

INFORMATION TO USERS

This reproduction was made from a copy of a manuscript sent to us for publication and microfilming. While the most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this manuscript, the quality of the reproduction is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted. Pages in any manuscript may have indistinct print. In all cases the best available copy has been filmed.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help clarify notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. Manuscripts may not always be complete. When it is not possible to obtain missing pages, a note appears to indicate this.
2. When copyrighted materials are removed from the manuscript, a note appears to indicate this.
3. Oversize materials (maps, drawings, and charts) are photographed by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each oversize page is also filmed as one exposure and is available, for an additional charge, as a standard 35mm slide or in black and white paper format.*
4. Most photographs reproduce acceptably on positive microfilm or microfiche but lack clarity on xerographic copies made from the microfilm. For an additional charge, all photographs are available in black and white standard 35mm slide format.*

*For more information about black and white slides or enlarged paper reproductions, please contact the Dissertations Customer Services Department.

UMI University
Microfilms
International

8601657

Jefka, Myron

**THE DIALECTICS OF HERMENEUTIC REPRODUCTION AND STRUCTURAL
TRANSFORMATION**

City University of New York

PH.D. 1986

**University
Microfilms
International**

300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106

THE DIALECTICS OF HERMENEUTIC REPRODUCTION
AND STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION

by

MYRON JEFKA

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in Philosophy in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University
of New York.

1986

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Philosophy in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 20, 1985
Date

Arthur W. Call
Chair of Examining Committee

September 20, 1985
Date

Arthur W. Call
Executive Officer

Peter Caws

Andrew McLaughlin

Arthur W. Collins

Marx Wartofsky

Mary Wiseman

Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

Abstract

THE DIALECTICS OF HERMENEUTIC REPRODUCTION
AND STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION

by

Myron Jefka

Adviser: Professor Andrew McLaughlin

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is interrogated in search of a new conception of "dialectics." It's gradual departure from its Heideggerian foundation is traced, showing Gadamer's movement towards Hegel as Heidegger moves away from Hegel. Parallel to our distinction between Gadamer's "speculative" and Heidegger's "non-speculative" dialectical insights, we distinguish between "open-system" and "closed-system dialectics" and criticize the Hegelian Aufhebung by exposing the repressive sublimation of irreducible differences which accompanies understandings or reconciliations between adherents to antagonistic linguistic frameworks or incommensurable belief and value systems.

Gadamer interprets Heidegger's "circle of understanding" as the hermeneutic circle, but it can also signify the movement of "Reason" itself, or the

"closure of metaphysics" which restricts that movement. In deconstructing Gadamer's speculative dialectic we delimit the circle of understanding, not only Gadamer's "fusion of horizons" but the "effective history" within whose movement all "understanding-events" are alleged to be taken up.

Dialectical thinking moves on both sides of the circle of understanding. It is both the hermeneutic recovery of alienated projections or semantic possibilities and the rupture of the semantic enclosure, which isn't a reproduction, however revolutionary, of already defined structures (like the state), but the creation of new structures (like the state's origin and "withering away"), or the redefinition of terms in another idiom, incommensurable with its source. Its major mode is its productive phase where closed systems are instituted. Its minor mode is its reproductive phase where it strategically enters the circle of understanding in search of absent possibilities.

Although they move on both sides of this circle, the major mode outside, the minor mode inside of it, they constantly meet, all along its borders. This is the enigma of dialectics. Dialectics is the movement common to, and passage between, two fundamentally different and irreducible kinds of changes: the transformations into new structures (like the founding

of "research programmes") and the hermeneutic reproductions or reappropriations of already existing structures (like paradigm changes within the same research programme).

"Temporilizing" deferrals within "the Same" system, and the "spacing/alterity" between "absolutely other" systems, the two incommensurable definitions of Derrida's "differance," belong together.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
PART I: GADAMER'S SPECULATIVE-DIALECTICAL HERMENEUTICS	
Chapter	
I. THE HEIDEGGERIAN STARTING-POINT OF GADAMER'S WORK	26
(A) Heidegger's Concept of Primordial Understanding	
(B) The Critique of Objectification and the Standing-In-Itself of a Work of Art	
(C) The Hermeneutic Circle	
(D) The Bogy of Relativism	
II. THE FUSION OF HORIZONS AND THE HAPPENING OF TRADITION	39
(A) Effective History and Effective Historical Consciousness	
(B) The Movement of Tradition and the Effects of Human Actions	
(C) The Confrontation of Old and New	
III. PLAY, STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION AND QUALITATIVE CHANGE	51
(A) Gadamer's Phenomenology of Restricted Play	
(B) The Transformation into Structure	
(C) Transformation and Qualitative Change	
IV. DIALOGUE AND SPECULATIVE LANGUAGE	63
(A) The Basis of Dialectic in Dialogue	
(B) Grounding Dialectical Identity Theory in the Speculative Unity of Language, Thought and Being	
(C) The Indissoluble Correlation of "the Dialectical" and "the Speculative"	
(D) Gadamer's Resurrection of Greek Logos Philosophy	

V.	HEIDEGGER'S CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS A NON-SPECULATIVE CONCEPTION OF DIALECTICAL THINKING	82
	(A) The Belonging Together of Thinking and Being	
	(B) Confronting the Hegelian Concept of "Aufhebung"	
	(C) Perdurance and the Ontological Difference	
	(D) Critique of Gadamer's Historical Determinism from a Non-Speculative Dialectical Perspective	
	PART II. CLOSED-SYSTEM AND OPEN-SYSTEM DIALECTICS	
Chapter		
VI.	CLOSED-SYSTEM THINKING AND CLOSED-SYSTEM DIALECTICS	102
	(A) Luxemburg's Critique of Marx's Closed Economic Model of the Capitalist System	
	(B) The Rationalism of Closed-System Thinking	
	(C) Preliminary Remarks about Kuhn's Concept of Incommensurable Linguistic Frameworks	
	(D) Lakatos's Concept of a Research Programme as a Model for Differenti- ating Two Orders of Theory Change	
	(E) Rationalism and Relativism in Dialectical Perspective	
VII.	THE MEDIATION OF INCOMMENSURABLE FRAMEWORKS AND THE REPRESSION OF DIALECTICAL DIFFERENCES	120
	(A) From Incompatibility to Dialectical Difference	
	(B) The Belonging Together of Antago- nistic Linguistic Traditions	
	(C) The Agreement Which We Are and the Repression of Irreconcilable Differences	
	
	SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	138

INTRODUCTION

(A) Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics
and the Nature of Dialectics

In the following dissertation our main concern will be to develop a new way of looking at the question of dialectics. We will approach our goal by examining the philosophical hermeneutics of the modern German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, whom we believe to be one of the most sophisticated traditional dialectical thinkers. "Dialectics" usually means a kind of thinking which seeks to develop a higher level of understanding of dynamically interacting phenomena through a bringing of different but related factors under an alleged higher relationship which is usually viewed as a "dialectical unity," "identity" or "totality." Gadamer calls such a relationship a "higher determination."

Gadamer's conception of what he calls "the dialectic" is based upon his lifelong study of classical thought, especially the thought of Plato, which he has attempted to fuse with the Hegelian dialectic in a way that he believes to be compatible with the many dialectical insights of his early teacher and later friend Martin Heidegger. Heidegger himself had a lifelong confrontation with Hegel's thought to which, according to Gadamer, he was both attracted and repelled.

Despite his attempts in his magnum opus, Truth and Method, to differentiate himself from Hegel, Gadamer moved closer and closer to Hegel throughout the later part of his philosophical career. His resulting hermeneutic theory represents what we consider to be the most serious attempt to revive the dialectic of Hegel under modern conditions, not in terms of thought thinking itself, but in terms of the original dialogical nature of Greek dialectic. He thus develops an interesting interpretation of the dialectic at work in Plato's Socratic dialogues in particular, and in Greek "logos" philosophy in general, which provides an interesting backdrop for those aspects of Heidegger and Hegel which he wishes to stress. Where his attempted synthesis of what he calls the insights into the "speculative" spirit of language common to Plato, Hegel and Heidegger most clearly breaks down is in the complicated interaction between Heidegger and Hegel. In examining Heidegger's critique of the Hegelian concept of "Aufhebung," a critique which Gadamer refuses to accept, we prepare the ground for both a critique of Gadamer and a broadening of the traditional conception of dialectical thought.

Since Hegel, Aufhebung has been one of the central concepts of dialectical thought. Its Hegelian usage can be translated into English as "synthesis,"

"elevation," "sublation," "sublimation," or "negation of the negation," but it is a complex notion to which none of these translations can alone do adequate justice. Perhaps the most proper single equivalent would be the word "supersession." Aufhebung connotes the reconciliation of alleged antagonistic concepts by raising them to a higher concept from whose vantage point the previously antagonistic concepts can be seen to have been viewed one-sidedly or in abstract "alienation" from one another. In this sense their previously affirmed difference can be said to have been superseded. Marx gave Hegel's dialectic the twist of applying it primarily to social life, in a way in which social institutions were analyzed as a dialectical unity of contending social forces. Marx appropriated Hegel's emphasis upon historical continuity, but attempted to integrate it into a radical theory of revolution.

In Hegel's hands, and in the interpretations of Marx that were influenced by Hegel, dialectic became an alleged "logic" of historical development and progress. It signified a view of the whole or the "totality" of a complex phenomenon, as opposed to viewing its particular parts or aspects in isolation from one another. It considered all phenomena in terms of their historical development, with a greater stress on what they were allegedly becoming than on what they were.

It was thus a highly useful tool for many forms of teleological thought, for metaphysical system builders and historical determinists. Outside of the Marxist movement, dialectical thought is today evaluated positively by a limited number of Hegelian, classical and oriental scholars. Gadamer has helped to bring dialectical thought back to the center of European philosophical discussion.

In the twentieth century revolt against Hegel and the different varieties of "historicism" which developed either under Hegel's influence or in alleged opposition to it, a new type of thinking has developed which is hostile to the traditional stress of dialectical thinkers upon historical development and progress. Although this mode of thought is represented by many diverse currents, for want of a better name we will call it "structuralist," if that term is expanded to include the various "post-structuralists" and the many predecessors claimed by both of these related trends such as Nietzsche, Freud and Ferdinand de Saussure. To the concepts of change through continuity, of motion from a given state to a potential state, of determined historical causality, were counterposed the concepts of emergence, conceptual leaps and ontological thrusts. Instead of stressing what different things had in common, or the larger wholes, in terms of which they could

be seen to be integral parts, it stressed their differences, their uniqueness and the lack of relevance that their historical genesis and continuing history had toward an understanding of their "structure".

The above counter-current, as well as its Hegelian antipode, influenced the thought of Heidegger and Gadamer. The aspects of their thought which we consider dialectical are involved with the interaction between the above "anti-Hegelian" and "Hegelian" ways of analyzing phenomena. It leads both of them into varying degrees of inconsistency and makes any conception of dialectical thinking which seeks to base itself upon their joint confrontation with Hegel quite complex.

In his attempt to explain the ontological basis of the hermeneutic experience, Gadamer expands upon Heidegger's objectivistic description of a work of art. This is one of his rare attempts to describe what lies behind the play that we get caught up in when we try to understand something. Although these ontological "structures," for which works of art serve as a paradigm, appear to open up a dimension of creative freedom, they are precisely what restricts the play of understanding. We will try to show, in chapter 2, that the initiating of social institutions, another example of what Gadamer would call "the transformation into structure," also does not rule out the dimension of human

freedom. But the way Gadamer embeds all creative actions in an "effective history" to which they are alleged to "belong" makes it clear that he is only borrowing something from the above mentioned anti-Hegelian current in order to reinforce his own historical determinism. Nevertheless, this contributes to his own undoing, since it can be shown that tradition as a whole is also a structure that was produced by creative actions, which were not just reproductive adaptations of the institutions of pre-civilized peoples. What Gadamer finds to be productive are only the creative ways in which we reproduce what has been handed down to us. All hermeneutic encounters with the so-called "things themselves" are for Gadamer reproductions rather than original productions. The only space he allows for creativity is restricted to the particular playing spaces into which we are all allegedly "thrown."

Gadamer thus does not ignore creativity, or the ability to project ontological thrusts, but rather subordinates it to the higher determination of inherited tradition. Like Hegel's "cunning of reason," Gadamer's "effective historical consciousness" is not interested in the motivations or the intentions of the great artists or statesmen who launch genuinely new structures. They too, are reduced to nothing but unconscious agents of the historical process.

Heidegger, on the other hand, gave up his earlier interest in "historicity" and moved further away from Hegel, albeit inconsistently. At a certain point in his philosophical career, he developed the aspect of his thought which was anti-Hegelian to a new fever pitch and presented a critique of Aufhebung from the point of view of a unique reinterpretation of the traditionally posited "identity" between thinking and being. Since Parmenides, this kind of "identity theory" had always been a key aspect of dialectical thought. Heidegger, in effect, gave voice to a conception of what we consider to be a form of dialectical thinking which, although anti-Hegelian, did not counterpose an anti-dialectical concept of "difference" to the traditional dialectical concept of "identity." Heidegger's dialectical concept of "difference," a difference within the domain of what he translates from Parmenides as "the Same," a sameness which is not a formal identity, is the takeoff point for our basic critique of Gadamer, as well as our own attempt to reconceptualize dialectical thought in the final chapters of this study.

What emerges is an attempt to broaden the traditional understanding of dialectical thought in a way that appreciates and yet is able to think beyond the well-known limitations of Hegelianism and Marxism. It is not based upon Heidegger's famous "ontological

difference" between "Being" and "beings," but finds support in the way he explains their relationship in his book Identity and Difference. There, he introduces the concept of "Austrag," which we interpret to mean an enduring tension between interrelated concepts. Such a conception is at the same time anti-Hegelian and dialectical. It is anti-Hegelian because it denies the possibility of a speculative synthesis of the concepts being compared; and it is dialectical because it examines these concepts in terms of their dynamic interaction and the relationship or structural totality which co-determines that interaction.

A key aspect of Hegelian dialectical thought, which is emphasized and further developed by Marxism, is the concept of a conceptual or social transformation seen as an Aufhebung or resolution of a struggle between two sides of a dialectical unity. What is usually seen in terms of continuity is reconceptualized by Heidegger in terms of discontinuity. His lifelong project of "overcoming metaphysics" is reconceptualized as a "spring" or "leap" out of metaphysical thinking. Gadamer views the same phenomenon with Hegelian lenses and sees continuity where Heidegger sees emergence, an Aufhebung where Heidegger sees a conceptual leap.

Even though our analysis of Heidegger and of Gadamer's confrontation with his thought will play a

pivotal role in the following study, we make no claim to be Heideggerians. Nor do we claim that the aspect of Heidegger's thought which we choose to highlight is its predominant aspect or final position. Heidegger was consistently radical in his thinking but he remained a romantic, and his romanticism often took his radicality in extremely irresponsible directions, from his flirtation with National Socialism in the early 1930s, to his deification of the romantic poet Hölderlin in the mid-1930s, to his vacillations between fascism and Marxism in the 1940s. Despite this, the radicality of his thinking enabled him to see beyond the conceptual boundaries which imprisoned his contemporaries, and the influence of his thought, especially through Gadamer in Germany and Derrida in France, has given him a permanent place of honor within many currents of contemporary thought which reach far beyond the limits of academic philosophy.

(B) The Order of Presentation

Our study will be divided into two parts of unequal length. The first and longer part will be concerned with developing and examining Gadamer's theory of hermeneutic understanding, with special emphasis upon its dialectical aspects. In chapter 1 we will introduce the reader to Gadamer's approach to the problem of hermeneutic understanding by embedding it

in the context of Gadamer's appropriation of Heidegger's work. We will there present aspects of Heidegger's thought with which Gadamer is in general agreement and which provide the takeoff points for Gadamer's own original contribution to hermeneutic theory.

In chapter 2, centering mainly upon part 2 of Truth and Method, we will then present that aspect of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics which is most relevant to social theory, where Gadamer attempts to combine Heidegger's early hermeneutic and historicist interests with a turn towards Hegel. But we will try to interpret Gadamer's historical and social-theoretical reflections as liberally as possible, attempting to distinguish his position from the looming menace of Hegelianism. Then, in chapters 3 and 4, we will get to the heart of the philosophical presuppositions which mould his attitude towards Hegel in particular and dialectical thought in general. In chapter 3, which covers the main points relevant to dialectical thought from part 1 of Truth and Method, we will show the beginnings of Gadamer's divergence from Heidegger by centering upon Gadamer's restricted concept of play and the way he uses it to ontologize the hermeneutic experience. There we will only begin the process of criticism, still relying mainly upon exposition, in order to cover as much ground in as little space as possible.

Not until chapter 4, when we bring in the Greek influence upon his work, will Gadamer's taking sides against Heidegger, in favor of Hegel, become apparent. There we will show how Gadamer's concept of dialectic traces back to Plato's Socratic dialectic in particular and Greek logos philosophy in general. From then on, there is only a short step to Hegel's speculative dialectic, which is made easier by Gadamer's slanted appropriation of Hegel's distinction between "the dialectical" and "the speculative." This culminates in his attempt to ground the entire hermeneutic project in a theory of the alleged speculative character of natural language, with which he concludes part 3 of Truth and Method. In chapter 4, we also begin a frontal assault upon Gadamer, which is carried on further in chapter 5, where we counterpose a Heideggerian non-speculative dialectic to Gadamer's speculative dialectic.

Our presentation, in the first part of our study, thus takes the form of tracing Gadamer's gradual departure from the Heideggerian foundations of his hermeneutic enterprise, as he moves towards Hegel at the same time that Heidegger moves away from Hegel. This becomes increasingly apparent as we center more and more explicitly upon Gadamer's attitude towards dialectical thought, both in its classical Greek and modern Hegelian forms.

In the second part of our study, we will move beyond exposition, critique and contrast between Gadamer and Heidegger, and further develop our own approach to the problem of dialectical thought. As a parallel to our distinction between speculative and non-speculative dialectics, we will develop a distinction between "open-system" and "closed-system" dialectics and will attempt to present a definitive critique of Aufhebung by exposing its darker side. We will call this negative aspect of Aufhebung a repression of irreducible differences, which accompanies any reconciliation between adherents to antagonistic linguistic frameworks or world outlooks.

In chapter 6, we will develop a concept of "Rationalism" which, in order to avoid a relativistic epistemology, embraces some kind of closed conceptual system or metaphysical theory (in the Heideggerian sense). We will attempt to develop an appreciation of both the weaknesses and strengths of closed-system thinking, or Rationalism, in order to more properly locate the contribution of Gadamer. It will also help us to more clearly delineate our own alternative view of dialectics, in relation to which Heidegger's dialectical insights are only precursors.

We will then attempt to illustrate our main thesis about the difference between open and closed

dialectical systems by using that distinction to make a novel interpretation of Imre Lakatos's concept of a "scientific research programme." We consider this concept to provide a model which illustrates two kinds of dialectical change: the continuity involved in a Hegelian Aufhebung on the one hand, and the conceptual leap involved in a Heideggerian thrust on the other hand. We will round out this discussion by attempting to put the debate between relativism and Rationalism in a dialectical perspective which avoids both a resolution and a dissolution of the fundamental differences between these two positions, focusing back upon our main conclusions about the irreducibility of dialectical differences.

