in its objective nature?

We see another paradoxical situation in the argument for the objectivity of meaning. While arguing that meaning is dependent on the author's subjective horizon, the intentionalists also argue that meaning is self-identical with respect to the changing contexts. Hence meaning is at the same time both a matter of consciousness and an autonomous entity. We will observe the continuation of this situation in Hirsch's theory of interpretation. He claims that meaning is both the subject of reconstructing the original condition and open to future applications. Hirsch remarks that with his argument for application he comes close to Gadamer who contends that application is a constitutive element of meaning. However, since Hirsch still presupposes that the past can be known in itself (i.e., the application is a secondary moment in the constitution of meaning), the basic difference between them still remains.³

This study will argue that the identity of textual meaning cannot be based on the subjective stance of the author as the intentionalists claim. It aims to show that understanding of textual identity should not be separated from the experience of the truth of the text which is essentially historical. Hence, the being of the text should be viewed as the ground underlying the historical continuity of the mediations (i.e., the experiences of the truth) of the text.

In order to show this, the first chapter will discuss the problem of method and the subject-object ontology which characterizes Hirsch's and Betti's intentionalist arguments for author's intention. We will claim that subject-object ontology cannot be held as the grounding of a genuine theory of interpretation since it requires the suspension of the truth-claim of the text and disregards the historicity of understanding.

The second chapter will focus primarily on the problem of identification of meaning with intention of the author. In this context, we will criticize the genetic approach which identifies meaning with the psychological acts of the author. Then we will call attention to the problematic aspects of Wimsatt's and Beardsley's theory of interpretation⁴ and the intentionalist theories proposed by Michaels, Knapp,⁵ Juhl,⁶ and Hirsch.⁷ This will try to show the reasons why they fail to demonstrate the identity of meaning and author's intention. The discussion on Gadamer's perspective regarding the author will follow this.

The third chapter will present Wachterhauser's and Hirsch's critique of the unity of meaning and its significance in Gadamer.⁸ We will discuss the problem of textual identity in Hirsch in its relation to perspectivism. We will then call attention to Hirsch's distinction between meaning and significance, claiming that this distinction leads Hirsch to subjectivism and relativism. The discussion of Betti's notion of the autonomy of the hermeneutical object and the distinction of meaning from significance will show that Betti cannot escape from subjectivism and relativism, since his theory leads to the distinction between meaning and its validity (truth) for the interpretive context.⁹ Then, we will try to shed light on Gadamer's notion of textual identity in terms of the dialectic between sameness and difference. This investigation will make the point that the problem of textual identity is basically the problem of truth of the text.

Finally, the fourth chapter will examine the notion of truth in Gadamer and the historical conditions of its occurrence. In order to show the background of Gadamer's notion of truth, attention will be paid first to the Heideggerian concept of truth as uncoveredness, as presented in *Being and Time*. The discussion of Gadamer's notion of the negativity of experience will highlight the problem of the historical continuity of the mediations of the truth of the text. We will emphasize the point that the transition between the discontinuities (different interpretations) is already the

experience of the historical continuity of meaning. From this perspective, we will discuss Margolis' theory of interpretation which justifies relativism by depriving the text of its claim to truth. We will contend that Margolis' robust relativism does not propose a transcendental ground for textual identity and reduces the event of interpretation to a mere intellectual activity. Hence his relativist theory does not solve the problem of the discontinuity of meaning.¹⁰

The argument will then be made that the historical continuity of the mediations of the text takes place in as far as the being of the text establishes a transcendental ground. Accordingly, we will call attention to the fact that different interpretations are nothing else than partners in the ongoing dialogue with the historical text. And this dialogue takes place in terms of the dialectic of question and answer. Hence the continuity of this dialogue (and the dialectic of question and answer) reflects the fact that the past and the present cannot be understood independently of each other. This is to say that the identity of the text lies in the continuity of the unity of the past and present. Hence the charge that Gadamer's hermeneutics collapses the identity of the text to the particular interpretive context is untenable.

Chapter I

The Problem of Relativity and Objectivity in Interpretation

Background of the Problem

In twentieth century hermeneutics, the question of what constitutes the meaning of a text underlies a celebrated debate between E. D. Hirsch and H.-G. Gadamer. Hirsch's approach to interpretation is called 'intentionalist' because he makes the author's intention the criterion of a text's meaning. On the basis of this criterion, Hirsch and his Anglo-American adherents P. D. Juhl and S. Knapp charge that Gadamer's approach to interpretation vitiates the notion of textual identity and undermines the possibility of objective and valid interpretation. In other words, precisely because of their allegiance to author's intention as an absolute standard (truth) for correct interpretation, they argue that Gadamer's approach takes the form of relativism.

But how is one to reconcile the claim to an absolute truth with the experience of human finitude?¹¹ Taking this question as the point of departure for his philosophical hermeneutics, Gadamer contends that we can understand a text only by sharing or assuming that we share a common linguistic and cultural horizon. A text is a phase in a communicative event within this horizon. The horizon itself, however, is grounded in the ontological features of the subject matter of the text. These ontological features, he maintains, manifest themselves in the dialogical character of language and provide a transcendental ground for the possibility of giving a true interpretation of a text. The meaning of a text retains an identity, in Gadamer's view, though it is capable of assuming an indefinite variety of finite expressions of its content. Gadamer accordingly argues that the meaning of a text cannot be legitimately equated with the intention of its author.

In light of this argument, does Gadamer's rejection of the identification of meaning with author's intention imply that he eliminates from his philosophical hermeneutics the question: "What role in the hermeneutic event [or process] does author's intention play?" As some critics of Gadamer, specifically intentionalists like Hirsch and Juhl complain, Gadamer refuses author's intention as a criterion for textual meaning.¹² According to Gadamer, "the *mens auctoris* is not admissible as a yardstick for the meaning of a work of art. Even the idea of work-in-itself, divorced from its constantly renewed reality in being experienced, always has something about it."¹³ Thus, not just occasionally but always, "the meaning of a text goes beyond its author."¹⁴ However, we should ask the question: "In what sense and to what extent does Gadamer discard 'author's intention' as a criterion for true interpretation?" He also argues:

It is only the failure of the attempt to admit what is said as true that leads to the endeavor to "understand"—psychologically or historically—the text as the opinion of another... To understand means primarily to understand [oneself in] the subject-matter, and only secondarily to detach and understand the opinion of the other as such.¹⁵

However, what Gadamer means here is not clear enough. From the Hirschian viewpoint one might ask the following questions: In order to admit that what someone says is untrue, do we not have first to understand him correctly? In other words, if we do not understand first author's intention how can we judge what the author says as true or untrue? Moreover, does Gadamer distinguish 'what' one means from 'the truth' of what one says? If this is the case, how can we separate *correct* (true) understanding from the *truth* of what one says?

Gadamer contends that understanding is basically dialogical in its character, i.e., it is coming to an agreement on a subject matter, thus, a matter of participation. Consequently, understanding is never a “subjective relation to a given object but to the history of its effect; in other words, understanding belongs to the being of that which is understood.”¹⁶ If this is the case, we should not understand ‘agreement’ or ‘participation’ to mean total agreement with someone or accepting what the other says as true. In this context, Gadamer argues that an agreement in understanding never means that “difference is totally overcome by identity. When one says that one has come to an understanding with someone about something, this does not mean that one has absolutely the same position.”¹⁷

It seems that according to Gadamer understanding mean not only to share the same perspective with someone, but more basically to share the same ground which is subject matter (*Sache*). Therefore, he seems to imply that in order to understand someone else’s perspective, one has first to understand on what ground (subject matter) one’s perspective is based. From this angle, understanding an author’s intention must be secondary to understanding the subject matter. Thus, Gadamer ought to be identifying ‘truth’ with ‘subject matter’ because ‘understanding’ primarily means the understanding of ‘subject matter’ and because he gives priority to the ‘truth’ of what one says with respect to the understanding one’s intention.

However, at this point the main question is: How can we identify truth with subject matter while rejecting the identity of meaning with author’s intention? Stated more clearly, when identifying truth and subject matter, do we not reduce truth to our own perspective, on the one hand, while arguing that meaning transcends someone else’s perspective (intention), on the other?¹⁸ This question refers to the main source of discussion between Gadamer and intentionalists, like Betti and Hirsch on the issue of relativity and objectivity in interpretation. In maintaining the essential autonomy of the object to be interpreted, Betti criticizes Gadamer’s perspective for inserting the subject into the hermeneutical circle. Such an introduction, in his approach, inevitably leads to both subjectivism and relativism, “with the consequence that hermeneutics is unable to adjudicate between correct and incorrect interpretation.”¹⁹

Hirsch believes that only when meaning is identified with author’s intention can interpretation theory have an “object” which is stable, i.e., sharable by everyone, and subject to the validation process. Therefore, according to Hirsch, objectivity in interpretation seems to be based on the determinacy of meaning and the source of determinacy of meaning cannot but be its author.²⁰ Hirsch argues that “no logical necessity compels a critic to banish an author in order to analyze his text.”²¹ Behind this reasoning lies the argument that a text has to represent *somebody*’s meaning—if not the author’s, then the critic’s.²² Therefore, meaning in its structure is referential to the consciousness of its creator, namely, as long as it does refer back to its originating mind, it is what it is.²³

Thus, meaning is functional in its nature, and its function is to represent the mind behind it. Precisely because of this fact, Hirsch maintains that meaning is a matter of consciousness and not of physical signs or things. Consciousness is, in turn, an affair of persons, and in textual interpretation the persons involved are the author and the reader. The meanings that are actualized by the reader are either shared with the author or belong to the reader alone.²⁴ Therefore, “there is no magic land of meanings outside human consciousness.”²⁵ In Gadamer, it seems that understanding is grounded on ‘subject matter’ (*Sache*), i.e., ‘perspective’ is based on subject matter,²⁶ in Hirsch understanding is grounded on the mind of the other, namely, subject matter becomes subsequent to perspective.²⁷ Criticizing this approach, Gadamer asks, if we discover only someone’s standpoint and his horizon in order to get to know him, are we not failing in the

understanding that is asked of us? In his view, this is a failure because we are here “not seeking an agreement concerning an object, but the specific contents of the conversation are only a means to get to know the horizon of the other person.”²⁸

One might question Gadamer’s viewpoint from Hirsch’s intentionalist approach: if we reject the identity of meaning (truth) with the author’s intention and give intention a second position with respect to truth (subject matter) how can we understand one’s intention psychologically or historically, as Gadamer claims? In other words, if we know that we do not share the same ground with someone, on what ground can we know what he intends? Moreover, if we can know what someone intends, are we not sharing the same ground with him, which is in Hirsch the intended meaning? As can be seen, behind these possible objections from the Hirschian perspective lies Hirsch’s basic belief that when we discover the standpoint or horizon of the other person, his ideas become intelligible without our necessarily having to agree with him.²⁹

As these questions indicate, the real problem between Gadamer and Hirsch is not of whether the author’s intention (the mind of the other) can be known.³⁰ However, we are not saying that in Hirsch and Gadamer the intention of the author can be known whenever an interpreter wishes. Both Gadamer and Hirsch accept that in some cases it is impossible to know the author’s intention³¹ due to lack of information about the author or his conditions. Some of the well known examples of this fact are in the Vedas in Hindu tradition,³² proverbs, pseudo authors,³³ and some texts which were written with “conscious camouflaging of the true meaning due to the threat of persecution by the authorities or by the church,”³⁴ as L. Strauss has shown in his *Persecution and the Art of Writing*.³⁵ Besides this, it is also possible that an author can consciously or intentionally mislead his readers.³⁶

Moreover, as Beardsley shows in his defense of non-author’s meaning, “some texts have been formed without the agency of an author.”³⁷ At this point, we should mention that behind this argument for non-author’s meaning lies the approach which separates intention from meaning. In other words, these arguments against intentionalist view consider author’s intention the external to textual meaning. Nevertheless, in some recent intentionalist perspectives, due to the difficulties of identifying intention with meaning as taken separately and the fear of falling into psychologism, the idea that intention is not external but internal to meaning has been defended more commonly.³⁸ In this context, some consider Hirsch an advocate for author’s intention as being internal to the meaning of a text.³⁹

On the one hand, Gadamer gives intention a secondary position with respect to ‘meaning’ (subject matter), on the other, he admits also that author’s intention has a primary function in understanding the spoken text at the moment of living conversation. In this context, he remarks:

In the usages of everyday speaking, where it is not a matter of passing through the fixity of writtenness, I think it is clear: One has to understand the other person’s intention; one must understand what the other person is saying as he or she meant it. The other person has not separated himself from himself, so to speak, into a written or whatever other form of fixed speech, and conveyed or delivered it to an unknown person, who perhaps distorts through misunderstanding, willful or involuntary, what is supposed to be understood. Even more, one is not separated physically or temporally from the person one is speaking to and who is listening to what one says.⁴⁰

Therefore, according to Gadamer, the discussion of the *mens auctoris* (author’s intention or mind) becomes a hermeneutical problem, provided one is not dealing with a living conversation

but with fixed expressions, or texts.⁴¹ In this case, it seems that the problem of author's intention becomes a matter of discussion between Gadamer and Hirsch in the context of the truth of the text and of how it reveals itself to the interpreter (or through the interpreter). Obviously, the nature of written or fixed texts plays an important role in this discussion. Therefore, while the basic question in Hirsch is: "How is it possible to understand a written or fixed text?" Gadamer asks: "How is it possible to bring the meaning (truth) behind the physical signs (text) back to the living conversation again?" Is this possibility based, in each case, on our going back to the moment of creation of meaning (or perspective) or on its pre-giveness in our historical linguistic tradition (horizon), thus, on our self-understanding?

It seems that when we accept the idea which has been defended by intentionalist tradition, we should ask the question which was directed by Gadamer to the intentionalist and historicist tradition of interpretation: How is it possible to go back to the moment of creation of meaning, i.e., to reconstruct the mind of the other (author's horizon) and historical past by transcending our own horizon? Is not the idea of reconstructing past meanings to restrict the truth of what is said to its historical moment of origination, and thus to cut it off from living tradition of meaning? However, when we accept the idea which has been maintained by Heideggerian-Gadamerian ontological hermeneutics, the objections directed by mainly Betti and Hirsch should be expressed: If we deny the possibility of reconstructing the historical intention, since we cannot transcend our own horizon, the meaning of the historical text will be relative to our horizon, and consequently we cannot have an objectively grounded meaning. In other words, since we will not have any "principle for distinguishing between an interpretation which is valid and one that is not, there is little point in writing books about texts or about hermeneutic theory."⁴²

It is clear that, as we saw above, at the background of Hirsch's and Betti's intentionalist criticism of Gadamer, we find the presupposition that meaning is objectively determinate; it is an ahistorical entity. Hence, intentionalist positions share the same approach with other objectivist but anti-intentionalist contentions against Gadamer's perspective of meaning. While Gadamer argues that in the human sciences, an "object in itself" clearly does not exist at all,⁴³ objectivist positions hold the idea that "the meaning of the text is an objective fact, something which in principle could be discovered once and for all."⁴⁴ Therefore, objectivist approaches, whether intentionalist or anti-intentionalist, are monistic and ignore what Gadamer calls "an ontological, structural aspect of understanding."

As Connolly and Keutner mentioned, the objectivist positions that are the subject to criticism from Gadamer's perspective can be divided into three groups as follows: the first objectivist perspective (the so-called intentionalist position) argues that the interpretive goal is to bring to light the hidden meaning which is in the text by appealing to the mind of its writer. Therefore, a text has its meaning "quite independently of any interpreting which might be done."⁴⁵ The second objectivist view claims that the object of interpretation is not the author's intention but something like the text-intention. This view is held by the New Critics, like M. Beardsley and W. K. Wimsatt.⁴⁶ The third view maintains that the correct interpretation is the one which captures the understanding had by the text's original audience. Gadamer refers to the third kind of objectivist view:

According to this self-interpretation of the methodology of the human sciences, it is generally said that the interpreter imagines an addressee for every text, whether expressly addressed by the text or not. This addressee is in every case the original reader, and the interpreter knows that this is a different person from himself.⁴⁷

At this point, we should start to investigate the presuppositions behind the monistic approach of Hirsch's objectivist theory in order to understand his arguments for a determinate, ahistorical and sharable object of interpretation, despite the plurality and historicity of interpretations. This investigation hopes to clarify the background of the close relation between his objectivist and monistic approach and the method to which he appeals. Further, such an investigation reveals the reason for his charge that Gadamer's hermeneutic theory is relativistic and non-methodological. First, however, it will be important to explicate Gadamer's standpoint with respect to the concept of method and subject-object ontology so that the questions basic to Gadamer's presuppositions in his critique of method and objectivism come to play in our investigation of Hirsch's position.

The Problem of Method and the Critique of the Subject-Object Ontology

The problem of the meaning of method and of its ontological presuppositions in Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics has been discussed mostly in the context of objectivity and relativity. By referring to the title and the content of his *magnum opus*, *Truth and Method*, many critics argue that Gadamer contraposes truth and method.⁴⁸ For instance, Ricoeur argues:

...On the one hand, alienating distancing is the attitude that makes the objectification that reigns in the human science possible; on the other hand, this distancing that is the very condition which accounts for the scientific status of the sciences is at the same time a break that destroys the fundamental and primordial relation by which we belong to and participate in the historical reality which we claim to construct as an object. Thus we reached the alternative suggested by the title of Gadamer's work, *Truth and Method*: either we have the methodological attitude and lose the ontological density of the reality under study or we have the attitude of truth and must give up the objectivity of the human sciences.⁴⁹

Does Gadamer's differentiation of truth from method refer to the fact, as Ricoeur argues, that he gives up also objectivity of the human sciences? Can we say that "when Gadamer is attacking the idea of method in the humanities he is, of course, not objecting to a methodological approach within different fields?" For instance, Stueber distinguishes 'method' from 'methodological approach' in Gadamer's hermeneutics and understands by the latter "the idea of proving one's thesis in confrontation with the evidence, be it experiments in the natural sciences or the systematic collecting of historical sources."⁵⁰ Thus, in his views, Gadamer rejects by 'method' the epistemological picture that accompanied scientific research as it was introduced in the works of Descartes and Bacon.⁵¹

In order to clarify the place of method in Gadamer's approach, we should first discuss the meaning and the function of method. Gadamer remarks that the idea of knowledge which dominates Western thinking is determined through the concept of method. Therefore, it consists "in pacing out a path of knowledge so consciously that it is always possible to retrace one's steps. *Method* means the path of repeated investigation [*nachgehen*]."⁵² Hence, to be methodical is always to be able once again to go over the ground one has traversed and is the basic characteristic of the procedure of science. It seems that since method, as Gadamer remarks, provides a condition for repeatability and verification, i.e., establishes a standard for certainty in knowledge, the ideal of knowledge and truth is satisfied only by 'the ideal of certainty.'⁵³ At this point, we can trace

the imprint of the first rule of Descartes' method behind this ideal of certainty: "Thus I must," says Descartes, "carefully withhold assent no less from these things than from the patently false, if I wish to find anything certain."⁵⁴ Consequently, the ideal of certainty based on faith in method seems to be a basic motivation for denying one's own historicity and refers to one of the points where Gadamer rejects objectivism.⁵⁵

It seems that in the human sciences the limitation of knowing truth by method on the basis of verification and certainty is the point where Gadamer rejects or, rather, limits the idea of method. In his view, the universal claim of scientific method is resisted by the experience of a truth "that transcends the domain of scientific method wherever that experience is to be found."⁵⁶ He refers to three different areas, philosophy, art and history, where the experience of truth is communicated and cannot be verified by the methodological means proper to science.⁵⁷

Therefore, Gadamer remarks in the *Foreword to the Second Edition of Truth and Method* that the investigation he will make takes its starting point from a transcendental question: "How is understanding possible?" Thus, he mentions that his hermeneutic project is not a 'methodological inquiry'⁵⁸ as traditional (such as Schleiermacherian) hermeneutics tried to achieve or a 'foundationalist' (as Diltheyan) hermeneutics pursued, but ontological in its character.⁵⁹ In other words, since the understanding and interpretation of a text is not only "a concern of science, but obviously belongs to the human experience of the world in general,"⁶⁰ the hermeneutic phenomenon is essentially not a "problem of method." Thus, the transcendental question above "precedes any action of understanding on the part of subjectivity, including the methodical activity of the 'interpretive sciences' and their norms and rules."⁶¹ Gadamer here seems to imply that since methodological activity falls under the concept of subjectivity, hermeneutic inquiry is prior to this category.

Gadamer's association of method with subjective activity reveals an important aspect of the idea of method and explains partially why his hermeneutics is not a methodological investigation. When criticizing Betti, who charges Gadamer with relativism since he rejects method and thus objectivity, Gadamer remarks that "that he [Betti] can conceive the problem of hermeneutics only as a problem of method shows that he is profoundly involved in the subjectivism which we are endeavoring to overcome."⁶² The paradoxical situation of objectivism of Betti and Hirsch, which falls into subjectivity while trying to overcome it, seems to stem, first, from reducing the being of meaning to its creator's mind (subjectivity) and, second, from trying to capture it objectively through a method based on the subject-object ontology. Stated more clearly, objectivism assumes to reach at the *objective* meaning in the reconstruction of the *subjective* act (perspective) of the author. In this context, Hirsch remarks, "My point may be summarized in the paradox that objectivity in textual interpretation requires explicit reference to the speaker's subjectivity."⁶³

Thus, it (objectivism) considers the interpretive activity as a double-movement process which is sourced from the subject-object scheme. First the interpreter goes back to the subjectivity of the author and second brings it back to the present in the objectively graspable form.⁶⁴ If meaning was not already objective, i.e., sharable in its nature, how could the interpreter grasp it, and, if it was objective and sharable in itself, why should the interpreter go back to the subjectivity of its creator? Thus, are not subjectivism and objectivism fused together when the subjectivity of the author is accepted as the point of departure for the objectivity of meaning? In other words, is not what is happening here nothing else than presupposing the subjectivity of the author as an objectively known entity when Hirsch claims, for instance, that "the only universally valid cognition of a work of art is that which is constituted by the kind of subjective stance adopted in its creation?"⁶⁵

At this point, one could object that, according to Betti and Hirsch, meaning is already the objectification of the mind and thus sharable. In other words, the interpreter starts from the objectified meaning and not from the subjective act of meaning. This is because in Betti, for instance, as Bleicher puts it:

Any interpretive act is a triadic process in which meaningful forms mediate between the mind objectified in them and the mind of the interpreter... It is the task of the interpreter to re-cognize or re-construct the ideas, message, intentions manifested in them; it is a process of internalization, in which the content of these forms is transposed into an 'other,' different subjectivity.⁶⁶

However, in the last analysis, these meaningful forms are not autonomous in their full sense and their objectification depends on to what extent they represent the mind behind them and to what degree they can be actualized in the mind of the interpreter. In other words, even though, according to Hirsch and Betti, mind and meaning are inseparable, it seems that the mind is always more than its expression.⁶⁷ This is another way of saying that since the mind is not objectified as such in its expression, there is no criterion for knowing to what degree the mind was objectified in the expression. Thus, it can be said that even the author's mind has itself no control over its expression in the process of its being objectified since according to Betti's and Hirsch's intentionalist approach, meaning cannot be detached from its creative consciousness.⁶⁸

From this angle, to take the author's perspective as the starting point in determining meaning is to start from a non-objectified standpoint, i.e., from subjectivity. Here, if one argues that meaningful forms are the medium between the author's mind and the interpreter's mind, we can reply that in this case one has to presuppose the autonomy of meaning. This would be a self-contradiction in Betti's and Hirsch's theory since meaning is depending on the author and it is not autonomous, as we saw above.

Gadamer's assertion that every use of method presupposes the alienation of its object from the subject (inquirer), and "requires from him constantly to distance himself from himself, and to weigh alternate possibilities,"⁶⁹ looks to be another reason for his rejection of method. It seems that for Gadamer the alienation presupposed by method means for us to step out of our own consciousness and to view the text *in itself*. Such a demand assumes that we can understand the text once we have divorced it from all the relative conditions "which make our understanding possible."⁷⁰ In other words, while believing that it is possible to gain access to the alien horizon of the text simply by leaving out one's own horizon, objectivism fails to recognize the fact that the interpreter's situation and his present interests, such as choice, perspective, evaluation, have been introduced into a supposedly objective reconstruction of meaning.⁷¹ In this context, Gadamer remarks that even in objective historical investigations research seems to proceed from a historical interest, i.e., it does not seem to have any relation to the present, and the real historical task is to realize and determine the meaning of what is investigated in a new way. This is because the meaning exists at the beginning of "any such research as well as at the end: as the choice of the theme to be investigated, the awakening of the desire to investigate, as the gaining of the new problematic."⁷²

By overlooking this fact, Hirsch's theory of objective interpretation assumes a view of the object in absolute separateness. As we saw above, Hirsch holds the idea that determinacy and reproducibility of the author's meaning is the basis for an objective interpretation and establishes the sole criterion for the validity in interpretation. This is another way of saying that the object of

interpretation has its own being which is quite independent of any interpreter's horizon. Thus, "if an interpreter," says Hirsch, "did not conceive a text's meaning to be *there* as an occasion for contemplation or application, he would have nothing to think or talk about. Its thereness, its self identity from one moment to the next allows it to be contemplated."⁷³ However, on the other hand, since 'meaning is an affair of consciousness,' it cannot have its autonomous being independent of its originating mind. Thus, while the author's mind is to be represented by the meaning, meaning needs a mind to be obtained.

Consequently, Hirsch has to reduce the being of meaning either to its creator's mind or to its interpreter's. Here, the main problem is how to bridge the seemingly insurmountable gap between the author's mind and the interpreter's mind as long as a subject-object dichotomy is held.⁷⁴ It is clear that according to Hirsch, language cannot provide a mirror-like medium between them because almost any word sequence can, under the conventions of language, legitimately represent more than one complex of meaning. "A word sequence means nothing in particular until somebody either means something by it or understands from it."⁷⁵

According to Hirsch, owing to the impossibility of detaching meaning from the consciousness that determines it, interpretation is not based on a 'given,' i.e., 'autonomous meaning' but is a matter of construction which takes its starting point from interpreter's choice: The interpreter should choose either to reconstruct the author's historical meaning or intention, or to impose his own meaning on the text (which is an anachronism).⁷⁶ "Any normative concept of interpretation," Hirsch remarks, "implies a choice that is required not by the nature of written texts but rather by the goal that the interpreter sets himself. . . [T]he object of interpretation is no automatic given, but a task that the interpreter sets himself."⁷⁷ According to Hirsch, the concept of choice reflects also the general characteristic of Schleiermacher's first canon: "Everything in a given text which requires fuller interpretation must be explained and determined exclusively from the linguistic domain common to the author and his original public." Hirsch argues that Schleiermacher's norm is not deduced at all; it is chosen. It is based on value-preference, and not on theoretical necessity. His preference for "original meaning over anachronistic meaning is ultimately an ethical choice."⁷⁸

As a result, while arguing that the object of interpretation is independent of the interpreter's subjectivity, Hirsch has to accept the interpreter's subjective act of choice as the starting point of interpretation.⁷⁹ While maintaining that meaning is self-identical from one moment to the next, he also remarks that "the nature of text is to mean whatever we construe it to mean. . . Indeed, we need a norm precisely because the nature of a text is to have no meaning except that which an interpreter wills into existence."⁸⁰ This paradoxical situation in Hirsch's approach shows itself clearly when he notes that even though the choice of a norm for interpretation is a free social and ethical act, as soon as anyone claims validity for his interpretation "he must be willing to measure his interpretation against a genuinely discriminating norm, and the only compelling normative principle . . . is the old fashioned ideal of rightly understanding what the author meant."⁸¹ In other words, the objectivity of interpretation as discipline depends upon our being able to make an objectively grounded choice between "two disparate probability judgments on the basis of the common evidence which supports them."⁸²

However, if meaning is a matter of construction and based finally on the will and consciousness of the interpreter, does not Hirsch have to recognize that *meaningful* evidence for it is also a matter of construction? He accepts the circular relation between textual meaning (intention) and the evidence for it: "Every interpreter labors under the handicap of an inevitable circularity: all his internal evidence tends to support his hypothesis because much of it was constituted by his hypothesis. . . An interpretive hypothesis—that is, a guess about genre—tends to

be a self-confirming hypothesis.”⁸³ Therefore, the idea of method in Hirsch’s theory of interpretation establishes only the objective part of the circle of interpretation of which the interpreter’s guess constitutes an “unmethodical, intuitive, sympathetic” part.⁸⁴

As we have seen, Hirsch’s insistence on the intention of the author as the measure of understanding is based on an ontological misunderstanding. He presupposes that the interpreter could just somehow reconstruct this intention again through a kind of identification and reproduction, and *only then* turn to the words as a standard of meaning. To assume that he can do so is “to make an epistemological assumption that has been refuted by phenomenological research—namely, that we have before our consciousness a kind of image of the actual thing that is meant, a so-called *Vorstellung*, that is, a representation.”⁸⁵ Therefore, in Hirsch’s subject-object ontology, the author’s intention is both the beginning and the end of the interpretation process at the same time. As Gadamer remarks, “wherever it arises, the problem of the beginning is, in fact, the problem of the end. For it is with respect to an end that a beginning is defined as a beginning of an end...For every beginning is an end and every end is beginning.”⁸⁶ Precisely because of this circularity of the beginning and the end Hirsch’s objectivist perspective is involved with the subjectivism it tried to overcome. In other words, supposedly objective meaning can find a place only in the subjectivity of the author and the interpreter, and since it is a matter of construction, there is no borderline which separates these two subjectivities.

Moreover, while trying to save the identity of meaning through methodical distance (subject-object dichotomy), Hirsch gives priority to the constructing power of the subjectivity of the interpreter with respect to the constructed meaning. In this context, Hirsch says:

Meanings that are actualized by a reader are of course the reader’s meanings—generated by him. Whether they are also meanings intended by an author cannot be determined with absolute certainty, and the reader is in fact free to choose whether or not he will *try* to make his actualized meanings congruent with the author’s intended ones.⁸⁷

So, in order to talk about the self-same identity of the text which is ahistorical, Hirsch has to presuppose an ahistorical mind which can contemplate this meaning in its identity.⁸⁸ This means that the interpreter will be “freezing both his object and himself into static patterns”⁸⁹ by exhausting the meaning of a statement in a concept. However, since meaning is a matter of construction, i.e., ‘meaning’ is mute and silent in its nature, Hirsch should accept that meaning has no power to resist to the misconstruction of the subjectivity of the interpreter. Therefore, a paradoxical relation between the ahistorical mind of the interpreter and a constructed meaning seems to exist. At this point, Hirsch might postulate the ahistorical mind of the author which is objectified in the expression and stands against the interpreter’s mind. However, the mind of the author must also be constructed by the interpreter’s mind.

Besides this, as we saw above, Hirsch’s argument that every construction (guess) is tested against available evidence does not seem to be convincing because, since the evidence itself, like the intention of the author, is subject to construction, one construction cannot be a basis for testing another. For instance, Hirsch argues that the discipline of interpretation is not based on a methodology of construction but on a logic of validation. Although we cannot be sure that our interpretive guesses are correct, “we know that they *can* be correct and that the goal of interpretation as a discipline is constantly to increase the probability that they are correct... [Objectivity] lies in our capacity to say on firm principles, ‘Yes, that answer is valid’ or ‘No, it is not.’”⁹⁰ Thus, the logic of validation in Hirsch depends on our ability to see the evidences as

relevant to the meaning (type or class) which was already constructed.⁹¹ In this case, to see something as evidence is to see it as meaningful and relevant to the meaning constructed before. Thus, since the relevance and meaning of evidence comes from the meaning (intention) to which it refers, it is already interpretive. This means that as long as it is confirmed by the meaning it refers to, it can be accepted as relevant evidence. Hence, evidence itself is a part of imaginative construction (guess).

Hirsch might object and say that evidence is not a matter of construction, rather it speaks by itself. In this case, he has to acknowledge that the meaning of evidence is autonomous, i.e., independent of the mind of the author, which would be a self-contradiction in Hirsch's theory.⁹² Stated more clearly, since evidence itself is a part of language (i.e., under the linguistic convention to which it belongs) it can legitimately represent more than one complex of meaning. Thus, it needs to be determined by a consciousness like an author's intention. If this is the case, it should be objectively constructed by the interpreter.

From this perspective, we can see a circular relation between the choice of the norm of interpretation and the choice of evidence in Hirsch. As we saw above, Hirsch seems to argue that the legitimacy of the choice of the 'author's intention' as a norm (i.e., the objectivity in interpretation) is shown by the evidences concerning it while the selection of the evidences is also a matter of choice. However, since the choice of evidence cannot be based on evidence, it is supposed to be dependent on the choice of author's intention as a norm. Therefore, while the choice of norm is validated and legitimated by the choice of evidence, the choice of evidence is determined by the choice of norm. Hence, Hirsch's theory of interpretation lacks the principle of 'otherness' which seems to be the firm basis of Gadamer's theory of interpretation which we will discuss later.

It seems that the presupposition behind the inseparable relation between the monistic approach of objectivist interpretation and the method in Hirsch is that subject and object belong to their own distinct ontological realms and thus they have their own identity. However, we can argue that in order to presuppose this, the subject (inquirer) is already supposed to close the gap between himself and his object. Now, if he closes this gap through his subjectivity, there is no way to talk about the objectivity at which Hirsch aims. In other words, from the viewpoint that subject and object possess their own distinct realms, there is no guarantee that the object is given to an inquirer in its own nature because the object will be grasped first in its difference (alienation) not in its identity (familiarity).

Hence, the subject-object ontology creates a dilemma which cannot be solved within any objectivistic framework. The dilemma is this: If one starts an investigation from the distinction (distance) between subject and object, one has to save this distinction (distance) because only through this distance one can secure an object from the distorting effect of subjectivity. However, as long as one keeps this distance (or alienation), this means that one cannot be familiar enough to recognize one's object in its proper nature. Therefore, while claiming to secure 'object,' objectivity prevents the inquirer from recognizing its nature or truth.⁹³

Consequently, the objectivism which grounds the idea of objectivity on a subject-object ontology creates a false dichotomy between object and its truth. From this perspective, the alternative between truth and method seems to be suggested not by Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics as Ricoeur argued,⁹⁴ but rather created by the presupposition, subject-object scheme, behind the idea of method in objectivism.

It should be noted that for Gadamer method has to be accepted just in order to avoid mistakes.⁹⁵ However, he also adds that "the hermeneutic interest of the philosopher begins properly

when error has been successfully avoided,”⁹⁶ i.e., when method completes its function. Hence, when Gadamer argues that hermeneutical truth transcends methodological activity⁹⁷ he does not seem to set up truth and method as diametrically opposite, i.e., each as an alternative to the other. Rather, in the light of his argument for methods in order to avoid mistakes, we can say that in Gadamer method is neither a condition (or originating point) of hermeneutical inquiry nor is hermeneutical truth the result of it. In other words, truth cannot be mediated by method.

If this is the case, method can function only on the ontological basis of inquiry. Therefore, it does take its legitimacy from the hermeneutical approach, not vice versa. This is another way of saying that method is accepted when it is employed for hermeneutical distancing and not for methodological distancing. As we saw above, methodological distancing (subject-object dichotomy) is considered by objectivists as the very condition and the possibility of objective interpretation. Thus, distancing in this sense is the source of alienation between object and subject which hermeneutical “interpretation intends to overcome.”⁹⁸ On the contrary, the hermeneutical distancing is a condition to recognize the ‘other’ in its otherness so that the interpreter finds himself in the tension of familiarity and strangeness which is the possibility of someone’s awareness of his own prejudices.⁹⁹

The otherness of the other plays a key role in understanding the relevance of distancing in Gadamer’s hermeneutics in the sense that truth becomes visible only through the otherness of the other. However, ‘otherness’ does not refer here to the ‘other’ itself like an individual consciousness, as traditional, such as Schleiermacherian hermeneutics accepted,¹⁰⁰ but to ‘what [the] other says’. Therefore, otherness is both one’s recognition of the limit of one’s consciousness and the basis of overcoming this limit. In other words, hermeneutical distancing as the otherness of the other is the way in which the interpreter elevates himself to the reflective knowledge,¹⁰¹ i.e., to self-knowledge by recognizing himself in the truth of the text. Thus, even though distancing in this way occurs on the ground of familiarity (truth), it refers also to the resisting (or challenging) power of truth—the ontological condition of reflective thinking in Gadamer—to the assimilating character of consciousness (i.e., prejudices). Therefore, truth is not like the object to be assimilated by *desire* in Hegel.¹⁰² Nor is it an object of mere contemplation, or staring, as objectivism assumes, nor a construction (or product) of consciousness as in the case of radical subjectivism.

