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Gadamer, Descartes, and the Problem of Method

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Abstract: In this paper, I demonstrate that, beyond the notion of prejudice, it is the whole Cartesian framework that Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics seems to reject in Truth and Method. I buttress this argument by addressing a gamut of central concepts, namely doubt, evidence, history, life, subjectivity, language, and, most importantly, method itself. In the course of the discussion, I emphasize many fine details of Gadamer's approach to Cartesianism. I further ask whether Gadamer really succeeds in disentangling himself from a methodical demand that is fundamental for Descartes but that he also underscores in the works of other philosophers, such as Hegel and Heidegger. I suggest that Cartesianism thus appears enlightening to point out the complexities of Gadamer's hermeneutics.

Keywords: Gadamer; Descartes; hermeneutics; doubt; subjectivity; method

> Aber hört man, dieses hypokeimenon, subiectum, das allem anderen zugrunde liegt, noch, wenn man das Wort Subjekt gebraucht? Wenn man, wie wir alle, in der cartesianischen Tradition steht und im Begriff des Subjektes die Selbstreflexion, die Sichselbstwissen, denkt? (...) Aber ich frage auch, wer hört es nicht doch darin? (Gadamer 1993b, p. 84)

1. Introduction

In what sense do we all, as subjects, and as Hans-Georg Gadamer once said, "stand within the Cartesian tradition" (Gadamer 1993b, p. 84)? How is this possible, given that in *Truth and Method* (Gadamer 1990; Gadamer 2006), his hermeneutical critique of René Descartes goes well beyond the debate about prejudices and seems to reject unambiguously the whole Cartesian stance? In the present paper, I will argue that Gadamer's critique pays a debt to Descartes' terminological and conceptual framework. I will support my argument by addressing concepts that are crucial for the elucidation of this issue, namely, doubt, evidence, history, life, subjectivity, language, and, most importantly, method itself. I will show that Gadamer hardly disentangles himself from a methodical demand that is crucial for Descartes and philosophy itself. Given the lack of space, I mainly focus on the theoretical grounds of Gadamer's method, while occasionally connecting it with other domains, such as morality. Nevertheless, no one should overlook the fact that this is a dialogical method that permeates all the humanities and that cannot be reduced to its contrast with the sciences.

Gadamer is a philologically gifted philosopher, and many studies explore the significance of his reading of Greek authors (Barthold 2010; Renaud 1999; Wachterhauser 1999), a reading that represents three volumes of his *Complete Works* (Bd. 5–7). Yet his relation to modern philosophy (explored in two more volumes, Bd. 3–4) and especially to Cartesianism still awaits a comprehensive discussion. I will thus develop this analysis as a contribution to the study of the intellectual relation between Gadamer and French philosophy, a study that has been undertaken extensively regarding contemporary authors such as Ricœur (Vallée 2012) or Derrida (Jankovic 2003).

To begin with, in what sense might Gadamer be said to react against Cartesianism?

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Unsystematically, in *Truth and Method*, he critiques the so-called Cartesian philosophers. He balks at the excessively rational historical exegesis of the Bible by Spinoza, finding it devastating for both Christianity and hermeneutics (Gadamer 1990, p. 24, 184ff.; Gadamer 2006, p. 17, 181ff.). No less vigorously does he condemn Leibniz's ideal of a "sign language of reason that would contain the whole of philosophy" as inappropriate to hermeneutical language (Gadamer 1990, p. 420; Gadamer 2006, p. 487). Still, Leibniz remains pivotal to the hermeneutical project (Grondin 2003b, p. 249), and Gadamer is silent about other Cartesian thinkers, such as Malebranche.

More frequently, Gadamer holds Cartesianism responsible for the methodological foundation of modern science and philosophy, and he calls for a revival of Greek ideas. His main point is that a position based in Descartes' philosophy appears incompatible with the phenomenological-hermeneutical approach that he intends to present in *Truth and Method*. He adds that a similar kind of overly rational hermeneutics lurks within Romanticism (Gadamer 1990, p. 242; Gadamer 2006, p. 263), the Enlightenment (Gadamer 1990, p. 283; Gadamer 2006, pp. 279–80), and the late works by Dilthey.

All this leaves us with the impression that Gadamer settles for second-hand knowledge in his apprehension of Descartes. In an exemplary manner, he endorses the blatant criticism of Descartes by Vico (Gadamer 1990, p. 25; Gadamer 2006, p. 17), disapproves of Husserl's methodological reliance on Descartes (Gadamer 1990, pp. 260–64; Gadamer 2006, 247ff.; Gadamer 1987b, 125ff.; Gadamer 1987c, pp. 149–50), and prefers Heidegger to Dilthey and Husserl because of the latter's Cartesian affiliations (Gadamer 1990, p. 260; Gadamer 2006, p. 246).

It is thus essential to examine if Gadamer presses a personal charge against Descartes himself and not only against his epigones or his intellectual posterity.

The problem for the interpreter is that such a charge appears itself in fairly indirect ways. Gadamer rarely quotes works of Descartes and his commentators, and when he does, his tone is distant (Gadamer 1990, pp. 283, 420, 464; Gadamer 2006, pp. 280, 420, 456). Neither in his 1960 magnum opus nor in other places in the corpus does he undertake a full-length discussion of Descartes, as his master Heidegger attempted (Perrin 2013, 100ff.). In addition, Gadamer's academic lectures on Descartes are scarce compared to those that he devoted to Greek and German authors (Grondin 2003b, 366ff.).

2. Doubt and Certitude, in Light of History and Life: The Dilthey Experiment

Nevertheless, a patient reading makes clear that Gadamer questions the major conceptual apparatus of Descartes, insofar as it might be discussed in the limited scope of my paper. First, I will be brief regarding the previously mentioned contrast between Gadamer and Descartes on prejudices (Gadamer 1990, 282ff.; Gadamer 2006, p. 278), which is a commonly discussed aspect of their intellectual connection (Gjesdal 2009, 121ff.; Ipperciel 1997, 2002).

In point of fact, Gadamer grants a certain value to the Cartesian theme of a rejection of prejudices (Gadamer 1990, p. 281; Gadamer 2006, p. 278), inasmuch as they fall short of a reexamination through the judging ability of the subject (Descartes 1996b, p. 18; Gadamer 2006, p. 17). In a 1968 essay "Classical and Philological Hermeneutics", Gadamer even highlights Descartes' reiterated claim to legitimate "his new concept of method" by showing its power against our deeply rooted prejudices (Gadamer 1993c, pp. 115–16). But Gadamer reproaches Descartes for not having envisioned an alternative and hermeneutically pivotal understanding of prejudice, namely as the *prae-judicium*, which stands before any judging activity and can fruitfully become the object of thematic reflection (Ipperciel 1997, pp. 44–48). To sum up, according to Descartes, the solitary ego sidesteps prejudices in order to reach certitude, thanks to the light of the unique metaphysical God; in stark contrast, Gadamer rehabilitates prejudices to interpret correctly what he conceives of as an essentially dialogical human reality, haunted by the very absence of God (Ipperciel 1997, p. 54).

However, the rejection and rehabilitation of prejudices by Gadamer has additional conceptual implications. The debate should not be confined to a concept of which he does

not unconditionally disapprove in the thought of Descartes (Ipperciel 1997, pp. 43–44). Such a restriction would veil his more unambiguous attack on other core Cartesian concepts.

In reality, the source of the debate on prejudices is to be found in another critique. Gadamer stigmatizes Cartesian doubt by delineating two seminal aspects of the concept.

First, he sets Cartesian doubt against the concept of historicity, which is a bedrock for hermeneutics (Hoy 1982, pp. 3, 95). In this regard, he expresses sympathy with two predecessors: "In reaction against Cartesian doubt and the certainty of the mathematical knowledge of nature based on it, Vico asserted the epistemological primacy of the man-made historical world. Dilthey repeats the same argument" (Gadamer 1990, p. 226; Gadamer 2006, p. 217). Yet Dilthey's case is symptomatic of the problem Gadamer discerns. He bemoans the fact that Dilthey's thought has a tendency to naturalize the human sciences (Gadamer 1993g, p. 464; Gadamer 2006, pp. 568–69) and remains crippled with an "epistemological Cartesianism" that makes it ambiguous (Gadamer 1990, pp. 242, 246; Gadamer 2006, pp. 234, 263)—even if Dilthey remains pivotal for his own hermeneutics (Grondin 2003a, p. 69). As a result, it appears that Dilthey's position is drawn back into the philosophical orbit of Descartes. It differs from Vico's position to the extent that it tends to minimize historicity.

Consequently, Gadamer's reliance on Dilthey's mitigated reaction against Descartes does not mean that he is content with it, especially regarding the concept of doubt. On the contrary, he unambiguously embraces the full argument for himself:

> Modern science is following the rule of Cartesian doubt, accepting nothing as certain that can in any way be doubted. (. . .) We have already pointed out how difficult it is to harmonize the historical knowledge that helps to shape our historical consciousness with this ideal (. . .). The concept of "prejudice" is where we can start (Gadamer 1990, pp. 275–76; Gadamer 2006, p. 273)

For Gadamer, the problem with Cartesian doubt is that it posits an intemporal and ideal methodical rule that is inconsistent with the historical dimension of human consciousness, which appears pivotal for hermeneutics (Hoy 1982, pp. 64, 97). It does not mean that Gadamer himself does not follow historically methodological rules. On the contrary, as he will confess later, "I have long followed the methodological rule that one should undertake nothing without giving an account of the history of a concept" (Gadamer 2000, p. 276). But I will return to this point later. I will also not comment on the fact that Gadamer thereby misses the way Descartes honors this human dimension in his own way. My point is that this inconsistency in relation to doubt is the reason why Gadamer seeks to rehabilitate an etymological and historical meaning of prejudice. He thus does not strictly adhere to the rejection of Cartesianism that he inherits from the tradition.