By centering our exposition and critique around the philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer, we will be able to both learn from his insights and oversights about the "event" of understanding or the "happening of tradition" which leads to an agreement. The way Gadamer uses these terms, "understanding" and "agreement about" a subject matter are synonymous. He shows understanding and agreement to be the very basis of social life. Without denying this insight, we will attempt to show that the "fusion of horizons" or synthesis of diverse linguistic idioms which leads to an understanding is at the same time a key contributor to

the perpetuation of social inequalities. Our main conclusion in chapter 7 will thus be that Gadamer's "hermeneutic experience" signifies both a genuine Aufhebung or elavation to a higher level of understanding, or mode of social cooperation, and a repression of irreducible differences.

We will devote our attention, in the early sections of chapter 7, to rejecting the traditional conception of dialectical antagonisms in terms of logical incompatibility, mutual negation or contradiction. Upon the basis of a new look at the Kuhnian usage of the controversial concept of "incommensurability," we will postulate that such antagonisms or differences are not "opposites" which logically negate one another, but are each tied to what we will call "partially incommensurable" linguistic frameworks. Such frameworks will be judged to be logically compatible and hence capable of "peacefully coexisting" in rivalry with one another. This compatibility, this ability to peacefully coexist, is what makes long-lasting agreements between adherents to different linguistic traditions possible.

(C) The Circle of Understanding and the
Challenge of Post-Structuralism

We would hope that the following dissertation will be looked at not only as a critique of speculative dialectics but of the circle of understanding as a

whole. We do not consider it to be a rejection of hermeneutic understanding, or of the metaphysical playing space to which Gadamer justifiably restricts it. Our real goal is to more adequately situate what is inside the closed circle which constitutes Gadamer's hermeneutic universe in relation to what purports to lie beyond it. Like the Hegelian Aufhebung, which is one of the primary principles of its movement, the circle of understanding cannot be gotten around. The problem is not how to avoid it but how to enter it without becoming trapped in it.

Of course the notion of "the circle of understanding" is vague. It can be understood as something essential to each particular "understanding-event." In this sense it is the traditional hermeneutic circle which describes the circular movement between an interpreter's understanding the whole of a text in terms of its parts, and the parts in terms of the whole. It points to the element of circularity through which one must pass in order to reappropriate the "closed circles of meaning" projected by what phenomenologists call "the things themselves." This is the way Gadamer interprets Heidegger's remarks about the circle of understanding. On the other hand, it can signify the very movement of Reason itself, or the "closure" of metaphysics, to which that movement is restricted. Either

way, a circle is a very good metaphor for that which has no beginning and no end, no ground, since its movement purports to ground everything else.

Rather than merely dismissing Gadamer's hermeneutic dialectics, which provides a one-sided, limited view of the circle of understanding, we will enter it, take it for a ride, to see how far we can go with it, temporarily adopting it as a working hypotheses, in order to take it to its limits. Both within the circle of Gadamer's thought, and in our attempts to think beyond it, we will continually be confronting the problem of clarifying the nature of dialectical thinking. The closed system which we will be attributing to Gadamer claims to be all encompassing, at least as far as what is linguistically expressible is concerned, and hence to be able to absorb its own critique. But we will try to show that in opening itself up to the influence of Heidegger's later thought, it provides the basis for its own deconstruction. To "deconstruct" is not simply to destroy or undo, and also not to reconstruct, but to situate, to measure, to delimit. In delimiting Gadamer's speculative dialectic, we will be delimiting the circle of understanding itself, not the small circles of hermeneutic interpretation, but the large circle, within whose movement (or play) all of these understanding-events are alleged to be taken up.

Gadamer refers to this macro-circle, which allegedly has no point of origin or termination as "effective history." We will be referring to it as "the movement of tradition as a whole."

Dialectical thinking moves on both sides of the circle of understanding. It is at once both the movement of the hermeneutic recovery of alienated significance or semantic possibilities and the rupture of the semantic enclosure, which is not a reproduction of already defined structures but the creation of new structures, or the redefinition of terms in another idiom which is incommensurable with its source. Although many post-structuralists are openly hostile to any form of dialectical thought and adopt an openly relativist epistemology which denies the possibility of any kind of dialectical mediation between allegedly incommensurable idioms, there is a tendency among them in the direction of what we will be calling "open-system dialectics." For example, in a recently translated interview, Jean-François Lyotard, at the same time that he raises the problem of incommensurable idioms, points to a means for "passing" between them. He proposes a form of mediation which is non-speculative, as follows:

Having, like no one before him, aggravated the incommensurability between the cognitive law (descriptive) and the moral law (prescriptive), Kant seeks to re-establish "over the abyss" a passage between the two domains. . . . he in fact finds a faculty of "passing", that of the reflective judgment, the

capacity to judge without criteria (already at work, in fact, although under diverse titles, in the two domains); but this faculty does not permit the reestablishment of a subject's unity nor of a system's architecture. This faculty is "only" critical, as Kant explains in the First Project for an Introduction to the Third Critique; it comes and goes between domains which remain incommensurable. A Hegelian outcome to this dispersion (the word is in Kant's anthropology) is thus refuted, in advance as a "transcendental appearance."¹

Although it is plausible that Hegel's logical stage of "the dialectical," as a critical stage which precedes "the speculative," is based upon a still unclear Kantian dialectic, our discussion follows Gadamer in limiting itself to the classical Greek roots of dialectical thought. What is important for us about the above passage is that it demonstrates that at least some "new French" theorists are moving away from the relativist excesses which have led so many literary critics into an anti-dialectical and anti-philosophical appropriation of Derrida's deconstructive criticism.

Like Lyotard's metaphor of "major" and "minor" musical "modes,"² dialectical thinking also has major and minor modes. Its major mode is its productive or creative phase, where it appears to be irrational to dogmatic Rationalists. Its minor mode is its reproductive phase, where it self-consciously, for strategic

¹Jean-François Lyotard, "Interview," trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele, Diacritics 14 (Fall 1984):18.

²Ibid., p. 20.

reasons, without making any dogmatic ontological commitments, adopts an entry tactic, or "research programme," and enters into the circle of understanding. Although they move on both sides of the circle of understanding, the major mode outside of it, the minor mode inside of it, they constantly meet, all along its borders. This is the enigma of dialectics. Dialectics is the movement common to two fundamentally different and irreducible kinds of changes: the transformations into new structures on the one hand, and the hermeneutic reproductions or reappropriations of already existing structures on the other hand.

Derrida draws a distinction between two basic kinds of interpretation and play, or the play of interpretation, which parallels the distinction which we will be making between open and closed-system thought. He distinguishes between a structured, restricted play, "a sure play: that which is limited to the substitution of given and existing, present pieces,"¹ which corresponds to Gadamer's play of understanding, and a Nietzschean "joyous affirmation of the play of the world and of the innocence of becoming, the affirmation of a world of signs without fault, without truth, and

¹Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in Writing and Difference, trans., with an Introduction and Additional Notes, by Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Books, 1978), p. 292.

without origin which is offered to an active interpretation,"¹ which corresponds to the then predominant post-structuralist tendency. Although he has usually been interpreted to side clearly with the latter against the former, he then points out that "these two interpretations of interpretation . . . are absolutely irreconcilable even if we live them simultaneously and reconcile them in an obscure economy."² Here we see a groping towards a mediation of what corresponds to our two dialectical movements, the movement of hermeneutic reproduction inside the circle of understanding and the movement of structural transformation outside the circle of understanding.

Derrida even goes a step further and gives this mediating "obscure economy" which "reconciles" what is alleged to be "absolutely irreconcilable" the name of "differance," which he purposely spells with an "a" instead of an "e." He defines differance as, on the one hand "spacing," by which he means "distinction, inequality, or discernibility."³ This corresponds to the English word "difference" and signifies what we will be calling "dialectical difference." On the other

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 293.

³Idem, "Differance," in Speech and Phenomena: And Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs, trans., with an Introduction, by David B. Allison, Preface by Newton Garver (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 129.

hand, differance also means "temporalizing" or "the interposition of a delay, . . . that puts off until 'later' what is presently denied, the possible that is presently impossible."¹ This corresponds to the English word "deferral," and signifies what we would call "dialectical speculation," by which we mean the movement of hermeneutic recovery or the reappropriation of meaning from a prior projection of possibilities, which in itself has only an ideal meaning.

The science of the circulation and reproduction of value is of course economics. Saussure, the founder of structural linguistics, applied economic concepts to linguistic values and Freud applied them to libidinal values. Following Georges Bataille, Derrida distinguishes between a "restricted economy," restricted to the circulation and reproduction of values with the anticipation of a return on invested resources, and a "general economy" which does not stipulate that investments will bring a profit, or even be recovered.² Hegelian speculation is economic in the restricted sense, since it is limited to the recovery of semantic values, in abstraction from their original production or possible destruction.

¹Ibid.

²Idem, "From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve," in Writing and Difference, pp. 251-77.

Marx's historical materialism, which limits the theory of social transformation to transitions from one kind of class-ruled state to another, is also "restricted," in the above sense. Marx has little to say about the origin of the state or its alleged "withering away" after a protracted period of socialist revolution. He describes such structural transformations in an evolutionary manner, not dialectically. Nietzsche's catastrophe theory is no better, however attractive it is to Deleuze,¹ since it overlooks any mediating relationship or historical continuities between state-based societies and their predecessors.

In this regard, Habermas is to be complimented for promoting a theory of social evolution which asserts that the state is itself the cause, rather than the effect, of the development of social classes and class antagonisms, while at the same time postulating the creative adaptation to the social "steering problems" of pre-state societies as a mediating factor, in order to rationally reconstruct the state's origin.²

¹See especially Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, trans. Robert Hurley, Helen R. Lane and Mark Seem (New York: Viking Press, 1977), pp. 191-92.

²See especially section 6 of Jürgen Habermas, "Towards a Reconstruction of Historical Materialism," in Communication and the Evolution of Society, trans. and with an Introduction by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), pp. 158-64.

The element of mediation is, in our opinion, essential to all forms of dialectical movement, including both senses of Derrida's notion of "différance." He relates these two senses as follows:

Here we touch on the point of greatest obscurity, on the very enigma of différance, on how the concept we have of it is divided by a strange separation. We must not hasten to make a decision too quickly. How can we conceive of différance as a systematic detour which, within the element of the same, always aims at either finding again the pleasure or the presence that had been deferred by (conscious or unconscious) calculation, and, at the same time, how can we, on the other hand, conceive of différance . . . as an irreparable loss of presence, . . . and a relation to the absolutely other that apparently breaks up any economy? It is evident--it is evidence itself--that system and nonsystem, the same and the absolutely other, etc., cannot be conceived together.
 . . . différance is this inconceivable factor.¹

By viewing différance as "system" in the Heideggerian context of "the same" on the one hand, and also as "nonsystem" in the Nietzschean context of the "absolutely other," on the other hand, Derrida has put his finger on both what we will be calling "dialectical identity" and "dialectical difference." The reappropriations of the things themselves are indeed repetitions or returns of "the same." This is the dialectical movement of hermeneutic recovery to which all appropriations of the same text or work of art "belong," and which constitutes their unity and what Gadamer will call the "being" of the "self-presenting" reality being

¹Derrida, "Différance," pp. 150-51.

appropriated. We are thus in agreement with Derrida's analysis of differance as deferral, and his critique of the speculative metaphysics which the idealization of meaning or "presence" entails. However, Derrida's failure to clarify the dialectical implications of both senses of differance leads his analysis of spacing, which he here refers to as "a relation to the absolutely other," astray. Incommensurable polar opposites, separated by a conceptual interval, also belong together in "the same," and are thus not "absolutely other," but rather, dialectically different.

Dialectical identity, which is identity constituted by differences within the same closed system or large circle of meaning, belongs together with the dialectical difference between incommensurable systems and this is what "reconciles" the enigma of dialectics and "the enigma of differance." Dialectics is not just the "joyous affirmation" of the irreducibility of differences, nor is it just the ingenious drawing of the distinction between the two senses of differance, because it is also their mediation. It is a possible way out of the cul-de-sac of a deconstructive criticism which has become irrelevant to the project of developing a historically effective critical social theory.

PART I

GADAMER'S SPECULATIVE-DIALECTICAL HERMENEUTICS

CHAPTER I

THE HEIDEGGERIAN STARTING-POINT
OF GADAMER'S WORK(A) Heidegger's Concept of
Primordial Understanding

Hermeneutics is the theory of understanding, which originated as the art or science of understanding texts. Gadamer's theory of understanding comes out of a philological, theological and juridical hermeneutic tradition which entered philosophy proper through F. Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey. Heidegger, working within the problematic of Husserl's phenomenology, gave hermeneutics what has come to be known as an "ontological" turn by placing human understanding at the center of his original inquiry into the question of "Being." (Heidegger always counterposed Being, das Sein, to the existent thing or entity, das Seiende, which is usually translated as "being.") We can work our way into Gadamer's conceptual universe by reviewing those aspects of Heidegger's work which he appropriated into his own hermeneutic theory.

Heidegger's point of departure in his earlier work, culminating in his magnum opus, Being and Time,

is his conviction that the kind of knowledge that we have of things with which we are directly involved is primary, is a practical knowledge of truths of experience, in relation to which all other forms of knowledge, which are based on the abstractions involved in making propositional assertions, are secondary and derivative. Heidegger calls this primary knowledge "understanding."

In more traditional philosophical discussion, the term "understanding" is often concerned with some kind of scientific knowledge. What is meant by "understanding" in the natural sciences is usually called "explanatory understanding" or "explanation." And what is usually meant by "understanding" in the humanities or cultural sciences is "interpretive understanding" or "interpretation." Both of these kinds of understanding are concerned with a particular kind of knowledge, obtainable through the correct use of appropriate kinds of procedures or what, at least since Descartes, have been called "methods." Neither of these types of understanding are what Heidegger means by the term when he talks about the "understanding" of Dasein (human existence). Rather, he is talking about a more primary or "primordial" kind of understanding upon which these other kinds of understanding are allegedly based.

This primordial understanding is Dasein's "mode of being." Dasein, as "Being-in-the-world," is "situated." It does not create its "world," which is the "horizon" of inherited and acquired meanings in which it finds itself and to which it must adapt itself. In becoming socialized, in learning to speak and live in a linguistic community of commonly shared meanings, we acquire a tremendous amount of prereflective knowledge.

One of the particular kinds of being whose Being Gadamer is interested in discussing is historical tradition. He wants to relate the Being of tradition (the alleged "object" of historical knowledge) to the Being of Dasein (the alleged "subject" who has knowledge of this object through its understanding). Man is alleged to be historical in his very being. Nothing he does can escape this fact, which Heidegger calls Dasein's "facticity." Man is born into a cultural tradition and this determines the "space" in which he can move. This is his "world," and although he is free to choose among many possibilities for his future "projects" and interpretations of the past, all of these possibilities are determined by the particular situation in which he finds himself, into which he is "thrown."

Gadamer tells us:

'affinity' with a tradition is no less primordially and essentially constitutive of the historical finitude of Dasein than is the fact that Dasein always projects itself towards its future possibilities. On this point Heidegger rightly emphasizes the two moments of 'thrownness' (Geworfenheit) and 'project' (Entwurf) must always be thought of together. Thus there is no understanding or interpretation whatsoever which does not bring into play the entirety of this existential structure.¹

Gadamer sums up the hermeneutic implications of the concept of "thrownness," still using much of Heidegger's terminology, as follows:

The existential structure of 'thrownness,' fundamental to understanding as the meaningful operation of Dasein, is a structure also found at the basis of daily life understanding as performed in the human sciences. The concrete links which represent an ethics or tradition, more generally the concrete historical conditions, as well as the future possibilities which they imply, there [sic] links define what is active at the heart of the understanding proper to the human sciences. The importance of an existential doctrine such as 'thrownness'--Geworfenheit--is precisely to show that the Dasein which is projected towards its future 'potentiality-for-Being' is a being which here and now has been, so that all of its unrestrained posturing comes up against and is halted in the face of the facticity of its own being.²

(B) The Critique of Objectification
and the Standing-In-Itself
of a Work of Art

In the middle 1930s Heidegger rejected his former approach to the question of Being. He reversed

¹Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Problem of Historical Consciousness," trans. Jeff L. Close, new Introduction to the English ed. trans. Hans Fantel, Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal 5 (Fall 1975):27.

²Ibid.

the order of his investigations and began stressing, as opposed to the activity of Dasein, the self-activity of Being. One of his paradigmatic examples for a self-presenting reality which was not constituted by any kind of transcendental subjectivity was a work of art.

According to Heidegger's analysis of a work of art, such a work is not only an inexhaustible reservoir for meaningful experience, but is capable of communicating truths and enriching our knowledge. A work of art has a being which "stands in itself" and it can only be objectified at the expense of destroying this capability. As Gadamer puts it:

Heidegger contends that a work of art is characterized precisely by the fact that it is not an object, but rather stands in itself. By standing in itself it not only belongs to its world; its world is present ¹in it. The work of art opens up its own world.

The concept of "world" referred to here represents the understandable effects which a being can have, the "referential totality" which can be associated with its presence, the "totality of meaningful involvements" that one who experiences it can associate with it. When Heidegger said that Dasein, or the being which understands, is Being-in-the world, by

¹Idem, Philosophical Hermeneutics, trans. and ed. David E. Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 222.

"world" he means the horizon of the possibilities of understanding the past in terms of Dasein's projects for the future. It is this world, into which Dasein is a thrown projection, that we have begun to characterize as "tradition." By the middle 1930s, Heidegger broadened the meaning of "world" to make it a metaphor for what Being "reveals" or opens up. On the other hand, as opposed to what is revealed, that aspect of things which is held back, those possibilities which are not brought forth, in virtue of which things about them are said to be "concealed," is called, as opposed to their "world," their "earth."

"Earth" is not just a metaphor for what we do not know but a symbol for the independence which things have from human cognition, which is the source of the resistance that reality presents to human understanding. This leads Gadamer to say the following about a work of art:

Its being does not consist in its becoming an experience. Rather, by virtue of its own existence it is an event, a thrust that overflows everything previously considered to be conventional, a thrust in which a world never before there opens itself up. But this thrust takes place within the work of art itself in such a fashion that at the same time it is sustained in an abiding (ins Bleiben geborgen). That which arises and sustains itself in this way constitutes the structure of the work in its tension. It is this tension that Heidegger designates¹ as the conflict between the world and the earth.

¹Ibid., p. 233.

Gadamer makes the following generalization, based upon the alleged "truth" of a work of art:

But precisely what is exhibited in the work of art ought to be the essence of being itself. The conflict between revelation and concealment is not the truth of the work of art alone, but is the truth of every being, for as unhiddenness, truth is always such an opposition of revelation and concealment. The two belong necessarily together. This obviously means that truth is not simply the mere presence of a being, so that it stands, as it were, over against its correct representation. Such a concept of being unhidden would presuppose the subjectivity of the Dasein that represents beings. But beings are not correctly defined in their being if they are defined merely as objects of possible representation. Rather, it belongs just as much to their being that they withhold themselves. As unhidden, truth has in itself an inner tension and ambiguity.¹

The definition of truth in terms of the dialectical interplay of world and earth changes the locus of the question of Being itself. Being is no longer looked at as something which is dependent upon the way it is represented to Dasein, where Dasein plays the role of an epistemological ground or "center." Rather, Being is alleged to be the ground of the ability of things to stand in themselves, to reveal and conceal themselves. The initiative is now with Being, not with Dasein.