Therefore, Gadamer seems to consider hermeneutical distancing not as a distance between subject and object, but, rather, as a space opened up by truth itself when it reveals itself in its dialectical movement.¹⁰³ The dialectical movement of truth is recognized by the fact that truth is both the most familiar and the strangest at one and the same time. It is the most familiar because consciousness can be what it is in it, or, as Heidegger puts it, “Dasein is ‘in the truth’.”¹⁰⁴ It is the strangest in the sense that being is more than consciousness of it, that is, “that which is can never be completely understood.”¹⁰⁵

From this view point, Gadamer allows method in his hermeneutical approach and remarks:

The art of interpretation or hermeneutics, then, makes use of the most diverse methods, but it is not itself a method. Still less is the theory of this art, philosophical hermeneutics, a method. Whatever might be intended by this expression, “the hermeneutical method,” I do not know. All methods of interpretation belong to hermeneutics and either play a role or can be brought into play when it comes to interpreting works of art, such as poems. The task of philosophical hermeneutics is to clarify how this can occur.¹⁰⁶

Accordingly, Gadamer's different approach to method and objectivity seems to be sourced from the view point of his transcendental question, "how is understanding possible." Here, he tries to eliminate 'subjective activity' as the power of constructing 'meaning.' As we saw above, as long as interpretive activity does not start from the truth of the object, the object will be subject to construction by subjective activity. Gadamer claims that this approach leads to an absolute mastery over being, which is the basic characteristic of modern subjectivism. "[B]eing is not experienced where," Gadamer continues, "something can be constructed by us and is to that extent conceived; it is experienced where what is happening can merely be understood."¹⁰⁷

Therefore, the task of Gadamer's hermeneutical project is to approach object first, not in its alienation (difference), but in its familiarity (truth), i.e., not as a matter of construction but as something which "happens to us over and above our wanting and doing."¹⁰⁸ Gadamer emphasizes this point in its whole weight by saying also that the object of interpretation is first grasped as something which has a claim to truth, i.e., something to say. Hence, the transcendental question aims at uncovering the basis upon which the inquirer has already been familiar with the truth of his object. Thus, in Gadamer, the ontological character of hermeneutical investigation transcends the subject-object scheme by focusing on the question of how subject and object originally belong to each other, namely, the same world.¹⁰⁹ "Understanding," says Gadamer, "is never a subjective relation to a given 'object' but to the history of its effect; in other words, understanding belongs to the being of that which is understood."¹¹⁰ It seems that Gadamer here appropriates Heidegger's basic insight that understanding is an "existential," i.e., Dasein's mode of being and his interpretation of this mode of being "in terms of time."¹¹¹ Therefore, it takes the form of phenomenological hermeneutics¹¹² which accepts time and historicity as the mode of being common to both subject and object as Heidegger has already shown its direction in *Sein und Zeit (Being and Time)*.¹¹³

Criticizing Gadamer's perspective, Hirsch maintains that the new hermeneutics Gadamer offers "to replace the tradition of Schleiermacher, Humboldt, Droysen, Boeckh, Steinthal, Dilthey and Simmel may be more destructive in its implications than Gadamer has reckoned."¹¹⁴ According to Hirsch, Gadamer's theory of hermeneutics belongs to a "skepticism" regarding historical knowledge since it accepts the essence of understanding as radically historical. This means that reconstructing "the original circumstances, like all restoration, is a futile undertaking in view of the historicity of our being. What is reconstructed, a life brought back from the lost past, is not the original."¹¹⁵ Therefore, Gadamer's denying the possibility of reproducing the original meaning of a text (author's meaning) and thus his displacing the 'author' as the criterion of valid interpretation,¹¹⁶ in Hirsch's view, is to reject the identity of meaning and the only compelling normative principle that could lend the validity to an interpretation."¹¹⁷

Is denying the possibility of reproducing the original meaning to reject the identity of meaning as Hirsch argues? In order to argue this, does not Hirsch have to show first that meaning can be identical with itself (i.e., what it is) as long as it is nothing else than author's intention?

Chapter II

The Problem of the Identification of Meaning with the Intention of the Author

The Gadamer's Rejection of the Identification of Meaning with the Intention of the Author

Although the nature of textual meaning is a crucial subject for hermeneutics, neither Gadamer nor Hirsch have devoted a substantial discussion to it. Rather, they approach this problem in terms of the question of the identification of meaning with "author's intention." In *Truth and Method* Gadamer rejects explicitly the identification of meaning with the author's intention on the presupposition that the author's intention and textual meaning are *essentially* different entities. In this context, Gadamer asserts: "Not just occasionally but always, the meaning of a text goes beyond its author."¹¹⁸

However, we should recall that, according to Gadamer, this detachment of meaning from the intention of the author happens in the case of writing¹¹⁹ and not in living conversation. As we saw above, he explicitly says that in everyday speaking, where it is not a matter of passing through the fixity of writtenness, one "has to understand the other person's intention."¹²⁰ Therefore, the problem of author or *mens auctoris* plays a hermeneutical role where one is dealing with fixed expressions.¹²¹

If this is the case, how should we understand Gadamer's contention that the construction of the author's intention can be a subject of interpretation only if the attempt to accept what is said as true fails when one tries to *understand* the text.¹²² With this statement, does Gadamer imply that there is no total detachment of meaning from the intention of the author? If we take this to be the case, Gadamer's counter thesis to Historical Criticism becomes problematic:

Reconstructing the original circumstances, like all restoration, is a futile undertaking in view of the historicity of our being. What is reconstructed, a life brought back from the lost past, is not the original.¹²³

Accordingly, one must question whether Gadamer falls victim to inconsistency by accepting both the possibility and the impossibility of reconstructing the author's intention or if whether he is talking about different (or seemingly opposite) aspects of the same thing. The best way to clarify this issue is to go back to the presuppositions lying behind these statements. These presuppositions can be found in his ontology of experience of meaning, the main characteristic of which reveals itself in the fact of *belongingness* of understanding to the being of that which is understood.

According to Gadamer, textual meaning becomes "an experience that changes the person who experiences it"¹²⁴ due to its truth-claim which transcends any historical individual consciousness of it. Thus, the text has its real being when it points away from itself and lets us see what it is the author is speaking about.¹²⁵ In other words, the text does not refer back to the author's intention or consciousness of the author, but rather points to the open realm of interpretation.¹²⁶ Furthermore, Gadamer remarks that "...it is a fortiori true of understanding what is written down that we are moving in a dimension of meaning that is intelligible in itself and as such offers no reason for going back to the subjectivity of the author."¹²⁷

Hence, since meaning functions primarily in its being-directed to the open possibilities (future), it must refer to the past secondarily—i.e., by way of abstraction. Here Gadamer is not

saying that meaning detaches itself essentially from the past and has only one (future) dimension. Rather, he means that the being of a work of art reveals itself from the horizon of time which is the past stretching into the future by effecting the present. Thus the author's intention with respect to the "historical continuity" of the textual meaning must represent just one of the dimensions (past), and thus becomes a matter of abstraction (which Gadamer calls aesthetic differentiation) whenever it is reconstructed.¹²⁸

From this perspective, we can say that when posing the idea that the 'original meaning of a historical text can be reached at,' the Historical Critics seem to presuppose that the author's consciousness (or the originating moment) is, as it were, a reserved space in the realm of history for the stability (identity) of meaning. In other words, the Historical Critics seem to consider history primarily as the realm of "discontinuities." If this is the case, since the identity of a historical event is revealing itself in its abstract (disconnected) form, this means that they should be picturing mentally the temporality of meaning as if it were a spatial entity with its boundaries and not a continuity.¹²⁹ This atomic perspective of history seems to lead them to the presumption that meaning functions primarily (essentially) in its being-directed to the stable past and secondarily (accidentally) to the unstable future. Hence the basic problem the Historical Critics are faced with is how to establish the historical continuity of meaning on the basis of these temporal (atomic) discontinuities. We will discuss this question in the context of the application of meaning in the following chapter in detail.

However, the question we posed above concerning Gadamer's seemingly opposite views remains open. Even if Gadamer claims that by way of abstraction (i.e., secondarily) meaning refers to the author's intention (past), he still seems to deny that a past meaning can be understood in its *originality* (atomic character) in view of the historicity of our understanding.¹³⁰ If this is the case, suspending the truth-claim of a text must be in fact changing not the direction of meaning to the past, but our perspective to it (meaning) as a viewer.

Stated more clearly, Gadamer seems to think that since meaning is an autonomous being, it does not change its nature (function) when one suspends its claim to truth. Otherwise, the autonomy of meaning could be an empty claim since it might depend on a subjective decision. If this is the case, the role of the intentionalist (i.e., of the historical reconstructionist) is to relate or restrict meaning to the past intention which, he assumes, is known previously. Therefore, the abstract character of the intentionalist view of meaning stems from connecting two already separated things (the author's intention and meaning) in an extraneous way on the presupposition that the relation between them remains forever as the relation between "originating" and the "originated." In other words, the intentionalist and the historical reconstructionist maintain that the primary function of meaning has to correspond to its originating moment (the author's intention).

If this is the case, does not the intentionalist theory of "correspondence" implicitly accept that meaning and the author's intention are both separate and identical at the same time? In other words, does not this theory leave us with the following case: in order to know that there is a correspondence between them, they are supposed to be known separately while, in order to know that meaning is not an autonomous being, they must be identical? It seems that this paradox in the intentionalist view stems from the assumption that the relation between meaning and the author's intention is both intrinsic and extrinsic.

The intentionalist and the historical reconstructionist argue that since meaning is a matter of consciousness, it is not given and has to be constructed by the interpreter. Consequently, due to the distance between originating time and the time of constructing, the constructed meaning has to correspond to the intention in the author's mind. However, by the same token, since meaning is

not independent from the author's consciousness, it cannot exist by itself either. Thus, it should be identical with it.

One might object that the idea of reconstruction does not lead to a paradox because the mind of the author is already *in* the reconstructed meaning though there is a time distance between historical intention and the act of reconstructing. We should say that this counter-argument equates knowledge and belief without any justification. All intentionalist views have to take the distinction between knowledge and belief into account as long as they argue that meaning is a matter of construction, i.e., not given. Accordingly, the intentionalist interpreter *believes* that the meaning which he constructed *is* (corresponds to) the author's meaning. Therefore, the great task for them is to turn "belief" into "knowledge" by finding evidence for it. Nevertheless, as discussed above, since even evidence itself will be subject to the construction, the question of how one can pass from the belief-level to the knowledge-level and from the epistemological-level to the ontological-level remains open for them.

Gadamer escapes this paradox by asserting that the relation between author and textual meaning is not genetic and intrinsically referential. Hence, for him the author must be an accidental or occasional aspect of the history of a text. In this context, he remarks that the "real meaning of a text, as it speaks to the interpreter, does not depend on the contingencies of the author."¹³¹ Therefore, in his view the question whether textual meaning is an effect of a cause (consciousness of historical author) is not significant.

The genetic approach reduces textual meaning to the psychological acts of the historical author on the presupposition that the effect reflects itself as "reference" to its cause. Thus, textual meaning is intelligible through its ability to represent the subjective acts (emotions, feelings, etc.) of its author behind it.

In other words, meaning has essentially a symbolic character or, as it were, a mirror-like function. Hence, the meaning becomes what it is in the re-experiencing of the author's original experience of meaning. From this kind of intentionalist approach it follows that textual meaning is "an object that stands over against a subject [interpreter] for itself,"¹³² since meaning reflects only the irreducible nature of the individuality of the historical author. Thus this approach seems to lead to a sort of solipsism by reducing 'meaning' to the private experiences of the author when he wrote the text. Wimsatt and Beardsley call this approach the "Intentional Fallacy," known also as the "Genetic Fallacy."¹³³

There is a close relation between the genetic approach and the Romantic approach which is said to be the characteristic of traditional hermeneutics. The Romantic approach is charged by an anti-intentionalist perspective—which seems to be the common characteristic of modern hermeneutics—while operating with a conception of meaning which was "subjectivistic" and ultimately "psychologistic."¹³⁴

Condemning the genetic approach to meaning, Hirsch's intentionalism, the New Critical formalism of Wimsatt and Beardsley, and Gadamer's position come close to each other. Refuting the identification of meaning with the mental acts by invoking Husserlian intentionalism,¹³⁵ Hirsch argues that "The psychologistic identification of textual meaning with a meaning experience is inadmissible. Meaning experiences *are* private, but they are not meanings."¹³⁶ According to him, the author's subjective stance is not part of his verbal meaning even when he explicitly discusses his feelings and attitudes. "This is Husserl's point ... The intentional object represented by a text is different from the intentional acts which realize it."¹³⁷

Thus Hirsch distinguishes the reconstructible part of the consciousness (content of the consciousness, intentional object) of the author from the non-reconstructible part of it (mental or

intentional acts) and tries to base the identity of textual meaning on the reconstructible part of consciousness. Nevertheless, he does not stop at this stage but takes a further step by distinguishing “private meaning” from “shareable meaning.” In other words, while previously separating mental acts from ‘meaning’ (intention), he later distinguishes the meaning which the author intended to convey from the meaning which the author did not intend. In this context, Hirsch notes, “Why should anyone with common sense wish to equate an author’s *textual meaning* with all the meanings he happened to entertain when he wrote? Some of these he had no intention of conveying by his words.”¹³⁸

Like Hirsch, Wimsatt and Beardsley refute the usefulness of any genetic analysis of the concept of intention and deny the sort of relationship of the poet’s personality to his poems put forth by the Romantics.¹³⁹ They do employ the concept of intention in the sense of design or plan in the author’s mind which has obvious references to the author’s attitude “towards his work, the way he felt, what made him write.”¹⁴⁰ However, for them Hirsch’s distinction between mental acts and their content does not lead to a concept of meaning which is solely the identification of meaning with the author’s intention. In this context, Beardsley remarks:

The question is not whether textual meaning and authorial meaning can coincide—that is, be very similar. Certainly they can. The question is not whether textual meaning is often adequate evidence of authorial meaning. Certainly it often is. The question is whether they are one and the same thing.¹⁴¹

Wimsatt and Beardsley argue that the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art.¹⁴² Textual meaning is detached from the author at birth and goes about the world beyond his power to intend about it or control it.

Thus texts acquire determinate meaning through the interactions of their words without the intervention of an author’s will.¹⁴³ Accordingly, works of art are self-contained (autonomous) organic entities; they create a privileged mode of discourse not available to other kinds of objects.¹⁴⁴ In Wimsatt’s and Beardsley’s view, poems, for instance, are verbal structures made out of public language which is governed by the conventions of a language community.¹⁴⁵ “The poem belongs to the public. It is embodied in language.”¹⁴⁶

Nevertheless as indicated above, Wimsatt and Beardsley hold that the autonomy of the text does not imply that there cannot be any kind of relation between textual meaning and the author’s intention. There are many practical occasions of which the interpreter’s task is to try to reach the author’s intention, such as when there is a difficulty in reading a will or a love letter, or in grasping an oral premise or instruction. Moreover, based on the distinction between works of art and other kinds of discourse, they argue that some texts, such as practical messages are successful if and only if we correctly infer the intention.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, “the proper task of the literary interpreter is to interpret textual meaning.”¹⁴⁸

From this perspective, their approach to textual meaning seems to be very close to that of Gadamer, who argues “it is only when the attempt to accept what is said as true fails that we try to ‘understand’ the text, psychologically or historically, as another’s opinion.”¹⁴⁹ However, as we noted above, Wimsatt and Beardsley do not take the interpreter’s historicity into account and ignore what Gadamer calls “an ontological, structural aspect of understanding.”¹⁵⁰ Therefore, in their view the meaning of the text is an objective fact, something which in principle could be discovered once and for all.¹⁵¹

At this level, we should note that the genetic approach and Hirsch's, Wimsatt's, Beardsley's as well as Gadamer's refutation of it presuppose a relation between meaning and its historical author (biographical person). As noted above, the genetic approach accepts paradoxically both the separateness and the unity of meaning with the intention and mental acts of the "historical author." However, avoiding this paradox created by the genetic approach, the recent intentionalist views try to consider the relation between meaning and the author's intention not as genetic but as an onto-logical relation, based on the assumption that "every meaning presupposes a meaner."

By the concept 'onto-logical' we refer to the conviction that the author's intention is not a historically contingent entity, and thus separated from textual meaning, but embodied or fixed in the expression itself like a cause in its effect. Therefore, meaning does not refer to the personality and historicity of the author but reveals the content of the mind of the author "in" itself. Hence, it is self-referential. Accordingly, as the ontological and rational cause for the meaning, the author is but a "rational entity."¹⁵²

However, what do they mean by rational entity? It seems that by rational entity, intentionalists not only refer to a "person" to whom the production of a text, a book, or a work can be legitimately attributed but they also assign to it a "realistic" dimension, as they speak of an individual's intentions or the original inspiration manifested *in* the text.¹⁵³ Therefore, a "text" seems to become a mere "occasion" for the manifestation of the author's mind.¹⁵⁴ We find the most striking example of this approach in the identity thesis of Knapp and Michaels.

The Problem of the Impossibility of Intentionless Meaning: Knapp and Michaels

According to Knapp and Michaels, since "the meaning of a text is simply identical to the author's intended meaning, the project of *grounding* meaning in intention becomes incoherent."¹⁵⁵ In other words, moving from the author's intention to textual meaning is in fact irrelevant to the nature of the identity of them because it presupposes either an intentionless language or the priority of language to intention. This perspective leads some intentionalists who fail "to recognize the fundamental inseparability of the elements involved" to consider the author's intention as "an ingredient to be added" to textual meaning.¹⁵⁶ According to Knapp and Michaels, Hirsch, Juhl, and Searle are some of the victims of this mistake.

Precisely because of this fact, they do not attempt to prove the identity of meaning and intention but show that language (text) can be what it is as long as we posit an already existing author. Otherwise the marks on a paper, wood, etc. will "merely seem to *resemble* words."¹⁵⁷ Accordingly, an authorless text is but an accident, i.e., meaningless. With this argument, they seem to refute Beardsley's contention for the possibility of authorless meaning. Beardsley notes that "When Hart Crane wrote 'Thy Nazarene and tender eyes,' a printer's error transformed it into 'Thy Nazarene and tinder eyes'; but Crane let the accidental version stand."¹⁵⁸

Knapp and Michaels try to conclude from the assertion that all linguistic or textual meaning is intentional, the idea that the meaning of a text is identical with the author's intention. In other words, they deny the distinction between language and speech acts. Nevertheless, they also contend that "...the interpreter who disregards the author's intention is not interpreting the same text but producing a new one."¹⁵⁹ It is obvious that with this latter argument they shift from the "original author" to the interpreter as author and thus posit the interpreter's intention as the constitutive for textual meaning. Since the "text" is not identical in both cases, they must also be arguing that there is no possibility of a "middle point" between the original author's intention and the interpreter's intention as an author.

Shusterman criticizes the identification of the intentionality of meaning with the author's intention, and remarks:

A string of letters accidentally produced by a computer or by the movement of the tide on the sand would still depend for its meaning on an intentional act, here the intention of the reader to see the marks as a meaningful text, as language rather than simply marks.¹⁶⁰

However, Knapp and Michaels could reply that the interpreter's intention to see the marks as a meaningful text is already to presuppose an author. Thus the author as a rational entity cannot be separated from any constitution of meaning. Consequently, the "existence" of an interpreter's intention to see the marks as a meaningful text depends on the presupposition that meaning cannot exist without the original author. If this is the case, does not meaning become the result of reflective thinking? Hence, is there not a split between author's intention and meaning, since meaning is secondary to the interpreter's positing an original author's intention? If meaning were identical with the author's intention as they claim, there would not be any necessity in positing an original author to see the marks as a text, since meaning would be just a "given." Moreover, if there is no text or language without positing an original author, how is it possible to reach for the identity of a text? Positing an author as rational entity is nothing else than "presupposing" that the marks *can be* a meaningful text, and not "understanding" the meaning of it. Therefore, to posit an author cannot "guarantee" that the understood meaning is identical with author's intention.

We are now once again faced with the problem of the distinction between belief and knowledge. Since there is no guaranteed meaning we can *only* believe that the meaning we construed is identical with the author's intention. If we will follow Knapp and Michaels's argument that a transition from intention to meaning is incoherent since there is no such a split, this means that we cannot look for (external) evidence for our belief. Accordingly, we are supposed to stay on the level of presupposition (belief).

Moreover, Knapp's and Michaels's perspective seems to lead to the impossibility of interpretation, given that interpretation lays claim to making a confused meaning clearer: in order to make a confused meaning clearer, the interpreter has to express the "same" meaning differently. However, how can an interpreter express a confused meaning more clearly if, according to them, there is no language without positing an original author? If an interpreter tries to express it in his own terms, because of the inseparability of language from intention, it will be his own text, not an interpretation of the original text. Therefore, they understand by the identity of meaning the unity of intention and the language (namely, fixed expression).

Thus from their argument for the inseparability of expression from the author's intention, the problem of how the meaning of an author can be expressed differently by an interpreter arises. There seems to be no basis for transferring the same meaning in different contexts and languages. Hence, they seem to fall victim to a solipsism by reducing the identity of textual meaning to the presupposed author as a rational entity. Reduction results from taking rationality of the author as the basis of the intelligibility (meaning) of a text and reducing the (being of) language to the particularity of author's intention. Language, then, becomes the full determination of an individual consciousness. Thus since outside the individual consciousness there is no meaningful expression, there is no nexus or common ground between the individual consciousness, who can initiate pre-understanding.

This acute rejection of the social aspect of human understanding, which reflects itself in the transcendence of the language of individual consciousness, must also be the rejection of the

possibility of meaning. If only the individual consciousness (posited rational entity) can be responsible for the intelligibility (meaning) of a text, this means that meaning must exist in its full actuality in the mind of the author. In this case, what would happen if an author failed to mean what he intended to convey?¹⁶¹

Since according to Knapp and Michaels, intention and language cannot be separated from each other, in the case of the author's failure, the original intention will not be *in the text*, and what an interpreter understands from the text cannot be identical with the author's meaning. Here a dilemma arises: In the case of an author's failure to mean, if the interpreter posits an "original" author, the meaning the interpreter understood will not be his (interpreter's) own production; however if there is no language without the author's intention as Knapp and Michaels assume, then in the case of failure, since the author's intention will not be *in the text*, what the interpreter deals with should be nothing but the meaningless marks. If this is the case, what is "it" that an interpreter understands?

Juhl could say that this "it" is the meaning of the "words" which are detached from the author's intention that makes them an utterance. In other words, by distinguishing speech acts (such as literary works) from language, Juhl accepts the existence of intentionless but meaningful words. Thus he can argue that when a parrot utters the words 'Water is pouring down from the sky,' one can understand that the words mean 'it is raining' but one can deny that the 'parrot *said* that it is raining.'¹⁶² Nevertheless, by the same token, he also seems to hold that intentionless meaning cannot be subject to an interpretation since "an interpretation is a statement about the author's intention."¹⁶³

Argument for Coherence: Juhl

Juhl contends that there is a logical connection between statements about the meaning of a literary work and statements about the author's intention such that a statement about the meaning of a work is a statement about the author's intention. Thus he claims:

...we cannot even take the various parts of a text (its lines, sentences, etc.) as constituting a whole, as forming a unit or as ...belonging together, in the sense which our concept of a literary work requires, without assuming that the text has been produced by a person and with certain kinds of intentions.¹⁶⁴

At this point, we should note that Juhl's notion of an author is mostly as a "rational entity" though he does not discard the concept of a historical author from his intentionalist theory, and gives it a secondary place with respect to the author as rational entity. In this context, he remarks that biographical evidence by itself does not have the same weight as textual evidence. An author may change his mind as to what he wants to convey, he may forget what he meant, or he may intend one thing before he begins to write and then, possibly without being fully aware of it, come to do something else.¹⁶⁵

Juhl seems to accept an indispensable relation between the coherence of textual meaning and the author's intention: if an author did not have a certain purpose or intention, the text could not be coherent, thus subject to interpretation. Here, interpretation is not an external or additional statement to textual meaning, but the means of revealing the existence of the author's intention behind the coherence of meaning.

According to Juhl, the logical connection between interpretation and the author's intention becomes explicit in the concept of "evidence." An interpretation can account for a textual feature if and only if this textual feature is an evidence of what the author intended to convey. In other words, a textual feature can be an evidence for an interpretation if and only if it is an evidence of what the author intended. From this it follows that a) one interpretation can be chosen as true among others on its accounting for the internal evidence (textual features), b) which can exist only as the evidence of the author's intention, c) which is the basis of the coherence of the text. In other words, Juhl seems to argue that there can be only one correct interpretation which reflects the identity of meaning (the author's intention) as the center (or reference point) of the coherence of the textual features.

However, how can Juhl accept the author as the basis of the coherence of the text if the historical author can make mistakes as mentioned above and the legitimacy of the author as rational entity is based on the historical author? Is there not a circular relation between the coherence of the text and the claim for the author as the basis of the coherence of a text? With respect to Juhl's approach, one might say that if we realize a coherence we should presuppose an author, and if we presuppose an author we can realize that textual features are evidence through which we aim for the coherence. If this is the case, should we argue that if we cannot realize a coherence in a text, the text is authorless?

It seems that although accepting the author (the rational entity) as the fixed part of the intention of the historical author in one moment, in the next moment, due to the possibility of fallibility of the historical author, Juhl does separate them and makes the author as rational entity responsible for the coherence of the text. Thus he seems to argue that if any text is to be a piece of literary work, it is supposed to be coherent, i.e., reflect the author's intention as the basis of its existence. In this case, the real task of Juhl's theory is to show the legitimacy of passing from the fallible historical author to the seemingly infallible author as rational entity if it is to be argued that the rational entity is embodied in the text itself. This casts a doubt about the identity thesis of Juhl.

Setting this problem aside for a moment, we can ask: does Juhl's argument for rational entity provide us indeed with a standpoint where we can know the identity of meaning with the author's intention? It seems that we can construe his argument for the identity thesis in two different directions: 1) Since textual evidence functions as an evidence for the author's intention, we can choose correct statements, i.e., we can interpret correctly. Since we choose correct statements in light of evidence, we reach at coherence. Thus coherence must stem from the author's intention. But the reverse is also true: 2) After reaching at coherence we can say that we chose a correct statement. And since we chose correct statement, we can argue that textual features might imply the author's intention. Thus, the author's intention can be based on the idea of coherence.

If this is the case, is Juhl justified in construing his argument in the former way and basing the identity thesis on this construct? We showed that it is also logical to reverse his way of reasoning and to say that the author is a determination of a coherent interpretation. In this case, one can argue that the interpreter is responsible as much as the author for the coherence of the text. Therefore, none of them is prior to any other.

Juhl argues that since the author's intention remains identical with the meaning interpreted, interpretation can disambiguate an author's utterance. Thus there is a logical connection between interpretation and the author's intention. However, he does not show from where an interpreter can have a sense of coherence and evidence, and thus the identity of text. He merely considers a whole-part relation between coherence and evidence. Accordingly coherence and evidence become what they are in terms of each other. However, the problem remains of how an interpreter

can enter into this circle from outside, since to say that meaning is identical with intention is to argue that this circle is a 'closed' one. Nevertheless, when he contends that an interpretive statement is logically connected with the identical meaning of a text, he seems to argue that the circle is also an 'open' one. Thus since Juhl's thesis of identity is based on two opposite arguments, we can say with Bagwell that Juhl's identification of understanding with intention tends to blur the difference between author and reader, and falls victim to the so-called 'interpretive fallacy.' By interpretive fallacy, Bagwell refers to the assumption that "secondary interpretive texts are semantically equivalent to literary text."¹⁶⁶

Moreover, by overlooking the interpreter's own sense of coherence and evidence (i.e., pre-understanding, which is essential to Gadamer's hermeneutic),¹⁶⁷ Juhl's identity thesis seems to take the form of a *petitio principii*: it assumes in the premise that meaning is identical with the author's intention, which he wants to prove. In other words, meaning is what the author intends and "whatever meaning interpretation yields is, *ipso facto*, what the author intends."¹⁶⁸

In addition, we should mention that the criteria of coherence and complexity can be only formal requirements in understanding a textual meaning. Hence, they can refer to rational entities (author and interpreter) only as formal requirements. In this case, since they cannot be the basis of the concrete structure (content) of the meaning—this is visible in the fact that the same text can be construed in different but coherent ways—Juhl's argument for coherence and complexity to show the identity of meaning with the author's intention is not convincing.

From the Indeterminacy of Language to the Determinacy of Meaning: Hirsch

Separating himself from Knapp and Michaels on the ground that there can be an intentionless language, and from Juhl by accepting that interpretation is a matter of choice (since interpretation is not identical but just can correspond to the author's intention), Hirsch hopes to show the identity of meaning and the author's intention by demonstrating that if meaning is to be determinate it must be identical with the author's intention. Thus, he takes his departure on the presupposition that there are the author's intention *and* textual meaning. Since, according to him, the identity of meaning is but the identification of it with the author's intention, he must also be presupposing that the author's intention is already a determinate, self-identical entity.

Precisely because of this fact, the main problem for Hirsch is to show how the identity (determinacy) of the author's intention can be the *basis* of the identification of meaning with it. Knapp and Michaels fault Hirsch for accepting the intentionless meaning and for distinguishing between the author's intention and textual meaning while arguing for their identity. If they are identical, Hirsch must accept that to talk about the author's intention must be already to talk about textual meaning.¹⁶⁹ In fact, this objection gives us a direction to consider Hirsch's concept of an author in his relation to language as the preparatory level for discussing the problem of the foundation of textual identity.

Hirsch seems to view the meaning of 'author' in terms of an interaction between individual consciousness (the author) and the language in which he expresses himself. He argues that "a word sequence means nothing *in particular* until somebody either means something by it or understands something from it" (italics mine).¹⁷⁰ In other words, since the conventions of language can sponsor different meanings from the same sequence of words, language cannot be the determiner of meaning of a text by itself. This fact according to Hirsch, reveals itself, for instance, in the disagreement of interpreters on the same sequence of words. Thus, with respect to the conventions of language, one interpretation can be as valid as another, so long as it is "sensitive" or

“plausible”.¹⁷¹ It seems that according to Hirsch, language is the realm of *possible* meanings to be actualized.¹⁷²

Here, the word “possible” does not mean that an individual consciousness (an author) can form or create *meanings* as he wishes in a convention of language. In this context, Hirsch maintains that when somebody does use a particular word sequence, “his verbal meaning cannot be anything he might wish it to be.”¹⁷³ All meaning communicated by texts is to some extent language-bound. Therefore, “no textual meaning can transcend the meaning possibilities and the control of the language in which it is expressed.”¹⁷⁴ The phrase ‘the control of language’ should refer to the fact that language is the source of the intelligibility of meaning. Accordingly, the sensitivity and plausibility of different interpretations should stem from this characteristic of language. If this is the case, Hirsch seems to accept that *meanings*¹⁷⁵ in general are ‘pre-given’ to individual consciousness (author or interpreter) by linguistic conventions which seem to represent ‘social or traditional consciousness’.¹⁷⁶ Hence, the description of language as the realm of ‘possible’ meanings must indicate the character of the ‘pre-giveness’ of meanings.

It seems, however, that, for Hirsch, since linguistic signs cannot speak their own meanings, the pre-giveness of language refers to the abstract and general character of language. In other words, Hirsch holds that language in its abstract structure does not refer to any determinate object by itself, thus it remains detached from the particular reality until it is willed by an individual consciousness. Consequently, an individual’s understanding of a particular reality is pre-linguistic and his mind is the medium between the particular reality and language.¹⁷⁷ In short, Hirsch presupposes a correspondence between language and particular reality and this correspondence is actualized by the individual (author)’s mind.

In this context, he remarks that meaning in itself (which he calls verbal genre) has no ‘entelechy’ or ‘will’ of its own. “It is not a living thing with a soul or vital principle. It is mute inert matter that is given ‘soul’ or ‘will’ by speakers and interpreters. In other words, the purpose of a genre is the communicable purpose of a particular speaker, nothing more nor less.”¹⁷⁸ Thus due to its generality, language cannot generate the purposeful character of a particular meaning by itself.

If this is the case, the process of transformation in the status of meaning from possibility to actuality must occur in the interaction between the traditional consciousness and the individual consciousness.¹⁷⁹ While traditional consciousness provides individual consciousness with possible (pre-given) meanings,¹⁸⁰ individual consciousness actualizes these possibilities.¹⁸¹

Here Hirsch follows the Saussurean distinction between *langue* and *paroles*. Saussure defines ‘langue’ as the system of linguistic possibilities shared by a speech community at a given point in time. However, this system of possibilities is distinguished from the actual verbal utterances which he calls *paroles*. *Paroles* are uses of language and actualize some (but never all) of the meaning possibilities constituting the *langue*.¹⁸²

Nevertheless, according to Hirsch, the distinction between language and individual consciousness is not an absolute distinction. If we look at the meaning as a ‘willed’ one, we emphasize the individual consciousness behind it as the determining power, but when we consider it as a ‘shared’ meaning, we pay attention to the social consciousness (language). Thus, ‘being willed’ and ‘being shared’ look to be two sides of a single coin.¹⁸³ For Hirsch meaning reveals itself in this opposite but complementary relationship between individual and social consciousness.

If we are not mistaken, Hirsch divides the (human) world into two parts: a general reality which is reflected by language in its abstract (pre-given) form, and a particular (concrete) reality which can simply be referred to. In this case, the problem is how to mediate between these parts if

we are to communicate with each other. Hirsch seems to believe that only human consciousness or intention can be a medium or nexus between general and particular. Therefore, 'meaning' or 'intention' in fact must refer to the mediative character of human consciousness between them. In other words, meaning arises in the act of subsuming the particular under the general by human consciousness.

From this perspective, we can see why Hirsch emphasizes individual consciousness (the author) as constitutive for meaning. For him, the determinacy of meaning must stem from the ability of individual consciousness to grasp the identity of a particular object and convey it through language. Thus, he seems to give individual consciousness (the author) the power to insert his intention, perspective or purpose into language. This must be how Hirsch understands the actualization of the meaning possibilities.

From this perspective, we get the impression that for Hirsch, the author (individual consciousness) must have a privileged (distant) standpoint with respect to the possible meanings (pre-given language), and thus can transcend the boundary drawn by traditional consciousness. As indicated above, this must be the logic behind Hirsch's defense of the author's intention in the constitution of textual identity. The author is not the determination of tradition (historical or social consciousness), but as the basis of the process of meaning, has his own space.¹⁸⁴

This space reveals itself in the author's free act of determining a purpose when using language. Here Hirsch is following Schleiermacher's hermeneutics of individuality. As Gadamer remarks, Schleiermacher considers the statement a text makes as a free production: "The discourse of the individual is in fact a free creative activity, however much its possibilities are limited by the fixed forms that language has taken."¹⁸⁵

If what Hirsch asserts is the case, how can language be the source of the intelligibility of meaning while individual consciousness transcends the boundaries of linguistic conventions (social consciousness)? Hirsch seems aware of this problem, as he differentiates the 'intelligibility' of meanings from the 'determinacy' of meaning. He argues that even though different interpretations can be 'sensitive' or 'plausible,' this does not mean that they all correspond to the author's intention. Consequently, for Hirsch the author's function must reveal itself not in the intelligibility or truth of meaning, but in the 'origin' and the 'mediation' of the *particularity* of a meaning.

However, the mediational function of the author reflects another problematic aspect of his theory with respect to the relationship between the determinate (particular) form of a meaning and its indeterminate (general, pre-given) status. Does not Hirsch's theory lead to the conclusion that as soon as meaning is willed by an author (individual consciousness), it becomes determinate and identical; yet, as soon as it is expressed, it becomes indeterminate again? Where is the basis of the 'continuity' of the mediation of the particularity of meaning after the author expresses his intention if no linguistic code can determine the meaning of a text because linguistic codes by themselves are too capacious and flexible to determine meanings for individual texts?

