

Hermeneia. An Anatomy of History and Ab-wesenheit.

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It is my intention here, using the metaphors of heavy and light, An-wesenheit and Ab-wesenheit, to draft an anatomy of historical re-membering. The inquiry into History and the historical is a process of sifting through the testimony of the past, not only in order to discover what in fact took place, but also to prioritize the spectrum of meanings inseparably woven into the contextual fiber of past-time happenings. The hermeneutical activity is an attempt to reconstitute methodically a cultural milieu now past, now remote and unfamiliar; it is an activity of re-membering the various pieces and bits of past-time into a re-semblance of their original existential cast, a re-semblance that truth-fully and meaning-fully reflects a time in the world's past that has since become light.

Among other things, an anatomy of historical reconstitution must attempt to clearly disengage the historical activity of authenticating the witnesses of past happenings, i.e., text in the widest sense, from the philosophical process of re-membering past-time happenings into History; for the manner in which historical information is brought together into History is strategically linked to the type of philosophical assumptions holding sway in the historian's mind.

This article is strictly didactic in nature. Structured around an anatomical dissection (Frye 1957, 311) of historical man's hermeneiaⁱ it seeks to throw light upon the shadowy places of the human animal's impressions of his own historicity, of his own intimate in-the-world mythos. I wish, first, to sketch a profile of the time-constrained animal who cannot seem to just "instantly forget" (Nietzsche 1964, 2:102), emphasizing the delimiting contextual milieu that surrounds and enfolds man-in-process. It is precisely this notion of milieuⁱⁱ that has given rise to many of the queries and responses proffered by historical and philosophical hermeneutics.ⁱⁱⁱ Then I shall give a brief synopsis of History and historicity, and finally, identify what seems to be the principal methodological difficulty confronting the philosophical creation of History.

The hermeneutical enquiry--the study of how to read the traces-in-time left behind by the historical animal--has become considerably more complex since historical critical scholars originally began investigating the authenticity of biblical documents "qua documents of history, and not simply qua documents of faith" (Aiken 1991, 230). In their pursuit of the historical-in-the-biblical, critical scholars set out first to reconstitute an historically reliable, and credible (Spinoza 1951, 120), biblical Ur-text by identifying the different literary sources and tendencies that initially gave form, and thus potentially substance, to the different narrative traditions reflected in the biblical documents (Aiken 1991, 230-231). Because there are no extant originals of the biblical texts, it was necessary for scholars to re-constitute the supposed form of those missing originals, to create a Bible or theoretical Ur-text (Eißfeldt 1934, 2, 693ff.) by clustering together corresponding fragments, references, and manuscripts into a consistent and unified whole.

The authentication and reconstitution of text has always been a stated factor in the goal and method of historical hermeneutics, partly, at least, because historical investigators have always believed that once established, an Ur-text, unlike other types of text, would reveal a previously "concealed or distorted Ur-Sinn" (Gadamer 1986, 2:95; Kisiel 1972, 198), an Ur-truth concerning historical man.^{iv} Ultimately, then, the inquiry into past-time derives from historical man's search for beginnings; it springs from his drive to dis-cover in the transient text of change, and to articulate, his own mythos.

The Lightness of Ab-wesenheit. A material heaviness enfolds the human animal actualizing himself in space and in time, yet his remembering of past happenings, far from being heavy, are suffused with lightness. In the intimate rememberings of near-at-hand events one reintroduces, in the lightness of the mind's re-collection, the presently in-substantial--the Ab-wesend--back into the originating context of its past-time ontological An-wesenheit,^v and into the anchoring grasp of "verfließenden Zeit" (Gadamer 1986, 2:135), in order to saturate the Ab-wesend once again with in-world substantiality. This is also the case with scholarly attempts to re-member for the present generation the existential heaviness of more remote past-time. Thus, both intimate rememberings of the near-past as well as scholarly rememberings of the more remote past are processes of re-uniting the in-substantial lightness of Ab-wesenheit with the substantial heaviness of An-wesenheit,^{vi} so that clothed in the garments of its own historicity the no-longer-in-the-world can once again cast a shadow of being. Unlike the eternal Now, the historical moment is a "Pflock des Augenblicks." These furtive flakes of time are the "ghosts" (Nietzsche 1964, 2:101) of the past that the historical animal attempts to assemble into a meaning-full scenario (contextuality) called History.^{vii} Yet what is man if not himself a nexus^{viii} drifting toward forgetfulness, if not himself an elusive apparition in the time continuum?^{ix}

An-wesenheit as Sum-phore [Nexus]. According to Herodotus, when the Lydian king Croesus queried Solon the wise concerning the happiest man he had yet encountered in his travels, Solon responded in what seems a curious fashion. Following a protracted but intriguing calculation concerning days and intercalary months and matching seasons, Solon eventually makes the point that man is a nexus, a junction of converging lifecurrents:

set the boundary of a man's life at seventy years, these seventy spaces of yeartime amounting to 25,200 days, not counting the intercalary month. So if one wishes to make every other year longer by one month in order to make the seasons properly agree, then not only are there thirty-five intercalary months beyond the seventy years, but the days of these months total one thousand and fifty, making all together of the seventy years 26,250 days, and each of these days is unlike any other particular day in that which it brings. Thus, then, Croesus, man is nothing more than a junction of happenings [*sum-phore*]. (Herodotus 1990, I:32, 37)^x