The conceptual problematic which is the point of departure for Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is stated in the vocabulary of Being and Time but is

¹Ibid., p. 226.

more fundamentally rooted in that aspect of Heidegger's later work where Being had taken the initiative away from Dasein. This should be kept in mind as we return to Heidegger's earlier work where the question of hermeneutic understanding is most explicitly treated.

(C) The Hermeneutic Circle

In works about hermeneutics written during the nineteenth century, it was generally believed that textual interpretation usually involved some kind of circular reasoning and, to that degree, was not logically rigorous. This phenomenon was known as the "hermeneutic circle" and was usually referred to by the allegation that the whole of a text can only be understood in terms of its parts, but that the parts themselves could only be understood in terms of the whole. Under the influence of John Stuart Mill's "Logic," (whose German translator coined the term "Geisteswissenschaften" for what Mill called the "cultural sciences"), Wilhelm Dilthey tried to take the element of circular reasoning out of the interpretive sciences and to establish hermeneutics as a scientific method.

Heidegger, and later Gadamer, rebelled against this attempt to limit hermeneutics to being a method for the human or interpretive sciences. They acknowledged the alleged circular structure of interpretation

but did not look at it as a negative aspect which ought to be avoided in order to insure objectivity.

According to Gadamer, texts are always analyzed in terms of all the previous beliefs and thought habits of the interpreter. These create anticipations of meaning, on the basis of what is initially understood, which guide a deeper analysis that either confirms or disconfirms them.

We do not only understand the details of a text in terms of the text as a totality, but also in relation to all of our experiences. This is what Heidegger is pointing out when he tells us that "understanding always pertains to the whole of Being-in-the-world" and then goes on to assert that "any interpretation which is to contribute to understanding, must have already understood what is to be interpreted."¹

This is not as paradoxical as it may sound, because by "understood" Heidegger is referring to his specific notion of primordial understanding. Nevertheless, although primordial understanding and its derivative forms of textual interpretation and understanding are not the same, the latter always is accompanied by the former, according to Heidegger's analysis. Thus,

¹Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 194.

the derivative form of understanding presupposes primordial understanding, and to the degree that it does, it can not possibly be scientifically objective.

The following passage presents Heidegger's most explicit statement of the hermeneutic problematic, and provides the basis for Gadamer's own point of departure. Heidegger begins this passage by expressing his attitude to the "ideal" of objectivity:

But if we see this circle as a vicious one and look out for ways of avoiding it, even if we just 'sense' it as an inevitable imperfection, then the act of understanding has been misunderstood from the ground up. The assimilation of understanding and interpretation to a definite ideal of knowledge is not the issue here. Such an ideal is ¹ itself only a subspecies of understanding.

He then concludes, referring to the hermeneutic circle as "the circle of understanding" as follows:

What is decisive is not to get out of the circle but to come into it in the right way. This circle of understanding is not an orbit in which any random kind of knowledge may move; it is the expression of the existential fore-structure of Dasein itself. It is not to be reduced to the level of a vicious circle, or even a circle which is merely tolerated. In the circle is hidden a positive possibility of the most primordial kind of knowing. To be sure, we genuinely take hold of this possibility only when, in our interpretation, we have understood that our first, last, and constant task is never to allow our fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception to be presented to us by fancies and popular conceptions, but rather to make the scientific theme secure by working out these fore-structures in terms of the things themselves.²

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 195.

The circle of understanding represents a description of the encounter of the interpreter with "the things themselves." By "things" is meant the subject matter of the text, what the text is saying. This does not mean the intentions of the author of the text, but rather, the significance that the text can have for an interpreter. This significance is not objectifiable; its existence can not be separated from the context of its interpretation.

The things themselves are only the semantic possibilities projected by the text; they are not its ideal meaning. We do not understand meanings, according to Heidegger. Rather, we attribute meaning to the things we understand. What meaning we attribute is not arbitrary. Not the intended meaning of the author, but the significance or effective meaning which the subject matter of a text has for an interpreter, is projected by the things themselves. How this subject matter is articulated into an interpretation can not be separated from the Being of the interpreter, which Heidegger is here referring to as "the existential fore-structure of Dasein itself."

(D) The Bogy of Relativism

This should not be misunderstood to imply relativism. On the contrary, it implies a methodologically conscious procedure. Interpretation is not

arbitrary, for Heidegger. If our attempt to understand is sincere, if we want to learn something new, we can not read anything at all into the objects which we are interpreting. Although the same things can have a different significance for different interpreters, all of their interpretations are the "working out" of possibilities actually inherent in the things themselves. We can thus not actualize a possibility that a text does not have; we can not interpret it in any way we want. The message that an interpreter receives when he understands a text is viewed as a projection of its Being, something that is not an arbitrary manipulation of it. False expectations are disconfirmed by experience. It is thus the resistance of reality that enables us to be sure that we are dealing with something which can stand in itself, over and against any arbitrary meaning which we may attribute to it.

Heidegger's analysis of understanding does not imply relativism because there is a form of objectivity involved, despite the firm commitment to avoid objectifying the things which we experience. Since different horizons or points of view make each non-objectifying interpretation different, the things being interpreted are the same things. This is what makes all interpretations of them part of the same tradition, giving it its unity, its identity with itself through

the course of time, despite the differences of its manifestations. Like works of art, the subject matter of texts have the ability to project a "depth of meaning" and a "self-sufficiency" which depends neither upon their creators, nor the audience for which they were originally presented or intended, nor upon what we might desire to read into them.

This concludes our review of those aspects of Heidegger's work which have been directly appropriated into Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. Gadamer transforms Heidegger's concept of "fore-structure" into his own concept of "prejudice" and the insights displayed with such concepts as "thrownness" and "facticity" into his own concept of "tradition." After presenting some of the dialectical dimensions of Gadamer's own work, we will be able to better clarify his overall relation to Heidegger.

CHAPTER II

THE FUSION OF HORIZONS AND THE
HAPPENING OF TRADITION(A) Effective History and Effective
Historical Consciousness

According to Gadamer, our prejudices represent those effects of the past that we have so deeply internalized that we are not normally conscious of them, even though we bring them to bear upon everything that we do. They are not merely the results of our own particular past experiences but of every past event that in any way influences our world. Gadamer believes that all of the accumulated cultural phenomena that went into our socialization processes have an inescapable effect upon us whenever we try to understand anything. Gadamer thus asserts that "the real meaning of a text . . . is always partly determined by the historical situation of the interpreter and hence by the totality of the objective course of history."¹

Gadamer calls the hermeneutically enlightened consciousness of tradition "wirkungsgeschichtliches

¹Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method, trans. and ed. Garrett Barden and John Cumming (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), p. 263.

Bewußtsein." We will render this complicated notion into English as "effective historical consciousness." Gadamer explicitly refers to "effective history" when he observes that "understanding is never subjective behaviour [sic] toward a given 'object', but towards its effective history--the history of its influence; in other words, understanding belongs to the being of that which is understood."¹ What he calls "tradition" is the objective historical effect of all previous events. Our understandings themselves are such events and contribute to tradition's movement. In actualizing possibilities by understanding past events in a new way, the cumulative influence of those events, or their effective history, is extended and enriched. The "being of that which is understood" are its historical effects, an important part of which is our understanding of it.

In order to clarify the notion of effective historical consciousness, Gadamer invokes the concepts of "situation" and "horizon" which he conjoins as follows:

We define the concept of 'situation' by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence an essential part of the concept of situation is the concept of 'horizon'. The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a

¹Ibid., p. xix.

particular vantage point. . . . To have a horizon means not to be limited to what is nearest, but to be able to see beyond it. . . . The working out of the hermeneutical situation means the achievement of the right horizon of enquiry for the questions evoked by the encounter with tradition.

By "horizon," Gadamer does not mean a closed point of view but rather a particular vantage point which enables one to look beyond. Applying this concept to the problem of historical consciousness we can speak, hypothetically, of the "present" horizon of the interpreter and the "past" horizon of the historical object. But the horizons of past and present are asserted to be abstract particularities which can not stand alone:

We started by saying that a hermeneutical situation is determined by the prejudices that we bring with us. They constitute, then, the horizon of a particular present, for they represent that beyond which it is impossible to see. But now it is important to avoid the error of thinking that it is a fixed set of opinions and evaluations that determine and limit the horizon of the present, and that the otherness of the past can be distinguished from it as from a fixed ground.²

Despite its heuristic value, it is wrong to consider the concept of the horizon of the present as pointing to a distinct reality, the reality of an interpreting subject and to consider the horizon of the past as pointing to another reality, the reality of a historical object. Both are abstractions,

¹ Ibid., p. 269.

² Ibid., pp. 272-73.

according to Gadamer. What is alleged to be real is the relationship itself of "the event of understanding" or "the happening of tradition." In analyzing this event, we posit an object and a subject, not as substantive realities but as categories of analysis.

Gadamer is now ready to present his concept of a "fusion" of horizons as he continues:

In fact the horizon of the present is being continually formed, in that we have continually to test all of our prejudices. An important part of this testing is the encounter with the past and the understanding of the tradition from which we come. Hence the horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past. There is no more an isolated horizon of the present than there are historical horizons. Understanding, rather, is always the fusion of these horizons which we imagine to exist by themselves. . . . In a tradition this process of fusion is continually going on, for there old and new continually grow together to make something of living value, without ever¹ being explicitly distinguished from the other.

The fusion of horizons appears to be a Hegelian "synthesis" in which the new higher horizon is affirmed to be the only real one, and the two older horizons are exposed as self-contradictory. Gadamer clarifies this as follows:

If, however, there is no such thing as these horizons that are distinguished from one another, why do we speak of the fusion of horizons and not simply of the formation of the one horizon, whose bounds are set in the depths of tradition? . . . Every encounter with tradition that takes place within historical consciousness involves the experience of the tension between the text and the

¹Ibid., p. 273.

present. The hermeneutic task consists in not covering up this tension by attempting a naive assimilation but consciously bringing it out. This is why it is part of the hermeneutic approach to project an historical horizon that is different from the horizon of the present. Historical consciousness is aware of its own otherness and hence distinguishes the horizon of tradition from its own. On the other hand, it is itself, as we are trying to show, only something laid over a continuing tradition, and hence it immediately recombines what it has distinguished in order, in the unity of the historical horizon that it, thus acquires, to become again one with itself.¹

Gadamer does not believe that he is projecting a Hegelian "Absolute," a movement of tradition in itself, in which only the highest stage, "the unity of the historical horizon," is real and everything preceding that stage is an "alienation," however necessary it has been to travel through it in order for the Absolute "to become again one with itself." Despite the obvious parallels with Hegelian speculation, tradition is not an Absolute in the sense of the march of history toward the self-realization of the Absolute spirit. Tradition is ongoing or "continuing" but it has neither a temporal nor a teleological end. We can never know it completely and we can never know ourselves completely. We are not blind agents of its forward march because its continuation has no "objective" direction, except the effects of our influences upon it.

¹Ibid.

(B) The Movement of Tradition and
the Effects of Human Actions

According to Gadamer, the historical consciousness which projects and simultaneously removes the otherness of the horizon of the past, is itself "only something laid over a continuing tradition." This movement of continuing tradition is what is real. He argues that both the alleged historical object and the historical consciousness which projects and removes the otherness of that object "belong" to the same historical movement, which is the reality upon which both are based. We can not understand one without understanding the other. It is the awareness of what is involved in all understanding and the limitations of our knowledge, and hence our finitude, which is designated by the term "effective historical consciousness." Gadamer thus asserts: "the true historical object is not an object at all, but the unity of the one and the other, a relationship in which exist both the reality of history and the reality of historical understanding."¹

Gadamer's fusion of horizons is only the conclusion of a particular "understanding-event." We have been examining this event from the point of view of those who experience it, but it can also be examined from the point of view of the happening of tradition

¹Ibid., p. 267.

itself. We will now turn our attention to "the movement of tradition as a whole," which is the way we will be referring to the alleged ongoing process in which all particular understanding-events become submerged.

Effective historical consciousness is not just an awareness of the event character of each interpretation that takes place as a fusion of horizons, whenever anything new is genuinely understood. It is also an awareness of the movement of the "continuing tradition" upon which each particular understanding-event is "laid-over." This laying-over of our interpretations upon the movement of tradition is the giving of our interpretations an historical effect. The more significant an interpretation is, the more historical effect it will have upon future interpretations in particular, and the movement of tradition in general. The greater the effects of my actions, the more they become part of the effective history influencing your actions.

It is Gadamer's conviction that every interpretation is a productive act, even if not a superior production to any other particular interpretation of the same thing, either in the past or in the future. When something is produced in an interpretive production, new meaning is created, new significance is being given to the subject matter being interpreted. This new significance has its historical effects; it leaves its

traces upon the movement of tradition. The reproduction of something traditional is itself an interpretive event which has its effects. Social reproduction as a whole, is the sum total of all of these reproductive events, which of course comprise all significant human actions, and goes far beyond the interpretation of historical texts, which so far has been our paradigm for illustrating the character of the hermeneutic experience. Interpretive understanding is of course only one among many kinds of human activity. What we have been calling "the movement of tradition" is shaped by all of our actions whereby tradition is constantly being productively reproduced. From this perspective, the movement of tradition can be looked at as a creative way of talking about the reality of social reproduction.

Every time we carry out a traditional custom, obey a law, follow a rule, we are not only reproducing it as a living institution but, according to Gadamer, carrying out a productive, creative act. This implies that we are responsible for all of our actions, no matter how conformist or non-creative they may appear to be; they all have their historical effects, even the alleged blind following of rules, whose maintenance as social institutions is only due to the fact that people continue to act in accordance with them.

Our present horizon is rooted in our past which

is rooted in tradition, and tradition is always in motion, just as our horizons are always in motion. The movement of our present horizon is caused by our own free productive actions which are both a result of our encounter with the movement of tradition and also the cause of tradition's further movement. All of our productive acts have their historical effects. We ourselves, not in so far as what we do is determined by the past, but in so far as what we do determines the future, are the cause of the movement of tradition.

Despite the dimension of freedom implied by the allegation that all reproductive actions are productive, Gadamer describes the alleged openness of our horizons in a way which implies, to the contrary, that tradition reproduces itself:

The historical movement of human life consists in the fact that it is never utterly bound to any one standpoint, and hence can never have a truly closed horizon. The horizon is, rather, something into which we move and that moves with us. Horizons change for a person who is moving. Thus the horizon of the past, out of which all human life lives and which exists in the form of tradition, is always in motion. It is not historical consciousness that first sets the surrounding horizon in motion.¹ But in it this motion becomes aware of itself.

It is significant that Gadamer says that through historical consciousness "this motion becomes aware of itself," rather than that man becomes aware of this

¹Ibid., p. 271.

motion. This appears to be a Hegelian slip and could indicate an even deeper appropriation of Hegelianism than is apparent from what we have so far presented. We will return to this problem in later chapters.

(C) The Confrontation of Old and New

The ultimate reality of social being, or what Gadamer calls "tradition," is constantly being modified in the course of time; but despite this, it allegedly remains the same basic reality. Gadamer believes that "even where life changes violently, as in ages of revolution, far more of the old is preserved in the supposed transformation of everything than anyone knows, and combines with the new to create a new value."¹ Thus, even a revolutionary transformation of tradition is nothing but a creative extension of it, according to Gadamer. In stressing what is preserved, as opposed to what changes, Gadamer is not just making a conservative value judgment. He is asserting, in his own way, that social reproduction is dependent upon a tremendous amount of tacitly accepted presuppositions which are rarely, if ever, brought to self-consciousness for critical reflection. It would be a misunderstanding of Gadamer, to merely look at him as a cynical conservative who blindly defends the status quo. For him, tradition is a

¹Ibid., p. 250.

living thing which is constantly being extended and modified. The reproduction of tradition, although to a certain extent done through acts of blind obedience to authority, can also be an act of reason, according to Gadamer. He believes that people learn from experience which traditions are worth preserving and which need to be abandoned, and that even the act of preservation is always a productive and not simply a reproductive act. Social reproduction is not blind. It is the creative extension and enrichment of tradition to constantly changing circumstances. In reproducing the old in the light of the genuinely new, previously blindly followed aspects of the old are not only brought to consciousness and rationally affirmed, but the old as a whole is modified, by being reaffirmed in a creative way. Tradition develops, not only through revolution but through creative preservation.

Every time a tradition is reaffirmed, social institutions are reproduced and values and beliefs are allegedly legitimated in practice. In effect, Gadamer views every aspect of social reproduction as a hermeneutic situation. In a hermeneutic situation there is a confrontation between the old and the new. It takes place every time the old is called into question by the new, every time we come into contact with something strange, that is different from our previous

conceptions. It also takes place every time we try to apply what is familiar to a new situation. In every hermeneutic encounter, all of our previously held beliefs are at stake. Gadamer thus makes the following clarification of his views, in response to some of his critics:

It is a grave misunderstanding to assume that emphasis on the essential factor of tradition which enters into all understanding implies an uncritical acceptance of tradition and socio-political conservatism. . . . In truth the confrontation of our historic tradition is always a critical challenge of this tradition. . . .

Every experience is a confrontation. Because every experience sets something new against something old and in every case it remains open in principle whether the new will prevail, i.e. will truly become experience, or whether the old, accustomed, predictable will be confirmed in the end. We know that even in the empirical sciences, as particularly Thomas Kuhn has shown in the meantime, not every new recognition is accepted without resistance. Rather, it is set aside as long as possible by the prevailing "paradigm." So it is basically with all experience. It must either overcome tradition or fail because of tradition.¹

Gadamer wrote the above passage in 1975 in an attempt to clarify his political position. The sympathetic reference to Kuhn is significant, and we will be exploring the dialectical implications of Kuhn's work in later chapters. For now, it is sufficient to say that it remains to be seen if the above position is consistent with Gadamer's overall work.

¹Gadamer, "The Problem of Historical Consciousness," p. 6.

CHAPTER III

PLAY, STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION
AND QUALITATIVE CHANGE(A) Gadamer's Phenomenology
of Restricted Play

In chapter 1, we presented Gadamer's appropriation of Heidegger's 1935 conception of a work of art. Now we will present Gadamer's conception of play, which he uses to further develop his conception of an art work so that it can be used as a paradigm for the hermeneutic experience. For Gadamer, the hermeneutic experience is nothing but entering into a dialectical relation with a self-presenting reality, be it a game, a work of art, or the subject matter of a text or a conversation.

According to his own restricted use of the word "play," "the players are not the subjects of the play; instead play merely reaches presentation through the players."¹ Gadamer is interested in this concept because, as he sees it, play is something that has a life of its own independent of the subjectivity of the players. The players become taken up in its movement.

¹Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 92.

Any game in which the players become absorbed has a "spirit," a "life," a "movement," a "logic" of its own. Among the limited number of responses, it is the back and forth movement of the game itself which inclines each player's response. No one knows in advance where a particular response will lead.