This difficulty is also manifest when Hirsch says that "Until the nature and purposes of a text have been grasped, its meaning will remain inaccessible, because its meaning is precisely something willed, something purposed."¹⁸⁶ It seems that Hirsch has to give social consciousness the role of 'continuing' to *actualize* the meaning of the text on the basis of the author's purpose. Therefore, while moving from the indeterminacy of language to the author as the determining and actualizing power of the possibilities of meaning, he has to turn back again to social consciousness as the basis of actualizing the author's purpose. However, in this circular movement, since the indeterminacy (pre-giveness) of language is the main characteristic of social consciousness, the

community of interpreters has to take the pre-givenness of language as the starting point for grasping the author's intention. Nevertheless, since language is too general to refer to the particular intention of the author, the interpreter cannot talk about the purpose or will of an author until it is guessed or actualized. If this is the case, the gap between universal (general reality, language) and particular (determinate object) occurs also between language and the author's intention. Accordingly, does not the author also become a matter of construction since the mind of the interpreter has to be a mediator between language and the author's intention?

This point refers to the distinction Hirsch makes between *historical author* (biographical person) and *speaking subject* (rational entity, implied author)¹⁸⁷, whose intention is present in his expression, due to the fact that the actual (historical) author in his individuality is "inaccessible."¹⁸⁸ In this context, Hirsch says:

The speaking subject is not, however, identical with the subjectivity of the author as an actual historical person; it corresponds, rather, to a very limited and special aspect of the author's total subjectivity; it is, so to speak, that 'part' of the author which specifies or determines verbal meaning.¹⁸⁹

Hirsch gives 'lying' as an example of this distinction. When I want to deceive, my hidden perception that 'I am lying' is irrelevant to the verbal meaning of my expression. The only correct interpretation of my lie is, paradoxically, to consider it as a true statement, since this is the only correct construction of my verbal intention. "Indeed," Hirsch continues, "it is only when my listener has *understood* my meaning (presented it as true) that he can *judge* it to be a lie."¹⁹⁰ If this is the case, the author must detach himself from himself when he expresses himself. Thus he concludes that for the process of interpretation, the author's private experiences are irrelevant. The only relevant "aspect of subjectivity is that which determines verbal meaning or, in Husserl's terms, content."¹⁹¹

However, in light of the very possibility that authors can change their mind and ideas in the course of time and thus reject their previous views, one can say that the relationship between the historical author and the speaking subject is not an internal but an external relation. This is the logic which stands behind the idea that the historical author becomes a reader or a critic of his meaning after having expressed his ideas. Hirsch calls the meaning in its relation to the historical author as reader 'significance.'¹⁹² According to him, the point in the distinction of meaning from significance is that the meaning of a text does not change when the author changes his mind with respect to his text. What is changed is only the *relationship* between the meaning and its readers.

Nevertheless, despite the detachment, Hirsch seems still to accept a sort of interaction between historical author and speaking subject. He indicates this in his polemic to anti-intentionalist authors who complain about the misreading or the misunderstandings of their texts by some interpreters. He says:

The question I always want to ask critics who dismiss authorial intention as their norm is one that could be transposed into the categorial imperative or simply into the golden rule. I want to ask them this: "When you write a piece of criticism, do you want me to disregard *your* intention and original meaning? Why do you say to me 'That is not what I meant at all'? Why do you ask me to honor the ethics of language for your writings when you do not honor them for the writings of others?"¹⁹³

Behind this polemic lies Hirsch's main tenet that textual meaning is determinate due to its being identical with the author's intention.¹⁹⁴ He seems to base the interaction between historical author and speaking subject on the assumption that to understand correctly is to understand the author's intention. In this context, he notes that "I was once told by a theorist who denied the possibility of correct interpretation that I had not interpreted his writings correctly."¹⁹⁵

However, if we consider Hirsch's ideas that "meaning is understood from the perspective that lends existence to meaning"¹⁹⁶ and that meaning is reproducible, we can say that the interaction between historical author and speaking subject can be found between historical author and the interpreters who reconstruct his intention as well. The interpreter is supposed to adopt the author's subjective stance "in order to make sense of the text."¹⁹⁷ This point becomes clear when Hirsch argues that when the interpreter posits the author's stance, "he sympathetically reenacts the author's intentional acts, but although the imaginative act is necessary for realizing meaning, it must be distinguished from meaning as such."¹⁹⁸

Thus since the reader or interpreter must realize verbal meaning by his own subjective acts,¹⁹⁹ the sympathetic interaction between historical author and reader should be restricted to the private experiences of the interpreter. This is the subjective aspect of divination or guess. Accordingly, the individuality of the historical author is not a part of meaning, rather, it is just the psychological background of the identification of verbal meaning with intention (speaking subject). Hence, the task of Hirsch's hermeneutic theory is to show how this identification happens, i.e., how it is possible to pass from the subjectivity of a sympathetic relation to the historical author to the objectivity of the speaking subject as rational entity. From this perspective, Hirsch's polemic with the anti-intentionalists seems to take the form of a *petitio principii*: it assumes in the premise that meaning is identical with the author's intention, which is what he wants to prove.

Since for Hirsch the interaction (or the process of understanding) between the author's and the interpreter's subjectivities has two sides, pre-conceptual and conceptual,²⁰⁰ he must be adopting the Schleiermacherian view of the author as considered by means of Husserlian intentionalism. As we saw above for Schleiermacher, since meaning is a free activity of unconscious genius, the truth of what the author says can be hidden from himself. In other words, an interpreter can understand an author better than he (the author) understood himself.²⁰¹ Though Hirsch discards the concept of unconscious genius by accepting meaning as an intentional object,²⁰² he still follows Schleiermacher by distinguishing meaning from unique, concrete content.²⁰³

Hence for Hirsch the idea of better understanding which stems either from the mis-identification of meaning with subject matter²⁰⁴ or from the concept of unconscious genius²⁰⁵ has no legitimacy. However, the main point in this rejection can reveal itself when we look at the issue in terms of the problem of the author's authority. From the idea that the author is unconscious of his meaning it follows that the author is "not the appointed interpreter of it. As an interpreter he has no automatic authority over the person who is simply receiving his work."²⁰⁶ Hence in order to secure the identity of textual meaning through the author's authority, Hirsch invokes the Husserlian idea that consciousness is the consciousness of the identity of the object. In short, Hirsch takes the directedness of consciousness to an intended object as the basis of the identity of textual meaning. Therefore, he avoids identifying meaning with the givenness of the intentional object since this would be to discard the author's intention and the author's authority.

However, at this point, since the distinction between historical author and speaking subject is blurred, we should ask the question: who is the authority over the text, the historical author or the

speaking subject? We saw that the historical author is detached from the speaking subject since the latter represents the fixed intention while the former can change his mind, feeling, etc. Thus, though the speaking subject is a limited part of the consciousness of the historical author, once fixed, it goes beyond the control of the historical author in the sense that the historical author can be just an interpreter of it: the historical author cannot be the authority over the text. This point comes out in Hirsch's remarks about the relation between the meaning we get from the text itself and the meaning or information we get from outside the text:

This extrinsic data is not, however, read into the text. On the contrary, it is used to verify that which we read out of it. The extrinsic information has ultimately a purely verificative function. The same thing is true of information relating to the author's subjective stance. No matter what the source of this information may be, whether it be the text alone or the text in conjunction with other data, this information is extrinsic to verbal meaning as such.²⁰⁷

If this is the case, how can the speaking subject be the authority over the text in the face of the fact that the historical author can fail to mean what he wanted to convey?

Indeed, accepting the distinction between a mere intention to do something and the concrete accomplishment of that intention, Hirsch says that "The anti-intentionalists are surely right when they insist that an author's aim is not to be taken for his accomplishment, his wish for his deed."²⁰⁸ It seems that this distinction between intention and the accomplishment of it is related to the gap between language (universal) and the particularity of the author's intention as indicated above.

Since language is too flexible to refer to the determinate intention of the historical author, and the accomplishment of the historical author is reflected in the language of the text, the accomplishment is too ambiguous to refer to the determinate historical intention or wish of the author. What we describe as "the accomplishment of the author" becomes a matter of construction (interpretation), i.e., not a determinate given entity. Thus the speaking subject cannot be an authority over the text either.²⁰⁹ If this is the case, who will make the decision as to what extent the historical author's intention and purpose was embodied in the text?

From this perspective, Hirsch's theory seems to lead us to the assumption that the fate of the speaking subject will be dependent on the interpreter's reconstruction of textual meaning. Hence Hirsch's theory does not prove that the speaking subject is the basis of textual identity since it fails to close the gap between language and the author's intention. Precisely because of this gap, the speaking subject, contra Hirsch's claim, does not play the mediating role between the subjectivity of the historical author and the objectivity of language. Rather, it seems to be nothing other than the determination of the interpretation of a text, i.e., something which is added to the meaning of the text in order to attribute meaning to the historical author.

Hirsch could object to this argument and contend that the speaking subject mediates between the historical author and the textual meaning since it can account for the coherence or consistency of the text by revealing itself as the ontological center of the organic unity of the text. In other words, the function of the speaking subject (implied author) reveals itself in the coherence of the meaning of the text by referring back to the unifying and purposeful consciousness of the historical author.²¹⁰ He makes the following argument for the author as the basis of coherence of textual meaning. The quality of coherence of a text rests on the context inferred. Thus, it is necessary to establish the most probable context or horizon. This is possible only if we posit the author's typical outlook.²¹¹

It seems that Hirsch does not start from the concept of coherence in order to show the identity of meaning and the author's intention as Juhl does; rather he grounds the possibility of moving toward coherence on positing the author's perspective or intention. Nevertheless, he also notes:

Of course, the text at hand is the safest source of clues to the author's outlook, since men do adopt different attitudes on different occasions. However, even though the text itself should be the primary source of clues and must always be the final authority, the interpreter should make an effort to go beyond his text wherever possible, since this is the only way he can avoid vicious circularity.²¹²

However, we saw above that external data or information remains secondary with respect to the text. This means that secondary (external) sources which refer to the historical author cannot be understood independently of the text, which for Hirsch represents the speaking subject. Thus Hirsch does not seem to escape the circularity as he wishes, since if they are to be an evidence for the text, they will be considered in the context provided by the text (speaking subject) itself. However, if it is argued that secondary sources can be understood independently of the text, they are viewed in a *different* context. Nevertheless, this different context must again be the author's perspective if they are to be an *evidence*. In this case, how can these different contexts be related to each other? Do they not need a third context and so on?

Hirsch's argument for the speaking subject as the mediation between historical author and textual meaning, based on the concept of coherence is not convincing. We can say that since Hirsch bases his contention, that the identity of the text can be established if the meaning is identical with the author's intention, on the mediative character of the speaking subject, his failure in showing the basis of the speaking subject reveals also his failure on proving this identity thesis.

The Occasional Character of Author: Gadamer

Against this view of the author as a rational entity which represents dogmatic certainty and priority of consciousness to meaning,²¹³ Gadamer suggests another perspective of the author by accepting "rationality" in the sense of knowing "the limits of one's own understanding."²¹⁴ In this view, consciousness (understanding) is drawn into the course of events when it actualizes the "historical potential of what is understood."²¹⁵ Thus the author is not independent of the particular aspect that the world shows him but, as a being who has 'world,' he is dependent on society and tradition.

However, this dependency does not mean that he is imprisoned and restricted by the milieu in which he lives. Rather since his being-in-the-world is primordially linguistic, he has a free and distanced orientation to his environment which is always realized in language. Hence he is able to raise himself to the *world* and move his world by the linguisticity of his understanding. The linguisticity of understanding refers to the way in which the understanding is both determined by its world (tradition) and also determines it through the mediation of language.

Precisely because of this fact, there is "no point of view outside the experience of the world in language from which it [linguistic world] could become an object."²¹⁶ Since the linguistic world cannot be viewed from above, individual consciousness has no pre-linguistic space. Hence with respect to the human understanding, language is both immanent and transcendent. We can call this the dialectic of immanent and transcendental aspects of language. This dialectic which we find in

Gadamer's theory is not the same as the interaction between the pre-linguistic consciousness and the linguistic conventions which Hirsch's theory assumes. This is clear when Gadamer argues:

In fact there is no reflection when the word is formed, for the word is not expressing the mind but the thing intended. The starting point for the formation of the word is the substantive content (the species) that fills the mind. The thought seeking expression refers not to the mind but to the thing. Thus the word is not the expression of the mind.²¹⁷

The referentiality of an expression to the thing intended, instead of to the mind of the author, shows why Gadamer views the author as occasional. The occasionality of the author can be understood in terms of the occasionality of an interpretation (interpretive conditions) in which the meaning of a text finds "its concretion (i.e., is understood) in its relation to the understanding I—not in reconstructing the originally intending I."²¹⁸ As soon as meaning is expressed (especially in written form), it enters into a new relation with its author: since meaning has its own being and direction, the author's intention stays in its subjective form, and the author enters into a relation with meaning as an understanding I. Referring to the distinction between the understanding I and the intending I, Gadamer remarks that occasionality of interpretation must appear as a meaningful component in the work's claim to truth and "not as the trace of the particular circumstances that are, as it were, hidden behind the work and are to be revealed by interpretation."²¹⁹ In his view, if the latter were the case, it would be possible to understand the meaning of the whole text only by re-establishing the original situation.²²⁰

The point Gadamer makes is this: the condition (horizon, intention) within which the work of art is originated should not be understood as the source of the so-called timeless identity of a text. Otherwise because of the transcendence of meaning from its original condition, meaning loses its determinate aspect given by this condition. Thus the priority is given to the work of art's condition, based on the presupposition that the work of art is dependent on its condition.

Thus for Gadamer, the occasionality of the author reveals itself in the fact that meaning detaches itself from its original condition. This does not mean that Gadamer denies the plain fact that the original condition is the way within which the work of art (text) actualizes its potentials. Rather he asserts that the original condition cannot be the basis of the original manifestations of the being of textual meaning. There is no logical and ontological basis for reducing the identity of the textual meaning to its original condition, as the originality of meaning is in its speaking to every space and time in a different manner by drawing them into its being: every condition is but a moment or phase in the continuity of meaning. Hence as indicated above, there is not a big difference between the textual meaning's relation with the original condition and its relation to the interpretive situations.

Accordingly, a condition (original or interpretive) does not have any priority to meaning as the fixed reference point, but can be what it is only when meaning is actualized in it. Therefore, meaning fills out its condition and makes it its own. Gadamer refers to this by his conception of *aesthetic non-differentiation*.²²¹ He opposes this concept to that of 'aesthetic differentiation,' which refers to the difference between the work of art and its representations (interpretive conditions), which allows the work of art to be seen in its originality. He maintains that the work of art (text) cannot simply be isolated from the "contingency" of the chance (interpretive) conditions in which it appears. However, due to its "open indeterminacy," i.e., its ability to integrate itself constantly in different times and spaces,²²² meaning cannot be restricted to any condition.

Gadamer discusses this point in the context of a 'play'. He remarks that the nature of a play itself cannot be found in the player's subjective reflection. In other words, the subject of the experience of work of art is not the subjectivity of the person who experiences it, but rather the work itself.²²³ Aesthetic consciousness is a part of the *event of being that occurs in presentation*, and belongs essentially to the play as play.²²⁴ Gadamer concludes from this that the "play is not to be understood as something a person does."²²⁵ Thus, the author's intention cannot be foregrounded from what is meant (being of work of art).

It seems that Gadamer's main purpose is to show that an author has no authority concerning his meaning, due to his occasional character. However, if this is the case, how can we understand Gadamer's contention that:

Admittedly, it is primarily persons that have authority; but the authority of persons is ultimately based not on the subjection and abdication of reason but on the act of acknowledgment and knowledge—the knowledge, namely, that the other is superior to oneself in judgment and insight and that for this reason his judgment takes precedence—i.e., it has priority over one's own. This is connected with the fact that authority cannot actually be bestowed but is earned, and must be earned if someone is to lay claim to it.²²⁶

Does Gadamer fall into contradiction when he both rejects and accepts author's authority? Moreover from his view of personal authority, does it follow that Gadamer implicitly acknowledges the inseparability of meaning (truth-claim of a text) from the individuality of its author (authority)?

Gadamer argues that authority has nothing to do with blind obedience, as what authority says is not "irrational and arbitrary but can, in principle, be discovered to be true."²²⁷ The prejudices which they (what the authority says) implant are not in favor of a person but a content, because they effect our disposition to believe something that can be shown in other ways and with good reasons.²²⁸ Thus it seems that authority is not the basis of the intelligibility of meaning, but rather is based on it. Hence, the sharability of meaning (truth-content) of a text plays an essential role in providing an author with authority.²²⁹

From this perspective, authority has no relation to the individuality of the historical author.²³⁰ Rather, since authority understood in this way symbolizes the common acceptance of the content of a text by a community of interpreters, it reflects only the social aspect of the author. However, the social aspect of author in Gadamer's theory should not be confused with the social (cultural) aspect of author (speaking subject) in Hirsch's view. As we saw, Hirsch's 'speaking subject' has a function of controlling the 'determinacy' of meaning in its teleological character. Therefore, meaning is determined when it is reduced to a speaking subject.

In Gadamer's theory, the social aspect of an author is a determination of the truth-claim of a text. As long as the content of a text is not considered as true by the community of interpreters, there is no reason for talking about the 'authority' of an author. Thus the concept of authority does not refer to the private relation between author and meaning, as Hirsch assumes, but reflects the common ground (meaning) of understanding in a society. From this perspective, it (the concept of authority) takes its legitimacy from the concept of dialogue.

If this is the case, the personal character of authority should not be different from the occasional character of an author since textual meaning is *accepted* first as 'true' independent of its author and then *attributed* to its 'author.' Textual meaning refers to its author (authority) by making a claim to truth (i.e., bringing a 'being' to the fore) which transcends the individuality of

the author. From this perspective, the referentiality of meaning to its author (authority) has nothing to do with the ‘correspondence’ of meaning to the author’s intention—which is, according to Hirsch, the main characteristic of an author’s authority. As indicated above, for Hirsch, if textual meaning is to be determinate and identical, it has to correspond to the author’s intention.

However, if, according to Gadamer, an author is not an authority over his text, i.e., his intention cannot be the basis of the identification of textual meaning with itself, what should we understand by the identity of textual meaning? How can Gadamer give us an account of textual identity if in human sciences, the ‘object in itself’ clearly does not exist at all?²³¹

Chapter III

The Problem of Textual Identity

Some Objections to the Unity of Meaning and Significance in Gadamer

Gadamer views the interpretive conditions (occasionality) as the constitutive element of meaning and rejects the distinction between meaning and significance. Significance does not refer to an accidental relation between the interpreter and a meaning, but rather it discloses how meaning affects the particular situation of an interpreter and is affected by it. Gadamer puts it as follows:

If we are trying to understand a historical phenomenon from the historical distance that is characteristic of our hermeneutical situation, we are always already affected by history. It determines in advance both what seems to us worth inquiring about and what will appear as an object of investigation.²³²

From this perspective, ‘significance’ is nothing but the appearance of the historical continuity of the effect (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) of a textual meaning.²³³ In this continuity, meaning and its effect remain inseparable because the effect is nothing else than the text’s claim to truth according to the different conditions within which it is understood. Therefore, in Gadamer’s eye, the separation of meaning from its significance makes the meaning irrelevant for the changing horizons. It cuts off the way by which the interpreter can draw the valid meaning (truth) of the text for his situation.

Nevertheless, Gadamer’s insistence on the unity of meaning and significance was seen by some of his critics as a threat to textual identity. In this context, Wachterhauser asks: if a text’s meaning only arises from its significance for our historical and linguistic perspective, how can we avoid the conclusion that there is no way to account for a text’s identity?²³⁴ According to Wachterhauser, Gadamer ultimately fails to present us with a convincing account of a text’s identity which somehow underlies all its many varied historically influenced interpretations.²³⁵

The idea underlying Wachterhauser’s critique of Gadamer is this: Gadamer does not show where to locate the principle of identity or continuity though he claims that meaning exists in the many different acts of interpretation. There is nothing about textual meaning which precludes mutually exclusive interpretations of the ‘same’ text arising over the course of its *Wirkungsgeschichte*. “Nor does,” continues Wachterhauser, “there seem to be anything like a ‘core’ of textual meaning or a fixed and stable ‘essence’ of the text which guarantees continuity between varying interpretations of the text.”²³⁶

The unity of meaning and significance in Gadamer becomes a subject for Hirsch’s critique of Gadamer on the problem of textual identity. According to Hirsch, this unity can reflect only the fact that the text is “determinate at any given point in time,”²³⁷ and this implies that a text means something only *for the particular interpreter*. It cannot provide the principle for determining which interpretation is “more nearly right.”²³⁸ From this he concludes that in Gadamer’s hermeneutic, a text means whatever we take it to mean.²³⁹

In Hirsch’s view, Gadamer’s introduction of the concept of ‘tradition’ in order to avoid this nihilistic conclusion still does not solve the problem. For ‘tradition’ implies that the changing ‘substance’ of a text is “determined by the wide spread cultural effects and manifestations it has

passed through, and that this wider significance is commonly understood and accepted within any present culture.”²⁴⁰

Thus, Hirsch says, Gadamer’s concept of tradition leads to the conclusion that the interpretation of the reader who follows the path of tradition is more nearly right than the interpretation of the reader who leaves this path. However, since the concept of tradition lacks hierarchical structure, or a “papal-like authority,” it cannot in fact save the day.²⁴¹ It is merely the history of how a text has been interpreted. Moreover, since every new interpretation belongs to the tradition and alters it, tradition is a changing concept. Hence it cannot function as a stable, normative concept.

According to Hirsch, neither can Gadamer’s concept of ‘repetition’ show the basis of textual identity. Though, on the one hand, Gadamer argues that the meaning of a text is identifiable and repeatable, on the other, he refuses to take the word ‘repetition’ in the sense of referring back to the originating moment in which a text was said or written.²⁴² For Hirsch this means that repetition is not really a repetition, nor the identity really an identity. Hence, we have a self-contradiction.²⁴³

Hirsch believes that the main problem in Gadamer’s view of textual identity as the unity of meaning and significance stems from his concept of the historicity of understanding. Gadamer, following Heidegger, denies that past meanings can be reproduced in the present because the past is ontologically alien to the present. The being of a past meaning cannot become the being of a present meaning because being is temporal, and differences in time are consequently differences in being.

Gadamer, in Hirsch’s view, should acknowledge that his concept of the historicity of understanding is an argument not only against communication between historical eras but also against every written communication. For it is merely arbitrary to hold that “a meaning fifty years old is ontologically alien while one three years or three minutes old is not.”²⁴⁴ From this perspective, to accept the possibility of communication within a relatively brief period while denying it between different eras is the naïve abstraction of Gadamer’s historicism, the assumption that any brief period in the past or present has a kind of homogeneity. Against Gadamer’s historicism, Hirsch argues that we know that even though there are always some shared elements in a culture which constitute its very substance, “all men in a culture do not share the same general perspective on life.”²⁴⁵

Hence, according to Hirsch, Gadamer’s concept of the fusion of horizons (*Horizontenverschmelzung*) cannot explain textual identity as long as one holds the Gadamerian concept of the unity of meaning and significance. Gadamer argues that the real meaning of a text as it addresses itself to an interpreter is always co-determined by the historical situation of the interpreter. Hence textual meaning arises neither wholly in the interpreter’s own horizon nor wholly in that of the author. It is rather the product of a fusion between these two.²⁴⁶

Nevertheless, “how can an interpreter,” asks Hirsch, “fuse two perspectives — his own and that of the text — unless he has somehow appropriated the original perspective and amalgamated it with his own?”²⁴⁷ Moreover, if the interpreter is bound by his own historical horizon how can one talk about the fusion of horizons? If the fusion is accepted, it should be admitted also that one “can break out of his own perspective.”²⁴⁸

Hirsch proposes the “resolution of Gadamer’s contradictions” by arguing that the fusion always involves two processes that are in themselves separate and distinct no matter how entangled they may be in a given instance of understanding.²⁴⁹ The first process is the interpreter’s act of construing and understanding a textual meaning. This act of construing is prior to everything else.²⁵⁰ The second process is the interpreter’s discovery of a way to relate this construed meaning

to himself. In this second moment, the interpreter recasts the construed meaning in his own idiom.²⁵¹ Thus this recasting *could* be called a fusion of horizons.²⁵²

Hirsch believes that in this solution he does not discard the concept of historicity insofar as the text represents the fundamental difference between past and present cultures. Hence, his solution is based on the assumption that a text remains identical with respect to the differences between the different cultures within which it is re-constructed. For that reason, Hirsch later prefers to call this approach 'historicality' in order to differentiate it from Gadamer's concept of historicity. In this context he remarks:

We may set against this [Gadamerian] principle of historicity the principle of *historicality*, which asserts that a historical event, that is to say, an original communicative intent, can determine forever the permanent, unchanging features of meaning. The doctrine of historicality has a different scope from that of historicity. Gadamer's historicity implies that meaning *must* change over time; but historicality maintains that meaning can stay the same if we choose to regard meaning as a historically determinate object. Historicality concedes that we can, if we prefer, treat meaning in a Gadamerian way, but it assumes that no necessity compels either choice. Historicality, in thus denying the quasi-metaphysical claims of historicity, simply makes the claim that a meaning can be stable only if it has been stabilized by a historical intention.²⁵³

However, how can a meaning remain self-identical when it is reconstructed in different cultures and situations? To put it another way, if meaning, as Hirsch argues, can exist only by reconstructing the original author's *perspective*, how can one carry it to one's own *perspective* without changing its identity?

Perspectivism and Textual Identity: Hirsch

We remarked above that Hirsch appeals to Husserlian intentionalism in order to show that the consciousness' being directed to the identity of the object is the basis of the identification of meaning with the author's intention. For Hirsch, this implies that the identity of the intentional object can be grasped only through the author's perspective (horizon).²⁵⁴ Thus *meaning* refers to how the impersonal identity of the object is given in the personal perspective of the author.

Nevertheless, Hirsch concedes that since the identity refers to the 'sharable' character of the object,²⁵⁵ the author's horizon within which the identity is given must also be sharable.²⁵⁶ However, from whence comes the legitimacy of concluding from the former argument (that the identity of an object is the basis of its sharability) the second argument that author's horizon must be also sharable? Does not Hirsch's argument fall into a vicious circle when he argues that meaning (the identity of the intentional object) can be grasped only from the author's horizon? For, while the sharableness of the horizon is based on the sharableness of the identity of the object, in the next step, the identity of the object can be grasped only if the horizon can be grasped.

It seems that Hirsch appropriates the Husserlian theory of intentionalism as one sided when he argues that "Like any other intentional object, it [meaning] is in principle reproducible."²⁵⁷ By intentional object, Hirsch understands the mental object which is "self-identical over against a plurality of mental acts."²⁵⁸ Thus he perceives three distinguishable aspects of the act of understanding an object. "First, there is the object as perceived by me; second, there is the act by

which I perceive the object; and finally, there is (for physical things) the object which exists independently of my perceptual act."²⁵⁹

However, from the fact that the mental object remains self-identical over and against the many different acts which 'intend' it, he concludes that verbal meaning has a supra-personal character. "It is not an intentional object for simply one person, but for many—potentially for all persons. Verbal meaning is, by definition, *that aspect of a speaker's 'intention' which under linguistic conventions, may be shared by others.*"²⁶⁰ Hirsch thinks that if an object can remain identical against the plurality of the mental acts it must also be identical against the plurality of persons.

Nevertheless, we should note that in the former case there is only one horizon while in the latter case there are multiple horizons. Though what is identical for the former case reveals itself to have the same identity for the latter case, the 'ways' or 'aspects' within which this identity reveals itself are different for each horizon. This is because no aspect can represent the total being (the identity) of the object in itself even if the aspect is nothing other than the object itself.²⁶¹ In this case, does this not mean that to insist on the author's horizon is to restrict the identity of the object to its one aspect (as Hirsch does), and thereby to ignore the distinction "between the 'object *which* is intended' and the 'object *as* it is intended'"?²⁶²

It seems that Hirsch ignores this distinction because he wants to save the determinacy of meaning by identifying it with the author's intention and distinguishing it from 'subject matter.' He insists that "if we do not make and preserve the distinction between a man's meaning and his subject matter, we cannot distinguish between true and false, better and worse meanings."²⁶³ Even though for Hirsch subject matter is the object *which* is intended,²⁶⁴ interestingly enough he also argues that it is "in practice entirely relative to the knowledge or presumed knowledge of the critic."²⁶⁵ Hence, he argues both in favor of the position that the object *which* is intended (i.e., the subject matter) has a supra-personal identity, and against it when he later deprives it of its determinacy. This is a self-contradiction.

Hirsch evidently falls victim to this contradiction since, as indicated above, he wants to guarantee the identification of meaning only with 'the object *as* it is intended.' Therefore, the difference between Gadamer and Hirsch presents itself in the fact that while the former gives priority to 'the object *which* is intended,' in order to emphasize the infinite richness (inexhaustibility) of the *Sache*, the latter gives priority to 'the object *as* it is intended,' in order to call attention to the determinacy of the intention (or horizon), and thereby deprives 'the object *which* is intended' of its identity.

Hirsch believes that only by identifying meaning with the object *as* it is intended it is possible to reconstruct meaning in every different condition and save it from the distorting effect of the interpreter's own perspective. The interpreter's own perspective can be distorting if he falls victim to "the fallacy of the inscrutable past,"²⁶⁶ which happens when one assumes that "the perspective-ridden meanings of the past are irremediably alien to us."

This assumption reflects itself in the approach that we should ignore such alien reality as irrelevant to our concerns and construct instead a usable past out of our own perspective.²⁶⁷ According to Hirsch, behind this assumption lies the presupposition that the present-day perspective is homogeneous, which he calls the 'historicistic fallacy.'²⁶⁸

The common point underlying these fallacies, Hirsch tells us, is the conviction that meaning is something 'out there' to be approached from different points of view. Rather it is "not *there* for the critic in any sense until he has construed it."²⁶⁹ He continues:

Whatever a critic's approach may be, it must necessarily follow upon his understanding. An approach must be subsequent to a construing of what the written symbols mean. Nor is a construction of meaning something that is altered by different critical approaches. It is not a physical object that shows different configurations when viewed from different positions. Meaning is an object that exists *only* by virtue of a single, privileged, precritical approach. No matter how much critics may differ in critical approach, they must understand a text through the same precritical approach if they are to understand it at all.²⁷⁰

Accordingly, the contention that the interpreter's alien perspective distorts meaning is but an evasion since it is "impossible to distort something that cannot even exist by means of an alien perspective."²⁷¹

Hirsch asserts that if perspectivism (the theory that meaning is not independent of perspective, i.e., that interpretation depends on the standpoint of the interpreter)²⁷² is to be consistent with itself, it has to accept the intentionalist idea that verbal meaning exists *only* by virtue of the author's perspective which gives its existence. Hence, every act of interpretation involves at least two perspectives, that of the author and that of the interpreter.²⁷³ The perspectives are entertained both at once, "as in normal binocular vision. Far from being an extraordinary or illusory feat, this entertaining of two perspectives at once is the ground of all human intercourse, and a universal fact of speech which the linguists have called 'the doubling of personality.'"²⁷⁴

According to Hirsch, when we speak or interpret speech, we are never trapped in a single matrix of spiritual categories. Further, we are never merely listeners or speakers; rather we are both at once. He continues:

"Readers of this essay [Faulty Perspectives]—emphatically those who are disagreeing with my argument—are here and now practicing both interpretation and criticism, are entertaining two perspectives at once. For, my meaning exists and is construed only from my perspective, while the simultaneous criticism of that meaning implies a different perspective. The empirical actuality of this double perspective, universal in verbal intercourse, calls in doubt a basic premise of hermeneutical relativism and, with it, most of the presently fashionable forms of cognitive atheism."²⁷⁵

Hirsch borrows the phrase *corrigible schemata* from Piaget in order to show that "unlike one's unalterable or inescapable pre-understanding [perspective] in Heidegger's account of the hermeneutical circle, a schema [intentional object] can be radically altered and corrected."²⁷⁶ A schema sets up a range of predictions or expectations, which, if fulfilled, confirm the schema, but, if not, cause us to revise it.²⁷⁷

It seems that the revisible or changeable character of the schema signifies the alteration not only in the interpreter's *own horizon* (value system) but also in his *guess* about the author's horizon. In Hirsch's view, this reflects the possibility of an objective knowledge on textual meaning (identity), i.e., the possibility of adopting two different perspectives at the same time. Hirsch believes that because of this possibility we can resolve some of the disagreements in hermeneutics, "particularly certain disagreements involving the concept of historicity."²⁷⁸ According to him, the disagreements between the interpreters are not on the *meaning* of the text but on the *significance* they give to that meaning.²⁷⁹ *Meaning* is a self-identical schema whose boundaries are determined by an originating speech event, while *significance* is a relationship drawn between that self-identical meaning and anything else.²⁸⁰

It seems that behind this distinction lies the presupposition that although the two horizons, (i.e., that of author and that of interpreter) are basically alien to each other, nonetheless somehow the interpreter can relate the author's meaning to his own without distorting its identity. Hence, for Hirsch, significance must be the act of overcoming the distance between the alien horizons. However, since "the significance of textual meaning has no foundation and no objectivity unless meaning itself is unchanging,"²⁸¹ there is no total overcoming of this distinction. This implies that the meaning which the interpreter is trying to relate to his own horizon remains in its own distinct (isolated) realm. If this is the case, what is it that the interpreter relates to his own horizon?

We can put the same problem in a different way: If the meaning, as Hirsch argues, "exists *only* by virtue of the perspective which gives it existence"²⁸² how is it possible to carry, or integrate, it into other perspectives and to sustain its existence in them? According to this argument, the meaning, (logically speaking), once detached from its own horizon, must lose its existence since there is no medium which can sustain it. We saw above that Hirsch insists on the alien or distinct characters of the author's and the interpreter's horizon. And, as noticed, he does not provide any medium between them. Therefore, what he asks of the interpreter is to leap over the abyss between the two horizons.

However, Hirsch seems to believe that meaning can exist when carried to different contexts. He argues that "In fact, if we could not distinguish a content of consciousness from its contexts, we could not know any object at all in the world. The context in which something is known is always a different context on a different occasion."²⁸³ In this case, does he not have to accept that meaning becomes like an object to be approached from different perspectives and hence has its autonomy, i.e., it can exist independent of its author's horizon?

No doubt, this last argument is in contradiction with Hirsch's basic tenet that meaning is a matter of consciousness. Trying to resolve this contradiction, one could argue that for Hirsch, as soon as reconstructed from the author's horizon, meaning becomes autonomous and goes beyond his intention. However, this is to say that whatever the interpreter understands from the text becomes independent of the author since the author's intention (horizon) turns out to be no more than the mere (extrinsic) 'reference' of what was already understood by the interpreter.

Therefore, when distinguishing meaning from significance, the problem with which Hirsch is faced is how to provide a medium between the original meaning and its application to the interpreter's situation. How can he solve the dilemma arising from his theory? If he insists on the author's horizon as the constitutive element for meaning (since textual identity becomes a totally alien, or isolated, entity) there is no possibility for overcoming the distance between the two different horizons and applying it to future situations. If it will be open to future applications, Hirsch has to accept the autonomy of meaning by giving up the identification of meaning with the author's intention.

Hirsch's Notion of Application

Although Hirsch makes some important revisions to his approach, and in fact partially disregards the author's will (or particular intention) in the definition of meaning,²⁸⁴ he still accepts the originating moment as the constitutive element of textual identity.²⁸⁵ This is to say that he does not stop at the author's mind but goes back to the historical and linguistic conditions where the author willed to actualize some meaning. The point of this new approach is this: if meaning is to be open to future applications, then the horizon which provides it with a borderline (identity) should be broadened. The wider the scope of the historical horizon of the original meaning, the

broader can the meaning be applied in the future. Thus Hirsch starts to entertain two new terms in his theory: the “future-directedness” and “provisionality” of intention.

Hirsch notes that “A future-directed intention is an explicit plan with areas of inexplicitness.”²⁸⁶ Accordingly, a future-directed intention could be conceived as an instrument or tool constructed for a broadly established application. Its purpose could embrace an indefinite number of future applications that no human being could foresee in any precise detail. “A claw hammer is intended to pound in and pull out nails. That purpose is fulfilled whether the nails are iron or brass, threepenny or tenpenny, headed or headless.”²⁸⁷ This is to say, any future intention necessarily comprises a degree of variability for its future-fulfillments.