In response to Croesus' question concerning the happy man, Solon first gives attention to a definition of man, making of him "nothing more than sum-phore." It is only after defining man as nexus that Solon finally addresses the question of the happy man: "If a [man of good fortune] shall also end his life well...he is worthy to have been called happy; but if he has not yet died, we must give heed not to call him happy, but only successful [*eutuxea*]" (Herodotus 1990, I:32, 39). Solon's definition of man as sum-phore carries with it neither implicit happiness nor unhappiness, neither lightness nor heaviness. Man is an evasive juncture in time linking together an agglomerate of happenings, and the significance of the individual man-nexus at any given moment of his existence is dependent uniquely upon the manner in which an interpreter brings together into *transient* text all the different happenings pertinent

to the particular man. Man is a nexus-point in an historical continuum, and whether or not a particular man can be called happy is a judgment rendered only by others, and then only upon the man's death. Shortly after this passage, however, in which he recounts Solon's conversation with Croesus, Herodotus introduces in a much more characteristic Greek existential context the concept of *baru-sumphoros*: heavy-nexus.

Following Solon's departure from the Lydian court, Croesus had a dream that his son would be killed by a spear of iron; and in fact, in spite of all Croesus' precautions the inevitable occurred. Adrastus, an expatriate in Croesus' house, accidentally kills the king's son during a boar hunt. Afterward, when the son's body was placed before the king, Adrastus pleaded for Croesus to slay him as well; but Croesus rendered tragic justice to Adrastus: "I do not hold you to be the cause of this evil, save in so far as you were the unwilling doer of it; rather it is the word of a god, the same who told me long ago what was to be" (Herodotus 1990, I:45, 51). Adrastus, however, who had unintentionally slain his own brother and thus been exiled from his home, who had been purified by Croesus and received into his house only to kill (once again inadvertently) his protector's son, "slew himself there by the sepulcher, seeing now clearly that he was the most ill-fated [*baru-sumphotatos*] of all men whom he knew" (Herodotus 1990, I:45, 51). Man is nothing more than *sum-phore*. Yet whether, like Adrastus, one is weighed down by the happenings that constitute one's own intimate History, being *baru-sumphoros*, or whether one has been generally fortunate enough in life to be thought successful, Solon argues that these are interpretive significations that may randomly apply to a man-nexus during his lifetime, but that it is only after the final card of life--death--has been played that one can be called truly happy.

Heaviness and Lightness. Solon defines man as a junction of happenings, neither heavy nor light. It is only according to the specific flowing of his days that the individual man becomes either heavy-nexus or prosperous; it is only after a man's death, and because of the conclusive hind-sight afforded surviving spectators of his life, that any particular man can be called happy or unhappy. This quintessentially Greek tragic sense of heaviness is significantly different from the abstraction of heaviness that later philosophers shall derive from the materiality that constitutes the boundaries of being (Sein). Likewise, the Greek concept of the well-fortuned or successful man, which is clearly endowed with a certain quality of lightness, is yet far removed from the lightness-through-absence metaphor that shall characterize the descriptions of philosophical hermeneutics. In philosophical hermeneutics, whose method revolves around "a particular 'psychological act', namely understanding" (Connolly and Keutner 1988, 2),^{xi} the metaphors of heaviness and lightness, An-wesenheit and Ab-wesenheit, shall instead serve to portray the abstract play between the material weightiness that clothes the potentialities of being-in-the-world, and the lightness inherent to the process of re-memorizing past-time happenings into an interpretively significant historical milieu called History. Hölderlin, among others, clearly recognizes the significance for poetry of the powerful play between An-wesenheit (heaviness) and Ab-wesenheit (lightness). In his essay "Über Achill (2)," Hölderlin focuses on, and praises, Homer's effectiveness in accentuating in the *Iliad* the immense importance of Achilles to the Greeks. Hölderlin argues that Homer skillfully creates a powerful idealization of Achilles simply by restricting his presense to rare intervals in the action of the poem. The en-lightening or Idealisierung of Achilles in the *Iliad* occurs precisely because "the greatest of the Achaians" is virtually ab-wesend in the Poet's narration:

Many have often wondered why Homer, who wanted to sing especially of the anger of Achilles, almost never let him appear [in the *Iliad*].... That which is ideal should not appear

all the time [alltäglich]; and [Homer] could not really sing of Achilles any more wonderfully...than that he should make him withdraw...in order that from that day on every loss of the Greeks...reminds one {of} [Achilles'] superiority over the whole magnificent array of lords and servants, and so that through his Abwesenheit, [Achilles] should be put so much the more in the light in the rare moments when the poet lets him appear before us. (Hölderlin 1977, 495-496)

