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**Conceptual
Deep Structures
and
the Hermeneutics
of
Hans-Georg Gadamer**

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**A thesis submitted to meet the requirements for the degree of Magister
Artium in the Faculty of Humanities (Department of Philosophy) of the
University of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein.**

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Date: August 2000**

Universiteit van die
Oranje-Vrystaat
BLOEMFONTEIN

31 MAY 2001

UOVS SASOL BIBLIOTEEK

To my loving mother

To my caring sister

and

To my absent father

Acknowledgments

Prof. Johann "Juan" Visagie. Thank you for undertaking the hard task of training me as a rigorous academic and venturing philosopher. I appreciate your almost military discipline when it comes to writing master's thesis. I also treasure your constant enthusiasm and support regarding "the project". You taught me a valuable methodology. Thank you as well for every invitation for coffee and cake at the nursery.

Prof. Danie "Pancho" Strauss. Thanks from the bottom of my heart for giving me the opportunity to experience such an awesome academic adventure; these two years and seven months in Bloemfontein were not just about books, assignments, exams, and lectures, but a journey. No doubt; it has been the best time in my life!

My mother and my sister. There is always gratitude for my Heavenly Father for giving me such a loving mother and such a caring sister. Your support in prayer and in numerous ways to my studies and projects has been indispensable in the achievement of my goals. I love you. It brings such a lot of joy to my heart to share with you what my Heavenly Father is doing in every stage of my life. Dear mother: my sister and I will always treasure your great effort in bringing us up in God's fear and in giving us the best education, without which we would never be where we are now. Te amo!

John Kennington and Adolfo García de la Sienna. Thank you for introducing me to Reformational theology and philosophy. Your teaching and friendship gave me the inspiration regarding the construction of my place in the world and sketched my life-project: to become a truly Christian scholar and to serve the Kingdom of God in the academic field.

Thanks a million to the Department of Philosophy of the U.O.V.S for moral and material support: COFFEE, computer, CD-player, copies, etc. (The office was actually my "woonstel"!). Ek sal dit altyd waardeer.

Joey "Juanita" van Bosch. Thanks for your smile and for always being willing to listen to me when I needed some advice. Thanks for sharing with me your amazing collection of beautiful music and books. I will miss our ever-lasting coffee breaks!

JC "Boetie/ Baco" van der Merwe. It was great to work together with another young philosopher. I wish you good luck with your future plans: doctor's degree and your career as a philosophy consultant and academic. Thanks you for your moral support. I enjoyed staying in your house, where I always felt at home. May Michael Schumacher see better days!

Reinier and Liesl Bronn. Thanks a million for the bounty of your kindness for welcoming me into your home for a whole year and for sharing your exciting lives with me. I treasure your friendship very much! Reinier: You will always be my best advanced student of my Spanish courses.

Nelis "Carlos", Oom Izak "Tio" and Tannie Martie "Tia" Grobler. How could I thank you for your constant care? Thank you for opening your home and heart. I always felt welcome at your house where I could rest for a while. I loved to see the sunset from your house.

All my friends (Gerhard, Werner, Tania, Heinrich "Quique", Adré "Adriana", Gerrit "Gerardo", Joleen "Juanita", Ana Marie "Gemela", Michelle "Hermana", Vlam "Fuego", Miemie, Sandra, Desirée, the Garzouzie, Herman, etc.) and acquaintances in Bloemfontein, who cared for me in many different ways, making me feel at home and never like a foreigner. Thank you for your constant invitations lunch and dinner, visits to farms and other incredible places in this country of adventure, and for helping me learn my fifth language: Afrikaans! Ek is Frikkie Koekemoer, die Meksikaanse Boer!

The "workoholic and owl club": Wilfred Greyling (president), Susan Brokensha (secretary), Arles van Wyk (treasurer). Thank you very much for your technical advice and moral support. I will always remember our topsy-turvy discussions we held when none of us had any wit and neuron left because of all our workloads. Thank you Susan for "blitz" proof-reading my last chapter, conclusions, introduction, etc. You are an "angel".

A word of thanks to all my friends in Mexico, in other countries, at Iglesia Nacional Presbiteriana "Camino, Verdad y Vida" and at "Saint John's" Presbyterian Church who prayed for me and for my studies.

The staff working at the "SASOL Biblioteek" library, the staff at the administration (cashiers, post office, accommodation, finances, international office, etc), the staff at the "Geesteswetenskap Fakulteit" and the staff at the "eetsaal" SK5 and at the KAF. Thank you for the help and attention you always gave me with a smile.

To the VCHO for the donation you made to me. Hartelik dankie!

Prof. Dirk van den Berg. Thank you for supplying me with important articles, suggesting relevant books and for the interesting talks we had.

To George Sabbagha and Pierre Luttig for having kindly proof-read my thesis.

To Prof. Lubbe, Prof. van Coller, Annette de Wet, and Francesco for having checked the translation of the quotations in Dutch.

My Heavenly Father. You are loving, faithful and amazing and I praise your Name! I dedicate to you this thesis and my whole career as a scholar.

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explain the notion of conceptual deep structures as a philosophical construct and to investigate such structures in the hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer. Conceptual deep structures involve: **key-conceptualizations** of a philosophical nature (such as the belief that all knowledge is wholly culturally determined); **root metaphors** determining the content of a specific philosophical discourse (such as viewing culture as a kind of organism); and **determining ideological paradigms** (such as positivism or post-modernism). The research will attempt to investigate the role of these factors in the thought of Gadamer – something which has never been attempted in this form before. It is also important to note that a specific analytical methodology is at stake here, which may eventually be implemented to determine the ground structure of other philosophical discourses.

Although many studies of Gadamer's thought (Gadamer is a major hermeneutic theorist of the previous century) have been undertaken, this particular analysis will achieve a unique philosophical perspective on the determining factor of his thought. In the process, important modifications to two other philosophical theories of conceptual deep structures, namely those of Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven, will be motivated. These latter theories are influential in the circles of Christian philosophy across the world.

The central hypothesis of the research is that it will be possible to explain the hermeneutics of Gadamer as deriving from certain determining factors which one can assume to be of an a priori nature (e.g. the guiding role that metaphors have been shown to play in concepts and theories). The methodology implemented here has been used successfully to analyse the thought of other philosophers, and it seemed that fruitful results in the case of Gadamer were also possible. The findings of this research may affirm some interpretations of Gadamer's thought, while others may become suspect. More importantly, a new analytical tool in philosophical interpretation (the elucidation of conceptual deep structures) will be tested and in the process further refined.

Introduction

This study is essentially a demonstration of how the analysis of the conceptual deep structures can aid us in understanding philosophical discourse. I shall start by searching for the most basic formula, which underscores the rest of the propositions and statements of a given discourse – in this case, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. I will suggest a couple of formulas and select the one, which, in my view, constitutes the best hypothesis. Then I shall explore the network of intertwined metaphors that pervaded this particular discourse. Conceptual relations captured by the key-formulas are deepened by their dynamic transposition into a system of metaphors. Finally, I shall devote the last part to an analysis of the ideological direction, which any philosophical thought can take at a theoretical level.

In sum, the analysis will demonstrate the nature of discourse in terms of the identification, distinction and interrelation of concepts and metaphors, as well as the theoretical direction the discourse takes. The ideological content of the discourse consists not in the *structure* itself, but in the *direction* to which the text points.

The ensuing study aims at elucidating the probable outcomes of a virtual dialogue between Reformational philosophers and Hans-Georg Gadamer. I believe that the textual analysis of the conceptual deep structures illuminates the perspective and insights of each participant in the dialogue. Hence, the dialogue, which can become a struggle, promises to be more fruitful and even-handed.

Here is a brief survey of the purpose and content of every chapter.

Chapter one is an overview of the main insights of Reformational philosophy, which in this study have been modified in the form of a methodology for discourse analysis. These insights constitute as well the framework within which I shall assess the claims of philosophical hermeneutics. Special attention has been paid to the notions of ground-idea, ground-motive (Dooyeweerd), time-stream and type (Vollenhoven).