The metaphor of play, as a key philosophical concept, has a rich tradition starting with Heraclitus, expanded upon by Nietzsche, and taken up in modern times by Heidegger and Eugen Fink in Germany, and Kostas Axelos and Jacques Derrida in France.¹ Gadamer

¹Near the end of his lectures on Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason, Heidegger invokes Heraclitus as follows:

"Das Fragment 52 lautet: . . . Seinsgeschichte, ein Kind ist es, spielend, spielend das Brettspiel; eines Kindes ist das Königtum . . . Warum spielt das von Heraklit im [Seinsgeschichte] . . . erblickte grosse Kind des Weltspieles? Es spielt weil es spielt. Das 'Weil' versinkt im Spiel. Das Spiel ist ohne 'Warum'. Es spielt, dieweil es spielt. Es bleibt nur Spiel: das Höchste und Tiefste. Aber dieses 'nur' ist Alles, das Eine, Einzige. Nichts ist ohne Grund. Sein und Grund: das Selbe. Sein als gründendes hat keinen Grund, spielt als der Ab-Grund jenes Spiel, das als Geschick uns Sein und Grund zuspült. Die Frage bleibt, ob wir und wie wir, die Sätze dieses Spiels hörend, mitspielen und uns in das Spiel fügen." (Martin Heidegger, Der Satz vom Grund [The principle of sufficient reason] [Pfullingen: Verlag Günther Neske, 1957; Fünfte Auflage (5th ed.), 1978], p. 188.)

I would translate this important passage as follows:
 "Fragment 52 tells us: . . . Destiny, it is a child, playing, playing at a playing board; it is the kingdom of a child . . .
 Why does it play, what Heraclitus calls [destiny], the play of the world, and perceives

has, in our opinion, chosen to overlook a major philosophical trend to which Heidegger has contributed,

as a great child? It plays because it plays.

In play, the 'because' disappears. Play is without a 'why.' While it plays, it only plays. It remains just play: the highest and most profound.

But this 'just' is everything, the one and only.

Nothing is without Ground. Being and Ground: the Same. Being, as what grounds, has no Ground; destiny is like an A-byss into whose play we, Being and Ground are thrown.

The question remains, whether we and how we, heeding the active principles of this play, involve ourselves in it and play along with it." Heidegger's conception of play contrasts sharply with Gadamer's conception. This contrast should be kept in mind when we compare their work in greater detail in chapters 4 and 5.

The importance of the concept of play for Nietzsche is stressed in Eugen Fink, Nietzsches Philosophy (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1960); and Alan D. Schrift, "Nietzsche's Psycho-Geneology: A Ludic Alternative to Heidegger's Reading of Nietzsche," Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology 14 (October 1983):283-303. For a comprehensive treatment of the philosophical importance of the metaphor of play, see Eugen Fink, Spiel als Weltsymbol (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1960), which is unfortunately out of print. An attempt is made to fuse such themes about play to a Marxist perspective in Kostas Axelos, Einführung in ein künftiges Denken: Über Marx und Heidegger (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1966).

One of the most important living theoreticians of play is Derrida. See especially Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 50; his "Theater of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation," in Writing and Difference, pp. 232-50; and his already referenced "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in Writing and Difference, pp. 278-93. A collection entitled "Games, Play, Literature," which appeared as Yale French Studies 41 (September 1968), contains translations from Fink, Axelos and others. Jacques Ehrmann, the special editor, also deserves credit for his part in bringing Derrida to Yale.

which stresses the undetermined aspects of play. What this entire tradition has in common is a notion of free or unrestricted play, which Derrida provocatively counterposes to a play, which is "restricted" by an epistemological center or ground.¹

One of the main theoreticians of play as a game restricted by rules is the conservative Dutch historian Huizinga. Huizinga is the main modern authority on the subject of play to which Gadamer appeals and by whom he was deeply influenced.²

The restricted or rule-bound concept of play looks at play from the point of view of a game, whose alleged "self-movement" is a dynamic whole which conditions its parts, which are the movements of its players. It is seen as an event which involves at least one and usually more than one participant who responds to something that is unpredictable. The actions (or

¹For the counterposition of centered and free play see Derrida, Writing and Difference, pp. 289-93. For what he means by "restricted," see Derrida, Writing and Difference, pp. 270-76.

²For Gadamer's reliance upon Huizinga, see Truth and Method, pp. 93-96, and Philosophical Hermeneutics, p. 55. All of Gadamer's references are to Johann Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955). A good synopsis of Huizinga's position is contained in Robert Anchor, "History and Play: Johann Huizinga and His Critics," History and Theory 17 (February 1978):63-93. For a critique of Huizinga from a perspective similar to that of Derrida, see Jacques Ehrmann, "Homo Ludens Revisited," in "Games, Play, Literature," pp. 31-57.

reactions) of each of the participants in a game can only be adequately described in terms of the game as a whole, which Gadamer describes with the help of the metaphor of "buoyancy" as follows:

The real experience of the game consists in the fact that something that obeys its own set of laws gains ascendancy in the game. To the movement in a determinate direction corresponds a movement in the opposite direction. The back and forth movement of the game has a peculiar freedom and buoyancy that determines the consciousness of the players. . . . Neither partner alone constitutes the real determining factor; rather, it is the unified form of movement as a whole that unifies the fluid activity of both. We can formulate this idea as a theoretical generalization by saying that the individual self, including his activity and his understanding of himself, is taken up into a higher, determination that is really the decisive factor.¹

The alleged "higher determination" is not a higher concept which cancels out the lower ones, even though it does subordinate them. This "higher determination" is the dialectical relationship created by the game. We do not analyze this relationship in terms of the consciousness or intentions of the players; rather, we analyze their effective motion in terms of it. Antagonisms, antitheses, oppositions or contradictions created by the movement or dynamic interaction which we call either literally or metaphorically a "game," generate a dynamic tension which fills the minds of the participants, and in whose back and forth movement they are swept along.

¹Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics, pp. 54-55.

According to Gadamer, play is a self-presenting reality. We become involved in it. We choose to become involved in one form of play rather than another, but once we have committed ourselves, we get taken up by the play itself. It fills our minds and overwhelms us. Our activity becomes a means to its self-presentation. The logic of the to and fro movement presents us with an overpowering reality to which we must adjust ourselves. We still have a range of possible responses, but the possibilities are determined by the game itself, not by us. We are only free to choose from a limited set of possibilities which are not of our own making. Our activity is more like a passivity; we react rather than act.

(B) The Transformation into Structure

Art and play do not always go together. Play may or may not become concretized into a work of art. All art works have play as an essential aspect, according to Gadamer. Art is play, but not all play is art. Gadamer distinguishes art from other forms of play as follows:

I call this development, in which human play finds its true perfection in being art, 'the transformation into structure'. Only through this development does play acquire its ideality, so that it can be intended and understood as play. Only now does it emerge as detached from the representing activity of the players and consist in the pure appearance of what they are playing. As such the play --even the unforeseen element of improvisation--

is fundamentally repeatable and hence permanent. It has the character of a work, of an *ergon* and not only of *energia*.¹⁵ In this sense I call it a structure.¹

¹⁵I am making use here of the classical distinction in which Aristotle (*Eth. Eud.* B1; *Eth. Nic.* vi, 5, 1140 a 20) separates the poesis from the praxis

A "structure" is something that has come into being, a created thing with a unique identity. This identity is maintained throughout its future presentations. It has a life of its own, not only while it is being presented but on into an indefinite future. A structure is something that has been generated by creative human activity. In the case of a drama it is the activity of the author or the original players. But once a drama is written or performed, it takes on a life of its own. Something new has come into being which can not be understood in terms of its generation but only in terms of its future presentations, interpretations or appropriations.

Any social institution which is reproduced by our productive actions is a structure, in Gadamer's sense. The being of a structure is its ongoing and different representations. As a dialectical phenomena, a structure involves human participation, which it conditions. It does not exist in itself. A work of art is alleged to be a structure whose being is not

¹Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 99.

only to present itself but to present itself for an audience. It is not dependent for its existence on the experience people have of it but on its ability to be experienced. Play is an event, but the play of art is an ongoing repeatable event, all of whose repetitions are different. Like a written text, it is an institution with a physical substrate, which means it exists as long as its substrate is not destroyed or transformed. An institutional activity, on the other hand, only exists as long as it is practiced.

Gadamer's paradigm for illustrating the being of an institution is a festival, which exists only in its renewals. Between renewals, it is only the memory of its past renewals, which have become a tradition. This tradition serves as a model for future renewals, but it is also correct to say that a festival which is not renewed ceases to be a tradition, in the ongoing sense. A festival exists only in its celebrations. Similarly, a social institution exists only in its reproductions, or social actions in accordance with it.

Gadamer is not interested in how structures come about, or come into being, but in their effective history. Dialectical thinking must be interested in both. A structure is something which has become but whose being has become detached from the way it has become. Its being is not its continued physical

existence but its continuing ability to be experienced as the kind of structure that it is. Herein lies its identity, which can only exist in the different appropriations of it.

Today, the word "structure" calls to mind Claude Lévi-Strauss and the structuralist movement. The only reference to this movement that I have found in Gadamer's writings is an elliptical one to Jacques Lacan.¹ The source for Gadamer's usage of the term "structure" is unclear. Be that as it may, Gadamer has put his hands on a key concept and used it in a manner quite similar to its structuralist usage, where questions of genesis and history are set aside, for methodological reasons. Derrida makes this plain in the following generalization about Lévi-Strauss:

In the work of Lévi-Strauss it must be recognized that the respect for structurality, for the internal originality of the structure, compels a neutralization of time and history. For example, the appearance of a new structure, of an original system, always comes about--and this is the very condition of its structural specificity--by a rupture with its past, its origin, and its cause. Therefore one can describe what is peculiar to the structural organization only by not taking into account, in the very moment of this description, its past conditions: by omitting to posit the problem of the transition from one structure to another, by putting history between brackets. In this "structuralist" moment, the concepts of chance and discontinuity are indispensable.²

¹ See Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics, p.41.

² Derrida, Writing and Difference, p. 291.

(C) Transformation and Qualitative Change

What Derrida calls a "rupture," Gadamer calls a "transformation." Gadamer explains what he means by "transformation," comparing it to "change" as follows:

The implications for the definition of the nature of art emerge when one takes the sense of transformation seriously. Transformation is not change, even a change that is especially far-reaching. A change always means that what is changed also remains the same and is held on to. However totally it may change, something changes in it. In terms of categories, all change (alloiosis) belongs in the sphere of quality, ie [sic] of an accident of substance. But transformation means that something is suddenly and as a whole something else, that this other transformed thing that it has become is its true being, in comparison with which its earlier being is nothing. When we find someone transformed we mean precisely this, that he has become, as it were, another person. There cannot here be any transition of gradual change leading from one to the other. Thus the transformation into a structure means that what existed previously no longer exists. But also that what now exists, what represents itself in the play of art, is what is lasting and true.¹

Here, Gadamer is counterposing "transformation" to all kinds of change, including "far-reaching" changes in "quality," or what Marxists call "qualitative change." "Qualitative change" is asserted by them to be abrupt but nevertheless based upon continuity, as opposed to "quantitative change," which is gradual. Qualitative changes are revolutionary whereas quantitative changes are evolutionary.

According to the Marxist appropriation of Hegel,

¹Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 100.

contradiction is alleged to be the motor of change, not only in the logical development of concepts, but in the social world. But the only kinds of change which traditional Marxists have distinguished are quantitative and qualitative change. Dialectical thought, however, should be able to account for all kinds of changes, including the emergence of something completely new, which has no logical connection to the thing which was transformed into it, which only serves as its substrate. When something new has come into being, it stands in itself as a self-presenting reality. It is no longer determined by the intentions of its creator, or by the past identity of the material substrate out of which it was made. Marxist dialectical categories may be sufficient to describe and demystify qualitative changes, but they are not always suited to describe, what Gadamer calls "the transformation into structure," through which a new work comes into being, which can stand in itself and overwhelm those who experience it. The Marxist dialectic has a limited range of applicability in that its main concern is to describe the "logic" of the development and changes of already given social institutions. It is not designed to deal with the emergence of new works or of meaning and significance. It relegates these kinds of things to the "superstructure," to which it pays little attention, concentrating most of

its energy on the economic base or "infrastructure."

The kinds of things with which Gadamer is interested in dealing are things which help him to describe the hermeneutic experience. They are usually created all at once and continue to exist as long as they and their traces are not obliterated, or transformed into something completely different. Works of art, written texts, ongoing customs etc., should also be susceptible to a dialectical analysis. Although they are alleged to be unchanging structures, the significance which they have for us and the knowledge we gain from our experiences of them are constantly changing. Gadamer believes that their being lies precisely in our different appropriations of them.

Truth is not something that evolves gradually. It is alleged to emerge all of a sudden as a unified circle or totality of meaning after an encounter with a subject matter. The same goes for solutions to problems, scientific discoveries and other sudden breakthroughs. There is no necessary connection between such leaps, and the gradual "quantitative" preparation which preceded them. Of course there cannot be breakthroughs without preparation, but not everyone who prepares can achieve them. The categories of emergence cannot be explained gradualistically, but they must nevertheless be understood dialectically.

CHAPTER IV

DIALOGUE AND SPECULATIVE LANGUAGE

(A) The Basis of Dialectic in Dialogue

Any event that brings about a hermeneutic experience which fills the mind with a spirit of its own can be looked upon as a dialectical phenomenon. We have discussed Gadamer's allegation that this is what is involved in the play of a work of art. But the original hermeneutic experience which first popularized dialectical thinking was the experience of a dialogue in pursuit of the truth of a subject matter. Gadamer puts it in this way:

Now I contend that the basic constitution of the game, to be filled with its spirit--the spirit of bouyancy, freedom and the joy of success--and to fulfill him who is playing, is structurally related to the constitution of the dialogue in which language is a reality. When one enters into a dialogue with another person and then is carried along further by the dialogue, it is no longer the will of the individual person, holding itself back or exposing itself, that is determinative. Rather, the law of the subject matter is at issue in the dialogue and elicits statement and counterstatement¹ and in the end plays them into each other.

The key conception here is "the law of the subject matter." As long as we sincerely pursue the truth, and sincerely try to understand one another, we will be

¹Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics, p. 66.

dominated by the subject matter. "Truth" and "understanding" are alleged not to be philosophical or metaphysical abstractions. We are supposed to understand one another when we agree about a subject matter; what is brought to light, what we previously did not know about that subject matter is here called its "truth."

The German word for the subject matter is "die Sache," which can also be rendered into English as "matter" or "thing," but its etymological meaning included something which was impartially placed between two competing parties, which gives it the connotation of objectivity. Gadamer asserts:

One of the greatest champions of such objectivity among classical philosophical thinkers is Hegel. He actually speaks of the action of the thing and characterizes real philosophical speculation by the fact that the thing itself is active in it and not simply the free play of our own notions. That is the free play of our reflective procedures with the thing is not operative in real philosophical speculation. The celebrated phenomenological slogan, "To the things themselves," which at the beginning of the century expressed a new orientation within philosophy, also means something similar.¹

When two people come to an understanding they agree about a subject matter. A dialectician, according to Gadamer's way of thinking, is someone who has become proficient in the art of guiding a conversation by clarifying and staying with the subject matter. Here, any reflective, methodological or arbitrary procedures

¹Ibid., pp. 70-71.

can have no "free play." Rather, the persons conversing are themselves caught up in the play of conversation. Conversation is a game of give and take in which alternative views of a subject matter are raised and dismissed until agreement is reached. The paradigm for this process is, of course, the Socratic dialogue.

A dialogue is always a dialogue about something. It is always motivated by a lack of knowledge which gets expressed in the form of a question about a subject matter. It is not a methodical investigation. What the dialectician takes seriously is the pursuit of truth, motivated by the knowledge that he does not already know something. It is not important who "wins." A dialogue is not a game, in the sense of a debate. We do not and can not play with the truth. Rather, in a real dialogue we get caught up in the play of our mutual pursuit of the truth; we get carried away with ourselves.

A question opens up the "space" which makes an answer possible. It provides a sense which points to the direction from which an answer can come. A sincere questioning into a subject matter creates and maintains an openness to different alternative answers. Dialectic, here, is nothing but what happens when one questions a subject matter in pursuit of knowledge. In so doing, he gets taken up into a higher relationship that he does not control, which displays its own logic.

For Gadamer, the development of the ideas presented in a Socratic dialogue is an attempt to illustrate the movement of thinking-together as it takes place in every genuine conversation in which the participants get taken up by "the law of the subject matter." It is dialectic in the sense of play and being taken up by a higher determination because

what emerges in its truth is the logos, which is neither mine nor yours and hence so far transcends the subjective opinions of the partners to the dialogue that even the person leading the conversation is always ignorant. Dialectic as the art of conducting a conversation is also . . . the art of the formation of concepts as the working out of a common meaning. Precisely this is what characterizes a dialogue, in contrast with the rigid form of the statement that demands to be set down in writing: that here language, in the process of question and answer, giving and taking, talking at cross purposes and seeing each other's point, performs that communication of meaning which, with respect to the written tradition, is the task of hermeneutics.¹

What applies to a conversation between persons must also apply to the interpretation of a text, according to Gadamer. If interpretation is also a dialectical language event, then it must also have the structure of question and answer, and since a text can not speak for itself, the interpreter must make it speak. Gadamer sees the dialectic of question and answer to be at the basis of all the sciences, including the early Heidegger's non-objectifying procedure of interpretation which still tried to be "scientific."

¹Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 331.

Since, for Gadamer, every assertion is motivated by a question, the interpreter must reconstruct the question to which the text's assertion is an answer. But, as in all dialogue, questioning is a "giving and taking." In questioning what lies behind the text we must relate the text's horizon to our own. In a hermeneutic conversation with a text, we become caught up in the back and forth logic of questioning and answering until we understand what the text asserts. Interpretive understanding is thus, in the final analysis, a questioning and a being questioned until a common meaning emerges which reflects both the horizon of the question behind the text and the horizon of the interpreter. We can not learn without questioning and we can not question without being questioned. We can not open up the horizon of the text without opening up our own horizon. In the process both become transformed.

(B) Grounding Dialectical Identity Theory
in the Speculative Unity of Language,
Thought and Being

Towards the end of Truth and Method, Gadamer writes about "the dialectic," in relation to Greek identity theory as follows:

The dialectic, this expression of the logos, was not for the Greeks a movement performed by thought, but the movement of the object itself that thought experiences. . . . In the situation of modern thought that we have described, Hegel has consciously taken up the model of Greek dialectic. Hence whoever wants to learn from the Greeks has always first to

learn from Hegel. Both his dialectic of the determinations of thought as well as his dialectic of the forms of knowledge explicitly repeat the total mediation between thought and being that was formerly the natural element of Greek thought. In that our hermeneutic theory seeks to show the interconnection of event and understanding, it sends us back to Parmenides as well as Hegel. . . . We are simply following an internal necessity of the thing itself if we go beyond the idea of the object and the objectivity of understanding towards the idea of the coordination of subject and object.¹

⁹³ Cf on this my essay in Hegel-Studien I: 'Hegel und die antike Dialektik'

Gadamer thus follows Hegel in understanding the alleged "identity" between "thought and being" or the "coordination of subject and object" as a "total mediation." In the next chapter, we will counterpose this to Heidegger's treatment of the same problem. Here, we will try to show that Gadamer's reduction of dialectical coordination or correlation to "total mediation," is rooted in his belief in the speculative unity of language, thought and being. We will try to demonstrate that for Gadamer, there is no difference between a dialectical identity and a speculative synthesis. In order to do this, we must first understand his theory of the speculative character of language. This is the theme he introduces when he qualifies the above assertions by saying that "we cannot simply follow the Greeks or the identity philosophy of German idealism:

¹Ibid., p. 418.

we are thinking from the centre of language."¹

Hegel and Plato also base their dialectic on language, each in his own way. But for both of them, language does not alone bear the truth since it must be worked on and elevated to the idea or the concept, according to Gadamer. Plato did not have a theory of language, in the modern sense, but of the logos, in which all ideas are related. For Plato and Hegel, however, the dialectical exposition of the idea or concept always based itself on the propositional judgment.