In another appeal to the metaphor of lightness, the French philosopher Alain includes in his *Système des beaux-arts* a short essay entitled, "De l'histoire," in which he emphasizes the dissimilarity between "the type of history that is only the inventory of our knowledge concerning the past," and "the art of painting with words" (Alain 1958, 448). Alain argues that while there are obvious dissimilarities one can point out between a history [une histoire], a painting [un tableau], and a novel [un roman], there is yet a very definite similarity between the historian, the painter, and the novelist, namely, a certain abstraction or lightness in their modes of expression. Because whatever the story being channeled through these different media, viz., "the tragedy, the scenic representation [le tableau], [and] the analysis of hearts, the whole [descriptive event] is contained in one or two lines," (Alain 1958, 449). The mythos, whether told by *crayon* or *pinceau*, is entirely contained within a few strokes, it is conveyed with brevity through abstraction--Idealisierung:

[O]ne no more sees La Grenadière...after one has read Balzac, than one would be capable of drawing or painting Nero and his courtesans according to Tacitus. The reader does not see Grandet at all...although Grandet is described from his shoes to his hat; he sees no better the face of Julien Sorel, described here and there with few strokes, who is however as alive and as present as the other.... Who then, in reading, sees Gobseck's smile? It is correct to say that he shall find it among men, for a short instant and as an apparition of this character on another face. (Alain 1958, 449)

Karl Jaspers, as well, speculates upon a metaphor of lightness (Ab-wesendheit) when, at a Unesco conference celebrating the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Kierkegaard's birth, he contends that if Kierkegaard were to return as an (an-wesend) contender in today's intellectual arena, he might well say: "If I were your contemporary you would again inflict upon me the treatment I endured in Copenhagen. Now, though, you celebrate me as absent [passé], inoffensive, as a now famous spiritual phenomenon with which you decorate each other, thus making me a spoil of myself" (Unesco 1966, 91). The play between heavy and light, the existential weight of the present moment and the weightlessness of the past moment, is the quintessential metaphor of the transcendent quality of Ab-wesendheit, and thus, of past-time itself -history; for an inevitable consequence of existential ab-sense is that by shedding the heavy garments of their in-time nexus natures, happenings and persons and texts^{xiii} are changed into ideal or transcending pre-senses. They become strangely lighter and purer, finally *fixed* as en-lightened or transcending re-collections. Gadamer's theory concerning hermeneutical activity revolves precisely around this image of Idealisierung, which he likens to the ideal-ization or transcendental re-membering of a loved one over whom death has cast its dis-membering shroud.

How the *Seinsweise* of this person suddenly changes there, how he has become lasting [bleibend], purer [reiner], not necessarily better in a moral or loving sense; but in the profile that remains of him [bleibenden Umriß] he has become fixed [geschlossen] and visible - obviously only because we can no longer expect anything from him, have nothing more to

experience from him, and because we may no longer do anything loving for him. (Gadamer 1986, 2:141-142)

History and Hermeneutic. What precisely is History or historicity? Aristotle claims that unlike the poet, whose task [*ergon*] is to speak of what *could* come about, the historian's task is to relate things that have *in fact* come about (Aristotle 1979, 1451a36-1451b11, 27-32). Others have argued that History is restricted to recording actual past-time happenings and events, thus effectively making the historical endeavor a simple inventory of past-time happenings. If this is the case, the historian actually re-constructs the flow of historical past-time following indications deduced from the witnesses of that past-time, re-remembering from the source material and re-presenting as accurately as possible the existential unfolding of that which has become historically ab-wesend--*light*. Still others, such as Merleau-Ponty, argue that History is something more than just a string of discontinuous happenings,^{xiii} and that "[t]here is no [H]istory if the flow of things is a series of separate episodes," or if History is presented as nothing more than a simple "concord of circumstances" (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 46, 49). If this refinement is accurate, that History is in fact more than an unaffected inventory of past happenings, then Merleau-Ponty's conclusion is defensible; for he argues that the reality of historical events can only be won by a methodical abstraction, that historical truth "is found not in certain existing historical subjects, nor in a theoretical prise de conscience, but in [their] confrontation, in their practice, and in their common life" (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 47; 1964, 55).

In Greek, the term history denotes more than just the process of inquiry into the causes of certain events, but refers, more specifically, to the understanding gained from that inquiry or to the transmission of information gained through historical inquiry. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that Greek historians speak of History as a com-position or com-pilation of deeds and events around a specific thesis,^{xiv} or in order that the knowledge of extraordinary events might not be lost.^{xv} In the broadest sense every document is historical in nature; but the Greek historians specifically intended to so position events in respect to one another [*sug-grapho*] that an especial emphasis concerning the meaning of historical happenings would become evident.