Chapter two is concerned with a thorough explanation of the notion of conceptual deep structures. I shall deal with the nature of a concept in terms of justifying its role in textual analysis. The need for such discussion lies in the fact that post-structuralism has ruled out any formal-conceptual study of a text in the name of a play of signs. Therefore I shall broach the interrelation of concept and metaphor in terms of the heuristic value that metaphor theory has for the theoretical enterprise of science and philosophy. Finally, I shall specify the term ideology in the way it will be applied in this textual analysis: the ideology analysis of a text refers to the conceptual tensions that the phenomenon of *conceptual absolutisation* engenders, within a specific tradition, framework or paradigm.

Chapter three is an overview of the main concepts of philosophical hermeneutics. These have been selected as concepts according to the criteria given in the previous chapter.

Chapter four constitutes the analysis of the key-formula based on selected texts. The quotations are samples of Gadamerian discourse which back up the eventual conclusions. Most of the quotations come from Gadamer's main work *Wahrheit und Methode* and also *Kleine Schriften I*. Several formulas are proposed in my analysis in order to elucidate the basic conceptual relations sustaining the text. Each one is assessed in order to decide which represents the best description of the deepest conceptual structure of Gadamer's philosophical discourse.

Chapter five focuses on the main metaphors of philosophical hermeneutics. Their classification as metaphors again follows certain basic criteria outlined in chapter two.

Chapter six, the final chapter, will present philosophical hermeneutics as a sharp criticism of the ideology of science and the monopoly of conceptual knowledge. At the same time it will criticise hermeneutics as being a kind of ideology itself. It will also link philosophical hermeneutics to a specific tradition within the history of philosophy by pointing out the connections with neighboring philosophical discourses, which in fact exerted a definite influence on Gadamer's thought.

The present study starts off by proposing a hypothesis which is later confirmed in relation to the texts analysed. There is a declared methodology to be followed, not rigidly, but with appropriate room for intuition and flexibility. The methodology should thus be understood in terms of guidelines, which, however, provide the analysis with a certain structure and direction. Against this background, my experience of some of the secondary literature which I consulted was disappointing; for the promised results to my mind are never actually attained. Instead, in some texts, the hypothesis is merely restated and rephrased in different ways which are never really tested.

Finally, I should remark on the literature featured in this study. The knowledgeable reader will see that I have by no means made exhaustive reference to Gadamer's very extensive writings. For my purposes this is not necessary for two reasons: firstly, Gadamer's basic philosophical insights return uncompromised in most of his writings, though in different contexts. Secondly, as is the case in generative linguistics for example, my methodological concern is with depth of analysis, rather than a comprehensive coverage of *data*. To this end I selected material from Gadamer's oeuvre that seemed to me most suited to the kind of analysis I have in mind.

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Part 1:

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEORY OF CONCEPTUAL DEEP STRUCTURES

CHAPTER 1

REFORMATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND CONCEPTUAL DEEP STRUCTURES

1. Introduction

Herman Dooyeweerd was quite right to believe that no philosophy, including his own Reformational philosophy, prospers in isolation. His main work is a very concrete example of the kind of dialogue philosophers must engage in, in order to develop their ideas. In other words, they cannot do so in a vacuum. Dooyeweerd was not only certain about his own position, but he also thoroughly knew the stances of the others. Therefore, he was able to explain his own conceptual system in the light of this dialogue, of which nevertheless, he also made significant criticisms. It is appropriate to invite Dooyeweerd and his co-worker Vollenhoven to converse, as it were, with the hermeneutic philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, who also believes in this dialogical approach which is necessary to reach a better understanding of any issue whatsoever.

In this study I intend to offer some of the probable outcomes of such an imaginary dialogue which embodies of the main ideas of both traditions, the common ground they agree upon, and even-handed criticisms in the sense of pointing out fruitful insights as well as problematic ideas. The latter can be regarded as tensions or inconsistencies in a given philosophical thought.

The recognition of frameworks or paradigms as the conceptual "deep structures" shaping any philosophy, is common ground for both the above philosophical viewpoints. Dooyeweerd calls them ground-ideas and ground-motives, Vollenhoven calls them types and time-streams, and Gadamer calls them prejudices. The conceptual deep structures, to which I refer in this study, are akin to them. It is precisely in this matter where the one joins the other in dismantling the dogma or prejudice of positivistic theoretical thought. For Reformational philosophy, these conceptual deep structures are rooted in a religious dimension, which constitutes the transcendent background both to philosophy and the special sciences. Gadamer, on the other hand, is concerned with the historicity and

linguisticity of rationality, which indicates the historical and lingual nature of the paradigms governing scientific thought.

The relevance of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is evident in our present age where many if not most philosophers are concerned with the problem of language. This hermeneutics is the thorough elaboration of Heidegger's ontological idea of language. Gadamer developed it in order to explain the event of understanding. At the same time he also paid attention to the ineluctable issue of the historicity of reason which plays a central part in the structure of the event of understanding. For that matter, Gadamer stresses the role of tradition and prejudices in the constitution of the event of understanding, which takes place within the boundaries of language. Therefore, philosophical hermeneutics bears heavily on the nature of what I understand as conceptual deep structures, as these are also mediated by language ¹. In addition, the analysis of conceptual deep structures implies in fact a hermeneutical task with specific goals, which I will discuss at a later stage ².

A very important aim of this study is to try to establish in what ways Reformational philosophy can rectify some conceptual mistakes, and also benefit from the insights hermeneutics brings forth. In other words, this investigation hopes to make a contribution as to how to refine hermeneutically the ways in which Reformational philosophy has practised immanent and transcendental criticism. The analysis of conceptual deep structures is a proposal for such a refinement. In addition, it should deepen our knowledge of the structure of the event of understanding, which, in Gadamer's theory, is intrinsically related to the lingual aspect of reality. To this end I would like to explore the conceptual deep structures in Gadamer's thought.

In closing these introductory remarks, a word about the resistance that the very idea of conceptual deep structures may encounter. Postmodernists like Derrida, for example, will never speak of conceptual deep structures upon which a discourse is built. Conversely, when he sets out to "deconstruct" a discourse, he begins by looking for fundamental statements, which claim a certain fixed order of truth. His kind of analysis looks for

tensions within the text, where concepts are substituted by *signifiers* which cause instability at the textual level. Deconstruction rules out any relatively fixed *signified*, which the term concept ordinarily entails. I believe, however, that there are certain claims made by the text, based upon a conceptual structure, which guarantee the stability of the text. Textual analysis, as I understand it, has to recognize continuity in the midst of dialogical and conflicting interpretations which are, nevertheless, based upon the same text whose structures must remain relatively constant. My own conviction is that there are structural laws, which secure the existence of texts. I am aware this is an open invitation for deconstructionists to get to work to deconstruct the present analysis. Yet, to my mind, every such attempt at deconstructing itself presupposes the structural laws referred to³.

Now let me summarise briefly the origin and purposes of the philosophical tradition in which my own work is situated, namely Reformational philosophy.

2. A brief historical account of the tradition of Reformational philosophy

2.1 Kuyper, Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven

In the 19th century Abraham Kuyper, a prominent Dutch statesman, started a cultural reformation based upon Calvinism, which he saw as a world-view and not just as theology. God's sovereignty over the whole of creation, was the cornerstone of his program, which later became known as neo-Calvinism. Its motto at that time was "sphere sovereignty" in relation to the particular structure of each social institution: meaning that each social form of life received its own law from God, and was not to be subordinated to another institution. This was a powerful argument for the inner limitations of state and church. The founding of the Free University of Amsterdam was a concrete result of this program, where scholarship too, just as any other cultural activity, had to undergo an internal and radical reformation (Wolters 1985a: 6-7).

Herman Dooyeweerd studied at the Free University and later became a professor in the law faculty of his *alma mater*. He took on the task of reformulating the neo-Calvinistic

ideas, which shaped his world-view, into an encyclopedic system of thought under the banner of what he came to call the biblical ground-motive of creation, man's fall into sin and redemption. His philosophic system is known as the *philosophy of the cosmonomic idea*.