This point leads me to the second aspect of the critique of Cartesian methodical doubt. Actually, if Gadamer discards Cartesian doubt, he nonetheless promotes another version of this concept, one rooted in life itself and which can be labeled "existential" (Grondin 2003a, p. 69). In the following passage, he superposes this distinction regarding doubt upon another one regarding certitude, which is another core Cartesian concept frequently mentioned but seldom discussed in Gadamer studies (Ipperciel 1997, p. 55; Warnke 1987, p. 6):

> The kind of certainty afforded by a verification that has passed through doubt is different from the immediate living certainty that all ends and values have when they appear in human consciousness with an absolute claim. (. . .) Scientific certainty always has something Cartesian about it. It is the result of a critical method that admits only the validity of what cannot be doubted. This certainty, then, does not proceed from doubts arising and being overcome, but is always anterior to doubt's occurring to anyone. Just as when in his famous meditation on doubt Descartes set up artificial and hyperbolical doubt such as an experiment, which led to the *fundamentum inconcussum* of self-consciousness, so methodical science fundamentally doubts everything that can be doubted in order to guarantee the

> certainty of its results. It is characteristic of the problem involved in Dilthey's attempt to ground the human sciences that he does not distinguish between this methodical doubt and the doubts that come "of their own accord" (Gadamer 1990, p. 243; Gadamer 2006, p. 232; Cf. Gadamer 1987b, p. 125; Gadamer 1987c, p. 150)

Here Gadamer comes to grips with Descartes himself. The Cartesian mode of certitude represents the terminal point of methodical doubt, one that is "artificial and hyperbolical", which is epistemologically (and metaphysically) carried out once and for all in the life of the thinker (*semel in vita*). Such a courageous decision (*einmaliger 'braver' Entschuß*) hardly squares with hermeneutical standards (Gadamer 1990, p. 271; Gadamer 2006, p. 269), given that Gadamer (after Heidegger) eschews any idea of singularity (*Einmaligkeit*) in the process of understanding (Gadamer 1990, pp. 10, 58, 366; Gadamer 2006, pp. 4, 46, 354). Before *Truth and Method*, he already contends that Descartes' "rule of certitude as the genuine ethos of modern science" is not to be confused with the truth to which we can actually lay claim (Gadamer 1993a, p. 48).

By contrast, Gadamer pinpoints a vital mode of certitude that overcomes spontaneous doubt historically. In addition, conversely again, it strikes as real and common, ontologically rooted in life, and susceptible to returning indefinitely. Regrettably, in *Truth and Method*, he does not flesh out these inspiring conceptions of "certainty acquired in life itself" (*im Leben selbst erworbenen*) nor of "doubts that come to someone "by themselves" (*die einem "von selber" kommen*) and thus stays ensnared within the Cartesian scheme of doubt. I will discuss the notion of self later, but my current point is that, nevertheless, Gadamer openly sets a vital doubt against Descartes' doubt and goes beyond the scope of the Diltheyian problematic.

Gadamer's emphasis on life is not coincidental. Ultimately, it is because he promotes a whole philosophy of life that he enters the fray with Descartes. As mentioned previously, the problem with Dilthey lies in his dependence on Descartes, a dependence that actually has two aspects to it.

First, Gadamer argues that Dilthey takes his departure in the concept of lived experience (*Erlebnis*). He highlights Dilthey's Cartesian commitment in this way:

What Dilthey tries to grasp with the concept of "lived experience" is the special nature of the given in the human sciences. Following Descartes's formulation of the *res cogitans*, he defines the concept of experience by reflexivity, by interiority, and on the basis of this special mode of being given, he tries to construct an epistemological justification for knowledge of the historical world (Gadamer 1990, p. 71; Gadamer 2006, p. 56).

The trouble is that such reflexivity and interiority, which are of Cartesian origin, burden lived experience, as Dilthey conceived of it, with an ambiguous hermeneutical status.

On the one hand, Gadamer notices that the *Erlebnis* can be construed as a unit of meaning that needs no further interpretation. Its gnoseological concept thus requires that:

The structures of meaning in the human sciences, however strange and incomprehensible (. . .) to us, can be traced back to ultimate units of what is given in consciousness, unities that themselves no longer contain anything alien, objective, or in need of interpretation. These units of experience are themselves units of meaning (Gadamer 1990, p. 71; Gadamer 2006, pp. 56–57).

But on the other hand, this unit of meaning cannot be fully understood as something that is grasped conceptually. This is because its unity is actually the result of a process of unification that is subjective and coordinated with the historical and vital unity of the unifying subject.

Dilthey consequently espouses a theory of *Erlebnis* infinitely open to interpretation:

> Everything (. . .) is experienced by oneself, and part of its signification is that it belongs to the unity of this self and thus contains an unmistakable and irreplaceable relation to the whole of this one life. Thus, essential to an experience is that it cannot be exhausted in what can be said of it. (. . .) An *Erlebnis* in this emphatic

> sense thus means something (. . .) whose signification cannot be exhausted by conceptual determination (Gadamer 1990, p. 73; Gadamer 2006, p. 58)

Paradoxically, what were originally Cartesian forms of reflexivity and interiority of the *cogitatio* appear in Dilthey's conception of the *Erlebnis* to enable both a reduction to a terminal unit of meaning (*Sinneinheit*) and a constantly renewed predication of signification (*Bedeutung*), which is debated in hermeneutics (Hoy 1982, p. 14). Therefore, the concept of lived experience begets a semantic ambiguity in Dilthey's analysis.

I turn then to the second aspect of Dilthey's dependance on Descartes. Beyond this point of departure in lived experience, the whole philosophy of Dilthey comes forth from his conception of life. However, Gadamer suspects an ambiguity in the Diltheyian project, which he encapsulates in a vivid statement: "Dilthey starts from life: life itself is ordered toward reflection" (Gadamer 1990, p. 239; Gadamer 2006, p. 229). Reflexively, life inclines towards knowledge; better yet, it "interprets itself" according to a "hermeneutical structure" (Gadamer 1990, p. 230; Gadamer 2006, p. 221). But the ambiguity is that this reflexive trend finally goes against the tide of the vital trend of Dilthey's philosophy. Furthermore, again, the predicament lies upon a bedrock of Cartesianism:

> This ambiguity has its ultimate foundation in an inner disunity of his thought, the unresolved Cartesianism from which he starts. His epistemological reflections on the basis of the human sciences are not really compatible with his starting from life philosophy. (. . .) [Dilthey] calls for a philosophical foundation that would extend to every area in which "consciousness has shaken off authority and is trying to attain valid knowledge through reflection and doubt". This statement seems a harmless pronouncement on the nature of science and modern philosophy in general. The Cartesian echoes cannot be missed. But in fact the statement is applied in a completely different sense when Dilthey goes on: "(. . .) If life is able to maintain itself against doubt, then thought can finally attain valid knowledge". Here it is no longer philosophical prejudices that are to be overcome through an epistemological grounding in the style of Descartes, but it is the realities of life, the tradition of morals, religion, and positive law that are being destroyed by reflection (. . .). [He] speaks here of knowledge and reflection, he does not mean the general immanence of knowledge in life, but *a movement that is directed against life* (Gadamer 1990, pp. 241–42; Gadamer 2006, p. 231, quoting Dilthey 1968, pp. 207, 347)

It is as if Gadamer were accusing Dilthey, in his late works, of being more Cartesian than Descartes himself in radicalizing the foundationalist demand and in exacerbating the power of reflexivity. The ambiguity ultimately evolves into a clear contradiction: life breeds a reflexive movement that is finally directed against life itself. Even Descartes escaped the violence of this kind of "unresolved Cartesianism" (*unaufgelösten Cartesianismus*). However, if Gadamer disagrees with this hypertrophic or hyperbolic form of Cartesianism that he detects in the stance of Dilthey, it is evidently not to endorse a well-balanced form of Cartesianism, as one might wrongly infer from his relative agreement with Descartes on prejudices. Gadamer alludes to "the Cartesianism that makes Dilthey's thought here ambiguous" (Gadamer 1990, p. 242; Gadamer 2006, p. 263), but the problem is not confined to the interpretation of the significance of Dilthey in the history of philosophy; rather, it pertains to the pitfalls of a Cartesian approach for hermeneutics in general.

The lesson that Gadamer draws from his Dilthey experiment is that an unbridled version of Cartesianism emerges as directed against life. This argument is clarified when Gadamer also welcomes the fact that another French philosopher, namely, Bergson, "defends the anti-Cartesian element of the concept of life against objectivizing science" (Gadamer 1990, p. 74; Gadamer 2006, p. 59). In brief, the originality of Gadamerian hermeneutics is not only that it seeks to revitalize major concepts such as doubt or certitude, but that it vehemently sets against Descartes' philosophy a novel conception of life. I will show that this conception is based on the idea of self-interpretation, which offers

an alternative to the traditional view of life running counter to its bare mechanization (Gadamer 1990, p. 89; Gadamer 2006, p. 55), which I discuss elsewhere with the help of Bergson (Dalissier 2022).