After Spinoza, however, and with the advent of philosophical hermeneutics, the horizon of the historian's activity was significantly widened. The historian was no longer seen as the chronicler of happenings that more or less tell their own story, but rather, he was re-defined as the interpretive judge and sculptor of History. Spinoza maintains that Reason, Ratio, is the only acceptable measure for separating the truth of past happenings from their meaning (Spinoza 1951, 99-101). For Spinoza, only Reason, which is anchored in the *current* existential experience of the world, can, *ipso facto*, determine ultimately and consistently what was existentially possible in the *historical* experience of the world. As the measure of historical experience, however, Ratio obviously allows for only natural and essentially rational explanations of happenings recorded in texts of the past, and specifically in the biblical texts. Gadamer shall stress the importance of this shift in impetus, arguing that it ultimately led to the "conversion into the Historical, which is to say to the conversion from the apparent (and incomprehensible) Wonder-histories to the (comprehensible) Wonder-faith" ("Das fährt zu der Wendung ins Historische, d.h. zur Wendung von den angeblichen (und unverständlichen) Wundergeschichten zu dem (verständlichen) Wunderglauben)." (Gadamer 1986, 2:96-97).^{xvi}

For Spinoza, then, the role of the hermeneut is primarily to transmit understanding concerning historical texts,^{xvii} to translate past-time happenings into a rational framework of relevant understanding in those places "...where the truth of a claim is no longer clear or a particular substantive understanding itself needs to be grounded" (Warnke 1987, 10). Spinoza translated past happenings through the grid of Ratio, thus transforming the historical inquiry into a systematic and, for all intent and purposes, exclusively philosophical exercise in the meaning-full rationalization of existential experiences of the world. Following Schleiermacher, who definitively codified the shift from historical hermeneutics to apperceptual or philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer 1986, 97), philosophers have generally agreed that History is a form of art: the "art de faire re-vivre" [hyphenation mine] (Alain 1958, 450). Philosophical hermeneuts, in fact, argue that History-qua-Art is essentially a form of poetic mimesis, and that it is by means of this artistic re-presentation that the now-silent is once again given voice.^{xviii} Thus, the art of re-membering the past into History parallels the art of re-storing or re-membering statues of antiquity, when, from various pieces of statue that seem to fit together, the sculptor creates once again an integral and related whole (Statue). This crafting together of happenings into History is a restitution of sorts,^{xix} an artistic attempt to render the heaviness of existential An-wesenheit to persons or deeds or events made light through Ab-wesenheit. Thus, Merleau-Ponty shall argue that the "mental activity" of the historian does not exhaust the "reality of the history that was," but is in fact a process of poetic invention: the making of *histoire-Dichtung* (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 47; 1964, 231).

Gadamer, as well, clearly identifies himself with this philosophical tradition when he argues that the hermeneutical re-membering of the past is in fact an artistic reproduction, using as his metaphor of History a quasi-theatrical notion of a modern *mise-en-scène* whose plot has been supplied by past happenings. Among those who have held to this type of History-qua-Art tradition, Humboldt writes that "[a]n historical presentation, like an artistic presentation, is an imitation of nature. (...) We must, therefore, not disdain to apply the more readily recognizable method of the artist to an understanding of the more dubious method employed by the historian" (Humboldt 1973 10). Ranke also argued for the artistic quality of historical re-production, emphasizing the 'true' character of the historical: "If historical art would ...succeed in giving life to this subject matter and in reproducing it with that part of poetic power which does not think up new things but mirrors in its true character that which has been grasped and comprehended, it would ...unite in its own peculiar manner science and art at the same time" (Ranke 1973 44; cf. 33-34). Finally, Kisiel explains Gadamer's theory of hermeneutical repetition not only as cultural translation, but as an artistic re-presentation of an original piece: "... [T]he interpretation is not evoked in place of the text...but is in fact the text itself in terms of the meaning it presents in the current situation.... The reproduction re-presents the work itself, makes it present again, no matter how far removed in time it originally may have been, and in fact in such a way that the work undergoes an enhancement in Being. And the work depends on the reproduction in order to represent itself, through which it obtains its authentic Being" (Kisiel 1972 199-200). In a similar summary, the translator of the English edition of *Truth and Method* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1989), xiv-xv, states that "[i]n the interrelations of "original" (Urbild) and "picture" (Bild), Gadamer wants to stress that we find not mimetic repetition...of the real, but a process...where the original reality comes to its fullest self-presentation in the picture and where the tie between original and picture is never broken. But as art, this interrelation is fully real only each time it is represented, exhibited, brought into the actuality of our participation in it." Gadamer himself makes very clear statements concerning the nature of History as *Kunst*, which idea of course assumes as a prerequisite the legitimacy of culturally translating past happenings: "...die Geschichte [muß] von jeder neuen Gegenwart neu

geschrieben werden" (Gadamer 1986, 2:333). Gadamer derives much of his concept of the representative nature of the hermeneutical Kunst--the art of making the past an-wesend through aesthetic re-production (Gadamer 1986, 2:104, 332-333), from Heidegger's concept of Greek tekne: "Die tekne ist als griechisch erfahrenes Wissen insofern ein Hervorbringen des Seienden, als es das Anwesende als ein solches *aus* der Verborgenheit *her* eigens *in* die Unverborgenheit seines Aussehens *vorbringt*" (Heidegger 1980 45; cf. Gadamer 1986, 2:366). In "Die Zeit des Weltbildes" (1980, esp. 101-103, and 106), Heidegger more fully fleshes out the concept of das Seiende as an expression of An-wesenheit. A common denominator of the different thinkers in the philosophical tradition of hermeneutics, then, is that they have "left the domain of historical re-construction, [and] have become engaged in a parallel process of literary creation in which they themselves become the authors of a sort of neo- or pseudo-[H]istory" (Aiken 1991, 233).