Vollenhoven was a professor in philosophy at the Free University in Amsterdam from 1926 to 1963. He was the only lecturer in philosophy until 1948 (Bril 1986: 6). Although his academic domains were systematic philosophy, logic and the history of philosophy, it is the latter that became his special field of interest. His dissertation on the principles of logic became his exposé on the history of philosophy. The elaboration of the so-called problem-historical method was his main contribution to Reformational philosophy.

2.2 God's law as the fundamental topic of the philosophy of the cosmonomic idea

The Calvinistic emphasis on God's sovereignty over creation is explained by Dooyeweerd in terms of God's law for it. The identity and purpose of everything created remains bound to the decreed laws, which are not obliterated nor altered by man's fall into sin. Creation is subject to God's law-word and under God's preserving grace, which upholds it. Bavinck, an important Reformational Dutch theologian, reformulated the scholastic motto "grace perfects nature" to "grace restores nature" (Wolters 1985a: 4). He naturally referred to the redeeming work of Jesus Christ in this world broken by sin. Creation and salvation do not hold opposing positions, but the gospel re-directs the whole of creation to God's original purpose for it.

I would like to comment briefly on the themes of creational laws and creational diversity as the two themes which give Reformational philosophy such a unique stamp. In the first place, to speak of creation is to start off with an ontic given. It is one of the fundamental truths and *confessions* shared in Reformational philosophy or, in Gadamer's words, one of the most basic *prejudices* of this tradition ⁴. Secondly, creation implies the ordering effect God's word has. God is sovereign and everything is subject to his creational laws, which can also be termed as his law-word. Thereby everything in creation gets its

identity. In order to function properly, everything must conform to the given laws. Creation is defined by the laws, which means that reality is composed of laws and of the subjects placed under them. Redemption in Christ means re-creation, whereby creation is enabled to fulfil its original purpose according to the laws set by God. Thirdly, Dooyeweerd thought of creation as meaning. This term means to capture its dependent and referential character. To be created denies the possibility of self-sufficiency, implying that creation cannot help but to refer to its Origin.

Conversely, diversity in creation cannot be explained in terms of historical processes or evolutionism, which implies an ever-changing state of affairs in which everything becomes a wholly different thing at every stage. As said, creational laws secure the ontic structures from which everything draws its identity. Whereas Kuyper coined the term "sphere sovereignty" to explain the singularity of the different social institutions and to argue against the interference of state and church in the other social institutions, Dooyeweerd, in turn, used it to explain creational diversity. The diversity in creation is an ontic given secured by creational laws. This is acknowledged in the principle of ontological irreducibility.

Neo-Calvinism, as understood by Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven, restricts philosophy to earthly affairs. This interest in earthly affairs is an outstanding feature as it grounds all the spheres of our life in the Christian ground-motive, in the grasp of which Reformational philosophy claims to give us a systematically integral view of our world and ourselves.

Our present reality is understood in terms of order and structures to which everything is subject. If this is the case, then it is possible to speak of the structure of understanding. In my opinion, Gadamer's hermeneutical insights shed light on this structure. This is the reason for initiating and sustaining a dialogue between Reformational and hermeneutical philosophy.

2.3 Dooyeweerd's academic background: philosophies in dialogue and in conflict

Dooyeweerd's philosophical training brought him into contact with two predominant German schools, namely, neo-Kantianism and Husserlian phenomenology (Wolters 1985a: 10). Though initially influenced by these traditions, he later became sharply critical of them, while seeking to make this critique as communicative as possible. Dooyeweerd demonstrates that in fact no philosophy prospers in isolation, but needs to be in dialogue with other lines of thought, any of which will have something relevant to say, that is, they all have something to contribute to the ongoing philosophical discussion. Dooyeweerd tends to be sceptical of the truth-moment idea, in other words, for him so-called elements of truth will ultimately be perverted within the immanence-framework in which they are conceptualized. By this token Christian philosophy cannot stand aloof from dialogue with other traditions, although they are contrary to its central intention. Dooyeweerd re-worked the conceptual tools he drew from both of the above traditions, as he was busy elaborating his critique of the dogmatic autonomy of theoretical thought to which both of them subscribed. Thus, although he borrowed concepts from other traditions, he reformed them and opposed those elements which run contrary to his conception of the biblical ground-motive.

The most fundamental neo-Kantian dogma or prejudice is the key-role the so-called transcendental logical ego plays in constituting the world as it falls into its horizon of experience. It is, in fact, a kind of demiurge that shapes the world. In other words, subjectivity, understood in this way, grounds science and scholarly activity.

- Thus for example, from the standpoint of the neo-Kantian of the Marburg School, there is no sense in inquiring after the origin of transcendental-logical meaning, in which this philosopher supposes he can understand the whole of cosmic reality. According to him, the very *origin* of our knowledge world is transcendental-logical in nature. Thus reality derives all its possible meaning from transcendental-logical thought! (Dooyeweerd 1969 I:10).

Terms such as 'transcendental', 'a priori', 'begründen' were fundamental to the Kantian lexicon (Wolters 1985a: 10). They were invoked to explain the validity of our knowledge of the world. This validity rests ultimately upon human experience, which constitutes our world by means of certain a priori conditions underscoring our experience. This approach had to be confronted by all who were interested in the foundations of methodology and metaphysics. In his reworking of the conceptual tools of a transcendental method, Dooyeweerd substituted the transcendental logical ego with a religious ego, which can be metaphorically referred to as the heart (Wolters 1985a: 12).

Dooyeweerd revised the idea of the a priori condition, in order to refer to the horizon of creational laws, which make human experience possible. It means that these a priori conditions are not the work of any transcendental logical ego, but are ontic givens ⁵. Other neo-Kantian ideas he borrowed are the distinction of concept and idea, the definition of philosophy as an encyclopaedia, and the distinction between laws and norms (Wolters 1985a: 12).

According to Wolters (1985a: 12-14), the two main phenomenologist conceptual tools Dooyeweerd borrowed are the idea of the relative independent reality of objects, and a broader definition of experience which meant for Husserl more than the psychological aspect encompassing, for example, values. Both conceptual tools are related in the intentionality with which we experience objects. That experience was "intentional" meant that it was directed towards the object as the phenomenologist endeavored to grasp its essence intuitively. In order to do this he had to "bracket" reality. The idea of intentional objects leads to the necessary delimitation of each mode of existence from the rest. Husserl wanted to delimit the logical aspect from any psychologism. Notwithstanding, for Husserl the reality of the object still remains grounded in the activity of a transcendental logical ego as it tries to grasp by intuition the essence or "Wesenschau" of the "intended" object ⁶. Dooyeweerd's use of terms like epoché and "intentional" are dependent on Husserl, though he puts these terms to a different use. Dooyeweerd's belief in intuition as an immediate way of grasping the essences of meaning is also related to Husserlian ideas.

Hartmann and Heidegger are two influential thinkers who also left their stamp on Dooyeweerd. On the one hand, it seems as if he borrowed his idea of cosmic time from Heidegger. For Dooyeweerd time binds all the aspects of our experience. It serves as an ontological all-encompassing principle. On the other hand, although he denies it, he was evidently inspired by Hartmann's ontological hierarchy, which resembles the order and interconnections of what Dooyeweerd calls the modal aspects of reality (Wolters 1985a: 14).

Ultimately, Dooyeweerd's main contribution was to pay attention to the role of religion as a necessary factor - a conceptual deep structure - for philosophical thought. According to him our ego is a not logical, historical, psychological, etc. given, but a religious one. Our ultimate convictions which pull us through in life are essentially religious in nature. This gives him a very special place among the philosophers of the 20th century.

In the following sections, I shall explain in more detail the nature of this particular conceptual deep structure (namely the so-called religious ground-motive) as envisioned by Dooyeweerd, and also note the link to another conceptual deep structure, the so-called ground-idea.

3. Reformational philosophy and the nature of conceptual deep structures

In this section I shall not only discuss Dooyeweerd's assumptions concerning the so-called transcendental ground-idea and religious ground-motives, but also Vollenhoven's concepts of types and time-streams. I interpret these notions as constituting two distinctive theories of conceptual deep structures that one can attribute to the above authors - although they themselves did not use this terminology. These assumptions and concepts will be used later, in a modified form, as tools for the analysis of Gadamer's hermeneutics.