According to Hirsch, the indefinite number of future applications does not require any change in the identity of the original intention, because every new application is but a concrete “exemplification” of the meaning-concept (universal).²⁸⁸ Hence, the true extension of a literary intention is not restricted to its original exemplary element. As can be recalled, Hirsch was previously accepting the author’s intention as the medium between universal concept (language) and particular object. In this new position, Hirsch does not limit meaning *only* to the historical (particular) *object* of the author’s intention, but also allows the possible (future) particular objects to be subsumed under the same universal concept, as long as they fall within the borders implied by the original meaning.²⁸⁹ Hirsch notes that with this approach he comes closer to Gadamer. While previously he held that the diverse future applications of meaning, each being different, must belong to the domain of significance, now he accepts that certain present applications of a text may belong to its meaning rather than to its significance.²⁹⁰

Nevertheless, Hirsch still dissents from Gadamer in holding that we first understand a concept from a text and then apply it to our own experience. As we said earlier, Gadamer holds that since application is a part of meaning, and it changes with each historical horizon, meaning must always be different for each interpretation. Thus, meaning and significance are inseparable. Consequently, while for Gadamer the inseparable relation between meaning and significance reveals itself as the concrete universal (as we will show below), for Hirsch the relation between meaning and application is like that between ‘class’ and ‘member,’ or between ‘universal’ and ‘particular’. Hence, application (significance) is historically always a changing instantiation of the ahistorical, changeless meaning-concept.

It seems that Hirsch adopts medieval allegorical interpretation as the basis of his theory. Therefore, as mentioned before, the referentiality of meaning is not restricted to the original historical possibilities, but goes beyond it by remaining true to the past.²⁹¹ Hence, according to Hirsch, past meaning must be stretched into the present and future as long as the interpreter is able to go behind the literal content (the author’s intention) by following the implications hidden therein. Thus, this transformation of the literal content (the author’s intention) into the allegorical one is not a distortion, but an extension of the border of the meaning. In other words, he seems to say that past meaning is both stable, since the interpreter has to understand first how the (original) author applied it to his own historical situation, and unstable, because the author did not intend to restrict his meaning to his own condition. This is clear when Hirsch argues that “Historical intention itself invites up-to-dateness.”²⁹²

From this perspective, the author’s intention seems to be a stable point or center around which the interpretations (historical applications) establish an increasingly expanding circle. The circle is established in three steps. First, the interpreter should go to the historical origin of a meaning; second, he should abstract the universal concept from the particular meaning; third, he should apply it to his own situation.²⁹³ Therefore, what Hirsch calls the ‘provisionality’ of meaning is

nothing else than the extraction of the universal concept from the author's intention, and the 'futurity' of meaning, the act of bringing it to the present. Hence, Hirsch seems to distinguish the general intention (purpose) of the author from his particular intention.²⁹⁴

If this is the case, then when accepting the particular intention as one of the (historical) applications of the general intention (universal concept),²⁹⁵ he implicitly admits that the relation between the general and the particular intention is in fact nothing else than the relation between the end (goal) and the means (tool). However, how is it possible to abstract (differentiate) the author's general purpose (goal) from his particular intention (tool)? Where is the criterion for differentiating them?

The Hermeneutical Autonomy of the Object: Betti

Like Hirsch, Betti distinguishes meaning from significance (application) on the basis of the autonomy (identity) of the author's intention. According to Betti, "wherever we come into contact with meaning-full forms (*sinnhaltige Formen*)²⁹⁶ through which an other mind addresses us, we find our interpretive powers stirring to get to know the meaning contained within these forms."²⁹⁷ The meaning-full form should be viewed by all means in the wider sense of an objectivation of mind.²⁹⁸ Hence, interpretation as the procedure of bringing something to understanding is a triadic process. The active and thinking mind of the interpreter can come into contact, not immediately, but only through the mediation of these meaning-full forms in which an objectivated mind confronts the interpreter as an unalterably other being. Accordingly, understanding is the recognition and re-construction of a meaning.²⁹⁹

Nevertheless, Betti, following Schleiermacher, grounds the possibility of reconstruction of the mind that is known through the forms of its objectivations on the basis of a shared humanity. He believes that only on this basis is it possible for the interpreter to invert the creative process by retracing the steps from the opposite direction and by re-thinking them in his inner self. Thus the interpreter's task is to recreate the meaning from within himself (i.e., to integrate it into his own horizon) and to objectify it at the same time.³⁰⁰

In Betti's view, objectification is possible since the meaning-full forms are autonomous and understood in accordance with

their own logic of development, their intended connections, and in their necessity, coherence and conclusiveness; they should be judged in relation to the standards immanent in their original intention: the intention, that is, which the created forms should correspond to from the point of view of the author and his formative impulse in the course of the creative process; it follows that they must not be judged in terms of their suitability for any other external purpose that may seem relevant to the interpreter.³⁰¹

Nevertheless, Betti does not argue that total objectivation is possible. Since the recognition or the reconstruction of the past meaning requires the active participation of the interpreter, the task of interpretation can never be regarded as finished and completed. This entails that "no interpretation, however convincing it may seem at first, can force itself upon mankind as the definitive one."³⁰²

How is it possible, then, to integrate actively the past meaning into one's intellectual horizon and to re-cognize it (meaning) in its unalterable otherness at the same time? Betti seems to argue that even though meaning is grasped in its significance for us, there remains an objective moment

by which meaning is differentiated from its significance. In this case, significance does not follow the mere reconstruction of the author's meaning as a secondary phase (as Hirsch argues), but must establish a unity with it (meaning), which is differentiated within itself. For Betti, this internal differentiation must allow the interpreter to contemplate the historical meaning in its otherness and to enjoy its significance for his horizon.³⁰³

It now becomes clear how Betti applies the Schleiermacherian notion of discontinuity (the unsurpassable otherness of the individual) within continuity (common nature, shared humanity) to his distinction (discontinuity) between meaning and significance within the unity (continuity) of an interpretation. Thus what he calls the autonomy of the object must be the basis of the internal differentiation within this unity. Betti fears that if one identifies meaning with its significance, the dialogue that should occur between the interpreter and the mind objectivated in his sources would fail completely and turn into a mere monologue since textual meaning would lose its autonomy and be affected by the prejudices of the interpreter.³⁰⁴

In his view, a real dialogue with the text is possible only if the partner is represented as the unchangeable mind of an Other. Only in this way can what the other mind says be known to us and exist independently of our prejudices. The main point here is that even if the present furthers and stimulates the interest in understanding, "it has no place in the transposition of the 'subjective stance'".³⁰⁵ The present cannot mediate the past meaning. Out of this we can conclude that in Betti's view, the primary purpose of the dialogue must be only to 'understand' the other mind, but not to come to an 'agreement' with it.

However, can there be a real unity of interpretation or dialogue if the main purpose is only to recognize the mind of an Other in its unchangeable character? It is obvious that Betti does not accept the agreement between the partners as the primary purpose of the dialogue since agreement presupposes common ground (Sache). This would both put the author's intention in a secondary place with respect to subject matter, and reject the distinction between meaning and significance. However, if Betti's hermeneutics does not propose 'subject matter' as the common ground, does not what he calls 'dialogue' have to result in monologue?

If the other mind is to be grasped always in its unchanging aspect, this means that it remains indifferent to the particular situation of the interpreter. And, as Betti contends, if significance arises simultaneously with the reconstructed meaning, then the interpreter must assume also that the meaning reconstructed is valid for his particular situation. If this is the case, how can the interpreter assume that the meaning reconstructed is valid for his own horizon when he is supposed to be suspending his own pre-conceptions or prejudices? If the interpreter has to suspend his prejudices in order to understand the other mind, do not his prejudices remain as untested (unquestioned)? If this is so, when the interpreter assumes that the meaning reconstructed is valid for his situation, is not his judgment for its validity based on his untested prejudices and thus becoming purely subjective?

It seems that while avoiding subjectivism by distinguishing meaning from its significance (i.e., by rejecting the mediation of the past meaning by the present context), Betti still falls victim into subjectivism. For, in his view, the prejudices or fore-conceptions of the interpreter should not come into contact with the meaning-full forms. Thus the question of whether or not what the other mind says is valid for the particular context cannot in fact be shown on the basis of the text since its validity (significance) can be determined only by the present context. Hence the distinction between meaning and significance in Betti's hermeneutics results in the distinction between meaning and its truth. For that reason, what Betti calls 'dialogue' turns into 'monologue.' While

he wants to secure the objective meaning of the text, he, in fact, secures (i.e., makes unattainable) the prejudices or the pre-conceptions of the interpreter.

Gadamer believes that the genuine dialogue (true interpretation) between the past and the present takes place when we are truly aware of the unity of meaning and significance. The distinction between meaning and significance is based on the subject-object dichotomy and ignores the ontological structure of understanding. According to Gadamer, since understanding is always an event and the basic characteristic of this event is its finitude, i.e., temporality (thus the 'essence' of Dasein is its historicity)³⁰⁶, "it is enough to say that we understand in a *different* way, *if we understand at all*."³⁰⁷ If this is the case, how can he bring together the *difference* of understanding and the *oneness* of the text or work?

Dynamic Identity of the Text: Gadamer

Gadamer argues that it is a mistake to make the endless multiplicity of the different understandings "a denial of the unshakable identity of the work."³⁰⁸ In his view, the artwork is a challenge for our understanding because over and over again it evades all our interpretations and puts up an invincible resistance to being transformed into the identity of the concept.³⁰⁹ If this is the case, even though the identity of the text is constructed in a dialogue between the text and interpretation³¹⁰ it is, at the same time, both immanent and transcendent with respect to interpretation.

Precisely because of its immanent and transcendent character, some critics see a close affinity between Gadamer's approach to textual identity and the Husserlian concept of 'identity within manifold'. In a contribution to the Gadamerian notion of identity, Sokolowski notes that "the identity needs the manifold *to be* and *to appear*, but the identity never becomes simply one member of the manifold of appearances" (italics mine).³¹¹ Accordingly, although a thing itself can appear as the same thing again in a new appearance, it can never be isolated from its modes of appearance. Hence, even if each interpretation intensifies the being of the text, text and interpretation never coincide.³¹²

Like Sokolowski, Wachterhauser too tries to show the affinities between Gadamer's and Husserl's perspectives with respect to identity. However, he calls attention also to the difference between them by remarking that while in Husserl's thought perception always involves spatial *Abschattungen* (which are of the same object for all perceivers, as constituted by the *transcendental* ego), in Gadamer's thought these *Abschattungen* are historical and cultural, thus "the only sense of the 'whole' text we can have is one which is constituted subjectively by the *historical* ego."³¹³

Therefore, Wachterhauser seems to think that, in Gadamer's theory, what we call 'textual identity' must be nothing else than the uniting idea in a *particular* (historical) interpretation. However, since the conditions of the historical ego are changing, textual identity is collapsed into its historical appearance (interpretation). Therefore, while Sokolowski thinks that in Gadamer's thought the difference between interpretations of the same text stems basically from the *difference* between the identity and its aspects, Wachterhauser believes that for Gadamer the difference arises from the *discontinuity* (i.e., lack of identity) between the different interpretations of the same text. Thus, while Sokolowski accepts that in Gadamer's thought 'identity' is the game of sameness and difference, Wachterhauser considers only the 'difference.'

In Wachterhauser's reading of Gadamer, the being of the text disappears in the being of the interpretation and thus the otherness of the text is covered up by the otherness of the interpretation.

From this perspective, the dialogue between the text (past) and interpretation (present) is destroyed in subsuming the past under the present. However, does this reading do justice to Gadamer's approach to identity? When arguing that "whoever understands must understand *differently* if he wants to understand at all,"³¹⁴ does Gadamer in fact reduce the *identity* of the text to the *difference* of understanding? What is the meaning of 'difference' in this argument? Does it refer to the absence of identity and thus reveal the self-contradiction in the argument, as Hirsch contends?³¹⁵

When we look at Gadamer's argument based on his other contention that understanding is essentially dialogical, we realize that the process of interpretation is not in fact from the present to the past but from the past to the present, since every interpretation presupposes that the text has a claim to truth, i.e., the text has something to say. In this context, Gadamer notes that "to understand it [literature] does not mean primarily to reason one's way back into the past, but to have a present involvement in what is said."³¹⁶ This is to say that every text is turned *toward others* (i.e., future situations).³¹⁷ He puts it thus: "To be sure, everything that is fixed in writing refers back to what was originally said, but it must equally as much look forward; for all that is said is always already directed toward understanding and includes the other."³¹⁸

Accordingly, the problem of *difference* of understanding stems from how the truth-claim of a text relates itself to the unsurpassable otherness of the infinite nows (presents). We should note that *difference* here refers not only to the otherness of the nature of a particular situation with respect to the text's horizon, but also to the 'time distance' between them. Thus the word *difference* signifies both the spatial and temporal otherness of the other. At this point, the difficulty we are trying to call attention to lies in the fact that if one presupposes the identity or the essence of meaning as separate from the infinitely different (possible) situations within which it is to be understood, one can easily fall victim to the metaphysics of presence which ignores the *reality* of the *difference* between the situations. However, if one takes the reality of the difference between the situations as one's sole starting point, then, one falls victim to collapsing the identity of the text into its appearance (*difference*). Thus radical relativism and possibly nihilism follows.

Precisely because of the need of avoiding both this kind of relativism and the metaphysics of presence, Gadamer accepts that the present is already open toward the past by finding a way to let the historical text speak to itself. What Gadamer means is this: the present does not stand over against the past (text) as something which first reflects the *otherness* (*difference*) of the past to itself (like the disagreement between the partners), but as something which tries to come to an agreement with it.³¹⁹ Owing to this fact, the text "presents itself only in connection with interpretation and from the point of view of interpretation."³²⁰ Nevertheless, since "the standpoint that is beyond any standpoint, a standpoint from which we could conceive its [text's] true identity, is a pure illusion,"³²¹ the otherness of the text reveals itself also as unsurpassable. Therefore, there is no total penetration into the otherness of the other.

We should note that 'otherness' in Gadamer's thought does not mean *alienation*, as subject-object ontology assumes, but refers to the inexhaustible potentiality of the other. Hence, though Gadamer accepts with Hegel that in the experience of being involved with someone or with a text, there is "a potentiality of being other" [Andersseins], he disagrees with Hegel, who accepts the total overcoming the otherness of the other in the further process, because he (Gadamer) argues that this potentiality "lies beyond every coming to agreement for being other."³²² In this context, Gadamer remarks also that "an agreement in understanding never means that difference is totally overcome by identity. When one says that one has come to an understanding with someone about something, this does not mean that one has absolutely the same position."³²³

Therefore, Gadamer rejects the monistic position which seeks to find the identity of the text in the total *agreement* of the interpretation with the text³²⁴ by ignoring the infinite potentiality of the otherness of each side. Hence we realize that the problem of textual identity cannot be understood without considering how the otherness of the past and present come to an agreement without being overcome totally by the other side (i.e., the problem of the concrete universal). We saw above that whenever the *otherness* between the past and the present is assumed to be known prior to their interrelation, (which presupposes the subject-object schema), the contradiction of taking ‘the alien as the familiar’ arises. As Gadamer shows, this is due to accepting a standpoint which is beyond any standpoint.

Gadamer argues that every process of interpretation presupposes the recognition of the otherness of the text ‘through’ its familiarity (significance). If this is the case, we can say that any discussion on the problem of textual identity should take into account the dialectic between the familiarity and otherness of the text. However, what does Gadamer mean by familiarity? If familiarity is the condition for recognizing the otherness of the past, does it not become a conditionless condition?

When taking the dialectic between ‘familiarity’ and ‘otherness’ of the text as his starting point, Gadamer seems to appeal to Heidegger’s identity-thesis. Heidegger understands identity as the relation of *belonging together*.³²⁵ As Stambaugh puts it, “what is new about this understanding of identity as a relation is that the relation first determines the manner of being of what is to be related and the how of this relation.”³²⁶ According to Heidegger, since man and Being belong together,

Being is present to man neither incidentally nor only on rare occasions. Being is present and abides only as *it concerns man through the claim it makes on him*. For it is man, open toward Being, who alone lets Being arrive as presence. Such becoming present needs the openness of a clearing, and by this need remains appropriated to human being. This does not at all mean that Being is posited first and only by man. On the contrary, the following becomes clear: Man and Being are appropriated to each other. They belong to each other. From this belonging to each other, which has not been thought out more closely, man and Being have first received those determinations of essence by which man and being are grasped metaphysically (*italics mine*).³²⁷

It seems that Heidegger’s notion of ‘belongingness’ takes the form of the dialectic between familiarity and strangeness according to Gadamer. This dialectic reveals the fact that there is a dissoluble tension between the interpreter and the text. The text never presents itself in its total being, nor does it remain in its total strangeness. Like the interplay between light and darkness, familiarity and strangeness presuppose each other. In this context, Gadamer remarks: “Hermeneutics must start from the position that a person seeking to understand something has a bond to the subject matter that comes into language through the traditional text and has, or acquires, a connection with the tradition from which the text speaks.”³²⁸ Precisely because of this connection (familiarity), it is possible to turn toward the original manifestations of the text.³²⁹ From this perspective, the infinite potentiality of the otherness of the text stays in its coveredness (strangeness) behind its uncoveredness (familiarity) through tradition. This tension between familiarity and strangeness reflects itself as the text’s belonging to a tradition and its being distanced from the interpreter. “*The true locus of hermeneutics is this-in-between.*”³³⁰

Thus in Gadamer’s thought, tradition as the basis of the familiarity of the text is the only manner to listen to what the text says to us. This is to say that tradition is the only place where the

past text can reach (make claim to truth) to different situations and these can be open toward its claim. Due to this fact, tradition is not a unity but reflects the plurality of the perspectives. In this context, Gadamer notes:

We accept the fact that the subject presents different aspects of itself at different times or from different standpoints. We accept the fact that these aspects do not simply cancel one another out as research proceeds, but are like mutually exclusive conditions that exist by themselves and combine only in us. Our historical consciousness is always filled with the variety of voices in which the echo of the past is heard. Only in the multifariousness of such voices does it exist: this constitutes the nature of the tradition in which we want to share and have a part.³³¹

Since the text “speaks to us in terms of the significance of its contents”³³² and since “the subject matter appears truly significant only when it is properly portrayed for us,”³³³ tradition is not a neutral conveyor of the variety of voices but the place where the *mutual mediation* of past and present takes place.

Gadamer calls this mutual mediation of the past and the present *application*. Application in Gadamer’s thought refers not to subsuming the past under the present or vice versa, but rather to how past and present *become* what they are through an internal tension between them. To speak metaphorically, application between past and present has the same tension as that between the seed and the soil which become what they are (i.e., they reflect themselves in their originality, otherness) as long as they belong together (i.e., they establish a unity). Thus, the continuity of their belonging together in an original manner is the condition for the continuity of manifesting themselves in an original way. Owing to this inseparability of meaning and significance (application), the text is always in motion, i.e., the text has an essentially dynamic identity.

By ‘dynamic identity’ we refer basically to the continuity of the text’s claim to truth according to ever changing horizons. However, with respect to the diversity of opinions and changing approaches to truth, how is it possible to base the argument for textual identity on the continuity of the text’s claim to truth? Does this argument lead to the conclusion that the text has to make different truth-claims to different situations since the text can exist only in interpretation? If this is so, how is it possible to recognize the inner connection between different truth-claims of the text if we argue for textual identity? In order to clarify those questions, let us discuss first what Gadamer understands by *truth*.

Chapter IV

The Problem of Truth

General Remarks

As Risser remarks, “it seems ironic that in a book entitled *Truth and Method* little is said in the book itself *about* truth.”³³⁴ Similarly, Gadamer does not give an explicit account of the problem of truth in his articles entitled “Truth in the Human Sciences,” and “What is Truth?”³³⁵ According to Jean Grondin, the fact that Gadamer does not have a systematic theory of truth is essential to the message of *Truth and Method*. An explicit theory of truth in its inevitable distance from the concrete experience of truth would consolidate the methodological approach that hermeneutics seeks to undermine.³³⁶

This approach is confirmed by Gadamer’s own remark that “throughout our investigation it has emerged that the certainty achieved by using scientific methods does not suffice to guarantee truth.” According to Gadamer, what the tool of method does not achieve “must—and really can—be achieved by a discipline of questioning and inquiring, a discipline that guarantees truth.”³³⁷ Nevertheless, Bernstein argues that “it is extraordinarily misleading—and betrays his [Gadamer’s] own best insights—to say that there is any discipline that ‘guarantees truth’.”³³⁸ Bernstein’s point is that to appeal to the *Sache*, which is the basis of the discipline of questioning, is not sufficient to clarify the concept of truth. “For the question can always be asked, When do we have a *true* understanding of the thing (*Sache*) itself?”³³⁹

It seems that Bernstein’s argument presupposes the distinction between *true* understanding and, as Schmidt puts it, the enlightening, i.e., the shining forth of the *Sache*.³⁴⁰ When Gadamer, following Heidegger, argues that “Truth is unconcealedness,” or the shining forth of the *Sache*, is this concept of truth not a sufficient condition for *true* understanding? In other words, can ‘truth’ as unconcealedness and ‘true’ understanding be separated from each other? Before trying to understand Gadamer’s approach to this problem, since his notion of truth is Heideggerian, we should first consider Heidegger’s treatment of the question of truth.

Heidegger’s Notion of Truth in *Being and Time*

Heidegger leads the traditional conception of truth as the agreement of knowledge with its object back to “its unthought presuppositions.”³⁴¹ Since what is demonstrated in the assertion is solely “the Being-uncovered of the entity itself,” truth must be understood in terms of disclosedness. Disclosedness refers primarily to the world’s disclosedness as the ground of the uncoveredness of entities. According to Heidegger, the discovering of anything new is never done on the basis of having something completely hidden, but takes its “departure rather from uncoveredness in the mode of semblance.”³⁴² This is to say that entities have, in a certain way, been uncovered already, and yet they are still disguised. Since they are disguised, truth as uncoveredness must always be captured from entities. Therefore, Dasein is both in the truth and in untruth.

However, what does Heidegger mean when he asserts that “the way of uncovering is achieved only in distinguishing between these [truth and untruth]”?³⁴³ How can we achieve discovering by distinguishing truth from untruth? In this argument does not Heidegger accept that we have a fore-

conception of truth by which we distinguish between truth and untruth, and thus achieve discovering? And if this is the case, does not new uncoveredness have a future by which it differs from the fore-conception of truth?

In Heidegger's hermeneutics, 'fore-conception' of truth refers both to the fact that uncoveredness of beings is grounded in the 'world's disclosedness' and to the basic characteristic of Dasein as 'uncovering.' Precisely because of this fact, as Versényi puts it, in Heidegger's philosophy man and world can never be separated or even discussed in separation.³⁴⁴ Accordingly, since Dasein exists as being-in-the-world, it is always already dwelling with some being, that is, the uncoveredness of such beings is equiprimordial with the being of Dasein and its disclosedness.³⁴⁵ Out of this inseparability between man and world, it follows that entities can never be true in themselves; what makes them true is the fact that they enter into a relationship with Dasein in terms of Being-discovering and Being-discovered. From this perspective, Heidegger's contention that "'Dasein is in the truth' states equiprimordially that 'Dasein is in untruth'" can be taken to mean that Dasein is always aware of the boundary where truth differs from untruth. If this is the case, we can argue that just as we know that we are in truth since we have a fore-conception of truth, so we know that we are in untruth since we have a fore-conception of untruth.

However, this does not mean certainly that the fore-conception of truth is discrete from that of untruth. But rather this distinction reflects only the inner tension between 'disclosedness' and 'closedness' in the concept of truth itself.³⁴⁶ For that reason, there is no total concealment and total revealment but, as Pöggeler argues, "truth is a co-presence of unconcealment and concealment, a process of instituting and withholding of ground."³⁴⁷ Since truth enters always into a 'limited opening,' to bring "something into the light is to cast an aspect of it into shadow."³⁴⁸

At this point to maintain both that 'truth is co-presence of unconcealment and concealment' and that 'untruth is coveredness' seems to be puzzling. How can we explain that 'untruth' is both 'closedness' and 'present' at one and the same time? If untruth as coveredness is the absence of truth as uncoveredness, how can absence be described as present? It seems that the argument for the co-presence of truth and untruth cannot be restricted only to temporal co-existence, since it presupposes that the presence of truth is not at the same level as that of untruth. If this is the case, the co-presence of truth and untruth must be both temporal and spatial co-presence. In our view, this spatio-temporal 'co-presence' of truth and untruth cannot be understood if we do not look at it as manifesting the internal continuity between them.

From this perspective, we can argue that Dasein can uncover entities only by following this inner continuity which takes its departure from the limited disclosedness of entities. Accordingly, to follow the inner continuity is to suppose that untruth is also truth to be uncovered. To put it another way, to be aware of untruth is to propose a future (or possible) truth. If, as Tugendhat remarks, "disclosure is to be understood as an occurrence that is actively related to its opposite closedness or concealment"³⁴⁹ there must be a circular relation between truth and untruth. Since we take our "departure. . . from uncoveredness" we realize that "entities. . . are disguised," but insofar as we are aware of untruth we can snatch entities "out of their hiddenness."³⁵⁰ Since we have a fore-conception of truth we approach entities in their hiddenness, and insofar as we approach such entities in their hiddenness we can release their truth, i.e., uncover them.

However, if, since we have a fore-conception of truth, we snatch entities in their hiddenness, how do we realize the difference between the fore-conception of truth and new discoveredness? In other words, if Dasein is Being-uncovering, i.e., discovering is a process, how does Dasein appreciate the new occurrence of truth? The significance of this question shows itself if we look

at it from the point of view of the internal tension or circular relation between truth and untruth. Accordingly, is the new occurrence of truth only a different aspect of a vicious circle or, reversely, is it a new manifestation which occurs in a circular process?

At this level we can say that if the act of uncovering is a process, then the uncoveredness of anything new should introduce itself as a manifestation of this process. In other words, even if uncoveredness is the truth itself, every new uncovering should transcend or widen the horizon of the truth which has occurred before. If this is the case, the internal tension and the continuity (circular relation) between truth and untruth should not be a vicious circle. This is because we have a fore-conception of truth that we are faced with untruth and every new uncoveredness becomes a fore-conception for further uncovering.

When Heidegger remarks that, through uncovering, entities become “accessible in themselves to Dasein,”³⁵¹ he refers to the fact that truth is grasping the *originality* of anything behind the semblance or cover. In this context, he also argues that “Dasein should. . . defend it [that which has already been uncovered] *against* semblance.”³⁵² By this he means that Dasein should preserve the originality of uncovering in discourse and language.

From this perspective, it can be argued that if every truth is finite, i.e., limited, and uncovering is a process, then originality of uncoveredness refers to nothing else than the distinctive aspect and uniqueness of a being uncovered. This is to say that since no discovering can be reduced to another discovering and replaced by another truth, so every truth as discoveredness has its own feature, scope and limit.³⁵³ Heidegger’s argument that “disclosedness is essentially factual” calls our attention also to the limit and uniqueness of every occurrence of truth. Precisely because of this fact, we refer to the original feature of disclosedness by means of different words. For instance, when we associate the name ‘Newton’ with the ‘laws’ we not only mention that ‘Newton first discovered them,’ but also, and more importantly, refer to the fact that the truth of these laws has been preserved (or handed down to us) in the originality of its discoveredness. For that reason, through language entities become accessible in their originality to Dasein.

However, the originality here should not be confused with the originating moment of uncovering or with the way the author understood what he uncovered. The ‘originality’ refers to the fact that the identity of the entity uncovered cannot be based on something else since the distinctive aspects and features of the uncoveredness cannot be reduced to anything else.³⁵⁴ Since every uncoveredness is finite and thus a phase in the endless process of uncovering, discontinuity or difference is intrinsic to the identity itself. To put it another way, identity is not something to which different aspects can be reduced and thus with respect to which difference between the aspects disappears. Rather since the continuity of uncovering is grasped in terms of the occurrence of the discontinuities, identity and difference reflects the internal conflict between force and resistance within the entity itself. While the intrinsic force is the basis of the *revelment* of an entity, the intrinsic resistance to this force is the basis of the *limited* revealment. As indicated above, we refer to this conflict when we argue that *revelment* is the revealment of the *irreducible*, unique nature of each aspect of the entity. From this perspective, since there is a counterbalance between intrinsic force and intrinsic resistance within the uncovered entity we perceive a unity (or identity) as the continuity between its distinctive aspects or features.

In other words, identity reveals itself in the opposite but complementary functions of the aspects of the entity. By opposite but complementary functions, we refer to the fact that though every aspect (uncoveredness) has its own distinctive and irreducible nature, it becomes a step upon which further uncoveredness can be based. Heidegger refers to this function by ‘fore-conception.’ From this perspective, the co-presence of coveredness and uncoveredness does not mean that what

is known previously becomes unknown when an entity reveals its new aspect. Rather, it means that since every uncoveredness is original and irreducible to another uncoveredness, it cannot be subsumed under one general concept which reflects the timeless identity of the entity.

From this perspective, coveredness or hiding itself does not necessarily mean that when one aspect of the entity comes to the fore its other aspect is obscured. But it refers primarily to the fact that the identity of the entity reveals itself always in a finite, limited way. Therefore, just as fore-conception paves the way for further (new) uncoverings, so the new uncovering makes us anticipate future uncoverings. Thus 'hiding' is not a total darkness behind the light (revealedness) but reflects the infinite possibilities or the depth of the future which invites Dasein to itself. For that reason, the temporality (finitude) of truth as uncoveredness refers also to the temporality (historicity) of identity. In this sense, the identity carries with itself the determinacy of the present (the said) and the indeterminacy of the future (the unsaid). In other words, the identity of a text cannot be realized without anticipating the future.

If our analysis of Heidegger's concept of truth and identity is correct, we can also say that the metaphor of sudden lightening which Heidegger employs in order to characterize the unexpected, surprising nature of truth must refer not only to the temporality (the suddenness of the moment) of truth but also to the original and distinctive features of uncoveredness itself. This is so because, if the every occurrence of truth as an interplay of the way in which Being sends itself and its withdrawal were not the occurrence of the new uncoveredness in its originality (irreducibility) and thus in its surprise character, it would be only a mere repetition of what occurred before. In this case, since we would have been already in the same light, i.e., familiar with it, we could not even recognize the *occurrence* of the truth and the argument for sudden lightening would be an empty one.³⁵⁵

How can one solve the puzzle of the relation between fore-conception and the surprise character of truth? Since we have fore-conceptions, we can anticipate or project into the future and thus uncover entities. However, on the other hand, we argue that every truth is distinctive and thus surprises us.³⁵⁶ In this case, we accept that truth does not occur exactly in the way we anticipated. It is beyond our control and always transcends our expectations. It reveals itself as the negation of our previous conceptions in the sense that it always reflects the narrowness of our fore-conceptions.

Thus the temporality of truth is also the recognition of the temporality of our knowledge. Obviously this is to say that a fore-conception cannot mediate the new truth since the new truth negates the mediation of fore-conception by reflecting its limit. Thus finiteness comes not only from the limit of our historical horizon but also out of the originality of the new truth which limits our fore-conception of truth. However paradoxical it may seem, it is precisely because of this fact that truth occurs also as a self-grounding movement. Nevertheless, the problem of the gap (the discontinuity) between the old truth (the fore-conception) and the new truth remains open.

We noted above that there is an internal tension between the fore-conception and the new truth. What was indicated there is the fact that, to use Hegel's objection to the Kantian distinction between noumenon and phenomenon, to recognize the limit is already to have gone beyond it. This is to say that every new uncoveredness reflects the limit of the old coveredness (fore-conception) and thus makes it possible for us to go beyond this limit and to recognize itself. Therefore, Heideggerian truth, to use Gadamer's language, is the self-presentation of the thing itself.

However, can this approach account for the continuity and identity between the discontinuities? If there is no mediation between the discontinuities, does not what we call

continuity refer only to the leaping over between them? Let us try to find out whether Gadamer's hermeneutics can provide an answer to this question.

The Temporality of the Experience of Truth: Gadamer

Gadamer seems to apply the Heideggerian notion of the surprise character of uncoveredness to his own theory of the negativity of experience.³⁵⁷ Like Heidegger, he also starts from the unity of world and man as the basis of the possibility to experience (recognize) the future truth. As can be recalled, we referred to this fact above by saying that in Gadamer's hermeneutics every interpretation takes its starting point from *familiarity*. In this context, Gadamer remarks:

There is always a world already interpreted, already organized in its basic relations, into which experience steps as something new, upsetting what has led our expectations and undergoing reorganization itself in the upheaval. Misunderstanding and strangeness are not the first factors, so that avoiding misunderstanding can be regarded as the specific task of hermeneutics. Just the reverse is the case. Only the support of familiar and common understanding makes possible the venture into the alien, the lifting up of something out of the alien, and thus the broadening and enrichment of our own experience of the world.³⁵⁸

It seems that the word 'alien' above does not have any negative significance but rather characterizes the resistance of the new experience to our previous experience (fore-conception or prejudice). In other words, it reflects how our expectations are challenged by the new experience which occurs in an unexpected way. We experience this challenge especially in the fact that the new experience forces us to look at our old experiences in a new way. This is to say that it makes us to grasp our previous (familiar) experience from a different perspective and thus to realize that we are not completely familiar with it. Therefore, it is the power of new experiences to make our previous experiences both old and new at one and the same time.

For this reason, "experience is always actually present only in the individual observation. It is not known in a previous universality."³⁵⁹ This means that the particularity of experience as the manifestation of unique truth cannot be surpassed.³⁶⁰ In this case, how is it possible to argue both that the particularity of experience is unsurpassable and that new experience negates and limits previous experience (which makes it possible for us to expect new experiences in the first place)?³⁶¹ Does Gadamer fall victim to a contradiction by arguing both that every experience is unique (unsurpassable) and that "the nature of experience is conceived in terms of something that surpasses it"?³⁶²

It seems that the nature of this problem can be understood better if we look at the notion of experience (*Erfahrung*) as the relation between universal and particular. If experience cannot be known in a previous universality, this means that a new experience has its own unique (concrete) characteristic which cannot be represented by the universal concept. Thus every new experience forces us to look at the universal concept from the perspective it (new experience) opens up before us. In this context, Gadamer remarks that we cannot have a new experience of any object at random, "but it must be of such a nature that we gain better knowledge through it, not only of itself, but of what we thought we knew before—i.e., of a universal."³⁶³

Obviously this productive aspect of experience is also the heart of the notion of application. Application is not the correct application of general principles (universal concepts) to the concrete case. Rather our knowledge of the general principles is supplemented and even productively

determined by the individual case. Therefore, since the rule does not comprehend (surpass) the concrete individuality, it is corrected by it.³⁶⁴

However, even though experience reflects itself in this unsurpassability it “implies an orientation toward new experience.”³⁶⁵ Otherwise, since there could be a total fulfillment of the universal concept by one experience, this would be the self-annihilation of the experience, a self-contradiction. From this perspective, new experience shows not only the limit of the previous experience and thus of our knowledge of the universal concept, but also limits itself by referring to the possible experiences. Hence the surpassability of experience does not mean that the difference between the experiences disappears by being subsumed under the universal concept but rather refers only to the self-negation or self-limitation of experience. It is essentially *historical*. In this context, Gadamer remarks that “experience in this sense belongs to the historical nature of man.” In other words, genuine experience is experience of one’s own historicity.³⁶⁶

However, can the dialectic between self-limitation and openness within the experience of truth provide the basis of historical continuity (identity) of a work of art? If openness to new experience is openness to the experience of unexpected truth, this means there is a discontinuity between different experiences of a work of art. In this case, does not what we call identity become only the temporal identification (determination) of the work of art if it is experienced each time in an unexpected way? Can we think of the identity of a text without a historical continuity between the temporal determinations (discontinuities) of it?

Gadamer writes that it is precisely continuity that “every understanding of time has to achieve, even when it is a question of the temporality of a work of art.”³⁶⁷ In his view, continuity should be understood as the togetherness of the timelessness and temporality of aesthetic being. However, by togetherness he does not mean co-existence. If it is understood to mean co-existence, the historical interpretation would be secondary with respect to the essence of the text. In this case, it is presupposed that there is a “real” text which is distinct from the way in which it is later interpreted.³⁶⁸ Obviously this leads to the conclusion that, since the true being of the text cannot be realized in its historical interpretations, there cannot be a true interpretation of it. What is called ‘interpretation’ could be only an approximate repetition (appearance) of the “real” text. We indicated above that all intentionalist views which presuppose the timeless identity of the text as distinct from its historical interpretations fall victim to this antithesis.