Question of an Interpretive Ausgangspunkt. History is a merging together of re-assembled past-time happenings and the historian's perspective, or Ausgangspunkt. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the historian's Ausgangspunkt, which already sanctions prior to any actual *historical* consideration a *philosophical* distinction between acceptable (rational) and unacceptable (ir-rational) experiences of the world, shall also actively influence the process of historical re-remembering, and thus History itself as the final product of that process. This interpretive Ausgangspunkt is philosophical in nature, and not historical, and it alone shall ultimately determine the spectrum of possible experiences in the modern realm, and of course, the spectrum of possible experiences in the realm of past-time.^{xx} The historian's objective in re-remembering past-time happenings into History is to obtain historical truth (Aiken 1991, 228). However, the apriori threads of a certain "non-reasoned dogmatic assumption [Voraussetzung]" or "pre-condition [Vorbedingung]"^{xxi} are also inevitably woven into this re-construction of the past. These philosophical assumptions reflect the attitude of the historian toward certain categories of experience, such as the 'mythical' or the 'fabulous', that are clearly not part of the modern intimate experience of the world. These assumptions, in fact, which are born of critical reason and the progressive enthroning of Ratio as the dominant measure of possible truth in the natural order,^{xxii} actually provide the *points de repère* that enable the historian to separate methodically, comprehensible types of happenings from the types of happening that the modern world simply cannot comprehend, because it finds them existentially ir-rational.

The principal Ausgangspunkt for the modern re-creation of History is the paradigm of world-become-rational, and Ratio remains the conventional apriori interpretive grid through which historical happenings are read and systematically stripped of any ir-rational elements.^{xxiii} This rapport between the historian's philosophical perspective and the historical information that he will re-remember into History, constitutes the methodological chink in the armor of philosophical hermeneutics; for the general structure through which the historian re-remembers past happenings into, in this case rational History, is already pre-determined by the implicit assumption that happenings in the world are only authentic existentially if they pass the test of Ratio.^{xxiv} The actual documents and witnesses of historical happenings--texts--are only of secondary consideration in the philosophical re-remembrance of History.

In general, an Ausgangspunkt enables the historian to re-constitute the psycho-apperceptual paradigm through which the chroniclers of man's past perceived and interpreted the events they were narrating. In particular, the rationalist Ausgangspunkt, which provides the historian with the point of reference necessary to identify the original paradigms surrounding the descriptions of past happenings, allows the historian to re-define those happenings in terms of

a rationally credible picture (*Bild*) of History.^{xxv} Yet Rational History may not be, in fact, history at all.

The documentary sources and other witnesses of past-time happenings "constitute for the modern historian the unique point of entry into the otherwise inaccessible and obscure world of the past" (Aiken 1991, 228; cf. 243). Thus, the most difficult phase of the historical inquiry is to determine the rapport between mythic, and therefore phenomenally in-comprehensible descriptions and explanations of man's historical being in-the-world, and the modern existential encounter of the world, which is not only immediately accessible but also quintessentially rational. As with any *Ausgangspunkt*, of course, the rationalist *Ausgangspunkt* enables the modern hermeneut to accomplish precisely this: to re-create a harmony or model of the past called History without having to accept as phenomenally possible that which is ir-rational or in-credible, viz., the possibility of an actual existential encounter with the mythic in what is evidently a uniquely natural *Lebenswelt*.^{xxvi}

The philosophical approach to hermeneutics is not without problems. It is, for example, difficult to defend an interpretive method that sanctions a systematic, rational *dépouillement* of historical experience. For Ratio notwithstanding, there are no indisputable guidelines that allow the historian methodologically to go *behind* a documented experience of the world, an experience recorded in an otherwise authentic historical text, in order to determine what the author of the text could have *in fact* experienced. Philosophical hermeneutics, however, which countenances a rationalist interpretive paradigm of the world, does not profess to remember historical facts or to re-present actual past-time happenings. Rather, it is engaged in a philosophical process of com-position and textual re-enactment, which is a parallel--and entirely different--activity. "For the philologist, the text...is there in front of its interpreter like a fixed given that precedes every new interpretation. The historian...has first to reconstruct his basic text, namely [H]istory itself."^{xxvii}

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NOTES

1 Nancy (1982:10): "[L]'hermeneia est le 'sens' de cet Étant que nous sommes, 'hommes', 'interprètes' du logos." Cf. Gadamer 1986, 2:93.