3.1 Dooyeweerd's approach to conceptual deep structures

3.1.1 *The notion of a transcendental ground-idea*

For Dooyeweerd, our starting-point in philosophy is always a religious one. When the philosopher is confronted with questions such as the origin, unity and diversity of this temporal reality, he is necessarily dealing with what lies at the foundation of his thought. In other words, he is concerned with the borderline or limits of philosophical thought. Hence, he cannot rely on his philosophical reflection. The answers to such questions constitute the ultimate commitments any philosopher holds. These commitments cannot be proved, as positivists would argue, but only confessed. For one's ultimate commitments will always be in the grip of some mind-shaping force, or power or motive, which claims to be self-sufficient, in other words, they are of a religious nature ⁷. Confession here means the pre-theoretical and supra-theoretical commitments, which ground philosophical thought.

According to Dooyeweerd, the formulation of every philosophical system rests upon a transcendental ground-idea, which is its a priori condition. The transcendental idea comprises ideas about the diversity, unity (totality) and origin of the modal aspects of meaning in their inter-modal coherence. The modal coherence and diversity to which Dooyeweerd's writings refer are for him the various aspects of reality like: number, space, life, feelings, love, etc. These aspects are supposed to be irreducible in their meaning and form a kind of framework for every concrete thing that exists. Philosophy requires a hypothesis, for it cannot ground itself. It must rest on supra-theoretical presuppositions, which make it aware of its limits within cosmic time. In self-reflection, theoretical thought is directed concentrically to these supra-theoretical presuppositions. The transcendental ground-idea constitutes the pre-supposition for philosophical thought and for the special sciences. Since philosophy has the task of solving the problem of the origin, unity (totality), modal diversity and inter-modal coherence of meaning, it cannot help disclosing the transcendental ground-idea as it tries to give content to the concepts of the special sciences by means of self-reflection. As Dooyeweerd said:

Truly *reflexive* thought, therefore, is characterized by the critical self-reflection as to the transcendental ground-Idea of philosophy, in which philosophic thought points beyond and above itself toward its own apriori conditions within and beyond cosmic time (Dooyeweerd 1969 I: 87).

The transcendental ground-idea, as a hypothesis of philosophy, leads philosophical thought to *self-reflection*. The transcendental presuppositions, which are supra-theoretical, constitute the a priori condition which delimits philosophical thought, i.e. cosmic time as a central presupposition for theoretical thought and philosophy. For philosophical thought has a structure, which is found upon the cosmic order. And the structure of theoretical thought is founded upon temporal reality.

On the other hand, the transcendental ground-idea constitutes a “limiting-concept” as Strauss (1981:166) refers to it. This is so because it fixes the limits for philosophical thought. We can reflect on the limits of philosophical thought because we can transcend them in our selfhood ⁸. Nevertheless, philosophy remains bound to temporal reality, although, by means of the transcendental ground-idea, it points to its presuppositions, which are located beyond its limits. The religious pre-supposition of philosophy is of a *transcendent* character, because it has to do with choosing an Archimedean point ⁹. But philosophy itself is of a *transcendental* character.

Philosophic thought, in its transcendental direction toward the totality and Origin of meaning, remains bound to cosmic time. Cosmic time is its pre-supposition, and in this time, philosophy is bound to a cosmic order... (Dooyeweerd 1969 I: 92).

3.1.1.1 *The transcendental ground-idea and the philosophy of the cosmonomic idea*

The philosophy of the cosmonomic idea in connection with the transcendental ground-idea stresses the idea of a divine world-order. In other words, it shows that the nature of a philosophic system is grounded on a cosmonomic idea, which entails that “the cosmic *“nomos”* has meaning only in indissoluble correlation with the *subject-side* of the cosmos

[...] the cosmomic Idea implies the *Idea of the subject*, which points toward the *factual-side of reality* according to the basic relation among totality, diversity and coherence of meaning”(Dooyeweerd 1969 I: 96). In other words, the cosmic laws set the limits of the subject to which they correlate.

The other fundamental idea that I shall discuss later but that is implied here, is that meaning is the ontic property of all creatures. As Dooyeweerd points out:

...the ultimate character of meaning as the mode of reality of the whole of creation, which finds no rest in itself [...], meaning is universally proper to all created things as their restless *mode of existence*. As *meaning*, reality points toward its Origin, the Creator, without Whom the creature sinks into nothingness. [...] Only God's being is not *meaning*, because He alone exists by and through Himself.[...]In fact, nobody who speaks about modal aspects of reality, or even about concrete things, can understand them otherwise than in their *meaning*, that is in their relative mode of reality which points to their temporal coherence, to a totality in the root, and to the Origin of all relative things (Dooyeweerd 1969 I: 96-97).

3.1.1.2 *The three transcendental questions*

According to Dooyeweerd, the transcendental ground-idea actually consists of three separate ideas, correlating with the origin, unity (totality), modal diversity and inter-modal-coherence of meaning.

The theoretical sphere of our philosophical reflection is religiously bound to the central supra-theoretical sphere of our consciousness. This religious connection ought to be found within the inner structure of the theoretical attitude of thought. For Dooyeweerd, the religious ground-motives, whose structure I will discuss soon, are the true starting-points of philosophy. Philosophic thought cannot itself give content to the transcendental ideas. Its content is derived from a religious ground-motive which is supra-theoretical. The ground-motives control theoretical thought by means of these *transcendental* ideas which represent three *transcendental* basic problems of theoretical thought. Furthermore, these three ideas are basic for a critical self-reflection in theoretical thought. These three

ideas must be taken as a unity, which is called the transcendental ground-idea. It is called so because it grounds theoretical thought as it is concerned with the problem of origin, unity (totality), modal diversity and coherence of meaning.

This is the basic Idea of philosophy, but indirectly it also lies at the basis of the various special sciences. The latter ever remains dependent on philosophy in their theoretical conception of reality, and in their method of forming concepts and problems. The contents of this Idea, so far as it is directed to the Origin and to the unity (or duality respectively) in the root of the temporal diversity of meaning, is directly determined by the religious basic motive of theoretical thought (Dooyeweerd 1969 I: 69-70).

3.1.1.3 *The modal aspects*

Before explaining the content of the transcendental ground-idea, it is necessary to broach the modal aspects of the temporal cosmic order. To my mind any notion of conceptual deep structures require this ontological presupposition. It is a *sine qua non* for an in-depth understanding of textual structures, concept-formation, metaphorical interactivity, theoretical models, ideological slants, and the like. The big picture of reality is only accessible through an understanding of its constituent aspects. I hold to this statement because I accept Strauss' description of the modal aspects as "points of entry to our experience of and reflection on created reality"(Strauss 1981: 159).

What are they? Modal aspects or modalities are the "creational ways of being"(Strauss 1999: 13). They are aspects in which any entity functions. Furthermore, they constitute laws to which every entity is universally subject. These aspects structure every entity (Strauss 1988: 633-635).

Human experience is made up out of fifteen different modal aspects. There is an inter-modal coherence of meaning among them. This coherence is founded in the cosmic order of time and upon a radical unity of meaning. There are analogical relations expressed among the modal aspects. The analogies point to the inter-modal coherence of meaning, which is determined by the cosmic order of time. In order to understand how they

originate and how they are interrelated, Dooyeweerd used the metaphor of a prism through which light is broken up into colours. Besides being dependent on unrefracted light, the colours are mutually interdependent, yet irreducible to one another. The aspects, then, are the result of the refraction of the one undivided fullness of meaning into a diversity of meaning. The prism, which breaks this fullness of meaning into a diversity of meaning, is the cosmic order of time. The cosmic order of time determines and delimits all the modal aspects. Every aspect is therefore sovereign within its own sphere, which is warranted by a meaning-nucleus. Because of its interrelation with all other aspects, it can express the whole of the temporal coherence of meaning in its own structure. The divine *Origin* lies beyond the inter-modal meaning coherence.