For Gadamer, propositional statements reflect a limited, objectified view of things, from the narrow perspective determined by their predicates. Speculative language uses sentences, the grammatical equivalent of propositional statements, in a living context in which, in most practical cases, the subject matter is something we are concerned about, involved with, and which is not treated like an object. Our language reflects this concern, which is always concern in a particular context and is always motivated. When we say something to someone who is listening and our words get caught up in the play of a conversation, they take on a life of their own, which the hearer can only understand in terms of his own particular horizon.

Speculative language says something which can

¹Ibid.

be understood, which is intelligible, and which opens up an array of possible interpretations, which are alleged to be different views of the same subject matter. Gadamer's paradigm for speculative language is the language of poetry. However, he believes that poetry is only an intensification of every day speech, which is itself alleged to be speculative. For Gadamer language is not merely a structure of signification or a tool for communication but, more basically, the common world through which we understand each other and express what we want to say. Words only have meaning in the context of the language in which they are expressed and understood. If in a single conversation these two moments take place in different languages, a common language must be worked out through translation.

Gadamer believes that every word which we use both expresses and effects the whole of language. He asserts that the speculative character of language

. . . assigns to every word an inner dimension of multiplication: every word breaks forth as if from a centre and is related to a whole, through which alone it is a word. Every word causes the whole of the language to which it belongs to resonate and the view of the world which lies behind it to appear. Thus every word, in its momentariness, carries with it the unsaid, to which it is related by responding and indicating. . . . All human speaking is finite in such a way that there is within it an infinity of meaning to be elaborated and interpreted.¹

¹Ibid., pp. 415-16.

Gadamer's implied relationship between "every word" and "the whole of language" can be considered a dialectical one, if by "the dialectic" we mean a process or intellectual movement culminating in a speculative synthesis or "totalization" which posits one great "whole" to which all the "parts" are subordinated. In Gadamer's case, this "whole" is not just "the whole of language," but "the whole of being," since he also asserts: "Someone speaks speculatively when his words do not reflect beings, but express a relation to the whole of being."¹ Such totalizations of all particular words to "the whole of language," or of all particular things (or "beings") to "the whole of being," establish what is today referred to as a "microcosmic-macrocosmic" relationship. This kind of relationship can be labeled "organicistic" since it treats an alleged totality like an organism which gives a meaning to the functioning of all of its parts. An organicistic totality is far more than a "higher determination" or "game" which restricts the choices open to its players. It is more comparable to the "play of the world." But in Gadamer's case, the play of the world is constituted by the speculative movement of language. This is the reason, the "because," which metaphysically "grounds" the self-presentation of the things themselves. But

¹Ibid., p. 426.

what is the speculative movement of "the whole of language" or "the whole of being" if not the movement of meaning itself? We believe that the circulation or reproduction of meaning is the real ground of the movement or happening of tradition, a ground which restricts all the play in Gadamer's hermeneutic universe.

Gadamer labels his view of language "speculative," not only to draw parallels with Hegel but also in order to imply the notion of "reflection," in the sense of mirroring, which he believes to be one of the meanings of the term "speculate." What is ironic is that Gadamer overlooks the modern economical uses of this key term where "to speculate" means: to invest with the expectation of a profit; to gamble that the circulation of an invested value will increase that value; to play with value; to conjecture, without the certitude of knowing that one is right; to play with ideas; to guess; to live dangerously; to risk the loss of one's investment; to risk being misunderstood. The more modern senses of the term "slide" from cunning calculation to reckless guesswork, which makes it an easy target for conceptual subversion or "deconstruction." But it is clear that only the more cunning uses of the term are hidden behind Gadamer's usage. What is hermeneutic appropriation if not the recovery of invested meaning? What is the emergence of a "totality

of meaning" or the "coming into language of meaning" if not the realization of the speculative projections of others, the appropriation of the meaning-effects of their meaningful investments?

Gadamer never categorically asserts that the thing itself is meaning, that the self-presentation of the thing and its hermeneutic appropriation are nothing but two ways of looking at the circulation or reproduction of meaning. But he implies this as he summarizes the discussion of the final part of Truth and Method and draws the following ontological conclusions:

The speculative structure of language emerged, not being the reflection of something given, but the coming into language of a totality of meaning. This brought us close to the dialectic of the Greeks, because it did not conceive understanding as a methodic activity of the subject, but as something that the thing itself does, and which thought 'suffers'. This activity of the thing itself is the real speculative movement that takes hold of the speaker. We have sought its subjective reflex in speech. We can now see that this turn from the activity of the thing itself, from the coming into language of meaning, points to a universal ontological structure, namely the basic nature of everything to which understanding can be directed. Being that can be understood is language. . . . That which can be understood is language. This means that it is of such a nature that of itself it offers itself to be understood. Here too is confirmed the speculative structure of language. To be expressed in language does not mean that a second being is acquired. The way in which a thing presents itself is, rather, part of its own being. Thus everything that is language has a speculative unity: it contains a distinction, that between its being and the way in which it presents itself, but this is a distinction that is really not a distinction at all.¹

¹Ibid., pp. 431-32.

(C) The Indissoluble Correlation of
"the Dialectical" and "the Speculative"

Gadamer believes that "being" (which he has explicitly defined as self-representation or self-presentation), and the speculative language in which this self-presentation takes place, and the understanding-event in which this self-presentation is experienced, all exist in speculative unity with each other. The three parts of Truth and Method, which respectively deal with art, history and language, are brought together under the alleged universality of the hermeneutic experience and grounded in the alleged speculative character of "being" as Gadamer concludes:

Obviously it is not a peculiar determination of the work of art that it has its being in its presentation, nor is it a peculiarity of the being of history that it is to be understood in its significance. Self-presentation and being-understood belong together not only in that one passes into the other, and the work of art is one with its effective-history, the tradition one with its present experience of being understood. Speculative language, distinguishing itself from itself, presenting itself, language which expresses meaning, is not only art and history but everything insofar as it may be understood. The speculative character of being that is the ground of hermeneutics¹ extends as universally as does reason and language.

As Gadamer sees it, we can not separate thinking, the self-presentation of beings and language from the event in which they all come together since they are all synthesized in a speculative unity. But he

¹Ibid., pp. 433-34.

also implies that they "belong together" in a dialectical unity. Is there a difference between a "speculative" and a "dialectical" unity? Isn't it more clarifying to attribute to Gadamer the notion of a "speculative-dialectical unity"? Isn't his dialectic based upon Hegel's speculative dialectic? Doesn't Gadamer take the term "speculative" from Hegel?

To answer such questions we must consult other sources. B. C. Birchall tells us the following:

The logical notion, or thought thinking itself, is . . . a self-differentiating activity that is essentially three-sided: "In point of form logical doctrine has three sides: (a) the Abstract side, or that of the understanding; (b) the Dialectical, or that of negative reason; ¹⁴(c) the Speculative, or that of positive reason." . . . Hegel says that [when] thought as understanding . . . attempts to think itself as that "whose nature it is to be merely being" and to make its "principle of intelligibility" intelligible, it inevitably finds itself in contradiction. And this is the critical or dialectical side of the logical notion, in which the exclusive characterizations of, or formulae for, intelligibility "supersede themselves, and pass into their opposites."¹⁷ . . .

The third side of the logical ¹⁹notion, that of speculative or positive reason, advances beyond the negative stage of dialectic. The contradictions brought out by the dialectic are now seen as they are, in and for themselves. This change in attitude on the part of thought enables the contradictions of the dialectical side to be resolved.¹

¹⁴G. W. F. Hegel, Logic, trans. W. Wallace (London: Oxford, 1975), p. 113.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 115. ¹⁹Ibid., p. 119.

¹B. C. Birchall, "On Hegel's Critique of Formal Logic," Clio 9 (Winter 1980):283-96 (hereafter cited as Birchall, "Hegel's Critique").

Hegel's situating of "the Dialectical" as a negative moment which is higher than the first moment of abstract "understanding," but lower than the positive "Speculative" moment, is confirmed by Heidegger's remarks during a joint seminar with Fink on Heraclitus. For example:

Heidegger: . . . If Hegel says, the dialectical is the negative-reasonable, it so signifies: the abstract finite determination elevates itself and goes over to its opposite determination. Opposed to this, is the clinging of the abstract thought of the understanding to the determination and its difference from others. . . .

Heidegger: Think concrete-historically towards the synthetic unity of the transcendental apperception, with Kant. It is a unity with regard to objectivity. But for Hegel this totality itself comes first, i.e., the positive unity of subject and object in their unity, wherein the totality of the dialectical procedure is lodged. The beholding of this unity, i.e., the beholding of the abstract and dialectical moments in their unity, is the speculative. As the positive-reasonable, the speculative apprehends the unity of the determinations in their opposition.¹

¹Eugen Fink and Martin Heidegger, Heraklit: Seminar Wintersemester 1966/67 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1970), pp. 184-85. My translation is based upon the following German text:

"Heidegger: . . . Wenn Hegel sagt, das Dialektische ist das Negativ-Vernünftige, so besagt das: die abstrakte endliche Bestimmung hebt sich selbst auf und geht in ihre entgegengesetzte Bestimmung über. Dagegen ist das abstrakte Denken des Verstandes das Festhalten an der Bestimmung und ihrer Unterschiedenheit gegen andere. . . .

Heidegger: Denken Sie historisch-konkret an die synthetische Einheit der transzendentalen Apperzeption bei Kant. Sie ist die Einheit in bezug auf die Objektivität. Für Hegel aber ist erst dieses Ganze selbst, d. h. Subjekt und Objekt in ihrer Einheit die positive Einheit, worin das Ganze des dialektischen Prozesses hinterlegt ist. Das Erblicken dieser Einheit, d. h. das Erblicken des abstrakten und dialektischen Moments in ihrer

It is thus clear that with respect to the positive speculative moment, the negative dialectical moment is a distinctly different one. Keeping this in mind, we can now conclude this discussion by presenting Gadamer's elliptical argument for the need to "go beyond" the above distinction. He asserts:

Here it even seems proper to me to go beyond Hegel's understanding of himself and to acknowledge that the dialectical development of thought and listening to the speculative spirit in one's own language are in the final analysis of the same nature. They themselves exist in dialectical unity, i.e., in indissoluble correlation with each other. For the speculative is only actual when it is not solely retained inwardly in mere opinion, but rather when it is also expressed, be this in the form of explicit philosophical exposition, in contradiction and its resolution, or in the covert tensions within the spirit of language prevailing over us. . . .

Plainly, the concepts of exposition and expression, which properly define the essence of dialectic, the reality of the speculative, must . . . be understood as referring to an ontological process. . . . The determinations within which thought moves are, as Hegel emphasizes, not extrinsic forms which we apply as is expedient to something already given. Rather, they always have already taken us up into themselves and our thought consists in following their movement. Now, . . . being captivated by the logos, something which the Greeks of the classical period experienced as delerium, [sic] and out of which Plato, in Socrates' name, sees the truth of the Idea emerging, can be seen to be close to the speculative self-movement of the thought as it is explicated in Hegel's dialectic.¹

Einheit, ist das Spekulative. Das Spekulative als das Positiv-Vernünftige faßt die Einheit der Bestimmungen in ihrer Entgegensetzung auf."

¹Hans-Georg Gadamer, Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), pp. 31-33.

(D) Gadamer's Resurrection of
Greek Logos Philosophy

For Gadamer, tradition functions as a metaphysical ground. Its movement is what constitutes effective history, which determines our consciousness and non-conscious thinking, as expressed in our language. All of our actions have a "because." They are grounded by tradition's movement and their effects continue that movement. In the final analysis, we are little more than playthings of the historical circumstances into which we have been thrown and from which we project ourselves towards the future. Our conscious choices express dispositions which are non-conscious and of which we are usually unaware. The horizon which we bring to our appropriation of tradition is predominantly beyond our conscious awareness and rational decision processes.

For Gadamer, even our most creative interpretations, appropriations or reproductions are hermeneutic experiences. The hermeneutic experience is alleged to be universal, to be involved in all forms of human cognition and action. What is the hermeneutic experience? What is in control when we get taken up by a higher determination? In the play of language or art, in all hermeneutic encounters with the things themselves we become overwhelmed, we experience a loss of self, which is not a state of non-consciousness but a

state in which our consciousness is completely subordinated to "the law of the subject matter." It is the dynamic interaction generated by a game which determines the players' moves, and not the rational self-consciousness of the players themselves. Gadamer compares being taken up in the spirit of a game to a state of possession. Is someone who is possessed by a spirit which is not his own, and which dictates his further actions, free? Is he the one that is acting? The entire category of activity, the validity of the distinction between activity and passivity is completely denied by Gadamer's dialectic.

The classical Greeks, as Gadamer would be the first to point out, did not have a concept for self-consciousness. They also had no conception of self-determined and responsible human action. These are all modern "subjectivist" concepts. So is the concept of rational criticism. Gadamer does not deny the efficacy of such modern concepts but sees no discontinuity of a basic kind between ancient and modern thinking. He holds Greek thought and Hegel's attempt to resurrect it under more modern conditions as a paradigm for philosophical procedures. Whether we call it spirit or logos or the language prevailing over us, we are faced with a historical given in which human beings can at best participate. For Plato and Hegel

and Gadamer, a dialectician is one who is completely taken up by the self-movement of the subject matter.

When mythological thinking broke down at the dawn of the classical age, only the poets, oracles and so-called prophets still claimed to be possessed by the gods and to allow these gods to speak through them.¹ Plato articulated a more developed kind of thinking and called for the banning of such ancient seers from his ideal state, but his dialectic was far from rational critical thinking. It was something which was experienced as a "delirium," through which one was taken up into the realm of the logos. The transition had been completed from demonic possession to an elevation to a higher spiritual world, which corresponds to the transition from paganism to monotheism. But critical rational thinking was still a long way from being born.¹ Gadamer praises the Greek conception of dialectic as something which thought "suffers," which is experienced as a "delirium." Gadamer's analysis of the event of understanding as a happening of tradition has this concept of dialectic

¹For an interesting theory with many philosophical implications which deals with the question of the radically different thought processes undergone by the Greek poets, oracles and prophets, comparing them to modern schizophrenics and people under hypnosis, the reader should see Julian Jaynes, The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976).

built into it, and it is for this reason that he is able to see so much continuity between the Platonic and Hegelian dialectics. His general concept of dialectic which he appropriates from Plato and upon which he bases his analysis of the hermeneutic experience, has built into it a conception of human finitude, of submission to the things themselves and the impossibility of their total intellectual mastery or objectification. This is what makes Gadamer's thought so compatible with the thought of Heidegger, after the "turn," when Heidegger developed a metaphysical conception of Being as an all-determining ground which took the initiative away from human Dasein. It is also what enables Gadamer to increasingly embrace and further develop a finitized version of Hegelianism. Despite any difference between Gadamer's concept of "fusion" and the Hegel's concept of "synthesis," Gadamer's "fusion of horizons" is a genuine speculative synthesis, in both Gadamer's and Hegel's sense of the term "speculative."

CHAPTER V

HEIDEGGER'S CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS
 A NON-SPECULATIVE CONCEPTION
 OF DIALECTICAL THINKING

(A) The Belonging Together
 of Thinking and Being

Gadamer uses the term "belongingness"¹ in reference to the traditional theory about the identity of truth (or thought) and being. Such an "identity" is not a strict logical one, since thinking and being are obviously different. The kind of "identity" involved in such an "identity theory" is a dynamic interaction or interplay between the two things being identified. It can be understood either as a dialectical identity, or a speculative identity, or both or neither, depending upon what one means by "dialectical" and "speculative." Hegel, of course, understands such an identity in terms of a synthesis or speculative unity. As Birchall puts it: "For Hegel, then, the essence of intelligibility is synthesis, identity in difference, or, as he sometimes puts it, the identity of identity and difference."² It is our contention that despite

¹Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 416.

²Birchall, "Hegel's Critique," p. 286.

his reservations concerning Hegel's dialectic, Gadamer is in basic agreement with him on this point.

Heidegger, on the other hand, clearly disagrees with the Hegelian position on this question. Like Gadamer, he understands traditional identity theory in terms of the mutual belongingness of being and thinking, which he formulates in terms of the relationship of "belonging together." But unlike Gadamer, he does not understand this relationship as a speculative or speculative-dialectical unity. In this chapter, we will review some aspects of his book Identity and Difference¹ in order to demonstrate that although Heidegger's version of identity theory may be dialectical in the sense of Hegel's negative dialectical moment, it is openly incompatible with Hegel's positive speculative moment. We believe that this work inadvertently shows that dialectical thought can be freed from its Hegelian prison. We will thus use Heidegger's critique of Hegel as a takeoff point from which to not only expose Gadamer's Hegelianism, but to develop a concept of dialectics which adequately clarifies the shortcomings of the resolution of dialectical antagonisms in any kind of synthesis or totalization.

In the first part of Identity and Difference,

¹Martin Heidegger, Identity and Difference, trans. and with an Introduction by Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1974).

which is based upon a lecture on "The Principle of Identity,"¹ Heidegger is interested in developing a new way of thinking, which is not metaphysical. By "metaphysics," he means traditional philosophical thought, at least since Plato. He has developed no procedure to enable one to systematically think beyond the confines of metaphysical thought, and only sees Identity and Difference as a pointing in that direction. He refers to the modern stage of metaphysics as a "representational thinking" which represents the "belonging together" of man (or thinking) and Being, reductively, where one or the other plays the role of a metaphysical ground, as follows:

We stubbornly misunderstand this prevailing belonging together of man and Being as long as we represent everything only in categories and mediations, be it with or without dialectic. Then we always find only connections that are established either in terms of Being or in terms of man, and that present the belonging together of man and Being as an intertwining.

We do not as yet enter the domain of the belonging together. How can such an entry come about? By our moving away from the attitude of representational thinking. This move is a leap in the sense of a spring. The spring leaps away, away from the habitual idea of man as the rational animal who in modern times has become a subject for his objects. Simultaneously, the spring also leaps away from Being. But Being, since the beginning of Western thought, has been interpreted as the ground, in which every being as such is grounded.²

¹ See Heidegger, Identity and Difference, pp. 23-41.

² Ibid., p. 32.

Heidegger is not throwing out the concepts of "man" and "Being." But he is telling us that they have no essence in terms of which they can be defined in themselves. Nor can they be defined in terms of each other. Rather, they can only be understood in terms of "the domain of the belonging together."

In her Introduction, the translator Joan Stambaugh expresses Heidegger's self-understanding of what he is doing, as follows:

Heidegger understands the "is" in identity as the relation of belonging together . . . 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. It is perhaps difficult for us to think of a relation as being more original than what is being related.¹

A relationship which "determines the manner of being of what is to be related" is a dialectical relationship. The things being related are being dialectically interrelated. The key feature which almost all conceptions of dialectic share is the bringing of concepts under a higher determination, which may be conceived as more real or general, or as a totalization. Heidegger uniquely conceives it as what is more "original." Let us return to Stambaugh:

Identity is belonging-together. If the element of together in belonging together is emphasized, we have the metaphysical concept of identity which orders the manifold into a unity mediated by a

¹Ibid., pp. 11-12.

synthesis. This unity forms a systematic totality of the world with God or Being as the ground, as the first cause and the highest being. But if the element of belonging in belonging together is emphasized, we have thinking and Being held apart and at the same time held together (not fitted together) in the Same.¹

In what we will be attributing to Heidegger as a "non-speculative" dialectic, there is no higher "unity mediated by a synthesis" or totality, as in most interpretations of the dialectic of Hegel or of Marx. Rather, the concepts being dialectically interrelated are "held apart and at the same time held together." In a non-speculative or non-reductive dialectical identity, the differences between the concepts which belong together are not dissolved into a higher unity. Such differences are not transcended but only conditioned by the dynamic interrelationship. What really separates Hegel, as Heidegger interprets him, from what Heidegger himself is trying to express, is not the concept of a higher unity per se, but what that unity does to the different things which it conditions. Does it or does it not remove their difference? If it does, we are left with some kind of reductionism, and this is what Heidegger is trying to "leap" out of.