2 The notion of milieu is critical to Gadamer's concept of textual Verstehen. See Gadamer 1990, 1:305-312 and Gadamer 1986, 2:31-32, 135, 330, 397, 404. In his article "The Science of the Life-World," Gadamer stresses the pervading contextuality contained in the notion of Lebenswelt. In defining an acquaintance, for example, Gadamer speaks of all the possible "forms of world" that may surround and define the acquaintance, concluding: "[o]ne sees that it is the world itself which is concretized by such intersubjective experiences: that, and not an objective world of mathematically describable *a priori*, is the world" (Gadamer 1972, 181). Ranke, likewise, says that, "the historian conceives for himself a general picture of the form of the connection of all events.... [The ideas he forms] are not being projected into history, but are the essence of history itself. For...all occurrences are inseparably linked in space and time" (Ranke 1973, 16; cf. 22 and 26). Husserl argues that any history drawn strictly from facts must remain incomprehensible, and that "[o]nly the disclosure of the essentially general structure lying in our present..., only the disclosure of the...historical time in which we live, in which out total humanity lives in respect to its total, essentially general structure--only this disclosure can make possible...[Historie]" (Husserl 1970, 371-372). Heidegger expresses the same idea with the notion of historical inferences: "Die Thematisierung, d. hst. die historische Erschließung von Geschichte ist die Voraussetzung für den möglichen 'Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften'" (Heidegger 1979, 376; cf. Gadamer 1972, 180). French phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty also argues that History is "as a milieu of life," and that the "historical act is invented" (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 45), and French historian George Duby is quoted as saying that, "there is no truth of facts [in History], but at very best an ethic. There is not one History, but multiple visions that assemble themselves following the whim of subjectivities" (in Simonnet 1992, 47).

3 For a discussion of the progression from historical hermeneutics to philosophical hermeneutics, see Gadamer, "Klassische und philosophische Hermeneutik" (1986), esp. 97ff., and "Hermeneutik und Historismus" (1965).

4 Although the reconstitution of authentic text and the determination of accurate historical facts have been central to the efforts of historical hermeneutics, Gadamer clearly states that this historical process is extraneous to the objective of philosophical hermeneutics: "Das eigentliche Urfaktum...ist offenbar nicht die Frage.... Das eigentliche Problem, das sich hier stellt und als das der Geschichte erkannt wird, findet in dem Begriff der Geschichtlichkeit seinen Ausdruck" (Gadamer 1986, 134).

ⁱ Nancy (1982:10): "[L]'hermeneia est le 'sens' de cet étant que nous sommes, 'hommes', 'interprètes' du logos." Cf. Gadamer 1986, 2:93.

ⁱⁱ The notion of milieu is critical to Gadamer's concept of textual Verstehen. See Gadamer 1990, 1:305-312 and Gadamer 1986, 2:31-32, 135, 330, 397, 404. In his article "The Science of the Life-World," Gadamer stresses the pervading contextuality contained in the notion of Lebenswelt. In defining an acquaintance, for example, Gadamer speaks of all the possible "forms of world" that may surround and define the acquaintance, concluding: "[o]ne sees that it is the world itself which is concretized by such intersubjective experiences: that, and not an objective world of mathematically describable *a priori*, is *the* world" (Gadamer 1972, 181). Ranke, likewise, says that, "the historian conceives for himself a general picture of the form of the connection of all events.... [The ideas he forms] are not being projected into history, but are the essence of history itself. For...all occurrences are inseparably linked in space and time" (Ranke 1973, 16; cf. 22 and 26). Husserl argues that any history drawn strictly from

facts must remain incomprehensible, and that "[o]nly the disclosure of the essentially general structure lying in our present..., only the disclosure of the...historical time in which we live, in which out total humanity lives in respect to its total, essentially general structure--only this disclosure can make possible...[*Historie*]..." (Husserl 1970, 371-372). Heidegger expresses the same idea with the notion of historical inferences: "Die Thematisierung, d. hst. die historische Erschließung von Geschichte ist die Voraussetzung für den möglichen 'Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften'" (Heidegger 1979 376; cf. Gadamer 1972, 180). French phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty also argues that History is "as a milieu of life," and that the "historical act is invented" (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 45), and French historian George Duby is quoted as saying that, "there is no truth of facts [in History], but at very best an ethic. There is not one History, but multiple visions that assemble themselves following the whim of subjectivities" (in Simonnet 1992, 47).

ⁱⁱⁱ For a discussion of the progression from historical hermeneutics to philosophical hermeneutics, see Gadamer, "Klassische und philosophische Hermeneutik" (1986), esp. 97ff., and "Hermeneutik und Historismus" (1965).