Precisely because of this fact, “togetherness” should be understood as the belonging of timelessness to temporality. In this context, Gadamer remarks that “timelessness is primarily only a dialectical feature which arises out of temporality and in contrast with it.”³⁶⁹ From this perspective, Gadamer seems to put the problem of continuity as the problem of the contemporaneity and presentness of a past text to every age. This is to say that the actual being of a text cannot be detached from its interpretation and that only in this interpretation do “the unity and identity of a structure emerge.”³⁷⁰

However, does not a paradoxical situation arise in this argument? How can the identity of the text (structure) emerge in the unity of text and interpretation? Does not the occurrence of the identity of the text refer to the split (difference) in this unity? If so, does not what Gadamer calls unity become the unity of the identity and difference?

In order to understand the nature of this paradox, we should see first how the identity of a structure emerges in the act of interpretation. Gadamer remarks that a structure is “one insofar as it presents itself as a meaningful whole. It does not exist in itself, nor is it encountered in a mediation (*Vermittlung*) accidental to it; rather, it acquires its proper being in being mediated.”³⁷¹

Thus, even though a structure (meaningful whole) is dependent on being interpreted, it can be repeatedly presented as such and its significance can be understood.

In this case, since what we called 'unity' is nothing else than the total mediation of a text by its interpretation, the identity of the structure (meaningful whole) must be the "pure appearance" of what is essential in the mediated text. Hence the real paradox is how what is essential can appear in its 'autonomy' by depending totally on the interpretive conditions. In other words, how can the ideality of the text appear in its reality in different conditions? It seems that what we called 'paradox' is generated from Gadamer's attempt to show the unity of the 'reality' and 'ideality' of textual meaning. Since what is ideal is real and what is real is ideal, to separate them is to presuppose an antithesis between them.

Gadamer refers to the manifestation of the unity of the reality and ideality of meaning by his phrase "transformation into structure." The point he makes with this phrase is this: when a game is played, a text is interpreted, or a piece of music is performed, what is played, interpreted, or performed detaches itself from the representing activity of the players or performers so that it can be intended or understood *as* play, text, or music. This is to say that text or play does not acquire a definite meaning through the particular persons representing or interpreting it since, when the text or play are represented, they are disguised. From this perspective, the more the representing persons or their activity are disguised (i.e., transparent), the more the play or the text achieves ideality, namely, comes to its own truth (reality). Hence Gadamer teaches us the fact that only by total mediation it is possible to have a real access to the meaning of the text. Only by transformation into structure is what is otherwise constantly hidden and withdrawn brought to light.³⁷²

Therefore, the being of the text is its self-realization, its sheer fulfillment. This means that the identity of a text consists in there being something to "understand." It asks to be understood in what it "says."³⁷³ Hence what Gadamer calls "total mediation" is nothing else than participation in the meaning (being) of the text. Only by being participated, i.e., by being understood, can what is meant (*die Sache*) disclose its world and identity.³⁷⁴ This means that participation requires the recognition of what is essential in the text. At this point, it is to be noted that recognition does not mean to recognize what is already known as essential in the same way. This would make participation a mere repetition. Rather the word 'recognition' refers to discovering what is closed (strange, unknown) through what is unclosed (familiar), and to separating what is essential from the contingent or occasional situation.³⁷⁵

From this perspective, since the recognition of the identity of the text is nothing else than the experience of truth of the text in its originality or irreducibility, it occurs in a circular movement. The recognition of it (identity) always takes its starting point from the partial disclosedness (familiarity, significance) which is grounded in tradition. Undoubtedly this partial disclosedness is also the possibility of its being mediated by the present horizon. Hence mediation is not the mediation of something totally alien on the present horizon, but rather refers to the continuity between past and present (which is called the 'happening of tradition'). This continuity of tradition in the truth of the present horizon allows the interpreter to look at the meaning from a different perspective and to uncover what is hidden otherwise. Therefore, textual identity reveals itself in the continuity (mediation) of its truth-claim.

Since the experience of the truth of a text is constituted by a dialectic of self-limitation and openness, the recognition of the 'essential' (i.e., identity) refers to the recognition of the timeless in the temporal. Here one should not assume that the temporal disappears when the timeless is recognized. Rather, temporality is the horizon within which what is timeless reveals itself in its distinctive and original (concrete) aspect. However, since every distinctive aspect or originality

has the character of negative experience (i.e., the dialectic of self-limitation and openness), the being of the timeless is not collapsed into its temporal realization.

The disappearance of the interpretation in the being of the text refers to the fact that what is disclosed takes place in a closed world. However, this does not mean that the interpreter is simply transformed into another world. Rather, since transformation into structure takes place through total mediation or participation, the closed world is the common world between the text and the interpreter. It is closed in the sense that it is self-fulfilling, i.e., it is a unity which has its telos within itself. Therefore, the closedness of the disclosed world is the 'self-limitation of truth.' In this sense, however paradoxical it may seem, truth is the closedness of the disclosed.

Thus, the closedness of truth does not mean that the identity or unity of the work is closed off from the person who reads or is affected by it.³⁷⁶ Rather it implies that there is no radical separation between the work of art and the person who experiences it, and "between the way the work is realized and the identity of the work itself."³⁷⁷ Since truth happens in a closed world, i.e., as a meaningful whole in the mediation of the historical horizon of the interpreter, the work as such speaks to the interpreter in an individual way as the same work, even in repeated and different encounters with it.

However, the fact that the text speaks to the interpreter in an individual way is not the destruction of the identity of the text since the closedness of the world can take place if and only if the autonomy of meaning is recognized, i.e., if the text is understood in its claim to truth. Hence what we called the unity of the identity and difference can be taken to mean that there is a free space in this closed world which allows the interpreter to recognize the autonomy of meaning. As noted above, Gadamer calls this free space "aesthetic distance."³⁷⁸ From this perspective, to use the phrase 'difference within the unity' seems to be more appropriate for describing 'hermeneutic identity' than the phrase 'unity of identity and difference.'³⁷⁹

However, aesthetic distance should not be restricted to the spatial distance. We remarked above that genuine experience belongs to the historical nature of man. In other words, genuine experience is experience of one's own historicity. What Gadamer indicates is the fact that participation is a condition for self-knowledge. Just as the being of the text comes to its own truth in terms of being mediated by the historical horizon of the interpreter, so the being of the interpreter comes to its own truth (self-knowledge) through the experience of meaning. Nevertheless, self-knowledge does not mean that one is in full awareness of oneself. Rather, as Gadamer expresses it, one's being is more than one's consciousness of it. This is because self-consciousness is bound up with the historicity of experience of truth.

The priority of the 'relation' over against its relational members—the I who understands and that which is understood—in Heidegger seems to lie behind this argument. Accordingly, "the self-understanding only realizes itself in the understanding of a subject matter and does not have the character of a free self-realization. The self that we are does not possess itself; one could say that it "happens."³⁸⁰ Hence to understand a text is to come to understand oneself in a kind of dialogue. Gadamer argues that this contention is confirmed by the fact that the concrete dealing with the text yields understanding only when what is said in the text begins to find expression in the interpreter's own language. "Interpretation belongs to the essential unity of understanding."³⁸¹

Therefore, aesthetic distance reflects also the happening of self-consciousness. We indicated this situation when discussing the role of 'otherness' in the occurrence of textual identity and in application. We mentioned that since the otherness of the text cannot be subsumed under the otherness of the interpretive condition and vice versa, textual identity is bound up with variation and difference. However, if, only through mediation, text and the interpreter come to their own

truth, this means that otherness happens in the process of mediation, and not at the outset. Hence, understanding involves a moment of “loss of self.” Gadamer puts this as follows: “One must lose oneself in order to find oneself. . . one never knows in advance what one will find oneself to be.”³⁸²

Obviously, this is not to say that understanding takes place in a totally unconscious way. Rather, as Gadamer emphasizes, “understanding includes a reflective dimension from the very beginning.” In this case, what Gadamer implies is the fact that the reflective dimension has no privileged standpoint apart from the temporal experience of the truth of the text. Through the reflective dimension, we can bring to light what is hidden in our experience of the meaning and thus realize the unsurpassable otherness of the text and of ourselves. Hence aesthetic distance must be the reflective dimension of our understanding. In this context, Gadamer notes that “every work leaves the person who responds to it a certain leeway, a space to be filled in by himself.”³⁸³

Therefore, we realize that the problem of truth and textual identity can be approached both from the perspective of ‘identity within difference’ and from that of ‘difference within identity.’ Accordingly, while the phrase ‘identity within difference’ refers to the problem of how the identity of the text can be represented by different interpretations in different historical eras, the phrase ‘difference within identity’ reflects the problem of how textual identity is realized in each interpretation. Hence, while the former calls attention to the historical ‘continuity’ of meaning in general, the latter focuses on how this continuity takes place in the mediation of each ‘particular situation.’

We noted above that Gadamer approaches the problem of continuity primarily as the problem of contemporaneity or the presentness of the past text to every age. He taught us that total mediation is the basis of the contemporaneity of the past text. Thus he indicates that the continuity of the mediation is the possibility of the historical continuity of meaning. Since every mediation happens on the basis of previous disclosedness (familiarity) which is tradition, contemporaneity of meaning is not a mere connection between two totally distinct historical moments as intentionalists and objectivists assume. Rather a text brings with itself the historical continuity of its effects (disclosedness, significance), namely, a text is encountered on the basis of the history of its effects.

However, even though this approach can account for the appearance of textual identity in different historical moments, the problem of how the text can be identified in its self-sameness among different interpretations still remains open. If, as Gadamer argues, the experience of truth occurs in an unexpected way, i.e., the text must be understood differently if it is to be understood at all, this means that the direction given by the text always changes. We learned from him also that this change of direction stems not only from the infinite possibility (inexhaustibility) of the text, but also from the difference or distance between the historical moments. Hence, since every difference as the concrete reality is unsurpassable, it allows the interpreter to look at the past meaning from the horizon it opens up before him. Therefore, difference is the basis of the productivity of interpretation.

From this perspective, he maintains that there is no identity which lies *behind* every different interpretation so that every interpretation stands in a secondary place with respect to it. Rather, identity exists “in” each different interpretation. If this is the case, does not Gadamer presuppose that ‘difference’ is not a ‘disconnection’ or ‘total discontinuity’, but somehow includes an inner continuity with others?

Historical Continuity of the Mediations of the Text

It seems that our task is to show how different interpretations of the same text can have an inner relation with each other if we want to argue for the historical continuity of the mediations of the text. However, if, as Heidegger and Gadamer argue, 'relation' is prior to its relational members, namely, to be in historical relation to each other is their mode of being, this means that the historical continuity (or as Gadamer puts it, hermeneutic identity)³⁸⁴ cannot be shown by taking different interpretations as 'distinct' entities to be related.

Nevertheless, if a text can exist only in its interpretations, historical continuity of meaning cannot be viewed as the mere 'relation' between different interpretations either. Otherwise, to focus on 'relation' itself already would presuppose that 'relation' itself can be viewed as a discrete entity and thus could fall victim into a fallacy.

If this is the case, the 'relation' is not an object of investigation but must be the 'experience' of how a new interpretation arises on the basis of previous interpretations. In other words, the problem of historical continuity is the problem of *transition* between different interpretations. However, we are not arguing that a new interpretation is only the interpretation of previous interpretations. This could be a third remove from the reality, given that the text itself is the interpretation of reality and thus the interpretation of the text is the interpretation of the interpretation. What we are saying is the fact that, since the meaning of the text is grasped in its pointing in a certain direction, the interpretation points in the same direction. Therefore, all interpretation comes to share in the being of the text. In this context, Gadamer remarks that "interpretation seems to be a genuine determination of existence."³⁸⁵

At this point, we should note that this argument (that interpretation points in the same direction) does not contradict the previous one that the direction given by the text always changes. Every interpretation brings the meaning of the text to light from a different perspective since interpretation does not start from zero (total darkness) but takes its start from the truth (light) of its own horizon which is effected by history. This means that the light of the present horizon gets sourced out of history. Hence 'present' makes its difference not by separating (disconnecting) itself from the past, but by presenting its source in its new dimension. Thus, "all relations appear to be ordered in another way and to be joined to new forms."³⁸⁶

Therefore, text and interpretation become what they are by pointing always in a new direction. This is what makes the past text present to every age and what makes an interpretation different from the other interpretations of the same text. Otherwise, the text could not be differentiated from its previous (old) interpretations, and interpretations could be mere repetitions of what was already said and thus could not be what they are. From this perspective, however paradoxical it may seem, the text reveals its own being if it is presented in different interpretations. If there is no difference between the interpretations, this means that the text has acquired durability by resting completely in itself, i.e., by being separated from the truth of the present horizon. In this respect, to talk about the historical continuity of the text would be meaningless, since to approach the text in its changeless meaning is already to presuppose a radical discontinuity between past and present in the sense that the past text is lifeless. It is not able to say something new since it is indifferent to the different (changing) situations.

In fact, Gadamer accepts this kind of radical discontinuity in the sense that some texts can cease to make a claim to truth, i.e., no longer be able to fulfill their tasks. For instance, some ancient literary forms have lost their function today. Hence their renewal is no longer possible or is only possible in the form of parody. Out of this he draws the conclusion that "not everything is possible at all times. And does not the truth of art lie in this?"³⁸⁷

It seems that Gadamer calls our attention to the nature of the historical continuity of meaning with respect to radical discontinuity (the temporality of truth). He seems to say that the temporality of truth is the truth of temporality. In other words, since the being of the text presents itself in the horizon of time, the content of time is determined by the being of the text. Therefore, the disappearance of the text, i.e., its ceasing to make a claim to truth, is the beginning of a new perspective on truth.

From this perspective, time or temporality is not something which measures the truth of the text or is something measured by it—this would indicate the independence of time from what is supposed to be measured or measures it, and thus time would be essentially empty—but rather is something which is experienced in this transition. In this context, Gadamer remarks:

The transition of which we speak is not the same as the ‘now’ that couples together what has preceded and what is to come, while it itself does not endure. It is in another sense that being-in-transition in a strange way simultaneously causes separation and conjunction: transition appears as the true being of time in the sense that everything is in it at the same time such that past and future are together. Whereas the uniform passing of time is a constant flux. It is clear that the experience of transition does not mean such a simple passing of time. It means rather, a definite-indefinite being, which in the experiences of departing and beginning brings the flow of time to a standstill.³⁸⁸

Hence transition, or the experience of time, takes place when the negativity of experience happens.³⁸⁹ In other words, transition as the intermediate position establishes the distinction between what is past and what is to come and at the same time establishes the union of both. In this case, the problem of the continuity of the text as transition takes the form of the problem of “how one is freed for the new by departing from the old.”³⁹⁰

Undoubtedly, the departure from the old does not mean necessarily the departure from the old text which ceased to make a claim to truth, but can be also the departure from the old interpretation (or, to use Kuhn’s favorite expression, paradigm). In other words, discontinuity can be observed even on the interpretations of the ‘same’ text. For instance, in the history of the interpretations of Qur’an, we observe a radical discontinuity in the case of *Zâhirî* (literal) interpretation.³⁹¹ No doubt, the discontinuity in a definite paradigm or in a certain model of interpretation does not mean that text becomes obsolete. Rather, it is most likely that the truth of the text impinges in the new or different interpretation.

In this case, how can the arrival of a new perspective or interpretation be experienced? Does the acceptance of one model of interpretation obsolete and the other model true (or new) depend on arbitrary decision? If so, this means that there cannot be a real historical continuity between different interpretations of the same text. We saw that Hirsch’s argument that “interpretation is primarily a matter of choice” involves this kind of discontinuity. After leading to this nihilistic conclusion, he also argues that the author’s intention should be the basis of textual identity. Therefore, he tries to solve one kind of discontinuity with another kind of discontinuity (in the sense of lifeless meaning as we discussed above).

If this is the case, how can we show that the discontinuity of interpretation, i.e., the transition between the interpretations, does not depend on an arbitrary decision but rather is generated out of the historicity of meaning (the being) of the text? In other words, how can we show that discontinuity is the mode of being of the text renewing itself in different conditions, and thus the transition is not empty but is rather fulfilled by the experience of the text itself?

We saw above that for Gadamer, the word 'transition' does not mean the dialectical mediation of the old and the new, as the word 'now' means in Greek ontology. From this ontology, "if one looks to the old that passes away, the process looks like a downfall. If one looks to the new that arises, the same process looks like an evolution, a genesis, a beginning."³⁹² However, the transition between the different interpretations is certainly more than this dual relativity and two-sidedness. This perspective accepts time as cyclical and has nothing to do with the real uncertainty and the open infinity of the event itself. However, we learnt from Gadamer that the determinacy of meaning cannot be separated from the infinite potentiality of the text. Hence every interpretation as the historical determination of the text signifies the infinite potentiality of the text behind it. This means that the past text which is determined in the present interpretation opens itself to the future.

From this perspective, the problem of the historical continuity of the text seems to be the problem of how the transition from the determinacy of meaning pointing in a certain direction in the mediation of interpretation to the infinite potentiality of the text takes place. In other words, it is the problem of moving from what is said to the unsaid. At this point, Gadamer seems to argue that the *insight* into what is said (i.e., the past interpretation) gives its own existence to both the past and the new interpretation which is supposed to follow the former. To put it another way, precisely because the insight into the past interpretation paves the way for the existence of new or different interpretations, the former is dissolved in the being of the latter.

Obviously, this does not mean that the past interpretation is forgotten or disappears, but that it is recollected in its dissolution in the new interpretation. From this fact, the question we asked above, "how is one freed for the new by departing from the old?" can be answered as follows: Only by having insight into the infinite potentiality of the text behind the old interpretation, can one be freed for the new by departing from it. However, as remarked above, departing from the old interpretation is not to abandon or neglect it but rather, by following the direction given by it, to go beyond it. If this is the case, we can say that the being of the text invites new interpretations of itself through old interpretations. This means that new interpretations can mediate a text *only* through old interpretations. Therefore, the difference between the interpretations takes place not through disconnection but through the dissolution of the previous in the being of the new when the text is mediated in its distinctive aspect.

It seems that, according to Gadamer, our knowing or coming to awareness of what is said in the text through old interpretations is not a representation of it from the standpoint of the new, but "such knowledge is itself a happening, is itself history."³⁹³ This means that what we call new interpretation happens as an event when something encounters us within the tradition in such a way that we understand it. Therefore, the historical continuity of the text takes place when we understand that which is given to us in the text (tradition) as addressing us (*ansprechend*) and engaging us (*angehend*).³⁹⁴ From this perspective, what we called discontinuity is already the event of understanding the continuity of the engaging power of the truth of the past text. In other words, discontinuity is nothing else than a phase in a communicative event within a historical horizon.

Hence discontinuity contains continuity within itself owing to the fact that the past cannot be a mere object for our representational thinking. When we are engaged with the truth of the past text, the past reveals itself by opening up a new dimension before us. We realize that the continuity of uncovering the past (i.e., its truth) is already projecting into the future. In this sense, past-present-future are only the different modes of the historical unity of man with his world. As Gadamer says, in every event of understanding past and future are brought together and separated

at the same time. This is the meaning of the continuity within the discontinuity, the timeless within the temporal, the identity within the difference.

From this perspective, we are better able to realize what Gadamer means when he says that understanding includes a reflective dimension from the very beginning. To be conscious of the historical unity of man and world, that is, to be aware of the historical belonging of understanding to the being of that which is understood, is itself already differentiation. In other words, differentiation is the mode of being of the historical unity of consciousness and being of the text.

Gadamer calls this 'insight' into unity and differentiation "historically effected (operative) consciousness" (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*). As he himself notes, this is a somewhat ambiguous expression. "This ambiguity is that it is used to mean at once the consciousness effected in the course of history and determined by history, and the very consciousness of being thus effected and determined."³⁹⁵ Therefore, since our consciousness is determined by real events rather than "left on its own to float free over against the past" to produce within ourselves the consciousness of this determination is an historical event itself.³⁹⁶

The point behind this perspective is this: since the text engages us with its truth and thus is mediated by its interpretation, and since every interpretation as the furthering of the truth of the text becomes the link in a forward-rolling chain³⁹⁷ in this historical continuity, the truth of the text is disseminated through its interpretations. Therefore, each interpretation determines the following interpretation by being dissolved in it. As can be recalled, Gadamer refers to this fact with his expression "history of effect" (*Wirkungsgeschichte*). He calls the content of this history of effect 'tradition'.³⁹⁸

Certainly, in this respect, tradition as the content of the history of the effecting of the text contains a repetition. But, as Gadamer remarks, even though the same text is repeated (identified), since its truth is furthered in each interpretation, it is not the repetition of the same aspect of the text. In this context, Hirsch's charging Gadamer with falling into self-contradiction when he argues that Gadamer maintains both that the meaning of text is identifiable and repeatable, and that repetition does not refer back to the originary moment in which a text was said or written stems from his missing this point. Hirsch's other criticism that Gadamer's concept of tradition leads to the conclusion that the reader who follows the path of tradition is more nearly right than the reader who leaves this path fails to see that to be in tradition is not a matter of choice.

However, this does not mean that the interpreter is in a closed circle or horizon. When Gadamer accepts that tradition is not something which happened once and for all, but is a happening itself, he refers to the fact that the horizon of the interpreter is always moving. As noted above, every new interpretation takes place by means of an insight into the past text through its old interpretations. This indicates both that the attempt to reconstruct the originating moment of the historical text is a futile task and that the previous aspects of the text, which were uncovered by the old interpretations, are dissolved in the new one.

Manfred Frank's and Philippe Forget's argument that Gadamer proposes a super subject or collective subject who can collect whole tradition within his own experience cannot be held. This would reduce the negativity of hermeneutical experience (historicity of understanding) to an empty word. Gadamer rejects this argument by remarking that "I am in no way putting forward a collective subject. Rather, 'tradition' is simply the collective name for each individual text (text in the widest sense, which would include a picture, an architectural work, even a natural event)."³⁹⁹

We can understand what Gadamer means by this if we consider it from the perspective of his favorite expression "fusion of horizons" (*Horizontenverschmelzung*). To fuse horizons is not in fact to merge two distinct horizons so that we could reach a third horizon including the two

previous ones within itself. This would be merely an appropriation of a Hegelian dialectic of thesis-antithesis-synthesis and lead to the conclusion that Gadamer proposes a super subject. In this context, he maintains that “when I speak in my own work of the necessity for the horizon of one person and the horizon of another to merge into one for any understanding between them to take place, I am not referring to an abiding and identifiable ‘one’ [*Eines*], but just to what takes place in conversation as it goes along.”⁴⁰⁰

Fusion of horizons does not also propose that the interpreter first transposes himself into the situation of the past so that he can acquire the right historical horizon and what he is trying to understand can be seen in its true dimensions. As can be recalled, this is what Hirsch and other intentionalists and historical reconstructionists suggest. Gadamer remarks that in this case, since the person who tries to understand the past has, as it were, stopped trying to reach an agreement, he himself cannot be reached. “By factoring the other person’s standpoint into what he is claiming to say, we are making our own standpoint safely unattainable.”⁴⁰¹ Obviously, this perspective makes what is only a means an end in the sense that instead of understanding the truth-claim of a text, it stops in reconstructing the past horizon. Thus it forces the text to abandon its claim to be saying something true.

What Gadamer means by the fusion of horizons can be put as follows. We saw above that consciousness of being affected by history is primarily consciousness of the hermeneutical situation. This means that we are not standing outside it and hence are unable to have any objective knowledge of it. Thus all self-knowledge arises from what is historically pregiven, which “both prescribes and limits every possibility for understanding any tradition whatsoever in its historical alterity.”⁴⁰²

As we can see, Gadamer’s account leads to the conclusion that there is a dialectical relation between what is historically pregiven and self-knowledge. What is historically pregiven both provides us with a connection to the past and limits our field of vision (horizon) at the same time. Thus horizon, or hermeneutic situation (“world” in Heidegger), is closed (limited) disclosedness (openness).⁴⁰³ We referred to this dialectic above when we remarked that old interpretations determine new ones by being dissolved in them. Precisely because of this dialectic of opening and limitation, the fusion does not result in the vertical movement (higher universality) of synthesis taking its departure from the horizontal (historical) relation of thesis and antithesis as proposed by Hegelian dialectic. Rather, it is Herder’s notion of the “link in a forward-rolling chain” which can describe better the Gadamerian dialectic of opening and limitation.

In this case, the fusion takes place when

a truly historical consciousness sees its own present in such a way that it sees itself, as well as the historically other, within the right relationships. . . Thus it is constantly necessary to guard against overhastily assimilating the past to our own expectations of meaning. Only then we can listen to tradition in a way that permits it to make its own meaning heard.⁴⁰⁴

What Gadamer is talking about is the process of the reciprocal foregrounding of the past from the present and of the present from the past. This indicates that the present horizon does not consist of a fixed set of opinions and valuations so that “the otherness of the past can be foregrounded from it as from a fixed ground.”⁴⁰⁵ Rather, since the horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past, there can be no isolated horizon for it. In this case, there is only an internal tension between the text and the present in a single horizon. Gadamer notes that the hermeneutic task

consists not in covering up this tension by attempting a naïve assimilation of the two but in consciously bringing it out.⁴⁰⁶

Accordingly, to fuse horizons is to project the historical horizon and to supersede it simultaneously in the sense of coming to an agreement with its truth. Therefore, the process of fusion takes place as follows: on the common ground, which is the pregivenness of the subject matter (*Sache*), the past and the present horizons are projected in their otherness and are brought together precisely because of the engaging power of the truth of the subject matter.⁴⁰⁷

However, since in every projection of otherness between the text and the present within this pregiven unity (common ground), each side is put at risk in terms of another, a new (unexpected) perspective to subject matter is attained and thus the new unity between them is not the mere repetition or copy of the previous unity. And since this new unity is differentiated within itself due to the projection of the otherness between the past and the present, it becomes a previous (pregiven) unity for the following unity, and so on.⁴⁰⁸ Hence the fusion of horizons is the constant dialectical relation of togetherness (unity) and otherness (difference) of the past and the present on the basis of subject matter.⁴⁰⁹

Here one should not assume that this account abandons the future. Rather, as noted above, since the projection of the past horizon brings to light something which was not known before (unexpected truth), every fusion implies that a new possibility is opened up toward the future. In this sense, the projection into the past truth is the projection into the future and the fusion is the productive aspect of understanding. We can understand the following well-known passage from this perspective:

When science expands into a total technocracy and thus brings on the “cosmic night” of the “forgetfulness of being,” the nihilism that Nietzsche prophesied, then may one not gaze at the last fading light of the sun setting in the evening sky, instead of turning around to look for the first shimmer of its return?⁴¹⁰

It is clear that the fusion of horizons describes how the transition from the past to the future through the present takes place. It also shows that the identity of the text is not to be understood as the constant reconstruction of an author’s horizon, but rather as the historical continuity of the textual meaning (its claim to truth) through the constant mediation of the past and the present. Since the textual identity cannot be differentiated from the way the meaning is presented, Gadamer does not seem to differentiate the truth of the text from the true understanding of it.

Undoubtedly, this is to say that the true (correct) interpretation is the one which disappears in the self-presentation of the subject matter.⁴¹¹ To separate them is to fall into a subject-object ontology as we saw in the case of aesthetic differentiation. Therefore, according to Gadamer, ‘correctness’ of the interpretation cannot be the aim since it is to miss the point by confusing the means (correctness, the disappearance of the interpretation) with the goal (the truth claim or self-presentation of the text). Hence, in Gadamer’s hermeneutics, the canonization of any interpretation does not have any legitimate place.⁴¹² However, with respect to diversity of interpretations of the same text, is the question of the ‘correctness’ of any interpretation an illegitimate one?

At this point, Gadamer could reply to us by asking the question: do we not have a pre-understanding of the meaning of the ‘correctness’ of an interpretation? If so, how could one accept the conditional as if it were unconditional, and thus determine or validate an interpretation through it? This shows that even the determination of the meaning of ‘correct interpretation’ and, if any criterion for correct interpretation is maintained, the application of this criterion will be subject to

interpretation.⁴¹³ This means that since a possible criterion for correct interpretation is already dependent on the primordial (interpretive) relation between man and his world, it will be historical and tradition-bound. However, does this rejection of the timeless (fixed) criterion lead to a radical relativism and arbitrariness (or subjectivism) in the act of interpretation?

Subject Matter (*Sache*) as the Transcendental Ground

As indicated repeatedly, one of the essential points Gadamer makes is the insoluble dialectical relation between the autonomy of the text and the mediation of the text by different conditions. This dialectic reflects itself in the fact that meaning is both immanent and transcendent to each interpretive condition.

Undoubtedly, in this perspective a sort of relativism arises if one emphasizes the irreducibility of each interpretive (concrete) condition. However, if we look at the relation between text and interpretive context from another side, we realize that a particular context can make its difference through its content (unexpected truth). Otherwise, it could be an 'empty,' i.e., 'unfulfilled,' context. Precisely because of this fact, giving priority to the 'context' with respect to the 'content' or vice versa is responsible for creating false relativism. We noticed this in the case of Hirsch's intentionalism which makes the present relative to the past and results in subsuming the former under the latter. And in the case of the deconstructionism of Derrida, the past is subsumed under the present. Therefore, the real danger of relativism which Gadamer tries to avoid takes place when the past or the present is subsumed under the other.

From this perspective, if one has to see a relativism in Gadamer's hermeneutics, it can only be the mutual relativity (dependence) of content and context to each other.⁴¹⁴ Nevertheless, this does not mean that the content is dependent on only 'one particular context.' Otherwise, there could arise a solipsism in the sense that the content could not be known with respect to ever-changing contexts. However, since a context can be known through its content, this means that if the content were restricted to a particular context, this particular context could not be known either. Therefore, the knowability of content and context is only possible if the context is always changing.

Can we conclude from this with Hirsch that the 'content' (the author's intention) is totally independent of the changing context?⁴¹⁵ If this were so, since the ever-changing contexts would be only the external conveyors of the content, there could not be genuine difference and change between contexts. Therefore, the indifference of the content with respect to the changing contexts leads to the conclusion that the changing contexts are in fact indifferent to each other in the sense that they do not have their original characteristics, given that the 'context' becomes what it is through its content.

Hence, Hirsch's argument for the total independence of the content results in the 'radical' semantic autonomy which he rejects. Moreover, if the context, according to Hirsch, is indifferent to its content (the author's intention), how can the author's context determine textual meaning for all times? Is not to argue both that the context of the author determines meaning at all, and that other contexts stay indifferent to it, a contradiction? It is clear that Hirsch falls into this contradiction owing to his presupposition that if the author's context does not determine content, then that of the interpreter will.

This means that the meaning will be re-determined in each context differently. Therefore, Hirsch finds himself accepting two extreme arguments, 'the total determinacy of meaning by the

author's context' and 'the total independence of the meaning of the other contexts' at the same time.

However, as Hirsch fears, does the rejection of the total independency of the content from its changing context lead in fact to the formidable conclusion that the content is re-determined in different context from start? However, if this were the case, there could arise a radical discontinuity and solipsism since the previous context and content could not be known as shown above. Therefore, an absolute relativism (or subjectivism) which paradoxically accepts the self-certainty and absoluteness of the present context is self-destructing since the internal continuity with, and the dependence on, the previous contexts is rejected.

In this case, Hirsch's intentionalism, which makes the changing contexts indifferent and thus relative to the author's context, seems to result just into another form of radical discontinuity of meaning and absolute relativism. We saw before that his attempt to provide a continuity between past meaning and changing contexts in terms of meaning's relation (significance) to them results in subsuming them and making them relative to the past. Hence, Hirsch fails to overcome the relativism which he totally rejects.

Accordingly, the solution for the problem of relativism should not be looked for in the 'absoluteness' of the past or the present since either route leads to different forms of relativism. The possible solution should base the effect and change relation (or mutual dependency) of the present content (meaning) and context on its internal continuity (or mutual dependency) with the previous historical contexts.

From this perspective, Margolis' 'robust' (substantive) or moderate relativism does not seem to be satisfactory. Robust relativism "entails that there be certain minimal constraints—in terms of what is simply true and false—that relativistic judgments must accommodate."⁴¹⁶ Therefore, Margolis distinguishes 'descriptions' of the literary work which are simply 'true' or 'false' from the critical interpretations which provide an explanatory context with descriptions. Descriptions are of the necessary substratum, or the properties, of the literary work which corresponds to the 'facts' in scientific theories. In this case, critical interpretations are like scientific theories whose truth cannot be demonstrated.

This is because, according to Margolis, interpretations contribute toward the work by extending it beyond those core descriptions of its undeniable properties. This never-ending interpretive productivity takes its start always from the interpreter's cultural or historical point of view. This means, however, that since the properties of the work are approached from changing cultural views, in each perspective they can support or justify different interpretations.

This leads to the conclusion that interpretations cannot be referred to ultimately by the relative terms 'true' or 'false,' since this disregards the contributions or the imputations of different cultural aspects into the work, but by the terms 'plausible' or 'implausible.' According to Margolis, the criteria outlined for critical plausibility entail (1) compatibility with the describable features of given art works and (2) "conformability with relativised canons of interpretation that themselves fall within the tolerance of an historically continuous tradition of interpretation."⁴¹⁷

Hence, incompatible interpretations of the same text can be plausible at the same time relative to a certain body of evidence while they cannot be true at the same time. The point is that the nature (or the properties) of the art work cannot justify interpretive judgments passed on the model of truth and falsity while they allow judgments on the model of plausibility or implausibility.

It seems that for Margolis the important thing is not aiming at canonical or exclusive interpretations, which in the final analysis cannot be justified, but at the acceptable interpretations which recognize their own historical and cultural relativity. Nevertheless, when accepting the

substratum as what is simply true and false of the text, to which relativistic judgments must accommodate themselves, he seems to presuppose that the substratum is what is objectively given to us, i.e., that the properties of the text speak for themselves. However, since they remain to be explained by our culturally conditioned interpretive models, they are mute at the same time. Obviously, this is to say that the text is always neutral or indifferent to the ever-changing contexts. It is essentially lifeless in the sense that it has no claim to truth for a particular interpreter.

Therefore, in Margolis' hermeneutics, interpretation seems to be only an intellectual activity which does not result in (existential) self-understanding. This is because the task of the interpreter, in his view, seems to accommodate his cultural perspective to the properties of the text. This shows that the interpreter is, paradoxically, self-certain about his own relative perspective, i.e., he chooses a certain set of interpretive concepts to be 'applied' before the performance of interpreting. Hence, the historical continuity of the text is not dependent on the historical effect or engaging power of the text, but rather, on the choice of the interpretive models. Obviously, this is a discontinuity in the sense that there is no common ground between text and interpreter.

In our view, the given properties of the text cannot establish a common ground since they are indifferent to the interpreter. Thus, the interpretive activity, in Margolis' hermeneutics, seems to start from a subject-object schema and ends up with relative explanation. It seems that the superiority of Gadamer's hermeneutics to the other models of interpretation, which we have discussed before, lies in its calling attention to the fact that the past text is recognized primarily in its claim to the truth which challenges our prejudices (pre-conception of truth). This refers to the fact that even though the common ground (*Sache*) addresses each particular horizon in a particular way, it cannot be restricted to any one of them. This shows that the past and the present are dependent on each other in order to reveal their original and distinctive characteristics through the truth of subject matter (*Sache*) so that they cannot be subsumed under the other. In fact, this is not the rejection of the timeless character of subject matter since this mutual dependency between the past and the present is an infinite process. Therefore, in Gadamer's hermeneutics, timelessness signifies the inexhaustibility of the truth-claim of the text by its interpretations.

Obviously, this perspective differs from the objectivist perspectives which take the timeless as something which can be known always in its changeless character. However, the paradox in the objectivist perspectives lies in the fact that when they take the timeless as changeless or something which remains indifferent to changing particular horizons, the timeless is apprehended as something which is 'exhausted' (completely understood in its identity) in each particular moment of time. In this regard, the timeless is not something which transcends temporality of time with its being but just stays outside of it.

This means that it has to be put in the changing contexts if its objective (indifferent meaning) is to be made relevant (i.e., valid) to the present context. Nevertheless, since this secondary activity of relating the timeless to the living context takes its departure from the untested (unquestioned) conception of truth (prejudices), the timeless is not the ground or active partner in this activity but rather is grounded by human subjectivity. This is why the objectivist perspectives fall prey easily to subjectivism and relativism.