In order to radically confront the thought of Hegel, Heidegger is forced to take a stand against the key Hegelian concept of Aufhebung. It is to this that

¹Ibid., pp. 12-13.

we must now turn, since the concept of Aufhebung provides the basis for the Hegelian resolution of dialectical antagonisms in a speculative synthesis.

(B) Confronting the Hegelian
Concept of "Aufhebung"

The German verb "aufheben" has been used to mean "to cancel," "to annul," or "to reverse a previous state of affairs," but its root "heben" means "to lift or raise," so it literally means "to lift or raise up," which is also its colloquial usage. When a concept is shown to be one-sided and is "mediated" or brought together with its denial under a higher dialectical unity, its previous claim to truth is negated, "sublimated," or "sublated." Whatever residue of truth the previous concept had is completely dependent upon the higher concept to which it has been elevated.

Birchall explains aufheben, with reference to the three moments of the logical notion, as follows:

Hegel's notion of aufheben can be explicated in the context of the three-sided activity of the logical notion. The word aufheben is commonly translated as cancelling and preserving, . . . Aufheben aptly describes how speculative thought, going beyond recognition of contradiction, resolves the problem of intelligibility. With reference to the principles or categories of identity and difference, thought raises itself . . . to the level of speculative reason. It cancels the false opposition between an identity that is identity only and a difference that is difference only, while it preserves the true distinction between identity and difference¹

¹Birchall, "Hegel's Critique," p. 289.

Within a long footnote to this discussion, Birchall quotes Hegel as follows:

Hegel says of aufheben: "To preserve includes this negative element, that something is removed from its immediacy and therefore from a Determinate Being exposed to external influences, in order that it may be preserved. Thus, what is transcended is also preserved it has only lost its immediacy and is not on that account annihilated" (my emphasis). Science of Logic, I, 119-120 (p. 107).¹

Gadamer links the concepts of "Aufhebung" and "synthesis" in the following apologetic summary of Hegel's dialectic:

For Hegel the point of dialectic is that precisely by pushing a position to the point of self-contradiction it makes possible the transition to a higher truth which unites the sides of that contradiction: the power of spirit lies in synthesis as the mediation of all contradictions.

What Hegel is proposing here is expressed clearly in the changed meaning which Aufhebung acquired in his work. Originally, the word had had a negative sense. Specifically, in the demonstration that something is contradictory its validity is aufgehoben, which is to say, canceled or negated. For Hegel, however, the meaning shifts and comes to imply preservation of all the elements of truth, which assert themselves within the contradictions, and even an elevation of these elements to a truth encompassing and uniting everything true. In this way dialectic becomes the advocate of the "concrete" or mediated truth over against the one-sided abstractions of the understanding. Reason's universal power of synthesis is not only able to mediate the oppositions in thought, but also to sublimate the oppositions in the real world. It demonstrates exactly this in history insofar as the most alien, inscrutable, and inimical forces of history are surmounted by reason's power of reconciliation.² Reason is reconciliation with ruination.

¹Ibid., p. 295.

²Gadamer, Hegel's Dialectic, p. 105.

Contrary to Gadamer, Heidegger counterposes his own view to the Hegelian Aufhebung. In the first essay of Identity and Difference, he called for a spring, a leap out of metaphysical thinking. Now, in the second essay, "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics,"¹ which was originally given as a seminar on Hegel, Heidegger talks about a "step back" out of metaphysics. In both cases he believes that we cannot overcome metaphysical thinking by improving upon it or creating a new kind of thinking upon its basis. This is in sharp contrast to his earlier discussions, where he had developed the project of "overcoming" metaphysics. The terms he used were "überwinden," which means "to overcome" in the sense of "surpassing," and "verwinden," which means "to overcome" in the sense of "getting over" or "learning to live with." Both of these terms were, in the final analysis, compatible with a Hegelian Aufhebung. He therefore felt it necessary to further differentiate his work from Hegel, and tells us the following:

For Hegel, the conversation with the earlier history¹ of philosophy has the character of Aufhebung, that is, of the mediating concept in the sense of an absolute foundation.

For us, the character of the conversation with the history of thinking is no longer Aufhebung (elevation), but the step back.

Elevation leads to the heightening and

¹See Heidegger, Identity and Difference, pp. 42-74.

gathering area of truth posited as absolute, truth in the sense of the completely developed certainty of self-knowing knowledge.

The step back points to the realm which until now has been skipped over, and from which the essence of truth becomes first of all worthy of thought.¹

¹Aufhebung. This terminus technicus of Hegel's philosophy has the triple meaning of negating something in its mere individuality as a partial reality (negare), of preserving it in its essential being (conservare), and of elevating it into the higher sphere of the whole of reality (elevare). (Tr.)

In this essay, Heidegger wants to get out of metaphysics by making a "step back," which for him means confronting the ontological difference between Being and beings. Unfortunately, Gadamer shows little interest in this part of Heidegger's work and never clarifies the concept of "Austrag" through which Heidegger articulates the ontological difference in a non-reductive manner. In one of his few references to the book we are discussing, Gadamer criticizes Heidegger's call for stepping back from, or leaping out of metaphysics as he asks: "And can this 'step back' be a leap at all in the sense of a vaulting out of the medium and context of metaphysical thought? Does not history always present a continuity? Coming to be in passing away?"² What Gadamer sees conservatively as

¹Ibid., p. 49.

²Gadamer, Hegel's Dialectic, p. 109.

continuity, Heidegger sees radically as a conceptual leap. Gadamer wants to reduce Heidegger's radical critique of metaphysics to an Aufhebung, which would only raise what he considers still valuable in that tradition to a higher level. Heidegger, on the contrary, at least in this work, wants to have nothing more to do with metaphysics. For him, the spring out of metaphysical thinking has "the abruptness" of an "unbridged entry"¹ into an entirely different realm.

(C) Perdurance and the Ontological Difference

The non-speculative dialectic which we are attributing to Heidegger is not a method and makes no claims to lead to certainty; it leads to no speculative resolution of alleged contradictions in a higher synthesis, but rather, to an enduring tension. This tension does not work itself out; we must learn to live with it and to do the most we can with it, even though adopting such an attitude limits the scope of our possible knowledge. Gadamer has appropriated Heidegger's dialectical insights in such a way that he sees continuity between them and what he has been able to appropriate from Hegel. Gadamer observes:

Heidegger is not sufficiently aware of his own proximity to Hegel, and for this reason he does not really do justice to the radical position of speculative logic. . . . Furthermore, are there not real dialectical antitheses at work whenever

¹Heidegger, Identity and Difference, p. 33.

Heidegger explicates himself? For instance, we find the dialectical tension of thrownness and projection, of authenticity and inauthenticity, of nothing as the veil of being, and finally, and most importantly, the inner tension and ambiguity (Gegenwendingkeit) of truth and error, revelation and concealment, which constitute the event of being as the event of truth. Did not Hegel's mediation of being and nothing in the truth of becoming--that is, in the truth of the concrete--already mark out the conceptual framework within which alone the Heideggerian doctrine of the inner tension of truth can exist? Hegel, by his dialectical-speculative sharpening of the antitheses in the understanding, overcame a thinking dominated by the understanding. Would it be possible to get beyond this achievement, so as to overcome the logic and language of metaphysics as a whole?¹

We have already discussed the details of the inner tension of truth as the conflict between "world" and "earth," in Chapter I. It should be clear that "truth" was not analyzed as the speculative resolution of this conflict but as a product of the conflict itself, or the dynamic interaction or "tension" between the two contending principles, whose difference is never "reconciled." The dialectical antitheses which Hegelians analyze, like Gadamer's different horizons, are only moments of a logical process whose purpose is to remove their alienation from one another. A Hegelian Aufhebung not only overcomes "the antitheses in the understanding," but also all of the subtle tensions and ambiguities which Heidegger has analyzed and which Gadamer has underwritten and helped to popularize. In

¹Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics, pp. 231-32.

short, "speculative logic" overcomes all antitheses, whether they be products of a one-sided understanding or of a dialectical analysis of irreconcilable antagonisms.

The enduring tension which characterizes all Heideggerian antitheses is a dynamic tension which maintains their difference and prevents reason from reconciling their antagonism. In order to further explain the primordial basis of this tension, in order to understand the "difference" involved in the ontological difference, Heidegger presents the concept of "Austrag," which Stambaugh translates as "perdurance." In her introduction to a later work, she gives the following account of how this concept, in the form of "per-dure," fits in with many key Heideggerian themes:

In his attempt to relinquish the emphasis which metaphysical thinking has placed on causality (Being thought exclusively as the ground of being), Heidegger, particularly in his later thinking, comes more and more to center on the relation of identity and difference. In this relation it is fundamentally difference which receives prime emphasis, since identity is not thought traditionally as a static, abstract equation, but as belonging-together, which makes sense only in terms of what differs. For Heidegger, to differ is literally to dif-fer, to per-dure, to carry, hold,¹ and bear out the relation of what belongs together.

"Austragen," the verbal form of the noun "Austrag," can be translated literally as "to carry out,"

¹Joan Stambaugh, [Translator's] Introduction to The End of Philosophy, by Martin Heidegger (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. ix.

and also as "to wear out," "to endure" or "to bear." In the following passage, where "Austrag," translated as "perdurance" or "perduration," is central, Heidegger explains the ontological difference in a thoroughly dialectical manner, which will hopefully not be obscured by his dense terminology:

Being shows itself . . . as the grounding in the manifold ways in which beings are brought about before us. Beings as such, the arrival that keeps itself concealed in unconcealedness, is what is grounded; so grounded and so generated, it in turn grounds in its own way, that is, it effects, it causes. The perdurance of that which grounds and that which is grounded, as such, not only holds the two apart, it holds them facing each other. What is held apart is held in the tension of perdurance in such a way that not only does Being ground beings as their ground, but beings in their turn ground, cause Being in their way. . . .

Inasmuch as Being becomes present as the Being of beings, as the difference, as perduration, the separateness and mutual relatedness of grounding and of accounting for endures, Being grounds beings, and beings, as what is most of all, account for Being. One comes over the other, one arrives in the other. Overwhelming and arrival appear in each other in reciprocal reflection. Speaking in terms of the difference, this means: perdurance is a circling, the¹ circling of Being and beings around each other.

Dialectical thinking unifies binary oppositions such as the ontological difference between Being and beings without reducing these poles to the relationship to which they belong, or reducing one of them to the other. The difference between things which belong together must be perdured, not undone or sublated.

¹Heidegger, Identity and Difference, pp. 68-69.

(D) Critique of Gadamer's Historical Determinism
from a Non-Speculative Dialectical Perspective

According to the logic of Heidegger's position, the difference between Being and thinking perdures. Although we can of course say that Being grounds thinking, we can say, in other respects, that thinking grounds Being. Being and thinking circle around each other and are equiprimordial concepts; neither one is the exclusive determinant of the other. Not so for Gadamer, however. For him, social being, which is that aspect of Heidegger's "Being" which comprises tradition's movement, is the ground of thinking, of consciousness, of subjectivity, of human freedom. Not that these subjectivist concepts are unreal but that they are not equiprimordial with tradition. Tradition and our appropriations of it do not circle around each other. Our appropriations circle around tradition but then get taken up by it. Before any particular action, different horizons of the same tradition are all that is given. There is no place in effective history for subjective motivations or intentions. Our actions have no value in themselves; only their enduring results, which usually are not their intended results, are historically important, according to Gadamer.

Gadamer's version of "belongingness," as opposed to Heidegger's "belonging together," is not

dialectical in the non-speculative sense which we have taken pains to distinguish. Gadamer shows how we belong to tradition, but he does not show how tradition also belongs to us; he does not show how we create new tradition without being the unknowing agents of past tradition. In a passage which we did not quote in our introduction to Gadamer's concept of effective history, his position on this question is made crystal clear, as he asserts the following:

In fact history does not belong to us, but we belong to it. Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society and state in which we live. The focus of subjectivity is a distorting mirror. The self-awareness of the individual is only a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life. That is why the prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgments, constitute the historical reality of his being.¹

The belongingness between man and the tradition in which he finds himself, the historical situation into which he is "thrown," is not a dialectical interrelationship in the way in which we have defined that concept. It is clear that for Gadamer the belongingness between man and the tradition in which he stands is a one-way causal relationship. Our "self-awareness," is nothing but but an epiphenomenal "flickering in the closed circuits of historical life." History is not open but "closed." The effects of our

¹Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 245.

judgments upon it are nothing but a "flickering;" they are not a major factor in the reality of our historical being. Whatever effects they do have is far more influenced by our prejudices than by our reflexive reasoning and self-awareness.

The question is not whether being grounds thinking. On this, most dialecticians can agree. The question is, rather, if thinking is equiprimordial with being and hence not just a reflection of it, whose self-reflexive aspect is only a flickering. True, "the focus of subjectivity," if treated as the ground of being in a one-sided manner, is certainly a "distorting mirror." But so is the focus of objectivity, if treated one-sidedly as the ground of subjectivity. In a perduring difference, neither of the two poles being dialectically identified with, or inter-related to, one another are completely reduced to a passive status. Our judgments and our prejudices belong together; our historical being and our historical consciousness belong together; history belongs to us just as much as we belong to it.

The dialectic is not just something which thought "suffers" but something which it can initiate and with which it can participate as an active partner. We do not simply find ourselves in a situation or get caught up in the play of a conversation, a work

of art or a text which we are trying to understand. True, we are "thrown," but "throwness" and "projection" go hand in hand. Man is a thrown projection. He is accountable for his projects. They can not be reduced to instinctual reactions to the situation in which he finds himself.

Tradition as an ongoing and regularly reproduced overwhelming social reality has not always existed in its present form and need not continue to exist. But whatever validity Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics has is completely dependent upon tradition's civilized form. What validity could the reality of "family, society and state" have for a society that had no families and no state? Hermeneutic universalism, like any all-explaining theory reducible to a single principle, is an undialectical fiction. The production of new traditions and the reproduction of old traditions are dialectically interrelated. Only the reproductive aspects of our activities are susceptible to Gadamer's hermeneutic analysis. Only insofar as what is handed down to us completely determines what we do, are we taken up into Gadamer's kind of "higher determination" when we act.

A more dialectical way of analyzing human action would be to view it as the interaction of a hermeneutic factor, which represents the force of

tradition, with a purposive or intentional factor. This is what we in effect did in chapter 2. Insofar as Gadamer is correct in analyzing every reproductive act as itself being a new production, we can look at each such act as a dialectical unity of two factors which are equiprimordial and hence belong together. We can isolate these two factors as active and passive or as productive and reproductive, for the purpose of analysis. It would be legitimate to do this, however, only as long as we keep in mind that all actions, all appropriations of tradition, involve both of these aspects. Both of them endure in all of our actions. Gadamer recognizes the existence of both of these kinds of factors and the difference between them, but he metaphysically reduces production to reproduction, actions to passions, things we do to things which happen to us.

Part of the effective history of any work is not just what was produced but how it was produced. Works are not just there but were put there and could have been put there differently. This point is important because in producing new works, knowledge of how old works were produced is relevant. In formulating new projects, knowledge of the subjective intentions behind old projects is very helpful. Creators also have a tradition, not just their creations. We can

not learn to be creators under the assumption that how and when and under what circumstances past works were created is irrelevant.

To the degree that our present actions are no longer free over and against our past actions, which is an empirical fact, not something that is constitutive of our human "Being-in-the-world," we must attempt to renew traditions of creativity which have been dying out. Man's past productions need not weigh like a dead weight on the heart of his ongoing attempts to be productive. We can not allow Gadamer to bequeath a one-sided closed hermeneutic universe which teaches us that it is rational to become reconciled with the situation into which we have been thrown, with which we must learn to live. Reason ought not to be reconciliation with ruination or corruption but should be dedicated to the conscious attempt to expose it and to combat against it. The only aspect of our reason which can help us in this regard is the self-reflective so-called "flickering" which Gadamer has done so much to denigrate.

PART II

CLOSED-SYSTEM AND OPEN-SYSTEM DIALECTICS

CHAPTER VI

CLOSED-SYSTEM THINKING AND
CLOSED-SYSTEM DIALECTICS(A) Luxemburg's Critique of Marx's
Closed Economic Model of
the Capitalist System

In order to deepen our criticism of Gadamer in particular, and of the speculative aspects of dialectical thought in general, we will try to reformulate our distinction between speculative and non-speculative dialectical thought in a different categorial framework. Let us, for a moment, forget about metaphysics or anything negative which we may have implied about it or about the objectifications presupposed by modern science. Let us think, in a philosophically neutral way about the concept of a system, a theory or a model. We can work our way into this new way of looking at the chief problems which have concerned us by briefly referring to Rosa Luxemburg's criticism of Marx.

In her The Accumulation of Capital,¹ Luxemburg pointed out that in the first two volumes of Capital, Marx adopted the methodological fiat of ignoring all economic phenomena that were irreducible to the

¹Rosa Luxemburg, The Accumulation of Capital (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964).

relationship between labor and capital, which meant ignoring the many remnants of pre-capitalist economic forms, such as small-scale farming and handicraft production, where the laborer owns his own means of production and does not have to sell his "labor-power" to a capitalist. Marx attempted to isolate what he saw as the unique structure of the capitalist mode of production, in order to explain the internal dynamics of a hypothetically pure capitalist system.

What Marx actually did was to reduce the capitalist system to the capitalist mode of production. His economic analysis of expanded capitalist reproduction, or the accumulation of capital, was thus a "closed" one, in the sense that it closed itself off from all economic forms which were not purely capitalist. Luxemburg's critique pointed out that the hypothesis of a closed capitalist system was untenable since it could not explain the accumulation of capital. She counterposed an open economic model which viewed the capitalist system of social reproduction as being composed of many modes of production which necessarily interact with each other and in which subordinated modes can not be reduced to the hegemonic capitalist mode.

A closed system or model is thus a methodological abstraction set up for the purpose of analyzing what is unique to a particular structure, be it a

scientific or philosophical model, a social institution, a work of art or a text. Such abstractions are made in both the microcosmic and macrocosmic sense. In the former case one is usually dealing with a scientific hypotheses restricted to a relatively small set of systematically interrelated phenomena. In the latter case we are usually dealing with a scientific or metaphysical super-theory which may aspire to universal proportions, and which purports to explain all phenomena within a loosely defined domain. Only macrocosmic closed systems will be of interest to us here, since they often make speculative pretensions which reduce or repress all anomalous phenomena.

(B) The Rationalism of Closed-System Thinking

In general a closed system, model or theory is an attempt to explain a certain related group of phenomena in terms of a single principle or logically consistent set of basic principles. The more a field of systematic inquiry is isolated from other related fields with which it may come into contact, the easier it is to do this. Accordingly, any apparently discordant factors must be either ignored, dismissed as insignificant or explained away by being reduced to factors which the system is capable of handling.