^{iv} Although the reconstitution of authentic text and the determination of accurate historical facts have been central to the efforts of historical hermeneutics, Gadamer clearly states that this *historical* process is extraneous to the objective of *philosophical* hermeneutics: "Das eigentliche Urfaktum...ist offenbar nicht die Frage.... Das eigentliche Problem, das sich hier stellt und als das der Geschichte erkannt wird, findet in dem Begriff der *Geschichtlichkeit* seinen Ausdruck" (Gadamer 1986, 134).

^v For the ontological statement [Aussage] contained in historicity [Geschichtlichkeit], see Gadamer 1986, 2:135.

^{vi} The play between lightness and heaviness, absence and presence, is really quite a common metaphor in literature. Nietzsche, for example, grounds his new aesthetic in the shift from Wagnerian weightiness to Mediterranean lightness, because, he says, "[Bizet's] music seems...consummate [vollkommen]. It comes lightly, spritely, thus with courtesy. It is worthy of love; it does not sweat. 'Goodness is light, everything divine walks on delicate feet': first line of my aesthetic" (Nietzsche 1964, 8:1, 5). Gide describes the marvelous sleights-of-hand of a certain Baldi: "...d'un papier chiffonné, déchiré, [il] faisait éclore maints papillons blancs...qu'il maintenait suspendus en l'air au-dessus des battements d'un éventail. Ainsi les objets près de lui perdaient poids et réalité, présence même, ou bien prenaient une signification nouvelle, inattendue, baroque, distante de toute utilité" (Gide 1958, 89). Gide also develops more philosophically upon this metaphor in *Paludes*: "Mais de tout ce que nous faisons, rien ne dure sitôt que nous ne l'entretiens plus. Et pourtant tous nos actes subsistent horriblement et pésent" (Gide 1968, 123-124). In *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, Kundera, as well, develops upon the intermingling play of lightness and darkness, ab-sense and pre-sense: "[Nietzsche's] myth of eternal return states that a life which disappears once and for all...is like a shadow, without weight, dead in advance.... If the French Revolution were to recur eternally, French historians would be less proud of Robespierre. But because they deal with something that will not return, the bloody years of the Revolution have turned into mere words, theories, and discussions, have become lighter than feathers, frightening no one.... [T]hings appear other than as we know them: they appear without the mitigating circumstance of their transitory nature" (Kundera 1984, 2-3). Finally, in *En attendant Godot*, Samuel Beckett might be perhaps suggesting that the most relevant way to speak of the God who is there (an-wesend), is to speak of the God(ot) who is not (ab-wesend).

^{vii} According to Löwith (1949, 4-5), historical meaning [Bedeutung] is distinct from the happenings of past-time; it is the interpretive creation of the historian. "[T]here would be no search for the meaning of history if its meaning were manifest in historical events. It is the very absence of meaning in the events themselves that motivates the quest. (...) Single events as such are not meaningful, nor is a mere succession of events. To venture a statement about the meaning of historical events is possible only when their *telos* becomes apparent." Similarly, Gadamer argues that the *Bewußtsein*, in many ways analogous to Kant's notion of *Anschauung*, does not impose an historical structure of *Kontinuität* on the *Erfahrung* of time itself, but rather on the *Erfahrung* of *Geschehens*. For Gadamer, History is not what actually took place in past time, but a meaning-full organization of human *Geschehens*, an imposing of continuity on that which would otherwise remain a dis-continuous cluster of happenings. Past-time does not have an inherent order or structure; it is, rather, an accumulation of days--a *Diskontinuität des Geschehens* (Gadamer 1986, 2:139, 138), and the man-nexus, by the imposition of continuity, creates (*poiein*) his own *hermeneia*. Thus, Gadamer argues that Nietzsche's concept of interpretation is more radical than Heidegger's because Nietzsche did not appeal to the "Auffindung eines vorhandenen Sinnes, sondern die Setzung von Sinn im Dienst des "Willens zur Macht" (Gadamer 1986, 2:333; cf. 339-340). Finally, Merleau-Ponty argues that the *monde perçu*, which he qualifies as *l'être brut or sauvage*, and which he identifies as the object of all apperceptual activity, is more than any painting, parole, or attitude. Of his two types of interpretive activity, Merleau-Ponty identifies the *logos proforikos* or the *logos* of perception as fundamentally philosophical in nature. He qualifies this *logos* of perception by saying that it is an activity that perceives the *être brut*, because when philosophy grasps *être* (Heidegger's *Sein*) in its universality, it "appears to contain everything that shall ever be said, and yet permits us to create it" (Merleau-Ponty 1964, 224).

^{viii} Merleau-Ponty uses the term *nexus* in this same sense of meeting point or *Ur-stiftung*. See Merleau-Ponty 1964, 312.

^{ix} Philosophical hermeneutics is an attempt to establish a method of interpreting flux or change--Gadamer's "verfließende Zeit" (Gadamer 1986, 2:135). Cf. Heidegger: "Das Beständige im Vergangenen, dasjenige, worauf die historische Erklärung das Einmalige und Mannigfaltige der Geschichte verrechnet, ist das Immer-schon-einmal-Dagewesene, das Vergleichbare" (Heidegger 1980, 80).