3. Descartes' "Epistemological" Foundationalism and Gadamer's Mediating Baseline

To sum up, Gadamer does not simply set the newly minted concepts of history and life in opposition to the Cartesian concepts of doubt and certainty. More remarkably, he tries to re-apprehend them through the hermeneutical prism of historicization and revitalization, as he carried out for prejudices. Now the orthodox Cartesian conceptual path is that methodical doubt must return to the *cogito* as a requisite of certainty (Descartes 1996b, p. 33; Gadamer 2006, p. 29) and as a foundation for knowledge. Hence Gadamer cannot avoid reconsidering Descartes' foundationalist undertaking, namely, the vital and historical act of delving into a starting point for philosophy. However, such an origin must differ from the concept of life, given the paradoxes and complexities faced by Dilthey.

Prima facie, Gadamer adopts an attitude regarding foundationalism that might veil his actual argument. From what precedes, it is plain that he repeatedly hammers away at epistemological foundationalism aligned with Cartesianism. Such foundationalism is construed as the need for the ground of modern science, both for Descartes himself (Gadamer 1990, pp. 242, 465; Gadamer 2006, pp. 231, 457) and for others, in exemplary fashion, with Dilthey's "striving towards stability" (Gadamer 1990, p. 240; Gadamer 2006, p. 229; Dilthey 1968, p. 347). Gadamer does not endorse this vital foundationalism and laments that Dilthey expects the "unsureness of life to be overcome not so much by the stability that the experience of life provides as by science" (Gadamer 1990, p. 243; Gadamer 2006, p. 232). From this epistemological perspective, Cartesian foundationalism serves as a shelter for timorous trends in hermeneutics and runs counter to the Gadamerian promotion of an infinitely daring self-interpretation of life. Descartes thus appears as a foil, which allows Gadamer to draw contrast with his own conception of hermeneutics.

But what is Gadamer's own approach to Descartes' *metaphysical* foundationalism? In a passage of *Truth and Method* that I will soon quote, he focuses on the *Regulae ad directionem ingenii* (Descartes 1996d) and recalls that its posthumous character delayed its influence on modern science. He also implicitly addresses the *Discours de la méthode*, an introductory work that is applied in the scientific *Essais* (Descartes 1996b, p. 2006). Yet he speaks far less about the *Meditationes de prima philosophia*, whose vernacular title reveals their metaphysical destination (Descartes 1996c). Granted, Gadamer gave four full-length lectures on the *Méditations* (Grondin 2003b, pp. 373–77). He later confessed that we must "not forget that the principle of the *cogito* is a metaphysical one" (Gadamer 1987e, p. 308). In addition, in his works, he sporadically alludes to Descartes' notion of self-consciousness as a grounding for modern science and philosophy. Yet these infrequent references hardly amount to a compelling and coherent position regarding Cartesian metaphysics. It is true that the gesture that reduces the philosophical path of an author to one of his major works or concepts sounds problematic, as is the case with Merleau-Ponty's perception of Descartes (Dalissier 2017, pp. 295, 603, 794).

In *Truth and Method* and in his other works, Gadamer neither offers any detailed interpretation of the *cogito*, which is mentioned only in passing (Gadamer 1990, pp. 30, 250; Gadamer 2006, pp. 90, 245), nor discusses Descartes' conception of a metaphysical god. It is enlightening that, on one occasion, when he refers to metaphysics, he stresses the significance of Descartes' attempt to reconcile metaphysics with modern science for the future history of philosophy:

> Descartes's real treatise on method, his "Rules", the veritable manifesto of modern science, did not appear, as we know, until a long time after his death. However, his thoughtful meditations on the compatibility of the mathematical knowledge of nature with metaphysics set a task for an entire age. German philosophy from Leibniz to Hegel constantly tried to supplement the new science of physics with

> a philosophical and speculative science in which the legacy of Aristotle would be revived and preserved (Gadamer 1990, p. 464; Gadamer 2006, pp. 455–56)

Instead of commenting in detail on the *Regulae*, and rather than condemning as a whole epistemological foundationalism inspired by Cartesianism, Gadamer extols here the virtues of Descartes' "thoughtful meditations" (*nachdenkliches Meditieren*) for future philosophy. Still, he does this inasmuch as these meditations remain epistemologically directed, given that they concern, he writes, "the compatibility" between mathematics and metaphysics.

It is true that Gadamer espouses his own metaphysics of finitude (Grondin 2003a, p. 150). But his overt epistemological reduction of the Cartesian metaphysical project is problematic by itself and appears "one-sided" (Gjesdal 2009, pp. 62–63, 92). So we cannot but guess that Gadamer might extend his critique of Descartes' epistemological foundationalism to metaphysical foundationalism. Unexpectedly, he even makes a step further toward Descartes when he underlies his lack of foundationalism in morals:

> Despite the radicalness of his methodical thinking, we know that Descartes excluded morality from the total reconstruction of all truths by reason. (. . .) It seems to me symptomatic that he did not in fact elaborate his definitive morality and that its principles, as far as we can judge from his letters to Elizabeth, contain hardly anything new. It is obviously unthinkable to defer morality until modern science has progressed enough to provide a new basis for it (Gadamer 1990, pp. 283–84; Gadamer 2006, p. 280)

Descartes is celebrated here no longer for his legacy within the history of philosophy but for his self-criticism regarding moral philosophy. Besides, Gadamer's appraisal of Descartes' lack of foundationalism is not only restricted to morals, as it is in this passage, but also extends to social and political science (Gadamer 1993d, p. 161). Nevertheless, his critique remains connected to his general rejection of an epistemological foundationalism that faces its limit with morality.

The first compelling aspect of Gadamer's critique of Descartes' foundationalism is that it implies a necessity to revisit the question of the foundation within his own thought. Unquestionably, Gadamer does not defend a pristine, purely anarchic a-foundationalism that would still owe much to foundationalism, as is the case in postmodernist hermeneutics (Grondin 2003a, pp. 3, 18–19). My question is then the following: is not Gadamer himself dependent upon a kind of "starting point"?

A stock answer to this question is that his hermeneutics "begins" within language. Summing up the critique that he unleashed in the two first parts of *Truth and Method*, he writes:

> Our critique (. . .) drove us to critique the concept of the objective, to detach ourselves from the Cartesian basis of modern science, and to revive ideas from Greek thought. But we cannot simply follow the Greeks or the identity philosophy of German idealism: we are thinking out the consequences of language as medium (Gadamer 1990, p. 465; Gadamer 2006, p. 457)

The last sentence of this passage—*Wir denken von der Mitte der Sprache aus*—is tricky to translate. For example, the French translation overemphasizes, in an excessive manner, the idea of origin. It reads as follows: "*Notre pensée prend son départ dans le centre de la langue*" (Gadamer 1996, p. 486), which means, literally, "Our thought takes its point of departure in the centre of language". On the contrary, the English version quoted above suppresses Gadamer's subtle reference to language as an origin (*von . . . aus*). I thus propose to translate as follows: "We think from the medium of language". Language indeed represents a point of departure, but insofar as it is not construed itself as an absolute starting point and insofar as it is conceived of as a medium from within which interpretation begins and to which it returns. Even Cartesian-like metaphysical and mathematical kinds of firm foundationalism begin from within language. From this vantage point, each individual or collective speech or script stands as a mediating node in the network of language(s). Language is irreducible

to an invariable and exceptional ground and incommensurable with a narrow "methodical basis" (Gadamer 1990, p. 479; Gadamer 2006, p. 471). It can commonly be joined up by speakers and readers, everywhere and anytime.

My argument here is that Gadamer's hermeneutics is thus implemented from the baseline of language, in clear opposition to "the Cartesian basis of Modern science", whereas he accepts other trends in Greek thought or German idealism (see Gjesdal 2009), even if they do not coincide with the hermeneutical project. The complexity of Gadamer's position dwells in the fact that if he denounces the epistemological foundationalism of Descartes, it is neither in view of denouncing the vanity of all foundationalist undertakings, as absolute idealism does (Hegel 1999, p. 87), nor in view of restating it under the form of a hermeneutical foundation of all kinds of knowledge. Instead, he envisions reshuffling philosophy to put it on a baseline (although non-foundationalist in a Cartesian sense), i.e., on the field of language understood as a medium of communication (also at work in metaphysics and mathematics). In this regard, Gadamer's blueprint is consistent with his account of the universally ontological structure of hermeneutics, according to which "*being that can be understood is language*" (Gadamer 1990, p. 478; Gadamer 2006, p. 470).

The question of language leads us to the second compelling aspect of Gadamer's critique of foundationalism, regarding his re-apprehension of the *cogito*. In *Truth and Method*, he affirms that Descartes already developed Leibniz's idea of "a sign language of reason" containing all philosophy (Gadamer 1990, p. 420; Gadamer 2006, p. 487). The main idea of his critique is that this "ideal of language" (Gadamer 1990, p. 420; Gadamer 2006, p. 487) is nothing else than the solitary calculation of divine reason. In a drastic contrast, the Gadamerian hermeneutical practice of language flourishes at the level of human dialogue, against the Cartesian ideal of language, as well as a narrowly scientific investigation of texts (Gadamer 1990, p. 1; Gadamer 2006, p. xx).