In a closed model or closed system there is no room for uncertainty. Chance is only a product of

ignorance. Everything is knowable in principle, and any future state is in principle predictable, given sufficient knowledge of all relevant present states. In a closed system, everything that happens has to happen the way it happens. If that system be the entire universe, then although it would be impossible for a finite mind to predict each future state, they are allegedly predictable by an ideal mind or God. A classical model for this type of thought is the rationalist system of Leibniz.¹ We will refer to the rationalist concept of reason, which subsumes everything under a fundamental metaphysical ground, as "Reason" with a capital "R." Although this was the reason of the rationalist movement in philosophy, it is also the reason of Hegel's "spirit" and the reason which Gadamer's Reason in the Age of Science,² is dedicated to defending. For the purpose of convenience, and also to avoid confusion with the specific tradition associated with Descartes, Leibniz and Spinoza, we will call defenders of Reason "Rationalists" with a capital "R."

The Rationalists accuse all who, in effect,

¹See Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, "The Monadology," in Leibniz: Selections, ed. Philip P. Wiener (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), pp. 533-52 (hereafter cited as Leibniz, "Monadology").

²Hans-Georg Gadamer, Reason in the Age of Science, trans. Fredrick G. Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981).

abandon the quest for rational certainty of being relativists. In this sense of the term, however, Gadamer is not a relativist, for his principle of effective history could in principle explain all human actions, even though it could obviously not explain them in the causal or mechanistic sense. Leibniz postulated two chains of parallel causality which each acted as if the other did not exist, one rational and one mechanical.¹ The former explained all the perceptions of all minds (or "monads") and the latter explained all the movements of all material things. Both his metaphysics and his physics were closed systems par excellence.

Dialectical thought not only cuts across our old distinction between speculative and non-speculative thinking but also our new distinction between closed and open systems. Gadamer's dialectic gives us a good example of what we will call "closed-system" thinking. As we have tried to show, Gadamer's concept of effective history, or what we have been referring to as "the movement of tradition," allows for no leaps outside of its closed conceptual universe. All changes are reduced to a matter of continuity, no matter how revolutionary they may appear to be. Everything that takes place has a reason, even if we are not capable

¹See Leibniz, "Monadology," pars. 78-81.

of understanding it in the short run. This leads Gadamer to apologize for Hegel's claim that "the rational is real" and that "the real is rational" by arguing: "Does he not actually mean--and it is utterly plain that he does mean this--that in the long run the irrational is not capable of really lasting?"¹

What we have been leading up to is a reconceptualization of metaphysics in terms of closed-system thinking. We are not interested, at this stage in our study, in developing a general formulation of all aspects of closed-system and open-system thought. We are only interested in those aspects of this important bifurcation which are relevant to a better understanding and situating of Gadamer's thought, in particular, and dialectical thought in general. We will thus narrow down our discussion to what we will be calling "closed-system dialectics" and "open-system dialectics."

In a closed dialectical system, which is the way we choose to reformulate the attempts to think dialectically in order to form comprehensive world views, syntheses reduce differences. This means that all secondary principles or subordinate explanatory factors are in the final analysis reducible to primary principles or a primary level of analysis. All categories of radical change such as "revolution,"

¹Gadamer, Reason in the Age of Science, p. 36.

"transformation," "emergence" or "discovery," are understood in terms of, or reduced to, categories of continuity. Every action has a reason and every change, no matter how fundamental, is the natural outcome of the previous state of affairs which gave rise to it, and in terms of which it can be understood.

In any succession of outlooks, according to this way of thinking, the direction of development is predetermined by a small set of basic principles which may even be reducible to a single principle. This does not entail that future states are in fact predictable. The example of Gadamer's universalization of the hermeneutic experience shows that our knowledge and our prejudices or theoretical commitments in no way determine the hard facts or the resistance of reality which phenomenologists call "the things themselves," and empiricists call "the given." No theory can completely determine experimental results; otherwise, no experiments would be needed. Nevertheless, a theory can determine how particular experimental results will be interpreted, and if it is held tenaciously enough, it can explain away any future development in terms of an alleged inherent logic. Some dialecticians attribute this "logic," not to their own theories but to the things themselves or phenomena.

(C) Preliminary Remarks about Kuhn's
Concept of Incommensurable
Linguistic Frameworks

What we want to do now, since we have already begun to clarify the metaphysical implications of our concept of a "closed system," is to attempt to clarify the relationship between metaphysics and science so that we can more properly situate closed-system dialectics. In order to lay the groundwork for the accomplishment of this task, we want to turn to the debate around Kuhn's work and to focus upon his belief in the alleged "incommensurability" of successive hegemonic theories in the history of particular scientific disciplines.¹ He refers to such theories as paradigms." To understand the relationship between a paradigm and a closed system, we must first clarify the controversial concept of "incommensurability."

The term "incommensurable" is taken from mathematics, where it means "incomparable." Kuhn made it into a philosophically controversial term by attributing it to different linguistic frameworks or "universes of discourse." Since Kuhn popularized it, the term actually signifies an ambiguous relationship

¹See Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 2d ed. enl. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). Also see his collection The Essential Tension: Selected Studies in Scientific Tradition and Change (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

between different but related linguistic frameworks, paradigms or theories. It can be interpreted to mean that people having incommensurable frameworks live in different worlds. On the other hand, it can merely mean that they have different linguistic horizons, in Gadamer's sense. In the former case, incommensurable universes of discourse allegedly constitute different object domains. In the latter case, they refer to the same object domain, which they map in different ways.

Although we would reject both the relativistic implications of the belief that we inhabit different worlds and the Rationalistic implications of any metaphysical theory of reference, we do not want to deny that there are incommensurable linguistic frameworks. We will work out our own position on this question in the next chapter. Here, however, we will try to use our distinction between closed and open systems to get closer to the root of this problem.

(D) Lakatos's Concept of a Research Programme
as a Model for Differentiating
Two Orders of Theory Change

Imre Lakatos has attempted to redefine the Kuhnian concept of a "paradigm" in a way in which the succession of paradigms within a particular scientific tradition can be rationally reconstructed and the relativistic implications of Kuhn's views can be obviated. To this end he has developed the concept of a

"scientific research programme,"¹ which we will shorten into "research program." A research program defines a basic theoretical approach which allows its secondary principles a large degree of variation, as long as they do not come into conflict with its "hard core" or basic precommitments, which are sufficient to give it its identity and to distinguish it from rival programs in the same general scientific area. A research program's successive phases can be looked at as rival and incompatible theories, each of which can be viewed as a Kuhnian paradigm.

In the development of research program "t," which runs from initial phase "t(1)" through final phase "t(n)," the total amount of successive theoretical reformulations can't be known in advance. Furthermore, there are no leaps from a given phase to a radically different successor phase. Each phase is commensurable with its preceding and succeeding phases. Thus, although we are dealing with a succession of incompatible theories, the unfalsified aspects of earlier ones are always reducible to later ones.

What we are here describing amounts to an

¹See Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," in Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge, ed. Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 91-195 (hereafter cited as Lakatos and Musgrave, Criticism).

open-system view of the development of scientific theories, paradigms or linguistic frameworks, which has built into it an appreciation of both the weaknesses and strengths of closed conceptual systems. Lakatos views a research program as analogous to a metaphysical system but makes no claim as to any necessary connection between successive programs, only to successive theories or phases within the same program. His discussion about the historical development of several particular research programs gives us a good illustration of their closed-system character. The transformation, within a particular program, from any given phase " $t(x)$ " to the next phase " $t(x+1)$," can certainly be dialectically reconstructed as a fusion between the new insights, which precipitated the rejection of $t(x)$, and $t(x)$ itself, since both $t(x)$ and $t(x+1)$ belong to the same linguistic universe.

Lakatos in effect distinguishes between two orders of paradigm change, i.e., between Kuhnian "scientific revolutions" within the same research program (from one phase to the next), and the revolutions involved in the switch from one research program to another. Lakatos shows that the typical reductions, redefinitions of terms and attributions of continuity are legitimate within a series of theories or paradigms, if they are in fact all phases or stages in

the same research program. Moreover, if we understand the implications of his position correctly, Lakatos could have accepted the attribution of categories of discontinuity to successive research programs in the same general field. The apparent progress that exists in the mature sciences need not flow from any necessary connection between successive research programs, but rather, from the established tradition of not giving up a research program until a better one is found.

In a footnote, however, Lakatos implies that the choice between incommensurable research programs can be rationally reconstructed, when he says:

I have not dealt with Kuhn's and Feyerabend's claim that theories can not be eliminated on any objective grounds because of the 'incommensurability' of rival theories. Incommensurable theories are neither inconsistent with each other, nor comparable for content. But we can make them, by a dictionary, inconsistent and their content comparable. If we want to eliminate a programme, we need some methodological determination.¹

Lakatos's appeal to a "dictionary" implies that all linguistic frameworks are translatable into one another. In this regard he remained a Rationalist.

The concept of a research program allows one to appreciate the value of a closed-system analysis. To think within the restrictions of a research program is not necessarily to think dogmatically or narrow-mindedly. It can be viewed as metaphysical

¹Ibid., p. 179.

thinking, but not in any sense of "metaphysical" that could be counterposed to scientific thought.

If we think within a research program, as we have redefined that concept for our own broader purposes, about the logic of its historical development, about the interrelationship between its past, present, and future phases, we are thinking dialectically in a sense which is defensible, even if such a program may be a metaphysical system. Paradigm shifts within that program can be analyzed as following a rationally reconstructible developmental logic precisely because its respective theoretical phases are not incommensurable with each other. In such circumstances there is no fundamental distortion involved when the concepts of an earlier paradigm are redefined in terms of the concepts belonging to a later paradigm. Here, reduction is an aid, rather than an obstacle, to understanding. However, what is not acceptable is to attempt to use any legitimate reductions or generalizations within a research program, to make similar reductions or generalizations beyond that program. This is where the metaphysical or meta-scientific aspects of scientific progress can quickly degenerate into dogmatic obstacles to further progress.

(E) Rationalism and Relativism
in Dialectical Perspective

In so far as any change or transformation is based upon continuity, it can be viewed as the Rational outcome of a conflict, its resolution, the overcoming of an antagonism by elevating it to a higher level of understanding, in which agreement between the previous antagonists can be reached. This is an Aufhebung and it is also the type of change involved in the switch from one phase to another within the same research program. As opposed to this, in so far as a change or transformation takes place which is viewed as the result of an irreconcilable conflict between two antagonistic forces, in which one completely replaces the other and has no need to negatively define itself in terms of that other (by reducing the other's alleged truth content to its own theoretical framework), it is not Rational, and any new determination which results is not an act of synthesis, not a fusion of horizons, not an elevation from a lower to a higher level of understanding, not a reconciliation with ruination or corruption but, on the contrary, a new thrust, a leap, a rejection of a previous state of affairs, which is not necessarily an improvement.

In the latter case of transformation, the only "understanding" which may be involved is the surrender of the old, previously dominant force, to

the hegemony of the victor. Such an "agreement" is tantamount to an unconditional surrender. This transformation, if viewed in the context of a conceptual revolution, is the kind of change involved in the switch from one research program to an entirely different research program. The dialectics which describe such a transformation must be a dialectics of open systems, to which the dialectics of Aufhebung does not apply. Strictly speaking, to apply the dialectics of Aufhebung to the transformation from one conceptual framework to a radically different one would be to commit a logical category mistake. Only open-system dialectics can describe the dynamic interaction between fundamentally different conceptual structures, for which we have been using the notion of rival research programs as a model. It is not a logic of progress and its results may or may not conform to what is considered rational, from the point of view of a closed-system analysis, which by definition is restricted to a single research program. As opposed to the dialectics of identity or Aufhebung, it is thus a different kind of dialectics, a higher-order dialectics or meta-dialectics. It does not invalidate closed-system dialectics, but restricts it to its proper sphere.

From the point of view of Reason, open-system

thinking is irrational. The understandable instinct of Reason to postulate a super-rationality which transcends all conceptual frameworks results from the failure to take the irreducible differences between some of those frameworks seriously. The boggy of relativism is raised, and all attempts at open-system thought are lumped together and summarily dismissed. Instead of admitting that fundamental differences exist, the Rationalist immediately looks to some kind of super-standard for avoiding relativism, which forces him to adopt some kind of what we have called a metaphysical ground. It would thus appear that we are faced with the dilemma of choosing between an untenable closed-system metaphysical theory or a relativist position in which mediation between radically different linguistic frameworksTM is ruled out in principle.

The above dilemma has driven the majority of the philosophers and social theorists who take such problems seriously into the Rationalist camp and a minority fringe into the relativist camp. But as we see it, it is not necessary to line up with one of these groups against the other. Only reductionistic thinking can not live with the tension between Rationalism and relativism. Rationalism suppresses differences in the name of a higher principle, and relativism absolutizes differences by refusing to accept

mediation. We believe that the debate between Rationalism and relativism is irresolvable within the playing space of modern epistemology, to which we have thus far restricted our discussion. Their respective adherents coexist in constant interaction with each other, but they often talk at cross-purposes with one another. They each make cognitive commitments which they defend tenaciously, and the going over from one side to the other in their underlying debate is, as with a change in scientific theories, comparable to a religious conversion. To understand the problematic of modern epistemology we must take both sides of this debate seriously.

If two antagonistic positions belong together, the tension between them must perdure. One or the other can achieve hegemony, and which side has hegemony can change in the course of time. Since each depends upon its opposition to the other, their polarity or "binary opposition" will never be resolved or work itself out. Appreciating the tension between these two camps, accepting epistemology as an open problematic dominated by the interplay between these two basic competing forces whose differences are irreconcilable, is the "position" which flows from our dialectical analysis. But in accepting this debate, in taking epistemology seriously, even without taking

sides, we are making a commitment which does not have to be made. However, any attempt to dissolve the opposition by refusing to take epistemology seriously runs the risk of irretrievably isolating oneself from both camps and breaking with philosophy altogether. If the debate between Rationalists and relativists is not a pseudo-debate, if these two basic positions belong together within the modern epistemological problematic, then that problematic is itself the higher determination which co-determines the interaction between the competing camps. This kind of higher determination neither reduces irreconcilable differences nor hypostatizes them by hermetically sealing off one from the other, ruling out the possibility of any mediation between them. Granting that the differences between particular conceptual frameworks are irreconcilable does not entail that there is no basis for mediation between them, but it does entail that any mediation would have to be limited in nature and that differences would remain despite such mediation. Appreciating this kind of higher determination, appreciating the never-ending tension between different positions which nevertheless belong together, is the only way to non-reductively juxtapose such dialectically interacting positions.

CHAPTER VII

THE MEDIATION OF INCOMMENSURABLE FRAMEWORKS AND
THE REPRESSION OF DIALECTICAL DIFFERENCES(A) From Incompatibility to
Dialectical Difference

The Hegelian system has postulated theories which illustrate what we call "closed-system dialectics," which is a dialectics of identity where differences exist but are synthesized, reduced, elevated, negated or fused by a higher determination. If one adheres to such a mode of thinking, and we believe that Gadamer does, one would have to say that the higher identity was more real and the previous difference was less real or only an apparent difference.

The concept of a dialectical antagonism or a difference which is encompassed by a higher unity in order to form a dialectical identity is referred to in terms of the logical concept of "contradiction." This has led to continuous confusion and arguments at cross-purposes between, on the one hand, alleged dialecticians who consider dialectics to be a logic of contradiction, and on the other hand, formal logicians who accept the law of non-contradiction as a basic postulate. We believe that part of the problem

behind the inability of these rival camps to communicate with one another is the misleadingness of the term "contradiction." For reasons to soon be elaborated, we do not believe that dialectical antagonisms are logical contradictions, and propose to drop this term and replace it by the term "difference," to which, as we have attempted to argue, Heidegger gave a dialectical dimension. We are here referring not to difference per se but to "dialectical difference," or difference in the context of a dialectical analysis where that difference is being viewed from the point of view of an alleged higher determination. We believe that we can best explain the logical status of such dialectical differences by returning to our discussion of Kuhn's concept of "incommensurability."

We will develop our own approach to the question of incommensurability by presenting a passage from John Watkins, a co-thinker of Karl Popper and a relatively minor figure in the debate¹ concerning

¹We are referring to the international colloquium held in London in 1965 which became the source of Lakatos and Musgrave, Criticism. In addition to Lakatos's own already referenced contribution, the following other contributions are also relevant to our discussion: Paul Feyerabend, "Consolations for the Specialist," pp. 197-230; Thomas S. Kuhn, "Logic of Discovery or Psychology of Research?," pp. 1-23, and "Reflections on my Critics," pp. 231-78; Karl Popper, "Normal Science and its Dangers," pp. 25-37; and John Watkins, "Against 'Normal Science,'" pp. 51-58.

Kuhn's views, who has put his finger on a point which we believe has important consequences. In criticism of Kuhn's belief that a new paradigm is incompatible with the one it supersedes, Watkins argues as follows:

There seems to be a certain internal coherence in Kuhn's version of this. He says that what 'emerges from a scientific revolution is not only incompatible but often actually incommensurable with what has gone before'.² But could two incommensurable theories be logically incompatible with each other? If someone holds that, say, Biblical myths and scientific theories are incommensurable, belong to different universes of discourse, he presumably implies that the Genesis account of the Creation should not be regarded as logically incompatible with geology, Darwinism, etc.: they are compatible and can peacefully co-exist just because they are incommensurable.¹

²Kuhn [1962], p. 102.

Here we see the logical distinction for which we have been looking in order to differentiate between a logical contradiction or incompatibility and a dialectical antagonism or difference, which we will try to show, involves incommensurability. But first let us finish our passage from Watkins:

But if the Ptolemaic system is logically incompatible with the Copernican system, or Newtonian theory with Relativity theory, peaceful co-existence is not possible: they were rival alternatives; and it was possible to make a rational choice between them partly because it was possible to devise crucial experiments between them (stellar parallax, starshift, etc.).²

¹John Watkins, "Against 'Normal Science,'" in Lakatos and Musgrave, Criticism, p. 36.

²Ibid.

What Watkins wants to bring out is that rival scientific theories are incompatible but not incommensurable. This means that they logically contradict each other and therefore can not coexist, in the sense that scientists must choose between them. If one is true or the truest available, the other is necessarily false, and is to be dismissed. What is important is that, according to Watkins, incommensurable theories do not contradict each other since they belong to "different universes of discourse." He is telling us that the logic of non-contradiction, to which he restricts himself, is relative to a single linguistic universe, or what for Gadamer would be an overarching tradition. Watkins believes that all scientists belong to this universe and thus that all scientific theories can in principle be logically compared. Once one grants that two rival theories belong to different universes of discourse, one is implying that they are no longer logically comparable, which means for Watkins that there is no rational procedure for choosing between them in order to eliminate one in favor of the other.

For Watkins, incommensurable theories would mean chaos and confusion precisely because they are not incompatible, in the falsificationist sense. The assertion of one does not entail the denial of its

rival or rivals. The insight which he has inadvertently made is that incommensurable theories can peacefully coexist, because they are not logically incompatible (in his sense of "logic"). As he puts it, if Kuhn is right, "they are compatible and can peacefully co-exist just because they are incommensurable."