The fifteen modalities distinguished by Dooyeweerd are:

modalities

meaning-nucleus

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| 1. arithmetical | discrete quantity |
| 2. spatial | continuous extension |
| 3. kinematic | motion |
| 4. physical | energy |
| 5. biotic | life |
| 6. psychic | feeling |
| 7. logical | distinction |
| 8. historical | formative power |
| 9. lingual | symbolic meaning |
| 10. social | social intercourse |
| 11. economic | frugality |
| 12. aesthetic | harmony |
| 13. juridical | retribution |
| 14. moral | love |
| 15. pistic | faith(Kalsbeek 1975: 100). |

Now we are prepared to expand on the content of the transcendental ground-idea.

3.1.1.4 *The origin, unity (totality, root) and diversity of meaning*

The architecture of the transcendental ground-idea postulates an integral religious unity at which the modal aspects of our horizon of temporal experience are directed and on which they are dependent for (1) their mutual relations, and (2) their coherence of meaning which is kept even when they are theoretically (analytically) set asunder by being opposed to one another.

As to the idea of the (unity) totality and diversity of meaning a dialectical philosopher will seek the unity (totality) of the different aspects of reality in one or other absolutized aspect, making the diversity of aspects actually relative to this one absolutized aspect. For Dooyeweerd any philosophy which is not shaped by the non-absolutizing mode of thought offered by the Christian world-view, will be dependent on a dialectical mode of thought in which created aspects of the world are absolutized into origin and totality. In contrast to this, Dooyeweerd holds the true origin and unity of reality to lie not in Reason and its absolutizations but in God's will and in the redeemed new humanity of which the Bible speaks.

In Humanist philosophy, the theoretical attitude of thought constitutes the answer to the question of origin. In a rationalistic fashion, Reason becomes the lawgiver, which is then incompatible with the recognition of a divine cosmic order. In an irrationalistic fashion, the ideal of concrete Life, for example, seemingly replaces theoretical thought. The theoretical origin of this ideal often goes unrecognized. Absolutizations such as these, Dooyeweerd holds to be the product of the secularization of the Christian idea of creation and freedom.

A philosopher like Kant represents a dualistic-transcendental kind of ground-idea. There is a process of transcendental thought which provides the regulations and laws for the natural world as we experience it, on the one hand, and the norms for moral freedom, on

the other. For this kind of idealism, Reason becomes overtly a kind of divine origin. On the other hand, his "Dinge an sich" are only understood within the context of the natural sciences, but are never explained for what they are. Here the natural sciences constitute a kind of idea of a theoretical totality. On the other hand, moral autonomy and freedom fill the content of the idea of a practical totality (Dooyeweerd 1969 I: 503).

Locke represents another example of the humanist ground-idea. From the origin of psychological reason, he derives a totality or unity of experience which is exclusively related to the psychical or sensory aspect. The diversity of the world is then a relative diversity flowing from this aspect. For Locke, science gets its validity from the fact that knowledge can be grounded in experience (sensation and reflection) (Dooyeweerd 1969 I: 268-269).

In a critique of the above philosophies, it must be said that no aspect itself can become the *transcendental idea of unity (totality)*, since it is part of the inter-modal coherence of meaning and dependent on the *transcendental idea of meaning*. The latter points to the *temporal coherence* and to the *supra-temporal unity (totality) of meaning*. In order to compare the different modal aspects with one another, it is necessary to identify a common denominator. As said, the idea of time makes coherence among the modal aspects possible. So the diversity of meaning is based upon a *temporal coherence* of meaning. Every modal aspect reflects the cosmic order of time which binds them all without violating their mutual irreducibility. The temporal coherence of meaning finds its identity and unity in its religious root. This is actually the starting point for any theoretical comparison and for theoretical synthesis.

Being is only to be ascribed to God, whereas creation has only *meaning*, the dependent mode of reality or existence. A true concept of being is impossible. The *word* being has no unity of meaning [...] Only the transcendental ground-Idea which is ruled by the central motive of the divine Word-Revelation, can relate the different modal aspects of meaning to the divine Being of the Origin. But this Idea is not an autonomous concept...(Dooyeweerd 1969 I: 73).

The transcendental ground idea is the frame of reference which applies for the unity and the origin of that modal aspect which has been *analytically* separated, but which nevertheless, is interrelated with the opposed aspects. In other words, it grounds the conceptualization of any modal aspect, which must acknowledge the modal diversity of meaning in order to separate from the rest the aspect it tries to capture in a concept. In other words, it is the basis for modal abstraction which is a theoretical activity.

3.1.2 *The notion of religious ground-motives*

Theoretical dogmatism is grounded by the dualistic religious basic motives which constitute its starting point. The axiom of the autonomy of theoretical reason is a patent case of theoretical dogmatism. Such criticism presupposes that the theoretical sphere of our philosophical reflection is religiously bound to the central supra-theoretical sphere of our consciousness. This religious connection ought to be found within the inner structure of the theoretical attitude of thought.

To begin with it must be said that (for Dooyeweerd), with the exception of the biblical ground-motive, the rest have a dialectical character, for their inner structure consists of two religiously opposed central powers or forces which drive thought from one pole to the other.

It is not surprising that the apostate main spring can manifest itself in divergent religious motives. For it never directs the attitude of life and thought to the true *totality of meaning* and the true radix of temporal reality, because this is not possible without the concentric direction to the true Origin (Dooyeweerd 1969 I: 63).

This dialectic is of a religious nature and different from any theoretical dialectic. The religious dialectic cannot be solved by means of theoretical synthesis. Furthermore, human consciousness is affected by this antithesis.

They [religious basic motives] involve every philosophical thought that finds itself in their grip, in a dialectical process, wherein this thought is

alternatively driven towards the one or the other pole of its religious starting-point (Dooyeweerd 1960 : 36).

The religious antithesis does not allow any real solution so long as the human ego finds itself in the grip of the dialectical basic motive that has called it into being. In this case there remains no other way out than to attribute the primacy to one of the opposed motives, which implies a religious depreciation, or at least, a subordination of the other (Dooyeweerd 1960: 38).

The central starting-point is split by two opposed powers. The antithesis remains unsolved, since there cannot be any other starting-point which can perform any synthesis. The ego falls prey to one of the two poles of the dialectic ground-motives. The dialectic character of philosophical thought can be explained by the constant shifting of poles or motives. For that reason a dualistic ground-motive will end up creating two opposing philosophical schools. Our selfhood must be integrally related to the whole of our temporal horizon of experience, but the ultimate antithesis which deviates the religious impulse of the ego, blocks such a central relation. In the case of the scholastic motive, this tension is caused by the impossible integration of the biblical and the Greek or of the biblical and the humanistic ground-motives. Any accommodation of the biblical ground-motive to the Greek or humanistic ground-motives or vice-versa is doomed to failure. The Greek and the humanistic ground-motives are split internally by the absolutization of aspects of reality which are not self-sufficient at all but referential in essence and therefore relative. The coherence among the various aspects of the cosmic order of time will turn against that aspect which was made self-sufficient. There will never be an absolutized aspect without an absolutized opponent.

I shall now briefly survey the four ground-motives distinguished by Dooyeweerd.

3.1.2.1 *The Greek form-matter ground-motive*

The Greek form-matter motive resulted from the clash of the pre-Homeric religion of life and the cultural religion of the Olympian gods. The former believed in the ever-flowing shapeless stream of organic life, which flows from mother earth. This stream dissolves any individual form. Every finite being is submitted to the fate of death called *anangkè*. The existence of any individual form was regarded as something unjust, for in order to exist an individual required the death of another. Fate or death always paid back that injustice. In short, the shapeless stream of life enclosed two steps: birth and decline of corporeal forms. This is the origin of the matter-motive. The stream of life is an absolutization of the biotic aspect. The cult of Dionysius is its best representative (Dooyeweerd 1960: 40-41).