This solitary character of the aforementioned divine reason brings me to the question of the *cogito*. Gadamer stresses that if an analysis firmly stands "on a Cartesian ground", then "[t]he individual I is like a lonely point in the world of appearances" (Gadamer 1990, p. 216; Gadamer 2006, p. 209). Such an ego might well possess its own language but appears fundamentally not in dialogue with others and hence incapable of responding to the hermeneutical demand. It represents "a Cartesian 'mind', an *inner* subjectivity that in some mysterious ways has to see into the inner subjectivity of an external Other" (Hoy 1982, p. 62). Originally, this ego is Cartesian, but it no less receives a phenomenological legacy. Gadamer makes the following observation about the Husserlian "pure transcendental subjectivity of the ego":

> [It is] not really given as such but always given in the idealization of language; moreover, language is already present in any acquisition of experience, and in it the individual ego comes to belong to a particular linguistic community" (Gadamer 1990, p. 353; Gadamer 2006, pp. 342–43)

Still, Gadamer refuses to embrace the cognate points of view of a thinking Cartesian *ego cogito* (Gadamer 1993f, p. 418; Gadamer 2006, p. 532) and of a linguistically rooted Husserlian *ego*. My point is that he introduces another kind of subject, namely, the one that tries to understand correctly through language, i.e., one that interprets. There is the hermeneutical "I":

> If emphasis has been—rightly—placed on the fact that all meaning is related to the I, this means, as far as the hermeneutical experience is concerned, that all the meaning of what is handed down to us finds its concretion (i.e., is understood) in its relation to the understanding I—and not in reconstructing the originally intending I (Gadamer 1990, p. 477; Gadamer 2006, p. 468)

Let me rephrase the thought that Gadamer undertakes regarding the "I" in the following form. I interpret, that is, I understand in speaking "therefore" I am, given that "being is *language* that is *self-presentation*" (Gadamer 1990, p. 512; Gadamer 2006, p. 490). This approach thus contrasts with the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*, which intends to think and

whose being is related to the widely discussed premise, "to think one must be" (Hegel 1987, p. 100; Gueroult 1953, p. 307). In addition, the Gadamerian I differs from the Husserlian ego, which is purely intentional before being an "understanding I" (*verstehendes Ich*), and originally differs from Husserl's primal ego (*Ur-Ich*) that Gadamer criticizes for its absence or relativity (Geniusas 2012, pp. 158, 171–72).

Gadamer's reflection of Descartes can thus appear vague, if not naïve, if the analysis focuses on his rough "anti-Cartesianism". But it strikes me as hermeneutically pervasive since it represents an attempt to interpret Cartesian concepts anew. In this sense, Descartes represents an insightful interlocutor of hermeneutics. My paper thus challenges such an argument, which is not discussed at length in major thematic volumes devoted to Gadamer (Dostal 2006; George and Heiden 2022; Lawn and Kean 2011) nor in reference works focusing on *Truth and Method* (Zarader 2016; Nielsen and Lynch 2022).

4. A Parenthesis: The Flaw of Subjectivity Itself

I would like to open a parenthesis. My discussion of the ego is connected to the broader problem of subjectivity for Gadamer, which is indeed a pivotal issue in a Cartesian context.

Gadamer certainly struggles to minimize the role of subjectivity. In *Truth and Method*, he plays the concept of game against the subjective notions of *sensus communis*, taste, and lived experience (Gadamer 1990, p. 121; Gadamer 2006, p. 104). As explained previously, he criticizes reflexivity, understood more generally as a subjectivist trend within the history of philosophy, emphasizing that: "*Understanding itself is less to be thought as an action of subjectivity than as participating in an event of tradition*" (Gadamer 1990, p. 295; Gadamer 2006, p. 291). Likewise, he increases the number of references to apparently non-subjective forms that pertain to the hermeneutical self, whose archetype is given by the leitmotiv: "Life interprets itself" (Gadamer 1990, p. 230; Gadamer 2006, p. 221). He reiterates such a "hermeneutical structure" of life when he delves into the interpreting play of an artwork, according to an explicit reflex of evasion from subjectivity:

> No matter how much the variety of the performances (. . .) of such a structure can be traced back to the conception of the players—it also does not remain enclosed in the subjectivity of what they think (. . .). Thus it is not at all a question of a mere subjective variety of conceptions, but of the work's own possibilities of being that emerge as the work interprets itself (*selber auslegt*), as it were, in the variety of its aspects (Gadamer 1990, p. 123; Gadamer 2006, p. 117)

This hermeneutically oriented self, which Gadamer conceives of as a self-interpreting act of artistic life, appears as freed from subjectivity. Such an act is epitomized in the way an exceptional work persistently preserves, actualizes, and imposes itself through time, to the extent that it becomes one of our "classics" (Gadamer 1990, p. 294; Gadamer 2006, p. 290), including perhaps *Truth and Method* itself (Grondin 2003b, p. 302). Ultimately, Gadamer envisions such a non-subjective hermeneutical self as caught in the act of interpreting itself through speech and script (Gadamer 1990, p. 397; Gadamer 2006, p. 395).

Uncoincidentally, a similar self-interpreting activity is out of the reach of the methodology of natural science and Cartesianism, which conceives of nature as not self-interpreting but as interpreted. For Gadamer, such an activity transpires at the level of the hermeneutically seminal function of understanding. In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer repeatedly offers meaningful variations on the major theme of "the continuity of self-understanding in which human existence moves" (Gadamer 1990, p. 102; Gadamer 2006, p. 83). Hermeneutically speaking, the understanding refers to itself—"to understand is always to understand yourself as well" (Grondin 2003a, p. 59)—and it does so in at least three ways.

First, self-understanding amounts to understanding the one who is in the process of understanding something, according to a "circular structure" that Gadamer borrows from Heidegger (Gadamer 1990, p. 270; Gadamer 2006, p. 268). See (Hoy 1982, p. vi; Grondin 2003a, p. 82). Yet phenomenologically speaking, self-understanding is by no means a purely noetic act but appears noematically intended. Gadamer holds that it "always occurs

through understanding something other than the self" (Gadamer 1990, p. 102; Gadamer 2006, p. 83), within aesthetic, but also historical and philosophical consciousness. In this sense, the seal of an "accomplished understanding" is "self-understanding (*Sichverstehen*: knowing one's way around)" (Gadamer 1990, p. 265; Gadamer 2006, p. 251).

Still, such a self-understanding self might be the self of anyone. Therefore, and secondly, it occurs in the understanding of the language of someone else. Gadamer correspondingly reflects on Schleiermacher's formula, "to *understand a writer better than he understood himself*", and claims that this statement "contains the whole problem of hermeneutics" (Gadamer 1990, p. 195; Gadamer 2006, p. 191). His main argument is that the act of bettering someone else's self-understanding marks progress in one's own self-understanding.

This is why, thirdly, self-understanding is not only mediated by the understanding of something else or the self-understanding of someone else. It represents a mutual understanding and agreement (*Einverständnis*) between speaking human beings (Gadamer 1990, p. 183; Gadamer 2006, p. 180). For Gadamer, and as is well-known, hermeneutics dwells not in the bare conflict of interpreting options but in the act of discussing and solving it fairly.

What Gadamer describes as an alleged a-subjective hermeneutical self thus shines as doubly imbued with subjectivity, both as subjective and intersubjective (see Geniusas 2012, p. 172). It thus turns out that subjectivity actually endures as one further Cartesian motive that is unavoidable for Gadamerian hermeneutics, for at least three reasons. The first reason has been formulated above: Gadamer interprets the Cartesian ego along the lines of the understanding "I". The second reason is that the interpretative act presents a keen subjective content. An interpretation is made by a subject and takes place between subjects that belong to history. In that regard, Gadamer's rehabilitation of prejudices entails the prejudice of subjectivity. The Cartesian subject discards prejudices in its ideal of perfect knowledge, but, on the contrary, Gadamer claims that:

> To think historically always involves mediating between those ideas and one's own thinking. To try to escape from one's own concepts in interpretation is not only impossible but manifestly absurd. To interpret means precisely to bring one's own preconceptions into play so that the text's meaning can really be made to speak for us (Gadamer 1990, p. 401; Gadamer 2006, p. 398)

The third reason why subjectivity remains pivotal lies in the presence of a hermeneutical "self". Gadamer argues that life, the artwork, a classical work, and language all represent realities that interpret themselves, that is, that possess their own "self". Now such a self remains a kind of subjective device, although expressed in the third person (*Es*); "it" constitutes interpretation. It is instructive that, in his formulation of the climatic concept of game, Gadamer hesitates between a passive or reflexive tense: "It is the game itself that is played or plays itself—there is no subject maintained that plays here (*Es ist das Spiel, das gespielt wird oder sich abspielt—es ist kein Subjekt dabei festgehalten, das da spielt*) (Gadamer 1990, p. 121; Gadamer 2006, p. 104). Yet if the game is played, there is no more subject; but if the game plays itself, there is a playing self that cannot but recover a subjective tone.

Parallel shortcomings return with the apparent "de-subjectivation" of the understanding alluded to above. Gadamer emphasizes that it is "*less to be thought as an action of subjectivity than as* (. . .) *a process of transmission* in which past and present constantly mediate themselves" (Gadamer 1990, p. 295; Gadamer 2006, p. 291). In this quotation, the understanding does not take place as a totally a-subjective item but rather emerges as a process of self-mediation of time that refers to a self: "themselves" (*sich*). Yet how might the past and the present mediate themselves, if not through historical subjects? In the last analysis, Gadamer conceives of language itself as self-presenting (*Sichdarstellen*, Gadamer 1990, p. 512; 2006, p. 490), i.e., presenting itself (itself) through subjects.