Perhaps there is nothing especially profound about pointing out that incommensurable theories can peacefully coexist. However, if it should turn out, as we believe it does, that dialectical differences are at least partially incommensurable, then this idea has profound implications for our conception of dialectical thought. If we view differences which have been brought together under a dialectical relationship as incommensurable, then they are not incompatible and can peacefully coexist. This would mean that they are not contradictory and that a dialectical logic would not necessarily have to violate the law of contradiction, since dialectical antagonisms are not contradictions.

Antagonistic theories or universes of discourse in the same general area can be viewed as compatible, in the sense that the talking at cross-purposes between their adherents does not close off debate by forcing a reductive resolution of their fundamental difference. Thus, rather than viewing

fundamentally opposing or competing viewpoints as mutually contradictory, and hence logically incompatible, we can view them as being based upon incommensurable linguistic frameworks or conceptual systems, which are capable of continuing to interact with each other in a non-reductive way. Such a dynamic interaction between related but nevertheless irreducibly different conceptual systems, or research programs, is precisely the proper domain of open-system dialectics.

(B) The Belonging Together of Antagonistic
Linguistic Traditions

When two theories are dialectically different, it is not necessary for one to remove the other. They can coexist, in dialectical interaction with each other, despite their difference. Here, one theory is no longer being viewed as the negation of the other. That they are based upon different universes of discourse means that any communication between their advocates will be distorted, to the degree that their universes of discourse are different, i.e., that they are incommensurable. Nevertheless, communication is possible between their respective adherents, and so is the understanding and agreement which enables their coexistence to continue. Should such a coexistence be necessary for social reproduction, we could even say that such linguistic communities belong together, in the Heideggerian sense.

We have thus begun to redefine the related dialectical conceptions of "difference" and "identity" in terms of incommensurability and compatibility rather than in terms of contradiction and incompatibility. The closed-system dialectical concept of Reason can now be understood as not being incompatible with the formal logic of non-contradiction. The reconciliation of alleged "opposites" is only the establishing of an understanding between different linguistic traditions. This means that the conceptual differences between their respective adherents are raised to the status of dialectical differences. It is such understandings which make the continued peaceful coexistence between different traditions possible.

Agreement between members of different traditions involves the overcoming of at least some of their differences in the interest of Reason, but, it is not the overcoming of the fundamental difference between those traditions as a whole. Here is the heart of our disagreement with Gadamer. For him there is no such thing as a fundamental difference which Reason can not reconcile. Hegelians view what we call differences as "alienations" caused by looking at things one-sidedly. In defense of Hegel, Gadamer asserts the following:

Alienation, this primary point of departure

of Hegel, entails as its correlative the reconciliation of alienation or also, as he phrases it, "the reconciliation of corruption." That is the task Hegel had set himself as a thinker: reestablishing the reconciliation of all alienations through the power of philosophic thought. . . . reconciliability or reconciliation has been shown by Hegel to be an authentic phenomenon of human spirituality. It resides in the dialectic of self-consciousness as well.

There is no friendship, no marriage, no relationship of love in which the inner sense of mutual trust between human beings does not grow through conflict and reconciliation. This mystery of reconciliation is the secret of Hegelian dialectic. It is called synthesis.

As we see it, a Hegelian synthesis can build a bridge between two antagonistic parties, which takes place every time people with fundamentally different world views come to an understanding, but despite such agreements, their fundamental differences remain. The new fused horizon or changed linguistic framework under which such an understanding is achieved is "ideologically distorted," as Habermas would put it.² What we believe we have done is to point out part of the linguistic basis for such distortion.

For Rationalists, incommensurability presents

¹Gadamer, Reason in the Age of Science, pp. 34-35.

²See especially the following of his earlier works: Jürgen Habermas, Toward a Rational Society: Student Protest, Science, and Politics, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, Beacon Paperback, 1971) and Theory and Practice, trans. John Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press, Beacon Paperback, 1974). Also see Thomas McCarthy, The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978).

no special problem. In fact, Gadamer makes a virtue of translation, despite the fact that no translation from one language into another can ever be a perfect one. Gadamer is not interested in what is lost in translation, which for us is the original intention of the author of a text, or of a member of a slightly (or considerably) different linguistic community from the person who is doing the translating. We are referring to subjective meaning or intension, connotation or sense. Gadamer's application of what we are calling Reason is only interested in the effective historical results of understanding-events, the outcome of agreements reached, and not in the intensional meaning which was distorted in the process, and the oppression which follows from such distortions.

Unlike Kuhn, who has broken with Rationalism Gadamer is in no way a relativist. In the eyes of a Rationalist, any talk about the irreducibility of different universes of discourse is relativistic. The attempt of Winch¹ to apply the insights of the later Wittgenstein to the social sciences is thus branded as "relativism," since it does not allow any overarching standards to bridge the conceptual differences

¹See especially Peter Winch, The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy (London, 1958) and "Understanding a Primitive Society" in American Philosophical Quarterly 1, no. 4 (1964).

between modern and primitive societies. Different "language games" are thus viewed here as being, in a sense, incommensurable. This phenomenon is the basis for the argument that the only way one can learn a basically different language is through socialization rather than translation. This point is underlined by Feyerabend in his defense of the concept of incommensurable theories. He asserts:

Linguists remind us that a perfect translation is never possible, even if we use complex contextual definitions. This is one of the reasons for the importance of field work where new languages are learned from scratch and for the rejection, as inadequate, of any account that relies on (complete, or partial) translations.¹

Feyerabend is suggesting that only in learning the languages of people who have a fundamentally different world view "from scratch," can we avoid the distortions involved in the reduction of their conceptual structures to ours.

(C) The Agreement Which We Are and the
Repression of Irreconcilable
Differences

As opposed to the sociological relativism which the above would imply, one can always appeal to Gadamer's theory of the mediation of different linguistic frameworks. For Gadamer, relativism can be obviated since understanding takes place despite

¹Paul Feyerabend, "Consolations for the Specialist," in Lakatos and Musgrave, Criticism, p. 225.

different linguistic frameworks, and this is the basis for all communication, all forms of social life. In a different context, Gadamer once said that "we are seeking to approach the mystery of language from the conversation that we ourselves are."¹ This was picked up by Albrecht Wellmer, a co-thinker of Habermas, who argued that "the 'dialogue' which (according to Gadamer) we 'are,' is also a relationship of coercion and, for this very reason, no dialogue at all."² We wish to characterize Gadamer's attitude to social institutions as "the agreement which we are." For Gadamer, all understanding is, in the final analysis, agreement reached about a subject matter through conversation or dialogue. This conversation, this agreement, is for him the foundation of all forms of civilized life. What for Gadamer makes such agreement possible is the belief that unlike artificially closed systems, linguistic frameworks or horizons are mobile and constantly changing. But he subordinates these allegedly open horizons to a speculative dialectical process which we have evaluated as an untenable metaphysical system. Gadamer's fusion of horizons in ultimate service to what he calls "effective history,"

¹Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 340.

²Albrecht Wellmer, Critical Theory of Society, trans. John Cumming (New York: The Seabury Press, 1974), p. 47.

obliterates the difference between the horizons being fused. In the name of an overriding tradition to which all the parties to an agreement allegedly belong, the specific differences between their respective particular traditions are covered over. The language expressing this agreement has built into it the inequality involved in the subordination of one horizon to another.

Although members of different linguistic communities are constantly reaching an understanding with one another, the fact that an alleged higher language or mode of communication has evolved which enables them to peacefully coexist in interaction with each other in no way removes the incommensurability between their respective conceptual frameworks. Gadamer's theory of understanding is only justified, in our opinion, for members of the same basic tradition who have very similar world views or conceptual frameworks, for which mediation involves no significant distortion of meaning. Once translation between significantly different linguistic frameworks comes into play, once it is necessary to fuse not only apparent, imagined or projected horizons but really different horizons, translation is not a mediation between equals, a genuine synthesis, but an act of domination or linguistic violence, in which the weaker horizon is subordinated

to the stronger. Here, we are dealing with the kind of understanding and agreement which ignores the basic social forces that produce and reproduce different conceptual frameworks in the first place.

The linguistic or conceptual incommensurability between different sets of world outlooks is not a simple reflection of economic and political antagonisms, but rather, their other side or dialectical complement. Incommensurable frameworks and social antagonisms produce and reproduce one another. No degree of peaceful coexistence or social compromise between fundamentally antagonistic social groups can remove their antagonisms; it can sweep them under the rug, but the dirt remains, even when no one sees it.

Incommensurable linguistic traditions, universes of discourse or world views are constantly interacting with each other both peacefully and by open force or coercion. Open system dialectics must provide the conceptual tools to help us better understand this kind of dynamic interaction. It does not deny that abstractly incompatible social ideas or social groupings exist, but it does deny that they can endure in interaction with each other. There is a fundamental distinction to be drawn between rivals for hegemony, in a bridging tradition to which they both belong, and rivals for existence, where there is

no room for compromise or peaceful coexistence.

Groups which have antagonistic interests in the stronger sense that the continued existence of one threatens the continued existence of the other do not have incommensurable but incompatible outlooks or value systems. Their differences are thus abstract and not dialectical. They are deadly enemies, like the cobra and mongoose. One must destroy the other. But groups which, despite their antagonistic interests, are dependent upon one another for their mutual survival, belong together. They must peacefully coexist in order to insure their own social reproduction. Such an arrangement is the model for a dialectical unity which is not a unity of opposites but a unity of incommensurables. Within such a unity the struggle for hegemony continues. Hegemony entails the subordination of one horizon to another, or a synthesis upon the basis of inequality. The same groups, while maintaining their dialectically different interests and incommensurable conceptual structures can switch hegemony or develop a new synthesis based upon the same basic horizons. This would mean that now, the concepts of the former oppressor must be translated into the concepts of the new oppressor.

When we talk about incommensurability and contrast it to incompatibility, we are interested

only in the kind of incommensurability involved in dialectical differences. If two linguistic frameworks are totally different, if their members always talk at cross-purposes with one another, then no enduring relationship between them is possible; they can co-exist only upon the basis of non-contact. To be able to coexist upon the basis of a relationship which co-determines, rather than metaphysically determines, their interaction, two antagonistic traditions or social groups can only have partially incommensurable frameworks. There must be a substantial overlap between their respective universes of discourse. They must have similar but different overall outlooks with many or most of the same basic terms. Many of these terms have systematically different meanings whose differences are ignored every time mediation takes place between them. No translation of one to the other is possible without repressing these differences.

It is for this reason that we believe that the incommensurability between linguistic frameworks which are capable of coming to an understanding can only be a partial one. "Partial incommensurability" thus means reducibility at a price. This price is the distortion of intensional meaning, or sense, which Gadamer believes to have no lasting effects or effective historical influence. This is a price which

we refuse to pay. "Partial incommensurability" is thus the conceptual relationship which provides the basis, not only for the ability of people with antagonistic world outlooks to come to an understanding with one another, but also for the distortion of intentional meaning necessarily involved in such understandings. The very thing which from one point of view is the miracle of reconciliation between people with antagonistic linguistic horizons, is from another point of view what insures that all such agreements will be ideologically distorted.

The loss of sense or distortion of meaning in the communication which hides social antagonisms takes the form of the reduction of the linguistic framework of the oppressed to the framework of the oppressor. Such dialectically different linguistic frameworks are not really different languages, but rather, sets of systematically interrelated linguistically expressed cultural traditions or value and belief structures. The consistent hiding of the difference between such fundamentally different world outlooks by the belief that each word in a verbal exchange between their adherents means the same thing to each of them, only helps to further repress their fundamental antagonism.

It might be pointed out that talk about such

frameworks is vague, since we have not presented a principle of individuation, by which one could clearly demarcate one alleged linguistic framework from a different one, and that only in rigorously defined closed systems are conceptual restrictions clearly spelled out. Our only reply is that if this were sufficient grounds to dismiss all talk about different linguistic frameworks as a myth, then outside restricted technical discussions between holders of rival theories, people would never, in the long run, talk at cross-purposes with one another. We start from the obvious social reality that there are antagonistic ways of looking at and evaluating social life, antagonistic value and belief systems which lead people with different social interests, to evaluate common social phenomena differently. Any two different theories or systematically related sets of beliefs which are not comparable, to the degree that if enough "facts" were known, all disagreements between their adherents could be overcome, are thus, in our view, partially incommensurable.

Any belief which is based upon a commitment to traditionally held values is a good example of this. The belief that the crucified Christ was resurrected and the belief that such an event is not possible are obviously not open to question, as far

as their respective adherents are concerned. From this, we believe ourselves justified in attributing at least partially incommensurable linguistic frameworks to their respective adherents. For the serious commitment to such a Christian dogma entails not only the inability to come to an agreement with an atheist, or even a Jew, about this one statement, but about an entire panorama of systematically related statements, which together at least partially define fundamentally different world outlooks.

The differences between partially incommensurable world outlooks are not removed when they are mediated in the interest of Reason. To use a Freudian term which has been used to translate Hegel's "Aufhebung," they are sublimated. This repressive sublimation, which is grounded in a synthesis or fusion of incommensurable horizons, is not just an Aufhebung, or elevation to a higher level of understanding but is, at the same time, a repression of irreconcilable differences which plays a crucial role in all forms of economic, political and social domination.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adorno, Theodor W. Negative Dialectics. Translated by E. B. Ashton. New York: The Seabury Press, 1973.
- Anchor, Robert. "History and Play: Johann Huizinga and his Critics." History and Theory 17 (February 1978):63-93.
- Bernstein, Richard J. Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983.
- _____. The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978.
- Birchall, B. C. "On Hegel's Critique of Formal Logic." Clio 9 (Winter 1980):283-96.
- Bleicher, Josef. Contemporary Hermeneutics: Hermeneutics as Method, Philosophy and Critique. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980.
- Bruns, Gerald L. "Structuralism, Deconstruction, and Hermeneutics." Diacritics 14 (Spring 1984):112-23.
- DeFew, David J. "The Habermas-Gadamer Debate in Hegelian Perspective." Philosophy and Social Criticism 8 (Winter 1981):425-46.
- Derrida, Jacques. Dissemination. Translated, with an Introduction and Additional Notes, by Barbara Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Books, 1981.
- _____. Margins of Philosophy. Translated, with Additional Notes, by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
- _____. Of Grammatology. Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.
- _____. Positions. Translated and Annotated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981; Phoenix Books, 1982.

- _____. Writing and Difference. Translated, with an Introduction and Additional Notes, by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Books, 1978.
- Fink, Eugen, and Heidegger, Martin. Heraklit: Seminar Wintersemester 1966/1967. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1970.
- Gadmer, Hans-Georg. Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato. Translated and with an Introduction by P. Christopher Smith. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.
- _____. Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.
- _____. Philosophical Hermeneutics. Translated and Edited by David E. Linge. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.
- _____. Reason in the Age of Science. Translated by Frederick G. Lawrence. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981.
- _____. "The Problem of Historical Consciousness." Translated by Jeff L. Close. New Introduction to the English ed. translated by Hans Fantel. Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal 5 (Fall 1975):2-52.
- _____. Truth and Method. Translated and Edited by Garrett Barden and John Cumming. New York: The Seabury Press, 1975.
- Geuss, Raymond. The Idea of a Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Giddens, Anthony. Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.
- _____. New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretive Sociologies. New York: Basic Books Publishers, 1976.
- _____. Studies in Social and Political Theory. New York: Basic Books Publishers, 1977.
- Griswold, Charles. "Gadamer and the Interpretation of Plato." Ancient Philosophy 1 (September 1981): 171-78.

Habermas, Jürgen. "A Review of Gadamer's Truth and Method." Translated by Fred R. Dallmayr and Thomas McCarthy. In Understanding and Social Inquiry, pp. 335-63. Edited by Fred R. Dallmayr and Thomas McCarthy. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977.

_____. Communication and the Evolution of Society. Translated and with an Introduction by Thomas McCarthy. Boston: Beacon Press, 1979.

_____. Knowledge and Human Interests. Translated by Jeremy J. Shapiro. Boston: Beacon Press, 1971.

_____. Theory and Practice. Translated by John Viertel. Boston: Beacon Press, 1973.

_____. Towards a Rational Society. Translated by Jeremy J. Shapiro. Boston: Beacon Press, 1970.

Hacking, Ian, ed. Scientific Revolutions, Oxford Readings in Philosophy. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Hans, James S. "Hans-Georg Gadamer and Hermeneutic Phenomenology." Philosophy Today 22 (Spring 1978):3-19.

_____. "Hermeneutics, Play, Deconstruction." Philosophy Today 24 (Winter 1980):299-317.

Heidegger, Martin. Being and Time. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.

_____. Identity and Difference. Translated and with an Introduction by Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper & Row, 1969; Harper Torchbooks, 1974.

_____. The End of Philosophy. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. New York, Harper & Row, 1973.

_____. Der Satz Vom Grund [The Principle of Sufficient Reason]. Pfullingen: Verlag Günther Neske, 1957; Fünfte Auflage [5th ed.], 1978.

Hoy, David Couzins. "Taking History Seriously: Foucault, Gadamer, Habermas." Union Seminary Quarterly Review 34 (Winter 1979):85-95.

_____. The Critical Circle: Literature and History in Contemporary Hermeneutics. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.

- Jaynes, Julian. The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1976.
- Kisiel, Theodore. "The Happening of Tradition: The Hermeneutic of Gadamer and Heidegger." Man & World 2 (1969):358-85.
- Knapke, Margaret Lee. "The Hermeneutic Focus of Heidegger and Gadamer: The Nullity of Understanding." Kinesis 12 (Fall 1982):3-18.
- Kuhn, Thomas S. The Essential Tension: Selected Studies in Scientific Tradition and Change. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977.
- _____. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. 2d ed. enl. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Lakatos, Imre. "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes." In Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge, pp. 91-195. Edited by Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave. London: Cambridge University Press, 1970.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. "The Monadology." In Leibniz: Selections, pp. 533-52. Edited by Philip P. Wiener. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951.
- Lyotard, Jean-François. "The Différend, The Referent, And the Proper Name." Translated by Georges Van Den Abbeele. Diacritics 14 (Fall 1984):4-14.
- _____. The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge. Translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- Maddox, Randy L. "Hermeneutic Circle--Vicious or Victorious." Philosophy Today 27 (Spring 1983):66-76.
- McCarthy, Thomas. The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978.
- Misgeld, Dieter. "On Gadamer's Hermeneutics." Philosophy of the Social Sciences 9 (June 1979):221-39.
- _____. "Science, Hermeneutics, and the Utopian Content of the Liberal-Democratic Tradition. On Habermas' Recent Work: A Reply to Habermas." New German Critique 8 (Winter 1981):123-44.

- Nägele, Rainer. "The Scene of the Other: Theodor W. Adorno's Negative Dialectic In the Context of Poststructuralism." Boundary 2 (1982):59-79.
- Palmer, Richard E. Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969.
- Rorty, Richard. Consequences of Pragmatism: (Essays: 1972-1980). Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982.
- _____. Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. Critique of Dialectical Reason: Theory of Practical Ensembles. Edited by Jonathan Rée. Translated by Alan Sheridan-Smith. London: NLB, 1976.
- Steiner, George. After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975; Oxford Paperbacks, 1977.
- Stegmüller, Wolfgang. "A Combined Approach to the Dynamics of Theories: How to Improve Historical Interpretation of Theory Change by Applying Set Theoretical Structures." Theory and Decision 9 (1978):39-75.
- Sturrock, John, ed. Structuralism and Since: From Lévi Strauss to Derrida. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- White, Hayden. Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.
- _____. "The Politics of Historical Interpretation: Discipline and De-Sublimation." Critical Inquiry 9 (September 1982):113-37.