^x All translations from the Greek are mine, based either upon the Greek text of the Loeb edition or the *Belles Lettres* edition.

^{xi} For the transformation of hermeneutics from the study of objective text to a psychology of *Verstehen* and finally to a psychology of interpretation, see Gadamer's discussions in "Klassische und philosophische Hermeneutik" (1986, 2:98-100, 104), "Zur Problematik des Selbstverständnisses" (1986, 2:123-126, 132), and in "Hermeneutik und Historismus" (1965, 387-388, 393).

^{xii} Texts are the primary informants of past-time, and their idealization is subtle, yet unavoidable. Thus the artistic re-production of a text's milieu--e.g., language, tone, and expression, all elements of what Gadamer calls *Sprachlichkeit* or *linguisticity* (Gadamer 1990, 1:64f., 73, 112, 143ff., 184ff., 232ff., 387-409, 436, 444, 465, 496f.; Gadamer 1986, 2:143) plays a central role in Gadamer's hermeneutic. Gadamer especially develops upon text in the "in-between world of language" in his essay entitled "Text und Interpretation" (1983), (Gadamer 1986, 2:330ff.). Kisiel summarizes Gadamer's concept of text in the following manner: "Detached from its authors as well as its intended reader...[the written word] is elevated into the sphere of meaning pure and simple. Finally detached from the contingency

of its origin, what is put down in writing is freed for new relations of meaning exceeding that which was intended by the author" (Kisiel 1972, 199).

^{xiii} Cf. Gadamer 1986, 2:138-139.

^{xiv} Thucydides com-poses [*syg-grapho*] his *History of the Peloponnesian War* in order that whosoever wishes shall be able "to make a clear assessment both of the events that have happened and of similar such events that, according to the wonts of man, shall again some day come to be; to adjudge these things profitable shall be enough [for me]" (Thucydides 1977, I:22, 41). For the different uses of *syg-grapho*, see Thucydides 1977, II:103, 461; III:116, 207; IV:51, 299.

^{xv} Herodotus com-poses [*syg-grapho*] his histories "lest the things done by men should be blotted out of memory by time, lest the great and marvelous deeds wrought by both Greeks and foreigners should become without glory, and especially in order to show the cause for which they warred with one another" (Herodotus 1990, I:1, 3). For the uses of *syg-grapho* in Herodotus, see Herodotus 1990, III:103, 131; VI:14, 161.

^{xvi} Cf. Heidegger (1980, 80-81): "Im ständigen Vergleichen von allem mit allem wird das Verständliche herausgerechnet und als der Grundriß der Geschichte bewährt und befestigt."

^{xvii} For Gadamer's discussion of historical *Verstehens* and *Überlieferung*, see "Klassische und philosophische Hermeneutik" (Gadamer 1986, 2:96-97), and "Zur Problematik des Selbstverständnisses" (Gadamer 1986 2:122-123).

^{xviii} Merleau-Ponty speaks of a second type of interpretive or hermeneutical activity, namely, the *logos endiathetos* or the *logos* of construction, as an activity of iterating the *Lebenswelt*. Concerning this *logos endiathetos* he says: "We make a philosophy of the *Lebenswelt*," and "our construction (in the mode of logic) enables us to find again this world of silence" (Merleau-Ponty 1964, 224), concluding that philosophy seeks to guide past-time into new expression--a philosophical construction, through poetic mimesis. Cf. Gadamer 1986, 2:371.

^{xix} Merleau-Ponty uses the term 'restitution' to describe the historian's re-creation of the historical life-milieu (Merleau-Ponty 1964, 289, 296-298). Cf. Nancy (1982, 57): "...si l'*ekmathesis* consiste à apprendre *ce que dit* le poète à travers son dire, l'*hermeneia* consiste à restituer le poète dans ses vers, à *le faire dire* dans ses propres dires."

^{xx} For a discussion on the rational parameters governing the making of History, see Aiken 1991, 226, 234-236.

^{xxi} Gadamer 1986, 2:100-101; 2:124; cf. 2:405-406.

^{xxii} Aiken 1991, 228ff.

^{xxiii} The *dépouillement* of past-time according to rational criteria is almost impossible to justify methodologically, because the hermeneut is called to go beyond information materially communicated in an historical text in order to determine what *truly* occurred, namely, what the author of the text really *must* have experienced based on what he rationally *could* "in fact" have experienced (Aiken 1991, 229).

^{xxiv} In an argument against "naive history," Nickles (1992, 87) would call this a charge of "residual whiggism": "Historians...retain the scientists' practice of 'putting the phenomena first.' By explaining...the process of research in terms of the products, historians continue to invert history. This practice is unhistorical in smuggling in precognition, in taking as given and unproblematic what had to be historically constructed by human activity, that which now needs historical explanation."

^{xxv} Aiken 1991, 228.

^{xxvi} *Ibid.*, 229

^{xxvii} Gadamer 1992, 65.