The mutual dependency of past and present in Gadamer's hermeneutics reflects the fact that subject matter (common ground) is not something to be objectified by representational consciousness in its being, but rather makes mutual understanding possible. In this sense, *Sache* remains always as transcendental ground which asserts its truth in the dialogical process between the language of the text (tradition) and that of the interpreter. Precisely because of this, the

relationship between the text and the interpreter is primarily in the form of the I-thou (Ich-Du) relation and cannot be “reduced to the epistemological relation between a subject and an object.”⁴¹⁸

Hence, as Gadamer remarks, language is the form or the manner of mediation in which the historical continuity of the text is able to occur in spite of all gaps and discontinuities. This means that since language fulfills itself and has its proper fulfillment only in the give and take of speaking, in which one word yields another, conversation is the “manner in which past texts, past information and forms of human creative efforts reach us.”⁴¹⁹ From this perspective, we can understand the relation between the discontinuity and the historical continuity better. The existence of the discontinuity is not in fact an obstacle which is to be overcome but rather makes historical continuity possible since every discontinuity reveals itself as a partner in the dialogue with the past.

In other words, a historical text can exist only in the conversation or dialogue, and since the continuity of dialogue requires new partners, then discontinuity is in fact the manner of preserving and experiencing historical continuity of the text. Gadamer puts this as follows:

Transmission and tradition have their true meaning preserved not by means of unyielding grasp on what has been handed down, but rather by constituting experienced and steadfast partners in that conversation which we are. Insofar as they answer us and bring up new questions, they demonstrate their own reality and their own forward-moving vitality.⁴²⁰

It seems that the logic of question and answer is the basic characteristic of dialogue.⁴²¹ According to this logic, “no subjective consciousness, neither that of a speaker nor of whomever is addressed, already knows enough to fully encompass what comes to light in dialogue.”⁴²² Therefore, the Logos is common to all and does not belong to a partner alone.

It seems that this subject matter is both the transcendental ground since it makes dialogue possible, and the truth which can be reached at the end of true conversation which requires an openness.⁴²³ Again we find ourselves in a circular movement in dialogue. Gadamer refers to this circular movement with the term ‘*anamnesis*’ which is sought for and awakened in *logoi*.⁴²⁴ Accordingly, what is presupposed (transcendental ground) is brought to light in its new aspect (*logoi*) in the give and take of conversation. Nevertheless, this process should not be confused with dressing up and unmasking for the purpose of knowing better what we already know. Rather, as Gadamer puts it, “it is the true carrying out of *anamnesis*.”⁴²⁵

What Gadamer means is the fact that through conversation the subject matter which is pointed out by the past text is brought back to its original role within language. Undoubtedly, this is not a historical reconstruction but to let the past text speak as a contemporary text. And since what comes to light in conversation is common to all, “the dialogical character of language . . . leaves behind it any starting point in the subjectivity of the subject, and especially in the meaning-directed intentions of the speaker.”⁴²⁶

However, since what is brought to light (the truth of the subject matter) through conversation is always limited and unexpected, relativism in its radical sense has no place in Gadamer’s hermeneutics. As indicated above, when asserting the finiteness of its knowledge, radical relativism presupposes paradoxically the self-certainty of the consciousness of itself. For instance, in the relativistic expression such as *I like* it (the text) read this way the *I* becomes the starting point, i.e., self-certain of itself before the performance of interpretation. Hence, this kind of relativism takes the form of individualism or monologue.

Contrary to the self-certainty of consciousness of itself, dialogue requires an infinite process of mutual testing of the truth-claim of the past text and that of the interpreter and does not allow any criterion other than the logic of question and answer. One might ask whether we do not have previously a criterion for asking correct question? Gadamer accepts this difficulty and says that “to find and elaborate the question, that is the question! For it is the question which gives us access to an adequate interpretation of a statement as a possible answer to the question.”⁴²⁷ Certainly there is no criterion for correct questioning. However, do we not have a sense of the subject matter in order to ask the right question? It is clear that there is a circular relation between the question and subject matter (answer) which can never be dissolved in the sense that just as there is no final question, there is also no final answer.

However, this bad infinity, to use Hegel’s expression, has, in fact, a positive aspect since it allows us to grasp the unexpected truth and to see further in every experience a new truth. From this perspective, we can argue that every genuine question reveals itself in the dialectic of self-limitation and openness of truth. In other words, we recognize the genuine questions when they point in a certain direction by giving a limited answer. This means that the real questions are not ‘mere’ questions which refer only to the darkness on the subject matter, but since they are also the limited answers posed by the previous questions, they give us a path to be followed. Hence, there is not pure question and pure answer. Rather, every question includes a limited answer and every answer includes a limited question.⁴²⁸

From this perspective, every genuine interpretation reveals itself in the dialectic of question and answer. The genuine interpretation is the one which gives illuminating answers the questions posed by the text and poses new questions to it. Just as there is no pure question and pure answer, there is no pure interpretation which stands in a distinct position with respect to the text. Rather, the relation between the text and the interpretation is the dialectic of question and answer itself. Every correct interpretation is nothing else than experiencing the transition between past and future in this dialectic. It both fulfills the space opened up previously and opens up new space to be fulfilled by any possible interpretation.

As a conclusion, the charge that Gadamer’s hermeneutics leads to an unavoidable relativism in interpretation is not convincing. In our view, Gadamer’s hermeneutics does not collapse the truth (identity) of the text to the particular interpretive conditions. Rather it shows that every genuine interpretation can share the truth of the text as it is based on the previous interpretations (i.e., on the history of effect of the text) and invites the possible interpretations to share the truth of the text by opening a new path for them. There is no dogmatism in this assertion in the sense that every interpretation expects to be accepted as the only way to the truth of the text. Since every genuine interpretation starts with the dialectic of question and answer, it includes a critical (reflective) dimension from the very beginning. If this is the case, is not to look for a criterion for the truth of the subject matter, which reveals itself in the dialectic of question and answer (text and interpretation) like to try to shed light on the source of light itself?

Conclusion

In the course of our inquiry, we pursued the problem of how interpretation as a genuine dialogue between past and present is possible in terms of the question of what constitutes the identity of the text. We tried to call attention first to the discussion on the place of method in text interpretation. We noted that Gadamer allows methods in order to avoid mistakes. What he rejects is the subject-object ontology lying behind the scientific ideal of objectivity which limits the knowledge of truth of the text by method on the basis of verification and certainty.

The universal claim of scientific method which presupposes a distancing or alienation between the subject and object is resisted by the human experience of truth (the world). This is so because every experience of truth takes place as a unique (original) historical event which cannot be subsumed under the universal concept. Hence, the problem of interpretation is not only a problem of method, but is more basically the experience of the truth of the text. It is the problem of how human understanding belongs to the being of what is understood. This implies that the problem of interpretation can be the problem of method only in its secondary sense, namely, when the text ceases to claim to truth for the interpreter's present horizon.

We observed that Gadamer's perspective of method reflects a parallelism with his view of the author's intention. He clearly argues that the interpreter should aim at understanding the author's intention in the case of the failure of appreciating the truth of the written text. This is to say that when a distancing occurs between the text and the interpreter, different methods should be applied in order to reconstruct the author's intention.

He also maintains that in a living conversation the aim should be understanding the partner's intention, since the meaning has not detached itself from the person intending it. However, this does not mean that the truth of what the other says is a secondary issue in a living conversation. Rather, the subject matter (*Sache*) as the common ground between the partners is brought to light (truth) in the living conversation. Nevertheless, when the meaning is written down through fixed forms, it (meaning) detaches itself from the intention of the author and gains its ideal character. This does not mean that meaning has its own existence as distinct from its interpretation. It can come to being only on the mediations of its interpretations. Therefore, the task of the interpretation is to bring the past (written) text to its original function in the living conversation. In other words, the interpretation is the living conversation itself between the past and present.

We demonstrated that Hirsch's and Betti's intentionalist models of interpretation cannot fulfill this task. This is because their arguments for the objectivity of interpretation, based on the idea of method, require an alienation between subject (inquirer) and object (meaning). This means that we can understand the text only by assuming the subjective horizon of the author. They failed to realize that the interpreter's situation and his present interests have been introduced into a supposedly objective reconstruction of meaning. By reducing the being of the meaning to the subjective perspective of the author they created the problem of how the subject might bridge the gap between past and present.

We have shown that their argument for meaning-full forms (Betti) and genres (Hirsch) as self-identical entities mediating (i.e., bridging the gap) between past and present does not hold, since

Betti and Hirsch argue that these forms or genres can be understood only if the author's horizon is assumed. This is obviously a vicious circle. If the meaning-full forms or genres can mediate between the past and the present since they are autonomous (i.e., self-identical), they have to accept that they should be independent of the author's horizon. A similar problem lies in Hirsch's argument for 'evidence for the author's intention.' Hirsch fails to see that an evidence can function only if it is viewed from an interpretive context.

We observed a paradoxical situation in Hirsch's theory. While arguing that the object of interpretation is independent of the interpreter's subjectivity, Hirsch accepts the interpreter's subjective act of choice as the starting point of interpretation. While maintaining that meaning is self-identical from one moment to the next, he also remarks that the nature of the text is to mean whatever we construe it to mean.

Undoubtedly, this casts a strong doubt on Hirsch's view of textual identity. In the final analysis, Hirsch's argument for identity takes the form that if meaning is to be determinate it must be identical with the author's intention. Nevertheless, in the next step, he presupposes that to show the identity of the author's intention is also to show the identity of the text. Hence, while treating textual meaning *and* the author's intention as different entities to be identified, Hirsch stops in the discussion of the identity of the latter by taking that of the former for granted.

In this context, we referred to the one-sidedness of Hirsch's appropriation of Husserlian intentionalism. While Husserlian intentionalism presupposes the irreducibility of the perspective and the intended object to each other and thus accepts the identity within the manifold, Hirsch reduces the identity of the object to the subjective stance of the author. Hence he disregards the distinction between 'the object *which* is intended' and 'the object *as* it is intended.' This is clear when he deprives 'subject matter' (the object *which* is intended) of its identity. Therefore, he makes the tool (author's horizon) the end of the interpretation. This reveals the inconclusiveness of his attempt to make the author the only authority on the meaning if we recall the Hirschian argument that interpretation is a matter of choice.

We called attention to the problem, in Hirsch's theory, of how meaning can be distinguished from other contexts and yet be a matter of consciousness. It was noted that if meaning is distinguished from changing contexts, it must be autonomous. This contradicts Hirsch's basic tenet that meaning is a matter of consciousness. Besides this, we found it unacceptable to argue both that meaning is the determination of the author's context and that it is totally independent of the contexts within which it is reconstructed.

This amounts to disregarding the reality of the differences between contexts and to making the changing contexts irrelevant with regard to meaning and each other. Hence in Hirsch's theory meaning is essentially discontinuous in the sense that it does not have any vital relation with the contexts within which it is reconstructed. This discontinuity of meaning, which characterizes intentionalist models of interpretation, is generated from reducing the being of the meaning to the author's intention.

We discussed whether Hirsch's concept of significance (application) can provide the historical continuity of meaning. Even though he accepts with Gadamer that application is part of the meaning, he still differs from him in holding that we first understand a concept from a text and then apply it to our own experience. Hence, while reducing the being of the meaning to its original condition on the one hand, he concedes that it is open to future applications on the other. This is both to reject and accept the autonomy of meaning from its original conditions (the author's intention) at the same time.

This paradoxical situation in Hirsch's theory results in subsuming the present under the past meaning and making the present relative to the past. This is clear when he reduces the particular in the present context of the interpreter to an exemplification of the universal (past meaning). We observed that Hirsch's view of the relation between universal concept (the author's general purpose) and its original exemplification in the historical object (the author's particular intention) takes the form of the relation between means (historical object) and end (universal concept).

However, Hirsch fails to provide a principle to extract the general purpose of the author from his particular purpose (intention). At this point, the determination of the universal concept through the text seems to be dependent on the interpreter's choice or decision. This leads to the very subjectivism and relativism which Hirsch opposes. Therefore, the continuity of meaning in Hirsch's hermeneutics does not depend on the historical continuity of the effect of the text on the changing horizons, but rather is determined by the subjective reconstructions of the interpreters. His intentionalist arguments do not provide a basis for the identity and vitality of meaning.

Betti's argument for the autonomy of the hermeneutic object and thus his distinction between meaning and significance leads to the distinction between meaning and its truth. Hence, it cannot escape from subjectivism and relativism because the validity or the truth of meaning for a particular horizon is determined only by the untested prejudices of the interpreter.

In the case of Knapp's and Michaels' argument for the impossibility of intentionless meaning, we noticed that there is no medium to carry the meaning between the author and the interpreter. Their argument falls short of demonstrating that the reconstructed meaning is identical with what the author intended since it presents the concept of author as only a formal requirement. The inseparability of intention from the language leads to the conclusion that there is no interpretation and only text, since interpretation attempts to make a confused claim clearer. This is a sort of solipsism.

We found that Juhl's argument for the coherence in order to demonstrate the identity of meaning with the author's intention is not convincing. This is because he disregards the interpreter's pre-conception of completeness (the unity) of the text and assumes it only as the evidence of the author's intention. On this assumption, he also forgets that coherence or the unity of the text is only a formal requirement for the interpretation. The historical fact that the same text can be reconstructed in different but coherent ways on the different presuppositions is enough to show the inconclusiveness of Juhl's argument for evidence.

Even though Beardsley and Wimsatt accept the semantic autonomy and thus reject the identification of meaning with the author's intention, they fail to see the fact that the interpretive context is a constitutive element of textual meaning. They approach meaning like a physical object to be analyzed in itself. The assumption that meaning is an objective entity leads them to conclude that there must be only one correct interpretation. Hence they overlook the historicity (ontological structure) of understanding.

The moderate or robust relativism of Margolis reduces the event of interpretation to mere intellectual activity by suspending the truth-claim of the text. This is clear in his argument that we can have only plausible interpretations relative to a certain body of evidence. Hence interpretation takes its starting point from the subject-object ontology. By claiming that the basic properties of the text can function as evidence for different interpretations, the robust relativism of Margolis does not aim for a genuine dialogue between the past and the present but mostly focuses on showing the impossibility of having a 'true' (one correct) interpretation. Hence, it is basically a negative theory of interpretation.

We argued that Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics provides a transcendental ground for textual identity in that the being of the text is its self-realization, its sheer fulfillment. The being of the text can never be reduced to a particular interpretive condition, but reflects itself only as the common ground between the partners in the dialogue. This means that in the constitution of textual identity, neither the past nor the present is subsumed under the other. Rather, textual identity reveals itself in the unity of the past and the present.

The constant unity of the past with the changing contexts reveals the dynamic identity of the text. This dynamism of textual identity is grasped through the text's claim to truth for the changing horizons. Hence, each interpretive context stands as the partner of the dialogue with the text. We noted that the present involvement with the truth of the text does not lead to subsuming the past under the present and hence relativism, since the present is already the determination or the effect of the past (tradition). The past cannot be grasped like an isolated entity but exists always in its vital relation to the present.

This shows the basis of the inseparability of the effect of the past on the present and the consciousness of this historical effect. We noted that, according to Gadamer, this does not mean that consciousness (the present) is a mere determination of the past. Rather, the consciousness of the historical effect is already an historical event itself within which the meaning of the past and the present reveals itself. Hence, the truth of the past text is not an objective fact staying in its distinct realm, but comes to itself on the mediation of the present consciousness of the historical effect. This means that historically effected consciousness is also operative.

This reflects the fact that the unity of the past and the present is constantly differentiated within itself. Every differentiation is the beginning of a new unity and every unity is the beginning of a new differentiation. Through this indissoluble dialectic between unity and differentiation, the past text is mediated and its identity realized. Since the meaning of the text is mediated through its interpretations, every interpretation becomes like a link in a forward-rolling chain. Hence, what seems to be discontinuity as the unique manifestation of the truth of the text becomes a step for further manifestation of the text. In other words, every interpretation becomes a fore-conception for the following interpretation.

We noted that when Gadamer argued that 'tradition' is the historical continuity of the effects (the interpretations) of the text, he does not propose a super subject or collective subject who can collect the whole tradition within his own experience, as Manfred Frank and Philippe Forget contend. This would reduce the negativity of hermeneutical experience (historicity of understanding and perspective) to an empty word. Undoubtedly, in this approach a sort of relativism arises if one emphasizes the irreducibility of each interpretive (concrete) condition.

However, if we look at the relation between text and interpretive context from another side, we realize that a particular context can make its difference through its content (unexpected truth). Otherwise, it could be an 'empty', i.e., 'unfulfilled', context. Precisely because of this fact, giving priority to the 'context' with respect to the 'content' or vice versa is responsible for creating false relativism. Therefore, the real danger of relativism which Gadamer tries to avoid takes place when the past or the present is subsumed under the other.

We observed that in Gadamer's hermeneutics the constant dialogue between the past and present (tradition) reveals itself in the form of the dialectic of question and answer. While this dialectic of question and answer between the text and its interpretation opens the realm for the truth of the text, the being of the text never shows itself up totally. We grasp this fact through the mutual presupposition of the question and the answer for each other. The relation between them is an ongoing process.

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Appendix

Some Remarks on Fazlur Rehman's Hermeneutics

Fazlur Rahman's hermeneutics revealed the problem of the historicity of the Qur'an to be one of the most fatal problems confronting contemporary Muslims. While indicating the two dimensions – temporal and historical – of the Qur'anic text, he failed to reconcile them due to his adherence to a subject-object ontology in this method of interpretation. By his new method of interpretation of the Qur'an, he tried to make the following three points:

1. the Qur'anic text can be understood objectively;
2. the historical Islamic tradition, i.e., the historical interpretation of the Qur'an can be criticized from the Qur'anic view itself; and
3. the activity of interpretation of the Qur'an is a dynamic (i.e., endless) process.

In Rahman's hermeneutics, the process of interpretation consists of "a double movements, from the present situation to Qur'anic times, then back to the present."¹ The first of the two movements consists of two steps. "First, one must understand the import or meaning of a given statement by studying the historical situation or problem to which it was the answer."² Hence the first step consists of understanding the meaning of the Qur'an, as a whole as well as in terms of the specific tenets that constitute responses to specific situation. "The second step is to generalize those specific answers and enunciate them as statements of general moral-social objectives that can be 'distilled' from specific text in the light of the socio-historical background and the often-stated *rationes legis*."³

In the first movement, an interpreter moves from the broadest horizon which embraces all kinds of historically and culturally significant events on the eve of Islam to the narrowest horizon or problem to which a particular Qur'anic verse was an answer. This means that without taking the historical problems into account, there cannot be any access to the meaning of the Qur'an. Hence, the interpretation of the Qur'an is a dialectical movement of question and answer. In this dialectical movement, the interpreter scrutinizes the particular meanings of the verses in terms of the whole context of the Qur'anic text so as to grasp the most general principles (universal) of the Qur'an.

The interpreter experiences a tension which emanates out of leaving his own present horizon by plunging into the particular historical horizons of the Qur'anic verses to attain their historical ground. It is clear that when the historical ground is attained, all kinds of distinctiveness (temporality) of the Qur'anic verses disappear and the interpreter finds himself or herself in a world of meaning not circumscribed or designated by any historical event. This is a world that has no immediate relation to the temporality of the interpretation. Moreover, this is a world which each temporal interpretation of the Qur'an tries to incorporate.⁴

Hence, Rahman's hermeneutics appears, from teleological perspective, to be differentiating between two levels or dimensions in the Qur'anic text. On the first level, there are particular meanings of the verses, which consist of historical interpretations of the extra-historical principles. More clearly, from the standpoint of Rahman's hermeneutics, the Qur'an embodied its transcendental principles in the form of historical interpretation. Hence it is a self-interpreting text.

On the second level, there are general meanings (principles) which underlie those particular historical meanings (interpretations).

However, two levels (dimensions) can be distinguished when the Qur'anic text is subject to cognitive interpretation. As the argument that the Qur'an is a divine response to the historical problems at the time of revelation indicates, the two levels constitute a unity for an existential interpretation. More precisely, only existential interpretation can grasp the historical meanings (principles) in their concrete historical forms. Precisely because of this, Rahman's hermeneutics proposes that in the second movement of the process of interpretation, the general principles must be brought into existence within the living temporal conditions of the interpreter.

Therefore, while the first movement of interpretation is cognitive, the second movement is existential. In this existential movement, what is distilled from the text is applied to new living problems as an answer. In other words, while in the first movement, cognitive interpretation attempts to uncover the theoretical aspect of the Qur'anic meaning, in the second movement existential interpretation endeavors to actualize its practical aspect. Hence, Rahman's hermeneutics moves from theory to practice in the dialectic of question and answer.

When viewed from this analysis, one can better understand why Rahman proposes two steps with the first movement of interpretation. Since the Qur'an revealed itself in the beginning as the unity of theory (historical meaning) and practice (interpretation or application of historical meaning), the interpreter should grasp first this unity by reconstructing the original historical situation. Nevertheless, due to the historicity of this unity, in the second step, the historical meaning should be distilled from the historical meaning (interpretation) within the text. That is to say, the original unity must be disunited if an interpreter wants to apply the Qur'an to his own situations. Hence in the second movement of interpretation, another unity between the extra-historical meaning and the historical (practical) situation of an interpreter is entrenched. This openness of the Qur'anic text for future applications (unities) explains why the activity of interpretation is an endless process.

This analysis shows also how Rahman hoped to establish a firm basis for criticizing the historical Islamic tradition (i.e., historical interpretations of the Qur'an). It is clear that in Rahman's view, only out of the transcendental (theoretical) perspective of Qur'anic principles, can the historical interpretations be made a subject for criticism.⁵ Nevertheless, in order to accomplish such a task, as shown above, the transcendental meaning must be differentiated from the historical meaning within the Qur'an. In view of its transcendental (historical) character, we endeavor to call the former meaning 'text', and in consideration of its historical character we call the latter meaning 'interpretation'. Hence, Rahman's hermeneutics, in our view, proposes a radical dissolution of text and interpretation within the Qur'an as well as between the Qur'an and its traditional interpretations.

We assume that behind the idea of this dissolution between text and interpretation in Rahman's hermeneutics lies his belief that Qur'anic meaning is essentially functional. This means that whenever meaning has some functions in a living condition, it can attain its real existence. In this context, he remarks that "we must also remember that knowledge in Islam exists in order to enable us to act, to change the current events in the world. The Qur'an is an action-oriented book, par excellence."⁶ However, this approach refers to the following technical problem, which Rahman tried to overcome in his method of interpretation. How is it possible to bring the Qur'anic text to its new function in the living context by overcoming the historical distance between the past (Qur'anic times) and the present?

It is clear that in view of the historical distance, the function that Qur'an performed in its original context cannot be identical with that which it can perform in the present context. By approaching the *rationes legis* as the "telos" of the particular meanings of the Qur'an, Rahman seems to admit that though the function of the response (particular meanings) is bounded to its original historical problems, the intention (*masqsad*) of the text transcends any given historical context. Referring to this fact, he notes "Any yet the message must – despite its being clothed in the flesh and blood of a particular situation – outflow though and beyond that given context of history."⁷

However, how can one contend that the message can transcend its given historical context and be applied to new problems if not in terms of one's own present context? It seems paradoxical to argue that the general meanings or extra-historical principles of the Qur'an must be attained through its historical context. How can a given context be sufficiently determinative for a meaning that transcends itself? Besides, in order to contend that the general principles must be distilled from the particular meanings in the first movement of the process of interpretation, Rahman has to presuppose that particular meanings of the Qur'an already have lost their adequate functions for the present context. This is amount to saying that the present context (i.e., value-system) of the interpretation is introduced into supposedly objective reconstruction of the past meaning.

Moreover, Rahman's hermeneutics falls short of explain how a general principle can be applied in a new condition. Since Rahman wants to separate the historical tradition not only from the present but also from the Qur'anic principles themselves, it (tradition) cannot mediate between the general principle and the new condition. In this case, because each application of the Qur'an will be confined to a specific condition, the Qur'anic meaning will reveal itself in closed circles.

In conclusion, by following the basic tenets of historical criticism, i.e., appealing to the subject-object ontology in his theory of interpretation, Rahman separates the tradition not only from the extra-historical meaning of the Qur'an but also from the present context. Precisely, by ignoring the effect of the tradition on attaining past meaning, he fails to explain how it is possible to move from the present situation to Qur'anic times and then back to the present.

Notes

¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*, 5th ed. (Tübingen: J. B. Mohr, 1986). English translation, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. ed. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 1989). (Henceforth *TM* and *WM*, respectively.)

² Gadamer, "The Continuity of History and the Existential Moment," *Philosophy Today* 16, no. 3/4 (Fall 1972), pp. 238-239; see also Gadamer, "Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, Metaphysics," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 25, no. 2 (May 1994), p. 109.

³ E. D. Hirsch, "Meaning and Significance Reinterpreted," *Critical Inquiry* 11 (December 1984), pp. 202-215.

⁴ Even though Beardsley and Wimsatt propose an anti-intentionalist theory, they approach 'meaning' as an objective entity whose truth can be discovered once and for all. See, M. C. Beardsley, "The Authority of the Text," in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), pp. 24-40; W. K. Wimsatt, and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," in *20th Century Literary Criticism: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge (London: Longman, 1972), pp. 333-345; "The Affective Fallacy," in *20th Century Literary Criticism: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge (London: Longman, 1972), pp. 345-358.

⁵ Knapp and Michaels propose that language and intention cannot be separated. See, S. Knapp and W. B. Michaels, "Against Theory," in *Against Theory*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1985), pp. 11-30. Reprinted as abridged with the title "The Impossibility of Intentionless Meaning," in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), pp. 51-64.

⁶ Juhl contends that behind the coherence of textual meaning lies author's intention. Hence, the possibility of interpretation which is based on the coherence of textual meaning presupposes author's intention. P. D. Juhl, *Interpretation: An Essay in the Philosophy of Literary Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); "The Appeal to the Text: What Are We Appealing to?" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 36, no. 3 (Spring 1978), pp. 277-287.

⁷ For Hirsch, the only basis of textual identity is author's intention. See, Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

⁸ B. R. Wachterhauser, "Interpreting Texts: Objectivity or Participation?" *Man and World* 19 (1986), pp. 439-457.

⁹ According to Betti, although past meaning is grasped in its significance, meaning is not identical with its significance. Author's intention is the basis of textual identity. See, E. Betti, "Hermeneutics as the general methodology of the *Geisteswissenschaften*," in *Contemporary Hermeneutics*, ed. J. Bleicher (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), pp. 51-94; "The Epistemological Problem of Understanding As an Aspect of the General Problem of Knowing," trans. Susan Noakes, *Hermeneutics: Questions and Prospects*, ed. Gary Shapiro and Alan Sica (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), pp. 25-53.

¹⁰ J. Margolis, "Interpretation at Risk," *The Monist* 73, no. 2 (April 1990), pp. 312-330; "Robust Relativism," in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), pp. 41-50; "The Truth about Relativism," in *Relativism: Interpretation and Confrontation*, ed. M. Crausz (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), pp. 232-255.

¹¹Jean Grondin, "Hermeneutics and Relativism," in *Festivals of Interpretation: Essays on Hans-Georg Gadamer's Work*, ed. K. Wright (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 51.

¹² Juhl, *Interpretation*, pp. 294-296.

¹³ *TM*, xxxi; *WM*, 1-5.

¹⁴ Gadamer, *TM*, 296; *WM*, 301.

¹⁵ Gadamer, "On the Circle of Understanding," in *Hermeneutic Versus Science?*, ed. J. M. Connolly and T. Keutner (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1988), p. 75; *TM*, 294; *WM*, 299.

¹⁶ *TM*, xxxi.

¹⁷ Gadamer, "Reflections on My Philosophical Journey," in *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, ed. L. E. Hahn (Illinois: Open Court, 1997), p. 50.

¹⁸ This fact is one of the important aspects of *hermeneutic circle* in Gadamer which asserts an inseparable relation between truth and human understanding which is historically conditioned. As we will discuss in detail later, the so-called hermeneutic circle, the content of which Gadamer calls tradition, is not to ground truth on human subjectivity, but, conversely, to show how truth and human *dasein* belong to each other as an ontological event. Precisely because of this fact, the hermeneutic circle reflects the inherent incompleteness of interpretive task and thus the impossibility of the autonomy of the object from the interpretive activity. See, T. Kisiel, "The Happening of Tradition: The Hermeneutics of Gadamer and Heidegger" *Man and World* 2 (1969), pp. 358-385; R. I. Maddox, "Hermeneutic Circle: Vicious or Victorious," *Philosophy Today* 27, no.1 (Spring 1983), pp. 66-76.

¹⁹ G. L. Ormiston and Alan Schrift (eds.), *The Hermeneutic Tradition* (Albany: State University Press of New York Press, 1990), p. 19; Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 242.

²⁰ Madison complains that "although Hirsch proposes to defend the objectivity of meaning, at no times does he attempt to clarify in what sense knowledge can properly lay claim to objectivity and what the very meaning of objectivity is." See, G. B. Madison, *The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 4.

²¹ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 2.

²² Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 3.

²³ F. W. Bateson criticizes Hirsch for reducing meaning to the individual consciousness and argues that Hirsch's ideas about meaning are too individualistic, too slanted towards the individual author, and are to that extent "not only wrong but hyper-American." See, Hirsch, "Past Intentions and Present Meanings" *Essays in Criticism* 33, no. 2 (April 1983), pp.79-80.

²⁴ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 23.

²⁵ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 4.

²⁶ Here, we are not saying that in Gadamer, 'perspective' is external, and attached to subject matter. Reversely, by belonging to subject matter, perspective reflects the different aspects of it. Thus, subject matter always transcends its perspective.

²⁷ From this approach, Hirsch criticizes Gadamer for identifying meaning with subject matter and paving the way for the pluralistic reading of the text and relativism. Hirsch, *Validity*, pp. 57-61.

²⁸ Gadamer, "The Historicity of Understanding," in *The Hermeneutics Reader*, ed. K. Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 1994), p. 270.

²⁹ Hirsch remarks that “Meaning is understood from the perspective that lends existence to meaning.” See, Hirsch, “Faulty Perspectives,” in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A reader*, ed. David Lodge (London: Longman, 1988), p. 262; Gadamer, “Historicity of Understanding,” p. 270.

³⁰ Hirsch calls the defenders of the idea that author’s intention cannot be known, like Barthes, Derrida, “cognitive atheists.” See, Hirsch, *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 13, 17.

³¹ Gadamer says: “And what about when this [to know author’s intention] is simply no possible because one knows nothing about the author?,” Gadamer, “Reflections,” p. 52; Hirsch remarks: “certain texts might, because of their character or age, represent author’s meanings which are now inaccessible.” Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 19.

³² Nevertheless, in Hindu tradition, even though the author[s] of the Vedas are not known, the question of whether the intention of the text (author) can be known has been discussed. For further information and the defense of non-author’s meaning in Hindu tradition, see V. K. Chari, “Validity in Interpretation: Some Indian Views” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 36, no. 3 (Spring 1978), pp. 329-340.

³³ For instance, in Medieval Islamic philosophical tradition, some Hellenistic and Roman philosophical texts were attributed mistakenly to Aristotle and interpreted as Aristotle’s for a while. See, T. J. De Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1903), pp. 16-19. See for discussion on “pseudo author,” J. J. E. Gracia, “Text and their Interpretation,” *Review of Metaphysics* 43 (March 1990), pp. 523-526.

³⁴ *TM*, 538.

³⁵ Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952), pp. 22-38.

³⁶ One of the recent examples of this fact is A. Sokal’s paper, “Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity” *Social Text* 46/47, Vol. 14 no. 1 and 2 (Spring/Summer 1996), pp. 217-252. Sokal mentioned later that he had written this deliberately absurd article and witnessed the article’s subsequent acceptance and publication in order to show the academic laziness and dogmatic tendencies of some so-called academic environments. See for his further comments on his article, Sokal, “A Physicist Experiments with Cultural Studies,” *Lingua Franca* (May/June 1996), pp. 62-64.

³⁷ M. C. Beardsley, “The Authority of the Text,” pp. 25-26.

³⁸ See for the defense of this approach, Colin Lyas, “Wittgensteinian Intentions,” in *Intention and Interpretation*, pp. 132-152; J. T. Bagwell, *American Formalism and the Problem of Interpretation* (Houston: Rice University Press, 1986), pp. 1-130.

³⁹ C. Lyas, “Wittgensteinian Intentions,” pp. 16; 29-65.

⁴⁰ Gadamer, “Reflections,” p. 52.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 251.

⁴³ *TM*, 285-286; *WM*, 289.

⁴⁴ J. M. Connolly and T. Keutner (eds), *Hermeneutics versus Science* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), p. 14.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ See, W. K. Wimsatt and M. C. Beardsley, “The Intentional Fallacy,” pp. 334-345; “The Affective Fallacy,” pp. 345-358.

⁴⁷ *TM*, 335; *WM*, 340. Gadamer also mentions that “The idea of the original reader is full of unexamined idealization... Thus the reference to the original reader, like that to the meaning of the

author, seems to offer only a very crude historico-hermeneutical criterion that cannot really limit the horizon of a text's meaning," *TM*, 395; *WM*, 399.

⁴⁸ In fact, Gadamer rejects this criticism by arguing that "Those who think that this [the title *Wahrheit und Methode*] means that the problem of method is not valid are mistaken." See, Gadamer, "Hermeneutics and Social Science" *Cultural Hermeneutics* 2 (1975), p. 310.

⁴⁹ P. Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation," *Philosophy Today* 17 (1973), pp. 129-141. See also B. D. Smith, "Distanciation and Textual Interpretation," *Laval Théologique et Philosophique* 43, no. 2 (June 1987), pp. 205-216.

⁵⁰ K. R. Stueber, "Understanding Truth and Objectivity: A Dialogue between Donald Davidson and Hans-Georg Gadamer," in *Hermeneutics and Truth*, ed. B. R. Wachterhauser (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1994), pp. 178-179.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Gadamer, "What is Truth," *Hermeneutics and Truth*, ed. B. R. Wachterhauser (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1994), pp. 37.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ R. Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. D. A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1980), p. 60.

⁵⁵ Gadamer, "Historicity of Understanding," pp. 268-269.

⁵⁶ *TM*, xxii; *WM*, 1-2.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Gadamer notes: "At any rate, the purpose of my investigation is not to offer a general theory of interpretation and a differential account of it," *TM*, xxxi.

⁵⁹ See for the main differences between traditional (Schleiermacherian) and modern (Heideggerian) hermeneutics, M. Ermarth, "Transformation of Hermeneutics" *The Monist* 64 (1981), pp.175-194.

⁶⁰ *TM*, xxi; *WM*, 1.

⁶¹ *TM*, xxx.

⁶² *TM*, 512-513.

⁶³ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 236.

⁶⁴ Inspired by Schleiermacherian hermeneutics through Betti, F. Rahman tries to apply this double-movement process scheme to history in interpreting the Qur'an. However, he criticizes Betti for stopping in the mind of the author in interpretive movement. He argues that "the invisible context of ideas is not just mental but environmental as well". Thus, he tries to go back to the historical and cultural background of the mind and tries to see the origin of meaning in the dialectic of question (historical conditions) and the mind's answer to it. Nevertheless, he still believes to reach objective meaning which is quite independent of the interpreter's present situation by appealing to the subject-object ontology. See, F. Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 8-11. However, we should note that though for Betti, understanding a meaning is to recognize "the inspiring, creative thought within the forms," he does not restrict meaning to the psychological experiences, i.e., the individuality of the author. He notes: "In the history of art, literature, science, jurisprudence, economic and social systems, historical facts are not limited merely to the individual experience of given personalities; they rather constitute an entity that embodies a value, i.e., it contains meaning, value and its character as a product." See, Betti, "Hermeneutics as the general methodology," pp. 57, 88.

⁶⁵ Hirsch, "Literary Evaluation as Knowledge," in *Criticism: Speculative and Analytical Essays*, ed. L. S. Dembo (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), p. 55.

⁶⁶ See, J. Bleicher, *Contemporary Hermeneutics* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 47; Betti, "Hermeneutics as the general methodology," pp. 53-58.