To sum up, Gadamer criticizes subjectivity regarding the first person, but he reworks it under the triple form of the understanding "I", the importance of prejudices, and the hermeneutical self as a subject in the third person that cannot exist without subjects in

the first person. This discursive scenario is admirably expressed when he depicts a true conversation, which:

> Is never the one that we wanted to conduct (. . .). The conversation taking its own twists and reaching its own conclusion, may well be conducted in some way, but the partners conversing are far less the leaders of it than the led. No one knows in advance what will "come out" of a conversation. (. . .) [which] has a spirit of its own (Gadamer 1990, p. 387; Gadamer 2006, p. 385)

In short, a genuine conversation needs us, each as an understanding "I", inasmuch as we hermeneutically understand that the conversation takes its own turn as a third-person spiritual subject, which is only expressed by first-person human subjects but which leads the understanding process in his own way.

Of course, the paradox raised concerning subjectivity is connected to the larger issue of objectivity, but I have no place here to address it comprehensively.[1] I moreover cast aside this problem, for my direct concern is Gadamer's hermeneutical approach, which definitely seems to pay a substantial tribute to Cartesian conceptuality.

5. The Gadamerian Controversy over the Cartesian Method

When Gadamer speaks of "method" (as in the title *Truth and Method* for instance), he is not primarily thinking of Descartes, whom he seldom interprets, but of the Neo-Kantians, who associated truth with the methodical science of the *Naturwissenschaften*. In this Gadamer follows Heidegger. My paper intends to contribute specifically to the study of Gadamer's critique of Descartes' method, a topic rarely discussed at length (Fuyarchuck 2017, p. 5; Grondin 2003a, pp. 1–3; Lawn 2006, p. 30). The burden of his critique concerns its application to science (Gadamer 1990, pp. 243, 275–76; Gadamer 2006, pp. 232, 273) and its legacy for contemporary philosophy, in particular Dilthey and Husserl (Gadamer 1990, pp. 260, 264; Gadamer 2006, pp. 247, 250). The task is awkward, for Gadamer never dissects Descartes' method nor addresses its rules and principles. I will thus follow indirect traces of his charge. In his afterword to the third edition of his book, he unexpectedly borrows a Cartesian metaphor to grant that he exaggerated the tension between truth and method:

> Ultimately, as Descartes himself realized, it belongs to the special structure of straightening something crooked that it needs to be bent in the opposite direction. But what was crooked in this case was not so much the methodic trend of the sciences as their reflexive self-consciousness (Gadamer 1993g, p. 453; Gadamer 2006, p. 559).

Accordingly, Gadamer's deprecation of the hermeneutical incapacity of the "methodic trend" or "methodology" (*Methodik*) of modern science as it is inspired by Cartesianism is neither an overall condemnation of science nor of method itself (Gama 2021, p. 25; Grondin 2003a, p. 20; Hoy 1982, p. 105), nor even of Descartes himself. The issue of method thus deserves a full examination.

To begin with, I surmise that there is a meaningful resonance between titles such as *Discourse on the Method* and *Truth and Method*. The question is then the following: does the latter title—which is "ironic" indeed since it claims that truth can no longer "be guaranteed by method" (Hoy 1982, p. 92)—refer to an alternative (*Truth or Method*) or a preference for "truth without method"? (Lawn 2006, p. 59; Niu 2015, p. 139) If the "search for truth" is undoubtedly a Cartesian motive (Descartes 1985), and if Gadamer surely seeks "truth before method" (Grondin 2003b, p. 282), what becomes of method "after" truth? It seems challenging, even for Gadamerian hermeneutics, to lay a claim to truth without any kind of "method". Of course, it shall no longer be based on the Cartesianism of modern science, nor on another sense. In addition, nor shall it attempt a "methodology of the social sciences" (Grondin 2003b, pp. 285, 297).

This aporetic issue of Gadamer's rehabilitation of method has been addressed (Gama 2021; Hoy 1982; Niu 2015), and it has been discussed regarding the work of Paul *Ricœur* (Berner 2019; Schouwey 1988) along with hermeneutics in general (Betti 2001; Ginev 2021; Seebohm 2004). In this paper, I contribute to this debate by reflecting on the Cartesian motive and by introducing unnoticed insights from *Truth and Method*. Generally speaking, I

detect an unresolved discordance in the discourse that Gadamer devotes to method and not only to subjectivity. Instead of an exclusive tension between truth and method (Lawn 2006, p. 60), I identify the presence of two methodical trends, negative and positive.

To begin with, Gadamer rebukes a certain idea of method, and this is the aspect of his work that is noticed most by readers and commentators, perhaps because it is especially noteworthy in the inaugural chapter of the book, entitled *Das Methodenproblem* (Gadamer 1990, p. 9; Gadamer 2006, p. 3). Beginning in the introduction, he bids farewell to method in a categorical way:

> The problem of hermeneutics goes beyond the limits of the concept of method as set by modern science. (. . .) The hermeneutic phenomenon is basically not a problem of method at all. It is not concerned with a method of understanding by means of which texts are subjected to scientific investigation (. . .) such as would satisfy the methodical ideal of science (*Methodenideal*). (. . .) The following investigations (. . .) are concerned to seek the experience of truth that transcends the domain of scientific method (Gadamer 1990, p. 1; Gadamer 2006, pp. xx–xxi)

However, it is clear that Gadamer does not exclude from the outset the idea of method in general, but methodical understanding inasmuch as it is conceived as a scientific method, in the wake of a "methodology" that will seek to rule it technically (Grondin 2003a, p. 19). By no means do I hold that Gadamer was against either science or method per se. I will rather work through three contrasting aspects of Gadamer's specific refusal of scientific method, which are connected to the issues of questioning, event, and passivity.

First, from the point of view of the interpreter, the one who does hermeneutics, Gadamer's refusal of method amounts to promoting an art of questioning. I uncover here his most "Socratic" (and less "Cartesian") formulation of the problem of method:

> Fundamentally the idea of method is limited for knowledge, which has been the starting point for our argument as a whole. There is no such thing as a method of learning to ask questions, of learning to see what is questionable. On the contrary, the example of Socrates teaches that the important thing is the knowledge that one does not know (Gadamer 1990, pp. 371, 359)

Gadamer defends the hermeneutical priority of the question in the perspective of "the art of questioning and seeking truth" in dialogue (Gadamer 1990, p. 372; Gadamer 2006, p. 360). Prima facie, he claims that such an art escapes all forms of methodical and learning attempts; it sounds methodologically and educationally irrelevant. There is surely a problematic claim regarding Socrates' maieutics. Yet this art transparently runs counter to a methodically questioning quest aiming at metaphysical truths, archetypally implemented for the profit of others, by Descartes in the first place, whose method is indirectly touched by Gadamer's critique.

Now, on the one hand, Gadamer does not seem to conceive that the hermeneutical method is out of reach. When he summons the authority of Socrates, he holds that "the idea of method is limited for knowledge", but such a limitation is surely not tantamount to a refusal of method itself. On the other hand, I find passages in *Truth and Method* where Gadamer suggests that there is a kind of hermeneutical learning. The following passage, for example, is very telling:

> A person trying to understand a text is prepared for it to tell him something. That is why a hermeneutically trained consciousness (*geschultes Bewußtsein*) must be, from the start, sensitive to the text's alterity. But this kind of sensitivity involves (. . .) the foregrounding and appropriation of one's own fore-meanings and prejudices (Gadamer 1990, p. 270; Gadamer 2006, p. 268)

What kind of hermeneutical training or schooling (*schulen*) of consciousness is this? From what or whom does such a learning stem? As I will suggest later, it is arguably related to this very notion of consciousness of one's own prejudices that arises here.

I turn now to the second aspect of the refusal of scientific method by Gadamer. From the point of view of what is to be interpreted, and not solely of the interpreter, his relative refusal of method is correlated to his promotion of a hermeneutical event that is out of reach of the subject of methodological knowledge (*Erkennender*). Gadamer puts it this way:

> "Occurrence" means that he is not a knower seeking an object, "discovering" by methodical means what was really meant (. . .). This is only an external aspect of the actual hermeneutical occurrence. It motivates the indispensable methodical discipline one has toward oneself. But the actual occurrence is made possible only because the word that has come down to us as tradition (. . .) really encounters us (Gadamer 1990, p. 465; Gadamer 2006, p. 457)

To put it differently, the hermeneutical "violence" is never on the side of the subject of knowledge who cannot methodically force meaning to happen. Rather, it is released within the hermeneutical event that happens to the interpreter. From that angle, hermeneutics appears eventful and event-making, while not methodic. It is primarily concerned with what happens, whereas a method cannot make things happen unless *precisely* within the Cartesian perspective of the rational ordering of internal and external reality. Albeit implicitly, Descartes' method is hit straight to the heart, and for the second time.

Finally, I now move to the third aspect of Gadamer's refusal of scientific method. Because of such an emphasis on the event that occurs to the subject, it is astonishing to observe that hermeneutics involves a kind of "pathology". I would now like to quote more extensively from a passage mentioned previously:

> Understanding itself is less to be thought as an action of subjectivity than as participating in an event of tradition, a process of transmission in which past and present constantly mediate themselves. This is what must be validated by hermeneutic theory, which is far too dominated by the idea of a procedure, a method (Gadamer 1990, p. 295; Gadamer 2006, p. 291)

Strikingly, Gadamer sets the "methodical activity of the subject" that applies the method in knowing aligned with Cartesianism against "something that the thing itself does and which thought 'suffers'" (Gadamer 1990, p. 478; Gadamer 2006, p. 469), namely an inherent passivity of the hermeneutical self. This pathology seems consistent with his claim, quoted above, that the hermeneutical art of questioning and seeking truth escapes both method and learning.