The form-motive was represented in particular by the Delphian god, Apollo, the legislator. The Olympian religion focused on form, measure and harmony. It is the absolutisation of the cultural life of classical Greek society. The cultural gods were ideal forms, which could not do anything about the sentence passed by fate. To break away from the popular belief just implied putting aside the mythological wrap of the ground-motive. The impact of demythologizing the religious clash between the Olympian religion and the religion of life, is evident in the foundation of a community of philosophers pertaining to opposing schools. It grounded a dualistic world-view, namely, the metaphysical view of being, on the one hand, and the visible world of becoming and decline, on the other hand. It also produced a dualistic anthropology of body and soul (Dooyeweerd 1960: 40-42).

The form-matter motive itself was independent of the mythological forms which it received in the old nature-religions and the new Olympian culture-religion. It has dominated Greek thought from the outset (Dooyeweerd 1969 I: 62).

3.1.2.2 Scholasticism: the nature-grace ground-motive

The second dialectical motive that has shaped Western thought is the nature-grace motive. Roman catholicism and protestantism attempted to synthesize the Greek and the biblical ground-motives. *Gratia naturam non tollit, sed perficit* (Grace does not cancel nature, but it perfects it) sums up in few words the whole scholastic antithesis. Reality was divided into two spheres of thought and action: natural and supra-natural. This dualism is evident in the achievement of Thomism in separating both philosophy and dogmatical theology. Within the natural sphere, human reason reigned supreme. All natural truths were determined by reason. Nevertheless, in the background, divine self-revelation determined human thought. For this reason dogmatical theology as part of the supra-natural sphere was thought to encompass the whole scope of the natural sphere to which philosophy belongs. It was just not relevant to ask what a real Christian philosophy could be (Dooyeweerd 1960: 44-45).

In short, Greek and humanistic basic ground-motives could gain a hold on philosophical thought since it was just a matter of accommodating them within the doctrine of the Church. It was by then completely normal to accept the autonomy of natural reason within the boundaries of the nature-grace ground-motive. As long as natural reason did not conflict with the church's doctrine, there was no objection to the accommodation of both Greek or humanistic ground-motives.

The Greek or Humanistic basic motive, which here dominates the vision of nature, has in its turn undergone a certain scholastic accommodation to the Christian doctrine of creation or to that of creation and fall, respectively. In the dialectical tension between "nature" and grace" is concealed, as a component, the inner dialectic of the Greek or Humanistic basic motive, respectively (Dooyeweerd 1969 I: 65).

3.1.2.3 *The humanist nature-freedom ground-motive*

The third dialectical motive is the humanist nature-freedom ground-motive, which started when a foreseen antithesis between the super-natural and the natural sphere was radicalized in the late medieval nominalistic movement, which did away with the universals supposedly inherent in being. Radical nominalism meant the exclusive recognition only of individual entities, whose functions and interrelations were constructed in the mind. By these means the nature-motive gained the upper hand.

The religious dimension was completely lost sight of by the acceptance of the dogma of the autonomy of theoretical thought. The humanistic nature-freedom motive came into being when human personality was given an autonomous status, which meant it was capable of devising its own destiny and world. On a cosmic scale, nature was thought of as the necessary correspondent of the personality ideal. This new conception of nature distorted the Christian presupposition of creation, fall into sin and redemption. Renaissance man re-creates in his own image the divine origin and his world.

The biblical revelation of the creation of man in the image of God was implicitly subverted into the idea of a creation of God in the idealized image of man. The biblical conception of the rebirth of man and his radical freedom in Jesus Christ was replaced by the idea of a regeneration of man by his own autonomous will, his emancipation from the medieval kingdom of darkness, rooted in the belief of the supra-natural authority of the Church [...] After having emancipated himself from all belief in a supra-natural sphere in its scholastic-ecclesiastic sense, and having made himself into the only master of his destiny, modern man seeks in nature infinite possibilities to satisfy his own creative impulse (Dooyeweerd 1960: 46, 47).

The biggest dilemma for humanist thought is to be found in the relation between the two poles, namely, man's free and autonomous personality and the realm of nature. What is at stake is the place of man's autonomous liberty. The supremacy of man over nature which is taken from the biblical creation-motive was understood in a secularized way. The freedom pole tried to control the nature pole. In order to secure man's dominion over the temporal world order, the freedom pole held fast to mathematical thought, because

mathematics was regarded as man's creative power. The freedom pole, likewise, reduced man to the ethical and aesthetical aspects. All these absolutisations hampered a unified view of the cosmos. Any given structural order of creation within the temporal horizon of experience was rejected by the humanist freedom motive since it represented a big threat to the dogma of the autonomy of theoretical thought. Instead, the world was explained in terms of an uninterrupted chain of functional causal relations. In this way autonomous scientific thought could dominate nature. This deterministic picture was expressed by means of mathematical equations. Classical mathematical physics was worked out by Galileo and Newton. Mathematics constituted the universal pattern for scientific philosophic thought in keeping with the domination program. This led to a conception of the world as a mechanism, which could be controlled. This picture provided nature with a certain kind of unity. Nevertheless, the world as a mechanism eliminated per se the opposing pole: the autonomous freedom of human personality in its practical activity. This is part of the inner religious dialectic. In Kant the freedom pole gained the upper hand over the nature pole.

The mathematical and mechanistic science-ideal was restricted to an empirical world of sensory phenomena ordered by transcendental logical categories of the human understanding (Dooyeweerd 1960: 50).

A crisis in humanist philosophy was inaugurated by the advent of its irrationalistic and universalistic stance, which is best represented by the reduction of all the aspects to the historical one. This constituted a new pattern of thought, which replaced the mathematical and mechanistic science ideal ¹⁰. Again the nature pole struck back in the form of positivism, forcing the historical mode of thought to become a sort of natural scientific thinking. The main effect historicism had, was the cancellation of the belief in the self-sufficiency of human reason, which was made relative. Logical positivism and humanist existentialism appeared as two opposing philosophies which witnessed to the crisis in humanist philosophy. If Dooyeweerd were writing today, he could have referred to more contemporary opponents, for example, critical rationalism versus postmodernism.

3.1.2.4 *The central and radical biblical ground-motive*

Any thought which strives to be Christian must be under the power of the central and radical biblical ground-motive whose paradigm is constituted by the theme of creation, fall into sin, and redemption by Jesus Christ as the incarnate Word of God, in the communion of the Holy Spirit.

This paradigm grounds a true Christian philosophy, whose starting point is the biblical presupposition that all of reality is ordered by laws which have been established by the Creator-Redeemer. This presupposition makes Christian philosophy radically anti-dogmatic, because the biblical ground-motive dismantles any self-sufficiency given to any modal aspect of the temporal order.

Another presupposition inherent in the biblical ground-motive is that the religious concentration point of our integral existence is to be found in the ego, where the image of God rests. The biblical ground-motive redirects the religious impulse of the ego towards the true-God. According to Dooyeweerd the dogmatic prejudices and uncritical axioms embracing the thinking self are nothing other than absolutisations of all sorts which block any unified vision of our temporal world-order.

...the radical and central biblical theme of creation, fall into sin and redemption by Jesus Christ as the incarnate Word of God, in the communion of the Holy Spirit [...] As the core of the divine Word-revelation, it is independent of any human theology. Its radical sense can only be explained by the Holy Spirit, operating in the heart, or the religious center of our consciousness within the communion of the invisible Catholic church (Dooyeweerd 1960: 42).

...it uncovers the origin of all absolutizations of the relative, namely, the negative, or apostate direction of the religious impulse of the human ego. Thereby it reveals the real character of all basic motives of human thought, which divert the religious impulse towards the temporal horizon (Dooyeweerd 1960: 43).

Christian philosophy is not theology. As discussed above, the effectiveness of a Christian philosophy has been undermined by its synthesis with Greek philosophy under the scholastic ground-motive. In the name of such a synthesis, Augustine restricted Christian philosophy to dogmatic theology. It was a crucial mistake to identify Christian philosophy with the latter. This meant that theology erroneously dealt with real philosophical issues. Any other attempt to treat them otherwise, that is, by true philosophical reflection, was taken to be in opposition to the divine Word-revelation as understood by dogmatic theology. Dogmatic theology gained the upper hand in relation to the rest of the sciences. This hierarchy dates back to Greek metaphysics.