⁶⁷ Hirsch, *Validity*, pp. 14-19. Interestingly enough, Hirsch also argues that meaning can include some implications (hidden meanings) of which the author is not conscious. "It is essential to emphasize," says Hirsch, "the concept of type [meaning] since it is only through this concept that verbal meaning can be (as it is) a determinate object of consciousness and yet transcend (as it does) the actual contents of consciousness." Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 49; 51-56; 61-67. Thus, he implicitly accepts that meaning is also more than consciousness of its author and thus partially autonomous. This partial autonomy of meaning seems to come from Hirsch's acceptance of language as the source of indeterminate meanings and thus in Hirsch determinacy or identity of meaning does not show the perfect objectification of author's intention but rather mixed with uncontrollable indeterminacy or ambiguity of language which can reveal itself (i.e., be determinate) in its future interpretations. In this context, Hirsch remarks: "While it is true that later aspects of verbal meaning *are* fixed by its originating moment in time, that moment has fixed only the *principles* of further extrapolations, and these will not cover with full determinacy all unforeseen possibilities." See, Hirsch, "Meaning and Significance Reinterpreted," p. 204.

⁶⁸ Here, Hirsch and Betti are not saying that the author's relation to his meaning is always at the primary level, i.e., not reflective. In their view, the author can change his perspective and can have a different relation with his meaning. See, Hirsch, *Validity*, pp. 6-10. However, in this case, they should accept that when meaning as the objectified intention is detached from the living author it becomes autonomous in the sense that it goes beyond the control of a living author—for instance, Hirsch distinguishes the author of the objectified meaning from the living author and calls the former one a "speaking subject." See, Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 242. Therefore, from the fact that meaning as objectified intention is detached from its living author it follows that meaning cannot be put legitimately in the context of the whole life of its author in order to make it intelligible since there arises the problem of the plurality of perspectives or, as Foucault says, the "plurality of egos" (see, M. Foucault, "What is an Author?" trans. D. F. Bouchard and S. Simon, in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. D. F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 130-1) and with what right one of them can be taken as the basis for reaching a unifying understanding of the author's ideas.

⁶⁹ Gadamer, "A Classical Text—A Hermeneutic Challenge" *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa* (1981), p. 639.

⁷⁰ B. R. Wachterhauser, "Interpreting Texts: Objectivity or Participation?" *Man and World* 19 (1986), p. 441. Gadamer remarks: "What makes modern scholarship scientific is precisely the fact that it objectifies tradition and eliminates the influence of the interpreter and his time on understanding," *TM*, 333; *WM*, 338.

⁷¹ H.-R. Jauß, "The Identity of the Poetic Text in the Changing Horizon of Understanding," in *Identity of Literary Text*, ed. M. J. Valdes and O. Miller, (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1985), p. 147.

⁷² Gadamer, "The Historicity of Understanding," pp. 265-266.

⁷³ Hirsch, *The Aims*, p. 80.

⁷⁴ Hirsch says: "We have no direct access to the author's mind," *Validity*, p. 99.

⁷⁵ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 4. He also remarks that "language does not speak its own meaning. No linguistic code can determine the meaning of a text because linguistic codes by themselves are too

capacious and flexible to determine meanings for individual texts.” Hirsch, “Afterwords: Criticism and Counter thesis on Justifying Interpretive Norms” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 43 (1984), p. 90.

⁷⁶ Hirsch considers the concept ‘choice’ in its association with the ‘norm of interpretation’ as a sign for the distinction between his theory and the other theories and says that the other theorists like Gadamer, Derrida, Fish, Juhl deny that we have an array of choices. Accordingly, Gadamer, Derrida and Fish argue that the norm of author’s intent is an illusionary norm while Juhl contends that the non-author’s norm is an illusionary norm. See, Hirsch, “Afterwords,” p. 89; Juhl, “The Appeal to the Text,” pp. 277-287.

⁷⁷ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 25. However, on the other hand, Hirsch insists on the idea that if the author’s meaning is not chosen, an arbitrariness arises. Thus, there is necessity in grounding meaning on the shared object of cognition (intention). See, Hirsch, “Evaluation as Knowledge,” p. 54. Therefore, he implies that even though choice is not based on an epistemological foundation (Hirsch, “The Politics of Theories of Interpretation,” in *The Politics of Interpretation*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983), p. 330) namely, it cannot be shown why author’s intention is a necessary starting point for correct interpretation, in terms of its consequences which is to prevent arbitrariness in the practice of interpretation, there is an implicit necessity to choose author’s intention. Hence, by grounding the validity of his epistemological and methodical principles on the practical level, he seems to restrict their scientific universal claim—which is the main goal of Hirsch, namely, to elevate the practice of interpretation to the scientific level. See, Hirsch, “Value and Knowledge in the Humanities,” in *In Search of Literary Theory*, ed. M. W. Bloomfield (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), pp. 55-72.

⁷⁸ Hirsch, *The Aims*, pp. 76-77.

⁷⁹ Hirsch remarks: “...it is a fallacy to claim that a particular norm for interpretation is necessarily grounded in the nature of this or that kind of text, rather than in the interpreter’s own will,” Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 25.

⁸⁰ Hirsch, *The Aims*, pp. 75-76.

⁸¹ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 26.

⁸² Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 180.

⁸³ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 166.

⁸⁴ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. x.

⁸⁵ Gadamer, “Reflections,” pp. 52-53.

⁸⁶ *TM*, 472; *WM*, 476.

⁸⁷ Hirsch, *The Aims*, 8. At this point, Hirsch’s approach to the generation of meaning by a reader raises the question: ‘what is the criterion which can determine that the meaning generated by the interpreter is author’s intended meaning not the meaning imposed by the interpreter on the author’s text?’. This question is closely related to the question of whether Hirsch can escape from the so-called ‘hermeneutical circle’. As we will see later, Hirsch rejects this notion since it reflects the insertion of the interpreter’s own historical situation and his contribution into the revelation of the meaning of a text and thus the inseparability of the meaning from the interpretive activity, namely, “the inherent incompleteness of the interpretive task.” See, J. M. Connolly, “Gadamer and the Author’s Authority: a Language-Game Approach” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 44, no.3 (Spring 1986), p. 271; Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 81.

⁸⁸ In this context, Hirsch assumes ‘the timelessness of understanding’ which is different from the historicity of interpretation which refers, in Hirsch, to the act of relating ahistorical meaning to the present time of the interpreter. In this latter sense, meaning is called ‘significance’. Thus,

Hirsch maintains that “All understanding is necessarily and by nature intrinsic [ahistorical], all interpretation necessarily is transient and historical.” It seems that, according to Hirsch, Interpreter’s mind is both ahistorical and historical, namely, it is the medium upon which ahistorical meaning is transformed into the historical meaning. Nevertheless, as we will discuss later, since he preserves the distinction between ahistorical meaning (intention) and historical meaning (significance) the mediation of the former is not, in fact, to bring it to the present situation but to subsume present situation under the past meaning. Thus, present (particular) is no more than an instance of the past (universal). See, Hirsch, *Validity*, pp. 137-138.

⁸⁹ R. J. Howard, *Three Faces of Hermeneutics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 151.

⁹⁰ Hirsch, *Validity*, p.207.

⁹¹ Hirsch, *Validity*, p.197.

⁹² Hirsch basically rejects the idea that textual meaning is cut off from the life of its author, and has its own life independent of its author’s mind. He calls this approach ‘semantic autonomy’ and criticizes Heideggerian-Gadamerian hermeneutics, New Criticism, Structuralism since they defend this approach. See, Hirsch, *Validity*, pp. 1-5; *The Aims*, p. 17. For the critique of Hirsch from the viewpoint of semantic autonomy, see B. A. Wilson, “Hirsch’s Hermeneutics: A Critical Examination,” *Philosophy Today* 12, no. ¼ (Spring 1978), pp. 20-33.

⁹³ In this context, Grondin says that “the idea of method introduces a *distance* between man and the truth, one that scorns the essential way understanding belongs together with what discloses itself as true.” See, J. Grondin, “Hermeneutics and Relativism,” p. 50.

⁹⁴ Ricoeur, “The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation,” pp. 129-141.

⁹⁵ For instance, Gadamer says that “The legal historian—like the judge—has his “methods” of avoiding mistakes, and in such matters I agree entirely with the legal historian.” *TM*, xxxiii.

⁹⁶ *TM*, xxxiii.

⁹⁷ *TM*, xxii; *WM*, 1-2.

⁹⁸ Gadamer, “A Classical Text,” p. 639.

⁹⁹ In this context, Gadamer argues that “The mere presence of the other before whom we stand helps us to break up our own bias and narrowness, and even before he opens his mouth to make a reply. That which becomes a dialogical experience for us here is not limited to the sphere of arguments and counterarguments the exchange and unification of which may be the end meaning of every confrontation. Rather, as the experiences... , there is something else in this experience, namely, a potentiality for being other [*Andersseins*] that lies beyond every coming to agreement about what is common.” See, Gadamer, “Text and Interpretation,” p. 27. Gadamer himself mentions his appropriation of Hegelian dialectic of recognition. However, he seems to separate his conception from Hegelian dialectic of recognition by accepting that otherness is an unsurpassable and, thus, inexhaustible source of truth while in Hegel otherness is surpassable and, then, a step to absolute knowledge. Concerning the notion ‘prejudice,’ Gadamer remarks that “whatever . . . precedes our power of judgment we call prejudice.” See, Gadamer, “The Power of Reason,” *Man and World* 3, no. 1 (1970), p. 11.

¹⁰⁰ Schleiermacher accepts that the bond which binds individuals and thus makes communication between them possible is human nature. Thus, in his hermeneutics, there seems to be a dialectical relation between individuality (radical otherness) of the other and its commonality with other individuals in term of human nature. Schleiermacher seems to apply this perspective to his theory of interpretation: On the one hand he accepts linguistic interpretation which reflects the

idea of common nature and technical interpretation (especially the method of divination) which must be the application of the concept of the individuality of the other.

¹⁰¹ Gadamer, "Reflections," p. 96.

¹⁰² In Hegel, the concept of desire refers to the assimilating power of consciousness. However, once object is assimilated, desire annihilates itself thanks to the satisfaction. However, once desire disappears, it (desire) exists again in order to assimilate its new object. See, G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 105-111.

¹⁰³ We should note that, in Gadamer, the concept of hermeneutic distance refers not only to the 'otherness of the other but also historical (time) and spatial distance which he calls "aesthetic distance". Gadamer says: "we are not only dealing with the distance between ages but more so with the otherness of the other which makes one reflective," Gadamer, "Reflections," p. 96; he argues on aesthetic distance in the following way: "The spectator is set at an absolute distance... But this distance is aesthetic distance in a true sense, for it signifies the distance necessary for seeing, and thus makes possible a genuine and comprehensive participation in what is presented before us." See for further discussion on the concept of spatial distance, *TM*, 128; *WM*, 132.

¹⁰⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 263.

¹⁰⁵ Here, Gadamer is appropriating Heideggerian understanding of Being. In Heidegger, 'Being' does not unfold totally in its self-manifestation, but rather withholds itself and withdraws with the same primordiality with which it manifests itself. According to Gadamer, "This is the deep insight that was first maintained by Schelling in opposition to Hegel's logical idealism." See, Gadamer, "Text and Interpretation," p. 25.

¹⁰⁶ Gadamer, "A Classical Text," p. 638.

¹⁰⁷ *TM*, xxxvi. Dannenberg and Müller criticize Hirsch since he approaches textual meaning as an artificial construct. For their further critique of Hirsch, see Lutz Dannenberg and Hans-Harald Müller, "On Justifying the Choice of Interpretive Theories," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 43 (1984), pp. 7-16.

¹⁰⁸ *TM*, xxviii.

¹⁰⁹ We should remark that Gadamer adopts the concepts of belongingness and world from Heidegger in order to show that the original unity of subject and object is prior to their distinction and that reflective thinking within which this distinction occurs can appear only upon this original unity. See for the discussion of the concept of belongingness and world in Heidegger, Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1969), pp. 19-75; *Being and Time*, pp. 91-163.

¹¹⁰ *TM*, xxxi.

¹¹¹ *TM*, 297; *WM*, 302.

¹¹² Gadamer says: "It is true that my book is phenomenological in its method. This may seem paradoxical inasmuch as Heidegger's criticism of transcendental inquiry and his thinking of 'the turn' form the basis of my treatment of the universal hermeneutic problem," *TM*, xxxvi.

¹¹³ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 49-67.

¹¹⁴ Hirsch, "Truth and Method in Interpretation," *Review of Metaphysics* 18, no. 3 (March 1965), pp. 488-490; reprinted as "Appendix II" to Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 245-247.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*; *TM*, 167.

¹¹⁶ *TM*, xxxi.

¹¹⁷ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 5.

¹¹⁸ *TM*, 296; *WM*, 301.

¹¹⁹ According to Gadamer, with writing the immediacy of all the emotional overtones of expression are left behind. A text demands first of all to be understood in terms of what is said, and not as an expression of an individual life. Detached from the contingency of its origin, what is put down in writing is freed for new relations of meaning exceeding those which may have been intended by the author. Gadamer refers to this situation by the “pure ideality of meaning.” *TM*, 394; *WM*, 398; “The Eminent Text and Its Truth” *Bulletin of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 13 (1980), pp. 4-6.

¹²⁰ Gadamer, “Reflections,” p. 52.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* Sharing the same view with Gadamer, Ricoeur accepts the inseparability of intention and textual meaning in the case of living discourse and argues that “With written discourse, however, the author’s intention and the meaning of the text cease to coincide. This dissociation of the verbal meaning of the text and the mental intention of the author gives to the concept of inscription its decisive significance, beyond the mere fixation of previous oral discourse. Inscription becomes synonymous with the semantic autonomy of the text, which results from the disconnection of the mental intention of the author from the verbal meaning of the text, of what the author meant and what the text means. The text’s career escapes the finite horizon lived by its author. What the text means now matters more than what the author meant when he wrote it.” See, Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth, Texas: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976), pp. 29-30; Ricoeur and Gadamer, “The Conflict of Interpretations,” in *Phenomenology: Dialogues and Bridges*, ed. R. Bruzina and B. Wilshire (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982), pp. 306-8.

¹²² *TM*, 294; *WM*, 299; *Le Problème de la Conscience Historique* (Louvain: Université Catholique, 1963), p. 79. “The Problem of Historical Consciousness,” in *Interpretive Social Science: A Reader*, ed. P. Rabinow and W. M. Sullivan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), p. 154.

¹²³ *TM*, 167; *WM*, 172.

¹²⁴ *TM*, 102; *WM*, 108.

¹²⁵ Alasdair MacIntyre gives an interesting example for this perspective when he notes that “we confront a blank wall” in trying to understand the aborigine practice of carrying about “a stick or stone which is treated as if it is or embodies the soul of the individual who carries it.” See, A. MacIntyre, “Is Understanding Religion Compatible with Believing It?” in *Rationality*, ed. Bryan Wilson (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 68ff; Georgia Warnke, *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason* (California: Stanford University Press, 1987), pp. 7-10.

¹²⁶ In this context, Gadamer writes: “When we read an interpretation, we turn ourselves in a given direction, but we do not intend this particular interpretation as such. Obviously the language of interpretation should not assume the place of that toward which it itself is pointing. An interpretation that attempted to do this would remind us of the dog that, when we try to point something out to it, invariably turns to the pointing hand instead of looking at what we are trying to show it.” See, Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, ed. R. Bernasconi, trans. N. Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 72-73.

¹²⁷ *TM*, 292; *WM*, 297. Gadamer remarks: “In reading a letter, to aim at persona; *thoughts* of our correspondent and not at the matters *about which* he reports is to contradict what is meant by letter.” See, “The Problem of Historical Consciousness,” p. 154.

¹²⁸ Gadamer writes: “What we call a work of art and experience (erleben) aesthetically depends on a process of abstraction. By disregarding everything in which a work is rooted (its original context of life, and the religious or secular function that gave it significance), it becomes visible as the “pure work of art.” In performing this abstraction, aesthetic consciousness performs a task that is positive in itself. It shows what a pure work of art is, and allows it to exist in its own right. I call this ‘aesthetic differentiation,” *TM*, 85-87; *WM*, 91-94.

¹²⁹ Funk describes the same approach of Historical Criticism as “a closed circle” and notes that “it [Historical Criticism] attempts to posit the past as something discrete from the present and thus release it from every relative appropriation.” See, R. W. Funk, “The Hermeneutical Problem and Historical Criticism,” in *The New Hermeneutics*, ed. J. M. Robinson and J. B. Cobb (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 186.

¹³⁰ As Bontekoe remarks, even though for Gadamer such a meaning could be reconstructed “what we would then have is a dead meaning—a meaning which was appropriate to, and arose out of, the circumstances of another place and time—a meaning with which for this very reason, it is impossible for us to enter into a living relationship.” See, R. Bontekoe, “A Fusion of Horizons: Gadamer and Schleiermacher” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (March 1987), p. 4.

¹³¹ *TM*, 296, *WM*, 301. When he is talking about the representation of a work of art, he notes that “this kind of representation leaves behind it everything that is accidental and unessential—e.g., the private, particular being of the actor. He disappears entirely in the recognition of what he is representing.” See, *TM*, 114; *WM*, 119-20. Hirsch views ‘text’ as an occasion for meaning (the author’s intention) since it is mute and requires a consciousness behind it. See, Hirsch, *The Aims*, pp. 75-76.

¹³² *TM*, 102; *WM*, 108.

¹³³ According to Wimsatt and Beardsley, the Intentional Fallacy occurs when the critic confuses the intention with the standard for determining what the actual meaning of the literary text is. See, “The Intentional Fallacy,” pp. 334-344; Suresh Raval, Intention and Contemporary Literary Theory” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 38, no. 3 (September 1980), pp. 261-277. See also Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1956), pp. 66-8.

¹³⁴ Ermarth, “Transformation of Hermeneutics,” p. 176

¹³⁵ As F. Lentricchia notes, Hirsch seems to accept the Husserlian distinction of intentional acts from intentional object on “the severe Cartesian division of object from subject.” See, F. Lentricchia, “E. D. Hirsch: The Hermeneutics of Innocence,” in *After the New Criticism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 263.

¹³⁶ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 16.

¹³⁷ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 241.

¹³⁸ Hirsch, *Validity*, pp. 17-18.

¹³⁹ Wimsatt and Beardsley, “The Intentional Fallacy,” pp. 334-344; Raval, “Intention and Contemporary Literary Theory,” p. 262.

¹⁴⁰ Wimsatt and Beardsley, “The Intentional Fallacy,” p. 334.

¹⁴¹ Beardsley, “The Authority of the Text,” p. 25; *Aesthetics* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1958), pp. 17-29.

¹⁴² Wimsatt and Beardsley, “The Intentional Fallacy,” p. 334.

¹⁴³ Beardsley, “The Authority of the Text,” p. 32.

¹⁴⁴ Beardsley, "The Authority of the Text," p. 24. Though Gadamer does not restrict semantic autonomy only to the work of art, he emphasizes the difference between a poetic text and the other kind of texts by arguing that, in fact, "a poem is precisely a text which holds itself together by meaning and sound and forms a unity, and insoluble whole." See, Gadamer, "Philosophy and Literature" *Man and World* 18 (1985), p. 255.

¹⁴⁵ Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," p. 335; Raval, "Intention and Contemporary Literary Theory," pp. 261-2. As we saw above, Hirsch calls this view "semantic autonomy."

¹⁴⁶ Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," p. 335.

¹⁴⁷ Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," p. 335.

¹⁴⁸ Beardsley, "The Authority of the Text," pp. 33-35.

¹⁴⁹ *TM*, 294, *WM*, 299-300. In this context, Gadamer notes that the unreadability of a written expression refers to the fact that "the text did not fulfill its task of being understood without any difficulties. We find further confirmation here that we always already look ahead to an understanding of that which is said in the text." See, "Text and Interpretation," p. 32.

¹⁵⁰ Palmer puts the formalist approach of Wimsatt and Beardsley as follows: "The text is analyzed in strict separation from any perceiving subject, and 'analysis' is thought of as virtually synonymous with 'interpretation.' And, "Literary interpretation, by and large, is still generally seen as an exercise in the conceptual 'dissection' (a biological image!) of the literary object (or being). Of course, since this being or object is an 'aesthetic' object, dissecting it is somehow thought to be vastly more 'humanizing' than dissecting a frog in the laboratory; yet the image of a scientist taking an object apart to see how it is made become the prevailing model of the art of interpretation." See, Richard Palmer, *Hermeneutics* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 6. Precisely because of this fact, Wimsatt and Beardsley consider the "confusion between poem and its *results* (what it *is* and what it *does*)" as an "Affective Fallacy." See, Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Affective Fallacy," pp. 345-358. Hence, from their perspective, Gadamer's assertion that meaning and significance (application) cannot be separated should be an affective fallacy.

¹⁵¹ Precisely because of this monistic approach, Beardsley, for instance, argues that "As Hirsch insists, the two interpretations [which are in conflict] cannot be reconciled; at least one must be false." See, Beardsley, "The Authority of the Text," p. 31. Palmer criticizes New Criticism by arguing that "But the error, I believe, they made was not realizing that a perspective which sharply distinguishes perception from the objects of perception encourages the tendency to focus on the object as if it were somehow independent of the act of encounter." See, Richard Palmer, "Phenomenology as Foundation for a Post-Modern Philosophy of Literary Interpretation," *Cultural Hermeneutics* 1 (1973), p. 210.

¹⁵² We borrow this conception from Foucault. See, Foucault, "What is an Author?," p. 127.

¹⁵³ Foucault, "What is an Author?," p. 127.

¹⁵⁴ See, Hirsch, *The Aims*, pp. 75-76. It should be noted that by the word "text" the embodiment of meaning in a particular field of carriers or signifiers is meant. In this context, Taylor remarks that "The meaning...is one which admits of more than one expression, and in this sense, a distinction must be possible between meaning and expression." See, C. Taylor, "Interpretation and the Science of Man," *Review of Metaphysics* 25, 1 (September 1971), pp. 3-5. See for the same distinction, Gracia, "Text and Their Interpretation," pp. 496-497.

¹⁵⁵ S. Knapp and W. B. Michaels, "Against Theory," p. 12; this article is reprinted with the title "The Impossibility of Intentionless Meaning" in *Intention and Interpretation*, pp. 51-65.

¹⁵⁶ Knapp and Michaels, "Against Theory," pp. 12-14.

¹⁵⁷ Knapp and Michaels, "Against Theory," pp. 15-17.

¹⁵⁸ Beardsley, "The authority of the Text," pp. 25-26.

¹⁵⁹ Knapp and Michaels, "The Impossibility of Intentionless Meaning," p. 63.

¹⁶⁰ R. Shusterman, "Interpretation, Intention, and Truth," in *Intention and Interpretation*, p. 66.

¹⁶¹ Shusterman makes this objection and notes: "By simplistically conflating 'meaning' with 'authorially intended meaning' they thereby absurdly preclude the possibility of someone's speech or writing failing to mean what it was intended to mean, a possibility which is indeed a very frequent actuality." See, Shusterman, "Intention, Interpretation, and Truth," p. 66.

¹⁶² Juhl, *Interpretation*, p. 109; Knapp and Michaels, "Against Theory," p. 20.

¹⁶³ Juhl, "The Appeal to the Text," p. 281.

¹⁶⁴ Juhl, "The Appeal to the Text," p. 284.

¹⁶⁵ Juhl, "The Appeal to the Text," p. 285.

¹⁶⁶ Bagwell, *American Formalism*, pp. 43-44.

¹⁶⁷ According to Gadamer, the anticipation of perfect coherence presupposes that the text is not only an adequate expression of a thought but also that it really transmits to us the truth. Hence, for him, the coherence of a text is a shared and comprehensible reference to the "things in themselves." See, Gadamer, "The Problem of Historical Consciousness," pp. 108, 155.

¹⁶⁸ Bagwell, *American Formalism*, p. 45.

¹⁶⁹ Knapp and Michaels, "Against Theory," pp. 13-15.

¹⁷⁰ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 4.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*; *The Aims*, pp. 75-76. This point reflects also Hirsch's objection to the theory of 'semantic autonomy' which takes language conventions as the basis of the interpretation of a text. Hirsch describes the interpretations based on semantic autonomy as the 'authorship' and thus anachronistic. He means that as long as the author's intention (original meaning) is not the goal of interpretation, the interpreter himself becomes the author of a text, namely, he intrudes his meaning on the text which he is interpreting. The presupposition behind this argument is this: "Whenever meaning is attached to a sequence of words it is impossible to escape an author," Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 5. (J. Gracia calls this kind of author the "interpretative author." See, Gracia, "Text and their Interpretations," pp. 526-527.) Here, Hirsch is following Schleiermacher's tenet that ". . . it is the primary task of interpretation not to understand an ancient text in view of modern thinking, but to rediscover the original relationship between the writer and his audience." See, Schleiermacher, "The Hermeneutics: Outline of the 1819 Lectures," in *The Hermeneutic Tradition*, pp. 89-90. Nevertheless, when posing the original meaning against the anachronistic meaning, he seems to disregard his own argument that the language of a text provides the possibilities of meaning and imposes "an unavoidable limitation on the wills of both the author and interpreter," *Validity*, p. 27. If this so, he should accept that an interpretation which is based on the semantic autonomy is not to impose alien meaning on a text, but rather, must be the realization of the possibilities of a text's language.

¹⁷² In this context, Hirsch notes: "An array of *possible* meanings is no doubt a determinate entity in the sense that it is not an array of *actual* meanings; thus, it too has a boundary." See, Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 45.

¹⁷³ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 30.

¹⁷⁴ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 23. We think that this point is implied also in Hirsch's remark that "Any author knows that written verbal utterances can convey only verbal meanings—that is to say, meanings which can be conveyed to others by the words he uses," *Validity*, p. 18.

¹⁷⁵ According to Hirsch, since language cannot determine a particular meaning, we will use the word ‘meanings’ in its plural form to distinguish it from the author’s determinate, self-identical ‘meaning’.

¹⁷⁶ For instance, he says that “The author has an idea of what he wants to convey.” See, Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 101.

¹⁷⁷ Hoy puts this fact thusly: “Hirsch clearly presupposes a theory of meaning that connects meaning with the will of a psychological agent.” See, D. C. Hoy, *The Critical Circle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 19.

¹⁷⁸ Hence, Hirsch remarks that “My description departs from that of Aristotle and the neo-Aristotelians by its insistence on the entirely metaphorical character of an entelechy when that concept is applied to a form of speech”, *Validity*, p. 101ff. Here Hirsch must be following Betti who describes meaning-content as “matter charged with mind.” See, Betti, “Hermeneutics as the general methodology,” p. 91.

¹⁷⁹ Hirsch, “Afterwords,” p. 90. It seems that we can trace this interaction in Hirsch’s theory back to Schleiermacher’s concept of two-part referential discourse. Schleiermacher remarks that “As every discourse has a two-part reference, to the whole language and to the entire thought of its creator, so all understanding of speech consists of two elements [Momenten]—understanding the speech as it derives from the language and as it derives from the mind of the thinker.” This explains why Schleiermacher proposes grammatical and psychological interpretations as the complementary process. See, Schleiermacher, “*The Hermeneutics: Outline of the 1819 Lectures*,” pp. 86-87.

¹⁸⁰ Hirsch argues that “many of my sharable meanings are meanings which I am not directly thinking of at all.” Here, Hirsch seems to accept that to a certain degree meaning transcends human ‘consciousness’ and ‘will’ due to its social aspect (pre-giveness).

¹⁸¹ Hirsch accepts that just as there should be “an *idea*, a notion of the type of meaning to be communicated; otherwise there would be nothing to guide the author’s will,” so, “there must also exist the motive force of will, since without its goal-seeking the idea could not be realized through the temporal activity of speaking.” See, Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 101.

¹⁸² Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. C. Bally and A. Sechehaye, trans. R. Harris (Illinois: Open Court, 1994), pp. 8-24; Jonathan Cullar, *Ferdinand de Saussure* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1997), pp. 22-24; Hirsch remarks that “A text can represent only the *parole* of the speaker or author, which is another way of saying that meaning requires a *meaneer*.” See, Hirsch, *Validity*, pp. 231-235. F. Lentricchia puts this Saussurean distinction in Hirsch’s theory thusly: “A text—any text—because it is an actualization from an ideal linguistic system of possibilities and conventions, owes its particular formal and semantic identity to a conscious, selecting will that interacts with the system, and in so doing realizes a linguistic possibility.” See, F. Lentricchia, “E. D. Hirsch: The Hermeneutics of Innocence,” p. 259.

¹⁸³ Hirsch, *Validity*, pp. 66-67. In this context, Warnke remarks: “It seems to me that nothing separates Gadamer and Hirsch so much as their views on sharing verbal meaning... for Gadamer, if the meaning of a text is shared then, such sharing involves more than either a knowledge of what an author’s intentions were or a capacity to reconstruct them; it means rather that readers share the text’s understanding of its subject-matter.” See, Warnke, *Gadamer*, p. 47.

¹⁸⁴ F. Lentricchia puts this approach of Hirsch as follows: “As source, or governing center, the author’s will stands outside the realm of language.” See, Lentricchia, “E. D. Hirsch,” p. 260. From this perspective, we share M. Ermarth’s contention that for traditional hermeneutics (of which Hirsch is a follower) “meaning is primarily a matter of consciousness and only *secondarily* a matter

of language or sign-system in which meaning comes to be” (italic mine). See, Ermarth, “Transformation of Hermeneutics,” pp. 177-178.

¹⁸⁵ *TM, 196; WM, 200*. This fact also explains why according to Hirsch the act of understanding is at first a guess (divination in Schleiermacher). In other words, if meaning is a free production of author (individual consciousness), it means that it is impossible to get behind this individuality, i.e., to reduce it to something prior. Thus, the starting point in interpretation is not a methodological activity which is based on the regularity and the generality of the object under investigation, but unmethodical. See, Hirsch, *Validity*, pp. x, 203.

¹⁸⁶ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 149.

¹⁸⁷ Foucault makes the same distinction and argues that “it would be as false to seek the author in relation to the actual writer as to the fictional narrator.” Thus, in his view, author (or according to Hirsch “speaking subject”) is functional. The function of the author lies in the fact that his name “remains at the contours of texts—separating one from the other, defining their form, and characterizing their mode of existence. It points to the existence of certain groups of discourse and refers to the status of this discourse within a society and culture.” See, Foucault, “What is an Author?,” pp. 123-129. Betti describes the speaking subject “an artificial unity constructed by value-orientations.” Betti, “Hermeneutics as the general methodology,” p. 67.

¹⁸⁸ Lentricchia remarks: “Hirsch’s conception of person, then, is severely dualistic in its recollection of the opposition of soul and body: a person is not a unified whole composed of fused elements of typicality and singularity, but a mechanical entity with separable ‘parts’: the ‘part’ that can be known via typological reconstruction (traditional metaphysics calls it the soul) is the “cultural subject,” the detached subjectivity of the historical person shared by the other persons of his “times.” See, Lentricchia, “E. D. Hirsch,” p. 266.

¹⁸⁹ Hirsch, *Validity*, pp. 242-243.

¹⁹⁰ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 243.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 143.

¹⁹³ Hirsch remarks that R. Barthes, an anti-intentionalist, was displeased when his intentions were distorted by M. Picard. See, Hirsch, *The Aims*, p. 91.

¹⁹⁴ Hirsch, *The Aims*, p. 6.

¹⁹⁵ Hirsch does not tell who fell into this paradoxical situation. But he calls attention to the similar situation (which seems to be paradoxical from his intentionalist point of view) concerning some Heideggerian scholars who argue that Hirsch misunderstood Heidegger. Hirsch remarks that “since the accusation assumes the determinateness and stability of Heidegger’s meaning, *and* the possibility of its being correctly interpreted, I admit practical error for the sake of the theoretical truth.” *Ibid.* In his view, Heidegger rejects the possibility of correct interpretation (textual identity) on the basis of the historicity of understanding.

¹⁹⁶ Hirsch, “Faulty Perspectives”, p. 262; *The Aims*, p. 48.

¹⁹⁷ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 241.

¹⁹⁸ See, Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 241. We find the same approach in Betti when he argues that “It is possible to enter into a spiritual relationship with one’s fellow-men only on the basis of such meaning-full forms.” Accordingly, psychological reconstruction is necessary for having intellectual understanding. See, Betti, “Hermeneutics as the general methodology,” p. 54, 67.

¹⁹⁹ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 234; Betti, “Hermeneutics as the general methodology,” p. 54.

²⁰⁰ Hirsch, *The Aims*, pp. 36-50.

²⁰¹ Schleiermacher, “*The Hermeneutics: The Outline of the 1819 Lectures*,” p. 93; W. Dilthey, “The Rise of Hermeneutics” in *The Hermeneutic Tradition*, p. 113

²⁰² That is, an entity in its boundaries or identity. See, Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 44.

²⁰³ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 50.

²⁰⁴ Hirsch, *Validity*, pp.19-23.

²⁰⁵ *TM*, 192-5; *WM*, 195-7. It seems that here Gadamer follows Dilthey’s interpretation of Schleiermacher’s theory. Dilthey remarks: “The ultimate goal of the hermeneutic process is to understand an author better than he understood himself. This is an idea which is the necessary consequence of the doctrine of unconscious creation.” See, Dilthey, “The Rise of Hermeneutics,” p. 113. According to Gadamer, “Wanting to understand an author better, even better than he understands himself, would eventually render all communication impossible.” See, Gadamer, “Reply to Karl-Otto Apel,” in *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, p. 96. See for a detailed discussion on “better understanding,” O. F. Bollnow, “What does it mean to Understand a Writer better than He Understood Himself” *Philosophy Today* 23, no. ¼ (Spring 1979), pp. 16-28.

²⁰⁶ *TM*, 193; *WM*, 196-7.

²⁰⁷ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 241.

²⁰⁸ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 153. Gadamer also makes this distinction between the author’s intention and his accomplishment when he discusses Collingwood’s intentionalist (reconstructionist) view. Collingwood defends the intentionalist view and argues that Nelson’s intention, for instance, can be reconstructed through events since his plan was successfully accomplished in the Battle of Trafalgar. In other words, understanding the course of the battle and understanding the plan that Nelson carried out in it are one and the same process. Accordingly, his opponents’ plan cannot be reconstructed through events since their plan failed. Gadamer remarks that the question concerning the meaning of a great event is not the same question of whether this event went according to plan. Certainly, there are some examples on the coincidence of the two but it cannot be taken as a methodological principle when we are concerned with a historical tradition which deals with men, like ourselves, in history. In his view, in history, reality and the forces are more determinant than our plans. He concludes that “As a rule we experience the course of events as something that continually changes our plans and expectations. Someone who tries to stick to his plans discovers precisely how powerless his reason is.” See, *TM*, 371-2; *WM*, 376-7.

²⁰⁹ See also W. E. Cain, “Authority, ‘Cognitive Atheism,’ and the Aims of Interpretation: The Literary Theory of E. D. Hirsch,” in *The Crisis in Criticism* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1984), pp. 21-25.

²¹⁰ For instance, on the question whether Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* does have Freudian implications, Hirsch rejects the implication that Hamlet wished to sleep with his mother because he (Hirsch) posits that such an implication “did not belong to the type of meaning Shakespeare willed.” See, Hirsch, *Validity*, pp. 122-126.

²¹¹ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 238.

²¹² Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 241.

²¹³ Gadamer’s critique of this view of the author indicates also his rejection of the so-called implied author (speaking subject) which reflects itself as the condition of the determinacy and timelessness of meaning. In this context, Gadamer notes: “But there is no possible consciousness—we have repeatedly emphasized this, and it is the basis of the historicity of understanding—there is no possible consciousness, however infinite, in which any traditionary ‘subject matter’ would appear in the light of eternity.” See, *TM*, 473; *WM*, 476.

²¹⁴ Gadamer, “The Power of Reason,” p. 14.

²¹⁵ *TM*, 373; *WM*, 379.

²¹⁶ *TM*, 452; *WM*, 456.

²¹⁷ *TM*, 426; *WM*, 430.

²¹⁸ *TM*, 473; *WM*, 477.

²¹⁹ *TM*, 497-499.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ *TM*, 117; *WM*, 122.

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ *TM*, 102; *WM*, 108.

²²⁴ *TM*, 116; *WM*, 121-2.

²²⁵ *TM*, 104; *WM*, 109-10.

²²⁶ *TM*, 279; *WM*, 284.

²²⁷ *TM*, 280; *WM*, 285.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ See Gadamer, "The Scope of Hermeneutical Reflection," in *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. and ed. D. E. Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 33-34.

²³⁰ Precisely because of this fact, according to Gadamer, understanding is not a psychic transposition as Schleiermacher assumes. See, *TM*, 395, *WM*, 398. Schleiermacher says that "An important prerequisite for interpretation is that one must be willing to leave one's own consciousness [Gesinnung] and to enter the author's." See, Schleiermacher, "The Aphorisms on Hermeneutics from 1805 and 1809/10," trans. R. Haas and J. Wojcik, in *The Hermeneutic Tradition*, pp. 58, 81.