Besides, such a pathological aspect offers Gadamer the occasion to clarify the debt that his hermeneutics pays to a Hegelian dialectical method rather than to a Cartesian prospective method, despite Gadamer's distance from Hegel (Gjesdal 2009, p. 138ff.). He thus notices "something resembling dialectic in hermeneutical experience: an activity of the thing itself, an action that, unlike the methodology of modern science, is a passion, an understanding, an event that happens to one" (Gadamer 1990, p. 469; Gadamer 2006, p. 460. See 478; Gadamer 1987a, p. 5).

I will return to this essential Hegelian trace later. For the moment, it is sufficient to point out that, once again, such a pathological scheme significantly contrasts with the methodical principles of Descartes himself. Even if Gadamer does not mention this point here, his reader cannot forget that the four principles of the *méthode* imply the activity of the subject (to receive things as true, to divide difficulties, to conduct thoughts orderly, and to number comprehensively). Better yet, the first principle states an overruling of passivity by the activity of the subject: "The first was never to accept anything as true that I did not incontrovertibly know to be so" (*ne recevoir jamais aucune chose pour vraie, que je ne la connusse évidemment être telle*) (Descartes 1996b, p. 18; 2006, p. 17).

However, the interest of the Gadamerian approach is precisely not to distinguish sharply between hermeneutics and method as between passivity and activity. In fact, passivity appears not inherently a-methodical. It more serenely follows Gadamer's general motive of seeking a revival of the Greek method through the speculative method of Hegel. One more confession further accentuates the methodical rooting of his thought:

> Our inquiry started from our dissatisfaction with the modern concept of method. But this dissatisfaction found its most significant philosophical justification in *Hegel's explicit appeal to the Greek concept of method*. He criticizes, as "external reflection", the concept of a method that would occur as an action (*Tun*) alien to the thing. The true method would be a making of the thing itself (*sei das Tun der Sache selbst*; Gadamer 1990, p. 467; Gadamer 2006, p. 459)

I will return to these two last sentences, which have been discussed elsewhere (Gama 2021, 19ff.). What I would like to emphasize is that Gadamer's critique of modern methodical trends, Descartes first but also Kant (Grondin 2003a, p. 30), ends in the rejuvenation of alternative trends within the history of philosophy, not in a complete repudiation of the methodical scheme. As he will make clear in his autobiography, he rather argues against "method fanatics" (Gadamer 1985, p. 177).

For without any method, how might he and others learn, apply, teach, critique, or, in brief, do hermeneutics at all? How might scholars even recognize a "methodological either/or of philosophical hermeneutics" and aim "toward a methodology of critical hermeneutics" (Kögler 1996)? In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer indubitably seeks for truth by freeing himself from the hurdles of a Cartesian-based method. Still, this is not at the cost of totally dismissing the method itself, both for himself and when he reviews the positions of others.

The problematic tension reaches a peak precisely when Gadamer declares his intention "to pursue the development of the hermeneutical method in the modern period" (Gadamer 1990, p. 177; Gadamer 2006, p. 175). Granted, this "hermeneutical method" must be sidestepped insofar it is grounded on a Cartesian-based method, whether epistemological (Diltheyian) or phenomenological (Husserlian): in short, insofar as it "has succeeded in being founded on knowledge" (Grondin 2003a, p. 93). Yet it must also mean something by itself.

For the risk of circularity is patent here and brings to mind cognate Cartesian predicaments. First, how might Gadamer follow a hermeneutical method in the works of previous philosophers if hermeneutics in no way represents a method? Second, how might he already be able to follow a hermeneutical method if such a method must ensue from this review? Third, how might he interpret their works with the aim of conceptualizing interpretation if he does not already possess this very concept? To untangle similar complexities, he surely hangs on to the Heideggerian description of the hermeneutical circle to blur the split between theory and practice and promote a ceaselessly reflexive and expanding mode of understanding (Gadamer 1990, p. 270; Gadamer 2006, p. 268. See 194, 189). But Gadamer's argument, which appears methodologically problematical in a Cartesian context (Grondin 2003a, pp. 22, 82), is hardly compelling enough and urges us to inquire into the way he might himself refer positively to a tentative hermeneutical method.

6. The Conundrum of the Hermeneutical Method

I reckon that these complexities are not unrelated to the fact that, quite unexpectedly, Gadamer also positively hints at the idea of method in *Truth and Method*. I emphasized that his rebuke of method (including that of Descartes) is not necessarily directed against Descartes himself. I argue further that it is not directed against method *stricto sensu*. As a matter of fact, his dissatisfaction concerns "the method's attempt to exercise a monopoly on the notion of truth. This is the modernist Cartesian assumption" (Grondin 2003a, p. 2).

I concur with the idea that Gadamer might allude to a "true method" to seek truth on the dialectical grounds of his critique of Hegel by identifying three principles in the exercise of hermeneutical thinking (Gama 2021, p. 18). I am also in accord with the project of re-apprehending his method as both dialectical and phenomenological (Niu 2015, 178ff.). But I find it necessary to complement these analyses by foregrounding not only Gadamer's debt to Descartes but also his essential reliance on Heidegger regarding the question of method, since it eventually becomes a genuine issue for Gadamer's hermeneutics itself. Due to the lack of space, I will sweep aside notable contributions to the examination of

the chiasm between Cartesianism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics, namely that of J.-L. Marion (Marion 2006), who stands at the point of convergence between Descartes, Heidegger, and Gadamer.

In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer certainly relies on Heidegger's "destructive" method in aesthetics and on the conception of the hermeneutical circle. My point is that he also explicitly lavishes praise on the general methodical approach of his former professor.

First, and negatively, Gadamer denounces those who do not pay sufficient heed to Heidegger's methodical praxis. For example, he deems that the "paraontology" of Oskar Becker and "absolute pointillism" in aesthetics, which stresses that the art work only exists in the lively experienced instant, loses the Heideggerian-spurred "hermeneutical continuity that constitutes our being" (Gadamer 1990, pp. 101–2; Gadamer 2006, pp. 82–83). He regrets that:

> [Becker's] brilliant ideas (. . .) seem to regard the "hermeneutic phenomenology" of Heidegger too much as a thesis regarding the content (*inhaltlich These*) and too little as a methodical one. In its content, this paraontology (. . .) thinking his way through the problems, comes back to the very point which Heidegger had fixed methodically (Gadamer 1990, p. 102; Gadamer 2006, p. 101)

Gadamer's critique of Becker is well documented (Hoy 1982, pp. 103–7). My point here is that Gadamer appears reluctant to reduce Heidegger's methodical contribution to the temporalized praxis of hermeneutics, based on the questioning about being, to a bare aesthetical thesis about being, which unduly promotes singularity against continuity.

Gadamer sketches this stricture of aesthetic consciousness in a footnote, but it is far from being secondary. A few pages later, he moves it to the body of the text and generalizes it:

> Every understanding of time has to achieve [continuity]. Here the misunderstanding of Heidegger's ontological exposition of the time horizon takes its revenge. Instead of holding on to the methodical significance of the existential analytic of *Dasein*, people treat *Dasein*'s existential, historical temporality, determined by care and the movement towards death (. . .) as one among many possible ways of understanding existence (Gadamer 1990, p. 127; Gadamer 2006, p. 120)

For Gadamer, the "methodical significance" (*methodischen Sinn*) of the existential analytic is by no means "methodological", as the English translation runs here, as if Heidegger were proposing a kind of rational methodology based on rules and principles, just like Descartes. However, it remains "methodical" in the way Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, painstakingly implements a hermeneutical and phenomenological praxis of the "radical finitude" of being through his descriptions of care, being-toward-death, and, above all for Gadamer, continuously temporalized understanding.

What is more, Gadamer's inflection on a methodical trend in Heidegger, which deserves a specific examination, imperceptibly leads him to foster a similar trend in hermeneutics in general. This happens when he broadens his critique of aesthetical to historical consciousness and delineates the salient features of a theory of hermeneutical experience. Suggestively enough, I find him later celebrating Heidegger's methodical trend at the level of the genuine hermeneutical understanding that he articulates through his book:

> In order to explain the hermeneutical situation of the question of being in terms of fore-having, foresight, and fore-conception, he [Heidegger] critically tested his question, directed at metaphysics, on important turning points in the history of metaphysics. Here he was basically doing what historical-hermeneutical consciousness requires in every case. An understanding led with methodical consciousness will be concerned not merely to form anticipatory ideas, but to make them conscious, so as to control them and thus acquire correct understanding from the things themselves (Gadamer 1990, p. 274; Gadamer 2006, p. 272)

Interestingly enough, by drawing on the Heideggerian analysis, Gadamer now elaborates on an aspect of the methodical modus operandi of his own hermeneutics. Here he holds that hermeneutics must "acquire a correct understanding from the things themselves", namely through the correct application to a situation, as I will stress later. Yet he is adamant that the acquisition of this understanding, which is the goal of hermeneutics, is invested with a methodical dimension. To understand interpretatively, under the spearhead of methodical consciousness, ends not in fulfilling one's anticipations; it is to make them conscious so as to control them (*bewußt zu machen, um sie zu kontrollieren*).