In fact, the philosophical fundamentals of Augustine's thought were, in the main, taken from the Hellenistic philosophy and only externally accommodated to the doctrine of the Church (Dooyeweerd 1960: 44).

Let me end this section by again underlining the link between ground-motive and ground-idea. It is the transcendental ground-idea which acts as a mediator between the religious ground-motives and philosophical thought. The fact that the thinking ego can be meshed with detrimental prejudices, which originate in absolutisations, exemplifies this link. Those absolutisations are a real obstacle to any attempt at seeing the structures of the temporal order of experience in an integral way. It has been made clear that the thinking ego is governed – on the theoretical level - by one of the central basic ground-motives. This motive directs philosophical reflection which is conditioned by the threefold transcendental ground-idea. By criticizing the dogma of the autonomy of theoretical thought, Reformational philosophy pays attention to the structure of our temporal horizon of experience, as well as to the structure of theoretical thought itself. By eliminating the dogmas or axioms grounded in absolutisations, Reformational philosophy enables the philosophical enterprise to render a unified vision of the divine order of our temporal horizon of experience which is valid for every thinker: Christian and non-Christian. Nevertheless, even Christian philosophers must accept their brokenness, that is, they are fallible human beings. They become aware of this in true self-knowledge.

3.2 Vollenhoven's approach to conceptual deep structures

3.2.1 *Vollenhoven's problem-historical method*

3.2.1.1 *The neo-idealistic background of Vollenhoven's work*

Vollenhoven's problem-historical method is another example of how Reformational philosophers have reformed the tools devised by their contemporaries in order to appropriate those valuable aspects contained in their thoughts and approaches. In this case, the neo-Kantian concept of *Problemgeschichte* inspired Vollenhoven's historiographical method, which can be seen as an attempt to uncover conceptual deep structures in the history of philosophical thought. To approach the historiography of philosophy *problemgeschichtlich* it has to be studied in terms of systematic philosophical interests (Wolters 1979: 231). Let us discuss the state of affairs in which neo-idealism followed this systematic approach.

Neo-idealism was in conflict with neo-positivistic historicism which made cultural norms part of an on-going process of becoming. Conversely, Hartmann and Windelband assumed the existence of a fixed set of rational problems which remain in spite of cultural changes.

Thinkers like Windelband and Nicolai Hartmann agreed that such relativism applied to the realm of particular things and individual acts, but wanted to except the *allgemeingültige* categories of Reason itself. More specifically: there are objective problems given by Vernunft, they said, which are all-the-time there, above every variable, historical approximation of them, and which guarantee by their unchanging unity the very possibility of continuity in philosophical history. This means that the crux to a *problem-historical* approach to historiography is taking the old noumenal *Dinge an sich* stabilizers of phenomenal reality and cashing them in methodologically for *Probleme an sich*, which are ungrounded but (dogmatically) affirmed and validated by human Reason (Seereveld 1973: 132-133).

To Seerveld's mind, this is precisely what had to be changed. Wolters' distinction between *Problemgehalt* from *Problemlage* introduces the possibility Seerveld is looking for in order to claim that these problems are actually creational affairs and not the product of a universal reason (Seerveld 1973: 133).

Seerveld contends that the problems which Vollenhoven's method refer to must, on the one hand, be recognized by and large as essentially creational problems. On the one hand. On the other hand, the historiography of philosophy must be more radically critical in the acknowledgement of the leading role of *Zeitgeister* play in all kinds of structural analyses (Seerveld 1973: 134).

Let us now focus on the nature of Vollenhoven's so-called problem-historical method. I shall largely follow the analyses of Wolters and Seerveld. In the first place, Vollenhoven's method hints at conceptual results of philosophizing and at the connections between them on the grounds of their *probleemstelling* (Dutch term for formulation of a problem). This means its purpose is to give an account of the history of philosophy based upon a defined set of systematic problems, which every philosopher through the ages has had to come to terms with. Furthermore, systematic philosophical interests constitute the guidelines for the study of the history of philosophy. Noteworthy is the important role the logical factor has in this kind of historiography, as it does in any scientific field.

The philosophical conceptions of that history lead him [historian] to the themes which are involved in them, and these in turn lead him to the *problems* of philosophy (with their solutions). Thus he arrives at the *problem-historical* method. Now in the discussion of this method *qua* method, we are told that the problems (and solutions) of the history of philosophy are its logical element (Wolters 1979: 240).

To Vollenhoven's mind, the different philosophical schools represent different answers to various philosophical issues, and reactions to the logical contradictions of antagonistic schools or traditions. Likewise, every school of thought is related to another by means of these reactions. Therefore immanent criticism is then a fundamental element in

Vollenhoven's historiography of philosophy and the basis for any transcendent criticism (Wolters 1979: 234). By pointing out internal logical contradictions, immanent criticism helps realizing the continuity among them, which ultimately does not follow a logical path, but a religious direction:

This means that the movement in the history of philosophy is always a matter of immanent criticism, in which only analytical considerations play a role (Wolters 1979: 255).

Every philosophical conception is actually a combination of complexes of problems and the proposed solution. Therefore Vollenhoven sets out to find out what those main problems are. Because they are actually an important clue to understanding the history of philosophy.

3.2.1.2 The "*Gegenstand*" of historiography of philosophy

According to Seerveld, historiography of philosophy should focus on the systematic answers given to issues such as: the problem of diversity and unity in created reality; who is man, and the structure of, and order for, created reality. In other words, historiography of philosophy deals with the analyses made of cosmological, anthropological and ontological problems (Seerveld 1973: 128).

Every method presupposes a researcher and a *Gegenstand* which is not of a logical nature itself¹¹. But in the case of the historiography of philosophy its *Gegenstand* entails a logical element, for it is engaged in examining the given solutions to philosophical problems. In general Vollenhoven starts off by distinguishing between philosophy as an *activity* and philosophy as a *result*. All the extra-logical elements are part of the activity whereas the conceptual part belongs to the results of philosophizing (Wolters 1979: 241).

In order to specify the *Gegenstand* of historiography of philosophy, the *Gegenstand* of the latter must be distinguished from the *Gegenstand* of systematics. Vollenhoven points out that the *Gegenstand* of any systematics is the result of reflecting upon the *structure* of

entities, that is, upon their creatureliness. Systematics deals with structural laws as ontic givens, which correlate with the entities. On the other hand, the conceptual aspect of *culture* as the Gegenstand of the history of philosophy, refers to the law of love which is only applicable to human beings. The reason is that only humans have a heart through which they are able to love God and their neighbour. This means that life is religion, for at the end cultural activity, including philosophy, is a matter of the heart. The problem-historical method deals particularly with the conceptual aspect of culture, which has a historical foundation and a religious direction (Wolters 1979: 245).

3.2.1.3 *The nature of philosophical development*

Seerveld, following in the steps of Vollenhoven, describes philosophical development as *typological*. He is not satisfied with any *teleological* or *genetic* explanation. Seerveld argues that a typological explanation refers to the creational state of affairs every philosophy is busy analyzing. Philosophy also unfolds itself led by the structural law of differentiation and integration (Seerveld 1973: 129).

The fact that there are similar philosophical responses made in time to the basic core of recurrent, creational meaning-problems, and therefore definite, fairly closed types of philosophy, is very humbling: there is nothing radically new under the sun in the history of philosophy... (Seerveld 1973: 130).

To Seerveld's mind, any analysis is in the grip of a transcendental *Zeitgeist* which leads philosophical thought owing to the fact that philosophy is part of the cultural commandment which is essentially religious.

When definite, idolatrous principalities and powers, instead of the Holy Spirit, capture and bind together the hearts of a certain human generation, the driving vision that gets formative authority among men in that age is a palpably real influence. *Zeitgeist* is much more than a fictive generalization constructed by later historians trying to organize their material: a *Zeitgeist* is the major δύναμις at work whose Kingdom seems to be coming, whose Regime of whirlwind (or shalom) is being historically built up by willing human servants in ... that day of our Lord! (Seerveld 1973: 130-131).