²³¹ *TM*, 285; *WM*, 289.

²³² *TM*, 300; *WM*, 305-6.

²³³ Gadamer, "On the Problematic Character of Aesthetic Consciousness," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 9, no. 1 (Winter 1982), pp. 38-40.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 452-3.

²³⁵ Wachterhauser, "Interpreting Texts," pp. 454-5.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 452.

²³⁷ Hirsch, "Truth and Method in Interpretation," p. 492.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 493.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 492-3.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² *TM*, 122; *WM*, 127-8.

²⁴³ Hirsch, "Truth and Method in Interpretation," p. 495.

²⁴⁴ Hirsch, "Truth and Method in Interpretation," pp. 499-500.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 501; Hirsch describes this naïve abstraction as "the fallacy of the homogeneous past." And if this abstraction is about the homogeneous present-day, he calls it the "historicistic fallacy." See, Hirsch, "Faulty Perspectives," p. 257.

²⁴⁶ *TM*, 306-7; *WM*, 311-2.

²⁴⁷ Hirsch, "Truth and Method in Interpretation," p. 497; "Faulty Perspectives," p. 262.

²⁴⁸ Hirsch, "Truth and Method in Interpretation," p. 498.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 499.

²⁵⁰ Hirsch also remarks that "meaning is an object that exists *only* by virtue of a single, privileged, precritical approach." Hirsch, "Faulty Perspectives," p. 260.

²⁵¹ Precisely because of this distinction, Hirsch calls understanding (*ars intelligendi*) “silent”—that is, it can be construed only on its own terms and not in foreign categories—and interpretation (i.e., explication of what is understood, *ars explicandi*) “garrulous.” See, Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 134-5. However, later he also remarks that it is useful to stick to the broad term ‘interpretation’ which fuses the two functions (understanding and explication), since they do go together whenever any representation is explicated. See, Hirsch, *The Aims*, p. 19. Thus we realize that for Hirsch understanding has only a logical priority to explanation. Hoy puts this Hirschian distinction as follows: “Thus understanding is not what actually gets written down in the act of practical commentary. Rather, only interpretation appears; the commentary is always in the interpreter’s terms and not in the text’s.” According to Hoy, the notion of understanding a text in its own terms might seem only an ideal, even an unattainable one. See, Hoy, *The Critical Circle*, pp. 15-16. Stanley Rosen, following Leo Strauss, shares the same perspective with Hirsch and argues that one must have understood the text before one can interpret it. See, Rosen, “Horizontverschmelzung,” in *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, pp. 207-218. Gadamer replies to him by arguing that “The reverse seems to me to be convincing too: that the interpretation is precisely supposed to help to finally understand the unintelligible. What then is correct? Both statements? None of them? In the end, the answer must be that understanding is always already interpretation.” See, Gadamer, “Reply to Stanley Rosen,” *ibid.*, p. 221.

²⁵² Hirsch, “Truth and Method in Interpretation,” p. 499.

²⁵³ Hirsch, “Meaning and Significance,” p. 216.

²⁵⁴ Hirsch, “Faulty Perspectives,” p. 262.

²⁵⁵ Hirsch, *Validity*, pp. 31-32

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-39, 217-219.

²⁵⁷ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 38.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ In this context, Sokolowski remarks: “The identity of the object never shows up as one of its appearances; the thing is never simply what shows up in this view or aspect or profile, nor is it equivalent to the sum of its appearances; the identity registered within the appearances is always distinguished, though never separated, from them. The identity is of a different order from the appearances through and in which it is presented.” See, Sokolowski, “Gadamer’s Theory of Hermeneutics,” in *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, p. 229. In fact, Hirsch seems to be aware of this distinction when he talks about grasping the identity of an object through its aspects. See, Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 132; “Meaning and Significance,” p. 203.

²⁶² Gurwitsch gives an example concerning this distinction: “In hearing the name ‘Greenland,’ each one of us has a certain thought or representation of that island; that is, the island presents itself and is intended in a certain fashion. The same hold for the arctic explorer. Both he and any one of us intend the same object. However, Greenland *as* intended and meant by some of us, with our sketchy, very vague, and indeterminate representation, obviously differs from Greenland *as* meant by the arctic explorer, who has been to the island and knows it thoroughly.” See, Aron Gurwitsch, *Phenomenology and the Theory of Science* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 230; R. Sokolowski, *Husserlian Meditations* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), pp. 86-113. See for Madison’s critique of Hirsch on intentionality of consciousness,

Madison, *The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity*, pp. 7-12. Madison reads Husserl's concept of intentionality from an idealist perspective and faults Hirsch with defending naïve realism.

²⁶³ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 20.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

²⁶⁶ Hirsch, "Faulty Perspectives," p. 256.

²⁶⁷ Hirsch argues that Gadamer falls victim to this fallacy. See, Hirsch, "Faulty Perspectives," p. 256.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 259-260.

²⁷¹ Hirsch, "Faulty Perspectives," p. 262. In discussing the question 'whether original or anachronistic meaning is the best meaning' Hirsch remarks that "Unless there is a powerful overriding value in disregarding an author's intention (i.e., original meaning), we who interpret as a vocation should not disregard it." See, Hirsch, *The Aims*, p. 90. If, as Hirsch argues, textual meaning cannot exist from another perspective than that of the author, how can it be disregarded? If it can be disregarded, does not textual meaning become an autonomous meaning which Hirsch opposes? This is an inconsistency in Hirsch's theory.

²⁷² Hirsch, "Faulty Perspectives," p. 260.

²⁷³ Hirsch remarks, "Responsible interpretation exists in two worlds at once, the world of the past and the world of the present, the world of the writer and the world of the reader." See, Hirsch, "Counterfactuals in Interpretation," in *Interpreting Law and Literature: A Hermeneutic Reader*, ed. S. Levinson and S. Mailloux (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), p. 55.

²⁷⁴ Hirsch, "Faulty Perspectives," pp. 262-3. He observes the "doubling of personality" also in Husserl's concept of 'bracketing': "Whenever we have posited another person's meaning, we have bracketed a region of our own experience as being that of another person . . . No doubt the paradoxical doubling of personality involved in verbal intercourse is bracketing experience for which some persons have greater talents than others, but it is nonetheless a widespread experience." *The Aims*, p. 6.

²⁷⁵ Hirsch, "Faulty Perspectives," pp. 263. Hirsch remarks that "Irony, whether verbal or dramatic, always entails this simultaneous adoption of two different mental sets, neither stance being assimilated to the other." Hirsch, *The Aims*, pp. 80, 106-7. Gadamer could object to Hirsch by arguing that "in conversation we understand irony to the extent to which we are in agreement with the other person on the subject matter." *TM*, 295n; *WM*, 300n. Thus, to understand somebody is not the matter of adopting the two different perspectives simultaneously but the matter of recognizing the common ground between them.

²⁷⁶ Hirsch, *The Aims*, p. 32.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*; "Meaning and Significance," p. 204. Owing to this fact, Hirsch prefers Piaget's model of corrigible schemata over Heidegger's concept "hermeneutic circle."

²⁷⁸ Hirsch, *The Aims*, p. 81.

²⁷⁹ Hirsch, "Faulty Perspectives," p. 259. According to Hirsch, the distinction between meaning and significance has a close resemblance to the distinction between knowledge and value. See, Hirsch, *The Aims*, p. 146. Thus, since the chief interest of significance is the unstable realm of value, the disagreements on the meaning stems from the difference between the value systems (horizons) of the interpreters. Linge seems to reject Hirsch's argument that ignoring this distinction is the source of some of the disagreements among the interpreters when he notes that "the

distinction between meaning and significance is at best difficult to apply to the history of interpretation, for it is indisputably the case that the interpreters of Plato, Aristotle, or Scripture in different historical eras differed *in what they thought they saw in the text* and not just in their views of the significance of the ‘same’ textual meaning for themselves. Interpreters of Paul, for instance, have not been arguing all these centuries only over what Paul ‘means’ *pro nobis*, but also over the claim Paul makes regarding the subject matter.” See, D. E. Linge, “Introduction,” in Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, p. xxiv.

²⁸⁰ Hirsch, “Meaning and Significance,” p. 204. Hirsch bases his distinction between meaning and significance on Frege’s distinction between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*. See, Hirsch, *Validity*, pp. 211-3. However, as Hoy shows, Frege’s distinction cannot be employed for Hirsch’s purpose since while Hirsch holds that meaning (*Sinn*, sense) is permanent and significance (*Bedeutung*, referent as Hoy suggests) may change, for Frege, *Bedeutung* or the truth-value of a thought does not change. “Change occurs only in the belief that the thought is true or not true.” See for further discussion, Hoy, *The Critical Circle*, pp. 22-23; F. F. Seeburger, “The Distinction Between ‘Meaning’ and ‘Significance’ : A Critique of the Hermeneutics of E. D. Hirsch,” *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 27, no. 2 (Spring 1979), pp. 254-262.

²⁸¹ Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 214.

²⁸² Hirsch, “Faulty Perspectives,” p. 262.

²⁸³ Hirsch, *The Aims*, p. 3

²⁸⁴ He remarks on these revisions as follows: “When I first proposed this distinction [between meaning and significance] my motivation was far from neutral; I equated meaning simply with original meaning, and wished to point up the integrity and permanence of original meaning... For the distinction between meaning and significance... are not limited to instances where meaning is equated with the author’s original meaning; it holds as well for any and all instances of “anachronistic meaning.” The universality in the distinction is readily seen if meaning is defined *tout court* as that which a text is taken to represent. No normative limitations are imported into the definition, since under it, meaning is simply meaning-for-an-interpreter.” (Hirsch, *The Aims*, p. 79; “Meaning and Significance,” pp. 223-4; “Past Intentions,” pp. 79-98). However, it is to be noted that Hirsch does not say that intention plays no role in the constitution of meaning. He argues that the interpreter is not bound only by the particular object of the author’s will in interpreting a text. See, Hirsch, “Against Theory,” pp. 48-49.

²⁸⁵ Hirsch, “Meaning and Significance,” pp. 203-4.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ In this context, Weinsheimer argues that Hirsch’s perspective eliminates the ‘real’ difference between the two examples as irrelevant before they can be used to exemplify the general concept. See for his further critique of Hirsch, “History and the Future of Meaning,” *Philosophy and Literature* 9, no. 2 (October 1985), p. 140.

²⁸⁹ In this context, Hirsch remarks: “when older texts have broad meanings, we can easily produce modern exemplifications *so long as the original meaning is understood as being itself as an exemplification of a broad and still valid concept.*” And “When I apply Shakespeare’s sonnet to my own lover rather than to his, I do not change his meaning-intention but rather instantiate and fulfill it. It is the nature of textual meaning to embrace many different future fulfillments without thereby being changed.” Hirsch, “Meaning and Significance,” p. 209-210, 217. Weinsheimer criticizes Hirsch by arguing that “to transfer the poem from one addressee to the other is more metaphor than subsumption.” Thus if I copy sonnet 55 onto a birthday card for my wife, or even

just think of her as I read it, I have not simply extended but changed its meaning. This is because “No concept, however universal in intent, is unlimited. . . Thus every concept must be understood historically, for what we mean is always something like ‘you’—something more or less particular, concrete, and historical.” See, J. Weinsheimer, “History and the Future of Meaning,” p. 145.

²⁹⁰ Hirsch, “Meaning and Significance,” p. 210.

²⁹¹ Hirsch, “Past Intentions,” p. 97.

²⁹² *Ibid.* It is to be noted that this kind of allegorical interpretation is not to be confused with the allegory itself. As is obvious, allegory exists by pointing to something else at the outset while, in Hirsch’s case, textual meaning refers first to something in its literal content. If it does not function in this way, for instance, if the author dies or the horizons (situations) change, it is to be taken as pointing to something else. Therefore, in Hirsch’s hermeneutic, allegorical interpretation is but a rebirth of the dead meaning in a different context.

²⁹³ As mentioned before, Rahman proposes the same approach in the process of interpretation. Like Hirsch, he distinguishes 3 steps in the double movement of going back to history and coming to the present. See, Rahman, *Islam and Modernity*, pp. 5-11. However, both Rahman and Hirsch presuppose that first we can know the past and present distinctly and then relate them to each other. If this is the case, then the application must be an extrinsic (accidental) relation. In other words, what they understand by application is like an attempt to find a common point or way of communication between the two distinct monologues. Nevertheless, precisely because of its extrinsic structure, the application must require a decision and power to exist. Thus this perspective leads to the (possible) conclusion that an alien value system can be applied to another horizon (society) without legitimacy, i.e., with force and power. This is because, both Rahman and Hirsch accept primarily the alien character of the horizons and value systems of the past and the present. In this case, they leave the question ‘how can these alien horizons be made familiar to each other?’ or ‘how can one find a way of communication between the monologues?’ open. More importantly, if the past and the present horizons can be known distinctively, the question why the past meaning should be applied to the present, i.e., the present should be subsumed under the past horizon arises. Is this the real meaning of application? How can we think ‘application’ without a genuine ‘dialogue’ between past and present at the outset?

It seems that this paradox arises because Hirsch wants to save the author’s authority (past intention) while adapting allegorical interpretation to his theory which presupposes, in fact, the common understanding, i.e., the autonomy of meaning at the outset. Thus Hirsch’s acceptance of the fulfillment of language in the monologue (the author’s intention) refers to why he fails to provide a basis for a genuine dialogue between past and present.

²⁹⁴ See, Hirsch, “Past Intentions,” pp. 84-85. For instance, I can fulfill my general intention (purpose) to go to the Catholic University of America by means of different particular intentions, like by driving a car, or by walking, or by riding the bicycle.

²⁹⁵ Hirsch, “Meaning and Significance,” p. 217.

²⁹⁶ Form is here “to be understood in a wide sense as an homogenous structure in which a number of perceptible elements are related to one another and which is suitable for preserving the character of the mind that created it or that is embodied in it.” Betti, “Hermeneutics as the general methodology,” p. 54; “The Epistemological Problem of Understanding As an Aspect of the General Problem of Knowing,” in *Hermeneutics: Questions and Prospects*, p. 30.

²⁹⁷ Betti, “Hermeneutics as the general methodology,” p. 53.

²⁹⁸ According to Betti, understanding is neither the exchange of the material signs of objects nor the mere reconstruction of the psychological acts of the Other.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 57-62.

³⁰⁰ Hence, according to Betti, interpretation goes beyond the simple task of the purely recognitive investigation of meaning by including the adaptation and assimilation of it within the existing life structures. Ibid., p. 61.

³⁰¹ Ibid., p. 58.

³⁰² Ibid., p. 68. Hence, Betti admits that “objectivity means something quite different in the *Geisteswissenschaften* compared with the natural sciences where we are dealing with objects that are essentially different from ourselves.” Ibid., p. 63.

³⁰³ Betti rejects Gadamer’s argument that meaning includes application (significance) by arguing that even if this is true for the theological interpretation of the Scripture or for normative-juridical hermeneutics, the task of the historical interpretation is purely contemplative. Hence, he makes a distinction between cognitive, normative, and reproductive interpretations which deal with philology, theology, legal hermeneutics, and history. Ibid., pp. 82-84; Gadamer, *TM*, 309-311. However, if Betti will follow his main tenet that understanding is the reconstruction of the original meaning (the mind of an Other), then his distinction cannot be a basic one. Accordingly, like historical interpretation, cognitive and normative interpretations will include a moment of contemplation of the past meaning.

³⁰⁴ Betti, *ibid.*, pp. 69-73. If this is the case, does not the autonomy of the hermeneutical object become a mere presupposition of the interpreter?

³⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 81.

³⁰⁶ Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, p. 125.

³⁰⁷ *TM*, 297; *WM*, 302.

³⁰⁸ Gadamer. “Reflections,” p. 44. In his view, to hold fast to the identity of sense [Sinnidentität] of a text is neither a falling back into the vanquished Platonism of a classicistic aesthetics nor is it an entrapment in metaphysics. Thus he rejects both the reception aesthetics of Hans-Robert Jauß as well as the deconstructionism of Jacques Derrida, both of which, as Sokolowski puts it, “collapse the object into its appearances and profiles.” Ibid., pp. 44, 229. For Gadamer’s critique of Derrida, see Gadamer, “Hermeneutics and Logocentrism,” in *Dialogue and Deconstruction: The Gadamer-Derrida Encounter*, ed. Diana P. Michelfelder and R. E. Palmer (Albany: State University of New York, 1989), pp. 114-125. H.-R. Jauß, “The Identity of the Poetic Text,” pp. 146-173. Derrida’s and Jauß’ approach can be considered also as the form of “reader-response criticism.” See, M. A. Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), pp. 16-19. Hence, it is clear that Gadamer wants to find another perspective than the author-centered theory of the intentionalists, like Hirsch and Juhl, and the reader-response theory of relativists, like Derrida, and Jauß. Nevertheless, when arguing that “in the Gadamerian mode of interpretation, meaning is *made* to conform to the critic’s view about what is true,” Hirsch seems to consider Gadamer among reader-response critics. This is because, in his view, there is either author’s horizon or that of the interpreter. See, Hirsch, “Meaning and Significance,” p. 218.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Gadamer, “Reflections,” p. 50.

³¹¹ Sokolowski, “Gadamer’s Theory of Hermeneutics,” p. 229.

³¹² Ibid. When defending Gadamer’s position against that of Hirsch, Madison reads Husserl like Sokolowski with respect to the relation between textual identity and interpretation. See, Madison, *The Hermeneutics of Post Modernity*, pp. 7-12.

³¹³ Wachterhauser, “Interpreting Texts,” pp. 453-454.

³¹⁴ Gadamer, “Hermeneutics and Logocentrism,” p. 118.

³¹⁵ Hirsch, "Truth and Method in Interpretation," p. 496

³¹⁶ *TM*, 391; *WM*, 395.

³¹⁷ Gadamer, "Hermeneutics and Logocentrism," p. 118.

³¹⁸ Gadamer, "Text and Interpretation," p. 34.

³¹⁹ This point refers to the basis of the diversity between the deconstructionism of Derrida, (which is under the influence of the hermeneutics of suspicion of Nietzsche and Freud), and the 'hermeneutics of trust' of Gadamer.

³²⁰ Gadamer, "Text and Interpretation," p. 30

³²¹ *TM*, 376; *WM*, 381.

³²² Gadamer, "Text and Interpretation," p. 26.

³²³ Gadamer, "Reflections," p. 50.

³²⁴ Betti misunderstands Gadamer when he argues that Gadamer's notion of 'fore-conception of completeness' (the *Vorgriff der Vollkommenheit*) proposes a "substantive agreement between text and reader—i.e. between the apparently easily accessible meaning of a text and the subjective conception of the reader—to be formed without, however, guaranteeing the correctness of understanding." See, Betti, "Hermeneutics as the general methodology," p. 79. In fact, what Gadamer means by this notion is that only what really constitutes a unity of meaning is intelligible. "So when we read a text we always assume its completeness, and only when this assumption proves mistaken—i.e., the text is not intelligible—do we begin to suspect the text and try to discover how it can be remedied." *TM*, 293-4; *WM*, 299. Hence, this notion is only a guidance for interpretation and not the result of the interpretation. See for further discussion, L. K. Schmidt, *The Epistemology of Hans-Georg Gadamer* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1985), pp. 45-56. Bontekoe also misunderstands Gadamer's notion of 'fore-conception of completeness' in the sense that as if "Gadamer considers it possible to arrive at a 'true' interpretation without engaging in a study of the text's background." R. Bontekoe, "A Fusion of Horizons: Gadamer and Schleiermacher," p. 10. Rather the opposite is true. For instance, when talking on the hermeneutic relevance of the Bible, Gadamer notes that "The reader of the Bible must know language, grammar, syntax, the historical conditions, and all the circumstances which are relevant for a given text." See, Gadamer, "Religious and Poetical Speaking," in *Myth, Symbol, and Reality*, ed. Alan M. Olson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980), p. 96.

³²⁵ Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, pp. 23-41.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

³²⁸ *TM*, 295; *WM*, 300.

³²⁹ In this context, Gadamer remarks: "every return to the 'text' . . . refers to that which was originally announced or pronounced and that should be maintained as constituting a meaningful identity." Gadamer, "Text and Interpretation," p. 35.

³³⁰ *TM*, 295; *WM*, 300.

³³¹ *TM*, 284; *WM*, 289.

³³² *TM*, 163; *WM*, 168.

³³³ *TM*, 284; *WM*, 289.

³³⁴ James Risser, "The Imagining of Truth in Philosophical Hermeneutics," in *Phenomenology, Interpretation, and Community*, ed. L. Langsdorf and S. H. Watson with E. M. Bower (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 159.

³³⁵ These articles can be found in *Hermeneutics and Truth*, pp. 25-32; 33-46.

³³⁶ Risser, *ibid.*

³³⁷ *TM*, 490-491; *WM*, 494.

³³⁸ Richard J. Bernstein, "From Hermeneutics to Praxis," in *Hermeneutics and Modern Philosophy*, ed. B. Wachterhauser (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), p. 99.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 107n32.

³⁴⁰ Lawrence K. Schmidt, "Das Einleuchtende: The Enlightening Aspect of the Subject Matter," in *Phenomenology, Interpretation, and Community*, pp. 175-191.

³⁴¹ Otto Pöggeler, *Martin Heidegger's Path of Thinking*, trans. D. Magurshak and S. Barber (NJ: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1987), p. 71.

³⁴² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 265.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁴ Laszlo Versényi, *Heidegger, Being, and Truth* (New Haven: Yale University Press: 1966), p. 14.

³⁴⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 264.

³⁴⁶ In this context, Heidegger argues that "to be closed off and covered up belongs to Dasein's facticity." *Ibid.*, p. 265.

³⁴⁷ Pöggeler, "Metaphysics and Topology of Being in Heidegger," trans. P. Amad, *Man and World* 8, no. 1 (1975), p. 10.

³⁴⁸ Robert J. Dostal, "The Experience of Truth for Gadamer and Heidegger: Taking Time and Sudden Lightening," in *Hermeneutics and Truth*, pp. 49-50.

³⁴⁹ Erns Tugendhat, "Heidegger's Idea of Truth," in *Hermeneutics and Truth*, p. 88.

³⁵⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 265.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 269.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 265.

³⁵³ As can be seen, by 'irreducibility of original discoveredness' we mean both that discoveredness cannot be reduced to another discoveredness *behind* it (for instance, since a symptom considered as discoveredness can be reduced to another discoveredness *behind* it, it is not original discoveredness) and that it cannot be reduced to another discoveredness *before* it, i.e., it is not a *repetition* of what is already known.

³⁵⁴ Thus since, in the originality of discoveredness, what "is" comes into the There (Da), Newton's laws, for instance, cannot be reduced to anything else. Here Newton's laws do not stand as secondary representation of what "is," rather through it reality comes to its own truth.

³⁵⁵ Dostal understands by Heidegger's metaphor of sudden lightening only the temporality (the suddenness of the moment) of truth. See, Dostal, "The Experience of Truth," pp. 47-58.

³⁵⁶ As can be recalled, the relation between the fore-conception and the occurrence of the new truth is called 'hermeneutic circle.' When Heidegger talks about the productive nature of the hermeneutic circle he seems to refer to this dialectic between fore-conception and new truth. Hence he convinces us that it is not a vicious circle as noted above.

³⁵⁷ We should note that Gadamer does not argue that every experience is the negation of the previous experience. He accepts that in natural sciences the individual observations must show the same regularity. However, what he rejects is the application of this concept of regularity of experiences to humanistic studies. In this context, he argues that we use the word "experience" in two different senses: the experiences that conform to our expectation and confirm it and the new experiences that occur to us. This latter—"experience" in the genuine sense—is always negative. See, *TM*, 346-362; *WM*, 352-368.

³⁵⁸ Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, p. 15.

³⁵⁹ *TM*, 351; *WM*, 357.

³⁶⁰ Gadamer, *The Relevance*, p. 37.

³⁶¹ At this point, we should note that according to Gadamer, since our previous experience (fore-conception, prejudice) makes us anticipate the new truth, it must already have a bit of truth. Otherwise, it would be impossible to anticipate the new truth on its basis. Therefore, we can say that the negation of the previous experience by the new experience is not a total negation.

³⁶² *TM*, 355; *WM*, 361.

³⁶³ *TM*, 353; *WM*, 359.

³⁶⁴ *TM*, 38-9; *WM*, 44-45. This is also the rejection of the idea of a method or universally valid rules which govern every approach to text.

³⁶⁵ *TM*, 355; *WM*, 361.

³⁶⁶ *TM*, 356-7; *WM*, 361-363.

³⁶⁷ *TM*, 121; *WM*, 126.

³⁶⁸ As noted above, Gadamer calls this aesthetic differentiation.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁰ *TM*, 122; *WM*, 127; *The Relevance*, p. 121.

³⁷¹ *TM*, 117; *WM*, 123.

³⁷² *TM*, 111-2; *WM*, 117-8.

³⁷³ Gadamer, *The Relevance*, p. 26.

³⁷⁴ Participation is a key notion in Gadamer's hermeneutics since it refers to the unity of timelessness and temporality and the unity of the ideality (identity) and reality (realization of the identity) of meaning. Since there is an indissoluble tension between mediation and the autonomy of meaning, participation does not presuppose a previous existence of meaning to be participated. Moreover, since every mediation is historically different, i.e., takes place in the concreteness and irreducibility of the historical moment, participation as mediation is not subsuming the present under the past, but rather productive determination of the past through present. Here the word determination is not to be taken to mean that the past is made relative to the present. Rather, it means that since the truth of the present in its originality opens up a free space before the interpreter, he can look at the past meaning from a different (new) perspective. Therefore, the present determination (mediation) of past meaning is not a violation or imposing present meaning on the past meaning. In this respect, participation is not to take something apart from meaning, but rather to add something to it in the sense that meaning is understood in a new way, i.e., differently. Hence, participation refers to the increase in the being of the text.

³⁷⁵ By contingency or occasionality of situation we refer to the subjectivity of the person representing or interpreting the play or text.

³⁷⁶ As can be recalled, this idea of identity has been defended by objectivists and intentionalists.

³⁷⁷ Gadamer, *The Relevance*, pp. 24-29.

³⁷⁸ In this context, Gadamer says that aesthetic distance "signifies the distance necessary for seeing, and thus makes possible a genuine and comprehensive participation in what is presented before us." *TM*, 128. At this point, we can recall that Hirsch criticizes Gadamer by defending 'semantic autonomy' (which accepts that the being of meaning is independent of any individual consciousness) and charges him with reconstructing past meaning from the present (alien) horizon and thus with distorting it. However, how is it possible to accept both semantic autonomy and to ground meaning on the contingent horizon of the interpreter at the same time? We can argue that since Gadamer accepts the autonomy of meaning as the sign of correct interpretation (i.e., total mediation), the inconsistency in Hirsch's critique stems not from Gadamer's account of meaning but from Hirsch's overlooking the opposition between the autonomy of meaning and anachronism.

³⁷⁹ In this context, Gadamer notes that “Difference exists within identity. Otherwise, identity would not be identity.” See, Gadamer, “Hermeneutics and Logocentrism,” p. 125. Unlike Hegel’s contention that the Absolute itself is the identity of identity and nonidentity, the phrase “the unity of identity and difference” in Gadamer refers to the finiteness or historicity of truth. For the discussion of the problem of identity in Hegel, see Gadamer, *Hegel’s Dialectic*, trans. P. C. Smith, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), pp. 54-100; Kathleen Wright, “Hegel: The Identity of Identity and Nonidentity,” *Idealistic Studies* 13, no. 1 (January 1983), pp. 11-32; also D. O. Dahlstrom, “Hegel’s Science of Logic and Idea of Truth,” *Ibid.*, pp. 33-45.

³⁸⁰ Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, p. 55.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

³⁸² Gadamer, “Reply to Jacques Derrida,” in *Dialogue and Deconstruction*, p. 57.

³⁸³ *Ibid.* Gadamer also remarks that “thought contains deferral and distance. Otherwise, thought would not be thought.” See, Gadamer, “Hermeneutics and Logocentrism,” p. 125.

³⁸⁴ Gadamer, *The Relevance*, p. 25.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

³⁸⁶ Gadamer, “Concerning Empty and Ful-filled Time” *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 4 (Winter 1970), p. 350.

³⁸⁷ Gadamer, “The Eminent Text,” p. 9.

³⁸⁸ Gadamer, “Concerning Empty and Ful-filled Time,” p. 350.

³⁸⁹ Obviously, we are not limiting time-experience with the experience of truth. As Gadamer shows time can be experienced as empty and fulfilled on different occasions. See for further discussion, Gadamer, “Concerning Empty and Ful-filled Time,” pp. 341-353; “The Continuity of History and the Existential Moment,” pp. 231-240; “A New Epoch in the History of the World begins Here and Now,” pp. 1-14; Sokolowski, *Husserlian Meditations*, pp. 138-169.

³⁹⁰ Gadamer, “Concerning Empty and Ful-filled Time,” p. 350.

³⁹¹ The Arabic word ‘zâhir’ (□□□□) means clear, apparent, phenomenal. The Zahirites (the Literalists, □□□□□□□□) argued for “the surface meaning of words, a meaning anchored to a particular usage, circumstance, historical and religious anomaly.” See for further discussion, Edward Said, “The Text, the World, the Critic,” in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, ed. J. V. Harari (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp. 167-170.

³⁹² Gadamer, “Concerning Empty and Ful-filled Time,” p. 351.

³⁹³ Gadamer, “The Continuity of History,” p. 236.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 237.

³⁹⁵ *TM*, xxxiv; “The Historical Continuity,” p. 238.

³⁹⁶ Gadamer, “The Historical Continuity,” p. 238. Precisely because consciousness is not a mere determination of historical events but itself also an historical event (thus furthering of tradition) by being conscious of this determination, we prefer to translate the expression above as historically ‘effected and operative’ consciousness. It is clear that Gadamer is neither a naïve realist nor radical idealist since he accepts the two simultaneous aspects of consciousness.

³⁹⁷ This is Herder’s expression. See, Gadamer, “The Continuity of History,” p. 238.

³⁹⁸ Hence Hirsch’s claim that Gadamer’s concept of tradition is nothing else than the history of the interpretations of the text does not do justice to Gadamer.

³⁹⁹ Gadamer, “Destruktion and Deconstruction,” in *Dialogue and Deconstruction*, p. 111.

⁴⁰⁰ Gadamer, “Hermeneutics and Logocentrism,” p. 119.

⁴⁰¹ *TM*, 303; *WM*, 308.

⁴⁰² *TM*, 301-2; *WM*, 305-6.

⁴⁰³ We should note that the closedness (limitation) of the horizon in Gadamer should not be confused with the closedness of the horizon in objectivist or intentionalist perspectives. Since in Hirsch, for instance, the interpreter transposes himself into alien (historical) horizon, his horizon stays unattainable, and thus closed (distinct). Gadamer criticizes this sense of closedness by arguing that “just as the individual is never simply an individual because he is always in understanding with others, so too the closed horizon that is supposed to enclose a culture is an abstraction. The historical movement of human life consists in the fact that it is never absolutely bound to any one standpoint, and hence can never have a truly closed horizon.” See, *TM*, 304; *WM*, 309.

⁴⁰⁴ *TM*, 305; *WM*, 310.

⁴⁰⁵ *TM*, 306; *WM*, 311.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁷ At this point, Garrett distinguishes the tacit horizon-fusion that occurs before there is any conscious contrast between the text and the interpreter’s horizon from the nontacit horizon-fusion that takes place on the basis of such a contrast. See, J. E. Garrett, “Hans-Georg Gadamer on ‘Fusion of Horizons,’” *Man and World* 11, no. ¾ (1978), p. 399.

⁴⁰⁸ Gadamer refers also to this transformation of the new unity to the previous unity for the following unity as the ‘formation of prejudices.’ In fact we noticed the same transformation when we were investigating the Heideggerian notion of the truth. Every uncoveredness becomes a stage for the following uncoveredness.

⁴⁰⁹ It is clear that what Gadamer calls fusion of horizons is in fact another description of the temporality of the hermeneutic circle, which refers to the truth relation between tradition and the present situation in Heidegger’s work. Just as the whole (the tradition) is understood in terms of the particular (the present), so the particular can be grasped only if the whole is projected. We saw before that Gadamer applies an Heideggerian version of the hermeneutic circle also to his dialectic between aesthetic non-differentiation and aesthetic distance which yields ‘transformation into structure.’ From this perspective, just as every transformation into structure is the self-presentation of the truth from a different aspect, so every fusion (which corresponds to the ‘total mediation’ or ‘aesthetic non-differentiation’ of the work of art in its representation) is the self-presentation of the subject matter from different perspective. Therefore, the meaning of the word ‘horizon’ should not be restricted to the subjective horizon of the interpreter as Hirsch does. It rather corresponds to the ‘clearing’ of being in Heideggerian philosophy.

⁴¹⁰ *TM*, xxxvii.

⁴¹¹ Gadamer puts this fact as follows: “The way the interpreter belongs to his text is like the way the point from which we are to view a picture belongs to its perspective. It is not a matter of looking for this view point and adopting it as one’s standpoint. The interpreter similarly finds his point of view already given, and does not choose it arbitrarily.” *TM*, 329; *WM*, 334. We can argue that ‘interpretation’ has the character of ‘language’ which, as Volkmann-Schluck puts it, “does not refer back to itself, but rather points away from itself to that which, by its pointing, rises into visibility, just as light itself withdraws into invisibility so that things can become visible in their appearance in the light.” See, K.-H. Volkmann-Schluck, “The Problem of Language” *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 4 (Winter 1970), p. 379.

⁴¹² It seems that behind Gadamer’s rejection of the canonization of any interpretation lies his conviction that since the text detaches itself from its originating moment (condition), it cannot be restricted to any other interpretive context. To restrict it to one interpretive context is to disregard

the infinite potentiality of the being of the text behind the interpretation. It is to assume that the text comes to its 'whole' truth in this particular condition. Therefore, while the interpretation is supposed to disappear in the being of the text, in this case the text disappears in the being of interpretation, hence the interpretation becomes "text," i.e., authority, itself.

⁴¹³ See also, Weinsheimer, "History and the Future of Meaning," pp. 139-151.

⁴¹⁴ Precisely because of this fact, Hoy describes Gadamer's hermeneutics as 'contextualist.' See, Hoy, *The Critical Circle*, pp. 68-72.

⁴¹⁵ Hirsch, *The Aims*, p. 3.

⁴¹⁶ J. Margolis, "Robust Relativism," in *Intention and Interpretation*, p. 48.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.; "The Truth about Relativism," in *Relativism: Interpretation and Confrontation*, pp. 232-255; "Interpretation at Risk," pp. 312-330; for the critique of Margolis' hermeneutics, see also, D. Novitz, "Towards a Robust Relativism," *The Journal of Aesthetic and Art Criticism* 41, no. 2 (Winter 1982), pp. 171-185; R. Shusterman, "Interpretation, Intention, and Truth," pp. 65-75.

⁴¹⁸ Hoy, *The Critical Circle*, p. 61.

⁴¹⁹ Gadamer, "The Continuity of History," pp. 238-9.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴²¹ Gadamer integrates Collingwood's dialectic of question and answer into his concept of dialogue. However, Gadamer criticizes Collingwood since he still accepts that to understand a historical event is to reconstruct the author's intention. See for further discussion, J. P. Hogan, *Collingwood and Theological Hermeneutics* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1989), pp. 43-65.

⁴²² Gadamer, "Hermeneutics and Logocentrism," p. 117.

⁴²³ Openness means both to say openly what one thinks and to be ready to hear what someone says (i.e., to presuppose that what someone says can be true).

⁴²⁴ Gadamer, "Destruktion and Deconstruction," p. 110.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 111.

⁴²⁶ Gadamer, "Text and Interpretation," p. 26.

⁴²⁷ Gadamer, "Religious and Poetical Speaking," p. 87.

⁴²⁸ See for further discussion on the logic of question and answer, *TM*, 369-379; Hogan, *Collingwood and Theological Hermeneutics*, pp. 43-65; F. J. Ambrosio, "Gadamer, Plato, and the Discipline of Dialogue" *International Philosophical Quarterly* 27, no.1 (March 1987), pp. 17-32; Ambrosio, "Gadamer: On Making Oneself at Home with Hegel," *The Owl of Minerva* 19, no. 1 (Fall 1987), pp. 23-40.