In the language of Heidegger, it means that the phenomenon of understanding implies a genuine temporalization towards the horizon of the future.[2] By contrast, translated into Gadamer's idiom, understanding amounts to a praxis that must make those anticipations conscious rather than waiting for them to become so and then control them enduringly. In this sense, a correct understanding emerges as an activity not only methodically qualified but also capable of stimulating learning, once again despite Gadamer's disputable view of the Socratic art. The crux of the matter is that such an awareness and mastering activity must manage a rational balance between a subjective element and a pathological element. As suggested above, the hermeneutical process bridges two operations: one that imports an individual's prejudices and another that subjects them to the linguistic context.

Gadamer's conception of "methodological consciousness" is puzzling. It coincides neither with the theoretical consciousness that Descartes describes (Gadamer 1990, pp. 30, 274; Gadamer 2006, pp. 90, 272. Cf. Gadamer 1993c, p. 103) nor with the cognate mode of methodical consciousness that Gadamer discards as well (Grondin 2003a, pp. 23, 31, 59, 70). Besides, it is no longer Heideggerian (Grondin 2003b, p. 292). One might construe such consciousness in a methodological vein:

> Gadamer's concept of hermeneutic awareness is not normative. It does not supply a *method* for understanding, nor does Gadamer claim this function for it. (. . .) Although Gadamer is not promoting any particular method, however, he is certainly promoting a *methodology* and contesting any methods based on unhistorical methodologies. (. . .) As a methodological principle it accounts for the very possibility of becoming aware of, and then suspending to a certain extent, one's own legal or cultural principles (Hoy 1982, p. 105)

Such an awareness ("becoming aware") informs the psychological side of Gadamer's depiction above ("make them conscious"), and such a reduction ("suspending. . .") complements its phenomenological side ("from the things themselves"). Hoy's account hinges on a concept of methodology that is "more abstract and philosophical" than a "method", eminently as "methodological holism" or "individualism". Yet this concept remains insufficiently underpinned (Hoy 1982, pp. 44–45, 102, 168). In addition, I suggested that in *Truth and Method*, and despite the fluctuations in the English translation, Gadamer prefers the terms *Methode* [method] and *methodisch* [methodical] to the ambiguous *Methodik* [methodical trend or methodology] (Gadamer 1990, pp. 1, 24–26, 186–202 and passim; Gadamer 2006, pp. x–xi, 17–18, 182–96), and to *Methodologismus* [methodology] that he mostly uses negatively (Gadamer 1990, pp. 212, 221, 287–90, 480–81; Gadamer 2006, pp. 205, 213, 283–86, 471–72).

My position is that this methodical consciousness represents a conceptual trace to try to describe the methodical trend as it emerges in Gadamer's own work. Once again, the problem is that if he recognizes the necessity of a method, he hardly characterizes it. Revealingly enough, when he addresses the being of writing or textuality (*Schriftlichkeit*), a core hermeneutical issue (Schmidt 2000), he refers in passing to a method but goes no further:

> Writing has the methodical advantage of presenting the hermeneutical problem in all its purity, detached from everything psychological. However, what is from our point of view and for our purpose a methodical advantage is at the same time the expression of a specific weakness. (. . .) Plato said (. . .) that no one could come

> to the aid of the written word if it falls victim to misunderstanding (Gadamer 1990, p. 396; Gadamer 2006, p. 394)

This text figures in the late part of a vast treatise entitled *Truth and Method*, which is usually interpreted as opposing truth to method. It is thus baffling to read Gadamer referring to the idea of a "methodical advantage" (*methodischen Vorzug*) on two occasions. In reality, he already spoke twice of a "methodical priority" (*methodischen Vorrang*) of "metaphorical usage" and "transitory arts" (Gadamer 1990, pp. 108, 142; Gadamer 2006, pp. 103, 133). I thus ask: what is the sense of the word "method"? Nowhere does Gadamer provide explanations about this intriguing methodic character, whereas he condemns the idea of method throughout his book in an epistemological and Cartesian sense. In the passage quoted above, he rather hastily shifts to Plato's analysis of the *Phaedrus* (275e–276b).

One might object that "methodical" mainly counts here for a formal way of speaking. But Gadamer takes the issue of language far too seriously to resort carelessly or randomly to such a term, which is so deeply loaded with meaning in *Truth and Method*. In addition, I underlined the fact that apart from a methodical advantage and priority, he also nominally speaks of a methodical thesis, significance, and consciousness. It is thus impossible to escape the question of what he has in mind when he introduces the term "method" in his philosophical discourse. I will finish my paper by suggesting two elements of reflection.

To begin with, Gadamer's method might take the form of an art (*Kunst*). At the outset of the third part of *Truth and Method*, he thematically restates his whole argument as such:

> To come to an understanding about the subject matter, not to get inside another person and relive his lives experiences. We emphasized that the experience (*Erfahrung*) of meaning that takes place in understanding always includes application. Now we are to note *that this whole process is verbal*. It is not for nothing that the special problematic of understanding and the attempt to master it as an art—the theme of hermeneutics—belongs traditionally to the sphere of grammar and rhetoric. Language is the medium in which substantive understanding and agreement take place between two people (Gadamer 1990, p. 387; Gadamer 2006, pp. 386–87)

The *Thema* of hermeneutics is the attempt to master understanding as an art (*Versuch seiner kunstmäßigen Beherrschung*), which belongs primordially to language. This mastering (and learning) operation harks back to the motive of an understanding led with methodical consciousness that has to control anticipations, and this recalls the dialogical and Socratic "art of questioning and seeking truth". Such an art might be meditated through the lens of the Aristotelian notions of *techne* and *phronesis*, to the extent that it remains a critical art (Hoy 1982, pp. 128–30). However, if it is true that grammar and rhetoric carry their own method (just as philology and philosophy), the question is the following: in what sense can such an art of speaking and writing constitute a method in the narrow sense? And more importantly, how might a similar method avoid the reduction of the *ars interpretandi* to a bare methodology of rules and techniques (Grondin 2003a, pp. 19, 24)? I already reported that Gadamer claims to have long followed a historically "methodological rule" (Gadamer 2000, p. 276), but in what limits?

First, given the content of the critique unleashed by Gadamer in the first part of *Truth and Method*, he cannot intend to abandon such a methodical art to the faculty of judgment, to a special taste, to the gift of genius, or to the transposition into another person's lived experience, as he states in the above quotation. Second, he assuredly does not conceive of such an art technically, as a terminological one, given his reluctance about the technical use of language that he confesses later: "There is no such thing as a purely technical discourse" (*rein terminologisches Sprechen*) (Gadamer 1990, p. 419; Gadamer 2006, p. 415). Third, and more positively, given Gadamer's emphasis on application in the above quotation, the methodic art must be essentially an applied one. What might such an applied art of method be?

This brings me to the second element of reflection about what motivates Gadamer's methodical discourse. He argues that a methodical art of mastering understanding through language might be grasped as the power to bring a text to speech. This argument is in line with his resolution of the problem of the "weakness of all writing" raised by Plato. He considers that this thesis represents an "ironical exaggeration" and promotes "an art of writing that comes to the aid of thought, and it is to this that the art of understanding—which affords the same help to what is written—is allied" (Gadamer 1990, p. 397; Gadamer 2006, p. 394). He argues that both a re-potentialized art of writing and a methodical art of understanding fraternally uphold thought and writing. But what form might such a support take?

As is known, Gadamer endorses a leitmotiv by Dilthey: "Everything is text" (Gadamer 1990, p. 245; Gadamer 2006, p. 234). He props up the argument by stating that a genuine hermeneutical experience amounts to bringing the text to speech correctly, i.e., within a context of application:

> The text should come [be made] to speak through interpretation (*soll. . . zum Sprechen kommen*). But no text and no book speaks if it does not speak a language that reaches the other person. Thus interpretation must find the right language if it really wants to bring the text to speech [to make the text speak] (*zur Sprache bringen will*). There cannot, therefore, be any single interpretation that is correct "in itself" (. . .) Every interpretation has to adapt itself to the hermeneutical situation to which it belongs (Gadamer 1990, p. 401; Gadamer 2006, p. 398)

Accordingly, the methodical art of understanding should reside in the following task: having to make a text come to speak or having to bring it to speech through an interpretation correctly applied to a context. This weight put on application respects the intimate structure of Gadamer's hermeneutics (Hoy 1982, p. 54; Niu 2015, p. 62). In this poetic sense, there is a subject of understanding that is able to produce meaning according to the context. It does not coincide with the subject of knowledge analyzed earlier, which cannot force meaning to happen, such as an event, through his or her method.

Gadamer thus refers to a distinctive methodical-hermeneutical orchestration of the text. A method is not limited to the question "how", as when it "involves discussion of how to read a book or debate about the merit of different "approaches", by contradistinction to a further abstract and philosophical methodology (Hoy 1982, p. 102). I argue that a method consists in offering the keys in order to make something, or that it teaches someone how to make what she wants to make. This is why the notion of making prevails here. I find it enlightening to endorse the reference to making that is made in the English translation quoted above (the text is made to speak/to make the text speak) and in the corresponding French translation (*faire parler le texte*) (Gadamer 1996, p. 419). Both translations suggestively insist on this idea of making, although it does not figure in the original.

The gist of Gadamer's argument is that an interpretation has to make the text speak. This idea is underpinned by his meditation of enlightenment, as reflected at the end of *Truth and Method*, which is based on a "speculative truth of language" (Grondin 2003a, p. 146). In other words, beyond the "clear unambiguity of the intended meaning" (Gadamer 1990, p. 398; Gadamer 2006, p. 395), hermeneutics requires an illumination: "All interpretation is highlighting" (*Überhellung*)" (Gadamer 1990, p. 404; Gadamer 2006, p. 410). Gadamer then suggests a parallel between light and language and declares the following: "The light that lets everything emerge in such a way that it is clear and comprehensible in itself is the light of the word" (Gadamer 1990, p. 487; Gadamer 2006, p. 478). In terms of analogy, his hermeneutics is making a text speak as the word lets the world be illuminated.

Overall, the Gadamerian project thus shines as a hermeneutics of facticity but also as a functional hermeneutics that linguistically implements the concept of making.[3] One might object that, in the quotation above, he does not refer to making. Nevertheless, I indicated that he speaks of a methodical act of making anticipations conscious (*bewußt zu machen*), and he also holds that the interpretation makes expressive the implications of a text's meaning into language (*ausdrücklich macht*) (Gadamer 1990, p. 477; Gadamer 2006,

p. 468). Therefore, the notion of making appears by no means unfitted to a hermeneutical approach.

Through this focus on the scheme of linguistic making, I concur with the argument that, for Gadamer's hermeneutical true method, the "making of the things themselves" (*hacer de las cosas mismas*) is nothing else than the "finite making of language as permanent opening of meaning" (*hacer finito del lenguaje como apertura permanente del sentido*) (Gama 2021, p. 25). I would add that the issue of phenomenological praxis has strong implications for the aforementioned crucial methodical issue of personal learning. Gadamer actually celebrates the experienced person who is positively able to "make new experiences" and "learn" from them (*neue Erfahrungen zu machen und aus Erfahrungen zu lernen*) (Gadamer 1990, p. 361; Gadamer 2006, p. 350), inasmuch as they are creative negative experiences (Gadamer 1990, p. 359; Gadamer 2006, p. 347). At any rate, if Gadamer occasionally confuses the notions of making and action (Gadamer 1990, pp. 319–20; Gadamer 2006, pp. 312–13), I find him able to distinguish "pure making" (*bloßes Tun*) from "finalized action" (*zweckvolles Handeln*) (Gadamer 1990, p. 450; Gadamer 2006, p. 443). It remains true that he does not address this phenomenon of making itself, as many philosophers do not, except Hegel, perhaps Merleau-Ponty (2022a, 70 ff.; 2022b, pp. 470, 753).

Be that as it may, the enigma returns: how might a text come to speak, be brought to speak—in short, be made to speak, concretely, and through what methodical procedures? From a theoretical standpoint, Gadamer holds that the aesthetic consciousness of the interpreter must rehabilitate allegorical discourse against symbolism (Gadamer 1990, p. 76; Gadamer 2006, p. 61). He adds that historical and linguistic consciousness must promote a metaphorical discourse (methodically prior, as mentioned previously) against a theory of logic that is constructed as alien to language (Gadamer 1990, p. 433; Gadamer 2006, p. 428). But how are these new discourses methodically possible, and how are they implemented?

This is certainly not through a comparative method for Gadamer. He resolutely states that hermeneutical consciousness is irreducible to comparison (Gadamer 1990, pp. 237, 367; Gadamer 2006, pp. 227, 355), insofar as the act of comparison aims at "what is common" (*das Gemeinsame*) (Gadamer 1990, p. 193; Gadamer 2006, p. 189) and yearns for a "methodical certitude of oneself" (Gadamer 1990, p. 367; Gadamer 2006, p. 355). Incidentally, it is no coincidence if comparison is rather methodically accredited in Cartesianism, by Descartes (Descartes 1996c, pp. 36, 183) and Leibniz (Dalissier 2023, p. 96).

Yet new queries abound around what appears as a conundrum at the heart of the Gadamerian hermeneutical method. For example, might we implement a methodical art distinct from comparison? In what sense might it be qualified as critical? Might it be based on the vital mode of certitude and no longer on the Cartesian one? It is plain that, at this theoretical level, there are plenty of problems and possibly even contradictions. Just to mention comparison, in *Truth and Method*, Gadamer eventually confesses that his own hermeneutical approach implies a "genial and inventive seeking out of similarities (*Gemeinsamkeiten*) by means of which it is possible to order things" through the medium of language (Gadamer 1990, p. 436; Gadamer 2006, p. 431). Nevertheless, who would not have noticed the fact that this proposal involves two concepts that he denounced throughout the book, namely, genius and comparison (Gadamer 1990, p. 193; Gadamer 2006, p. 189)?

Indisputably, Gadamer envisions the theoretical frame, which is necessary to address all these questions, all initiated by his vibrant discussion of Descartes. He nonetheless seems to leave us at the threshold of the "problem of method" he began with.

7. Conclusion: A Cartesian Resilience to Hermeneutics

It is thus no coincidence if Gadamer was born exactly 250 years after the death of Descartes (Grondin 2003a, p. 1; 2003b, p. 12). Such an event might represent one more variation on the theme of the philosophical parricide that I will explore elsewhere, yet only to the extent that the shadow of Descartes continues to haunt hermeneutics.

One might be tempted to speak of Gadamer's "Anti-Cartesianism". However, this is an expression that has to be put in brackets, for he vehemently criticizes Cartesian concepts

(doubt, certitude, subjectivity, foundationalism) from the angle of historicity, life, and language. Still, he finds himself entangled in a process of reinvestment of those conceptions in a hermeneutical perspective, however different it might be from the Cartesian one. In that regard, the concept of method turns out to be unavoidable within Gadamer's meditation. In addition, in this sense, it is interesting that Cartesianism paves the way towards the revelation of some major problems in his philosophical hermeneutics. In this perspective, my paper contributes to the discussion about the way he himself might "stand within the Cartesian tradition", to return to the motif of the introduction, and pays a conceptual (although not methodical) debt to it.

Within the limits of the present paper, it was not possible to engage systematically with all Descartes's arguments. Consequently, it might leave the impression that "Cartesianism" unfairly functions as a specter that hovers over any reference to subjectivity or method. My main point, though, was to identify a resilience of Cartesianism in the face of Gadamerian hermeneutics. In closing, this strategy also encourages me to ask a cognate question that might do more justice to Descartes: is there not something like an anti-hermeneutical trend in his work in the first place? Gadamer claims the following: "Descartes himself, this great and passionate advocate of method and certitude, is in all his writings a writer, who uses the means of rhetoric in a considerable way" (Gadamer 1993e, p. 237). But he refers here to Gouhier (1955), who also holds that Descartes promotes a "philosophy without rhetoric" as such. Might we add "without hermeneutics"? In the *Discourse on the Method*, Descartes undermines the fundamentals of a hermeneutical position, such as the primacy of language and dialogue. He discards language by notoriously confessing his "dislike" for writing books and stresses the vanity of most objections made by others as predictable and incommensurate with self-critique (Descartes 2006, pp. 50, 56). In short, the Cartesian ego, as a sovereign authority, steps along the self-critical path towards truth. It has little to learn from others, and this self-reliance is not a guarantee of its intellectual supremacy but preferably of its emblematic methodical rigor and independence: "We cannot so well grasp something and make it our own when we learn it from someone else as when we discover it ourselves" (Descartes 2006, p. 56).

One will object that apologetics is not hermeneutics, but, beyond such mistrust of a certain conception of language and otherness, it is well-known that Descartes distrusts the very notion of interpretation itself as a problem rather than a resource and frequently confesses his fear of being wrongly interpreted. In that regard, and in an exemplary fashion, on 28 October 1640 he wrote the following to Mersenne about his theory of light: "It is no wonder that those who have heard only a few words of my thoughts concerning this subject interpret them wrongly and unearth in them several incomprehensible things" (Descartes 1996a, pp. 214–15).

So if it is true that there might have been anticipations of hermeneutics in the work of other authors such as Augustine (Arthos 2009, p. 98), and if it is true that Descartes represents one of the "great classics of thought" (Gadamer 1987d, p. 271), inasmuch as his philosophy offers infinite resources to interpretation, Descartes himself does not sound very loquacious about the very concept of interpretation, irrespective of the fate of his other concepts and his method.

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Notes

[1] My query is: how can Gadamer continually impugn scientific objectivity, which is based on the Cartesian method (Gadamer 1990, pp. 74, 246, 465; Gadamer 2006, pp. 59, 234, 457), while endeavoring to build a hermeneutics that has to be objective in some sense? Hermeneutics must be objective if it cannot be left to the caprice of the subject and if it interprets according to a "claim to

truth" (*Wahrheitanspruch*) (Gadamer 1990, p. 401; Gadamer 2006, p. 399). But what might such hermeneutical objectivity be, what might its limits be (Hoy 1982, p. 48), and how might it differ from a phenomenological conception of intersubjectivity? (Gadamer 2000; Dalissier 2020). Besides, is not Gadamer urging us to supersede the subjective-objective dualism (Gadamer 1990, pp. 296, 465; Gadamer 2006, pp. 290, 457), which is actually wedded to the opposition that Descartes establishes between *res cogitans* and *extensa*? (Gadamer 1993f, p. 410; Gadamer 2006, p. 526)

[2] On the question of the horizon in Husserl, Heidegger, and Gadamer, see (Geniusas 2012, pp. 235–36, passim).

[3] I surmise that it is inspired both by Aristotle's theory of practical knowledge that Gadamer explores in his *Habilitationsschrift* (Grondin 2003b, pp. 135–36) and by the theory of phronesis that he displays in *Truth and Method* (Hoy 1982, p. 55). I also perceive a phenomenological character in the way a text must intentionally come to, be brought to, or be made to speak, but he does not develop it.

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