3.2.1.4 Vollenhoven's methodology

Vollenhoven begins by presupposing that the historian of philosophy must read the texts within the context of the problems and the solutions which were given at that stage. That means he must discover the common grounds and disagreements through which a specific philosopher is related to his predecessors and contemporaries.

Vollenhoven's own interpretation, on the other hand, proceeds from the methodological assumption that the texts must be read *in immediate connection with the problems and solutions of their philosophical environment* (Wolters 1979: 246).

The historian of philosophy must, then, pay attention to the *historical environment* in order to understand philosophical texts. Tracking down the historical environment means to find out the "verbanden" or connections amongst different philosophers. In other words, the historical environment of a philosopher compels the historian to look for a common formulation of a problem upon which comparisons and contrasts can be made in order to pin down a variety of possible philosophical "bonds". The historian must also realize that he is standing in a philosophical tradition which has already been shaped by the ideas of the philosopher whom he attempts to understand, as well as those of other related philosophers. The historian must be aware of this state of affairs in order to do justice to the answers the philosopher gave in his own time. Otherwise, the historian's reading will have flaws in the sense that he will be reading the philosopher out of context, that is, anachronistically.

...to use the problem-historical method means [...] to trace the *connections* between these conceptions in terms of their common framing of the problem (*probleemstelling*). Philosophical differences are not, to put it in logical terms, "contradictory" but "contrary": they always presuppose a common basis which makes comparison and contrast possible. This common basis is the formulation of the problem, and the comparison and contrast establishes *verbanden* (Wolters 1979: 248).

These "bonds" constitute types and time-streams which I shall discuss later on.

The two kinds of *verband*, then, which bind together the multiplicity of philosophical conceptions into a coherent whole, are, on the one hand, the contemporaneous bond of a shared law-answer which unites the conceptions of one time-stream into a *historical* unity, and, on the other hand, the bond of permanence which joins specific combinations of other philosophical answers into the trans-historical *systematic* unity of continuous types (Wolters 1979: 251).

3.2.1.5 *Greek thought*

Vollenhoven developed his method acknowledging the fact that Greek philosophy established the basic problems or 'denkvormen' to which the rest of Western philosophers throughout the ages have tried to provide answers.

These thought-forms have been handed down from one generation to the other. None can break completely with these specific problems. Every generation combines the complexes of problems in different ways. As Wolters points out:

The Greek 'mind', then, in the sense of the assumed complex of philosophical alternatives, is like a natural language which children learn unquestioningly from their parents -and which is, in fact, the condition for mutual intelligibility. This language, once learned at the beginning of Greek culture, has been spoken ever since by the thinkers of Western civilization. Seen in this light, it is not so difficult to imagine that within every historical time-stream, the latent possibilities of the shared thought-world should recur (Wolters 1979: 257).

Seerveld is against the idea that the problems which Greek philosophy dealt with are essentially Greek problems. He claims those problems are ontic matters, and that Greek philosophy is actually the Greek response to them.

...*Greek responses*, to be sure, and conceived in a thoroughly pagan Spirit, but neither essentially Greek *problems*, that then persisted for centuries, nor quasi timeless fixations, incumbent upon every systematic thinker to adopt. Those basic ontic matters are perennial *historical challenges* ("problems"!) and have staying power through the ages *because* they are *creational structural affairs* (Seerveld 1973: 135).

3.2.1.6 *Scriptural philosophy*

For Vollenhoven, scriptural philosophy is characterized by the fundamental distinction between God, laws and cosmos. Moreover, Vollenhoven's point of departure is that all of creation stands under the law of God: it is subject to his rule. Consequently, his scriptural philosophy also acknowledges the consequences of the fall into sin which are manifested in the *-isms* different ontologies have (Bril 1995: 138). Vollenhoven's and Dooyeweerd's stances were radically against any synthetic philosophizing, which is impossible when the religious root and direction of philosophical thought is realized (Bril 1995: 139, 142).

Vollenhoven believes that his scriptural philosophy radically breaks with the formulation of the problems posed by the development of Western thought, which has eliminated God and the law of love as well as the structural law upon which created reality is grounded. As Wolters has expressed it:

The reason for this is that the Greek "thought-form" is rooted in paganism, whereas Vollenhoven's philosophy is radically Scriptural. Only by subjecting itself consciously and wholeheartedly to the Word of God can philosophy escape from the pagan "problematic" of Western thought thus far (Wolters 1979: 258).

It [the law problem] would show that the most momentous decision with respect to the problem of the place of the law had been taken long before Greek philosophy began: in the primeval rejection of God's Word-revelation (Wolters 1979: 259).

Wolters is convinced that the problem-historical method is the gateway through which to escape the Greek 'thought-form' dominating Western thought.

Seerveld believes that a Christian philosophical historiography constitutes an important tool to carry out our Christian duty of bringing Shalom, that is redemption in Jesus Christ, to scholarship.

This christian method of philosophical historiography makes clear that there are a number of different, recurrent conceptual neighbourhoods (or,

if you will, "families of ideas") which hold men captive, and are attractive, thoughtful ways to go to hell [...] We who do have the Truth in philosophically earthen vessels, are called upon, if that is our professional ministry, to serve the philosophical neighbourhoods of the world, devastated today by a plague of secular disbelief in Jesus Christ's Rule, to serve them with critically christian, philosophical historiographic instruments and healing, before it is autopsy time (Seerveld 1975: 300-301).

3.2.1.7 *The notions of type and time-stream*

3.2.1.7.1 *Type*

Fundamental to Vollenhoven's methodology is the idea that every philosopher confronts a definite set of problems. In Seerveld's interpretation, he proposed a set of four basic problems in connection with fundamental philosophical issues, namely (1) the problem of individual and universal, (2) the problem of monism and dualism, (3) the problem of genesis, and (4) the problem of the place of the law.

The first three problems, which have to do with ontic issues about created reality, namely the structure of the cosmos and man, constitute the main types. Types are the fixed set of problems, which will be solved in different ways within the context of various time-streams. If we use the mathematical metaphor of vertical and horizontal co-ordinates, then the former intersect vertically with a time-stream which goes horizontally.

For these conceptions all have connections with each other, and that in two ways. In answering the question concerning the place of the law, one solution came up after the other, so that a *succession* of time-streams arose. On the other hand, from an early date different answers to the question concerning vertical structure stand *side by side* within a single time-stream. Thus *succession* and *simultaneity* here go hand in hand (Wolters 1979:250).

Types and time-streams are the two elements in any philosophical conception. There are many combinations possible out of their intersections.

Closer examination reveals that a number of these questions recur throughout the history of philosophy. These recurring questions give rise to what we call types. As a result, we are able to develop a typology, that is, we can describe a set of philosophical thought patterns which reflect the attempts of the various thinkers to give answers to fundamental questions of ontology, anthropology, and epistemology (Van Dyk 1969, 1970: 5).

The first problem has to do with the relation of the individual entity to that aspect of reality which was taken as a constituting principle. Three possible answers are possible here, namely universalism, partial universalism and individualism. The first one refers to the cosmos as a whole, ignoring its diversity. Any early Greek cosmological philosopher ventured statements such as *everything* is fire or water or air. This is a typical universalistic statement. Partial universalism entails that the individual is partially connected to the universal. It is understood at its best when speaking about a macro- and a microcosmos. The macrocosmos has to do with the universal and the microcosmos has to do with the individual human being. Evidently, individualism singles out the existence of parts, leaving out any unifying whole (Bril 1995: 131).

The second problem answers the question whether reality is reducible to one principle or to two or more. If it is reducible to one principle, then the philosopher happens to be a monist. Examples are Hesiod and chaos and Thales and water. If it is reducible to two principles, then the philosopher is a dualist. For instance, the atomists thought that the world was made up of indivisible atoms and a void. The pythagoreans thought that the world was made up of odd and even numbers.

The third problem has to do with the coming into being of the ordering principle of all reality. There are three basic answers. A static thought or purely cosmological thought underestimates the need of an origin. A theogonic or mythologizing thought presupposes gods as the origin or genesis. A dynamic or cosmogonic thought stresses a continuous process of becoming. The latter has been referred to as *geneticist*.

3.2.1.7.2 Seerveld's Categories

The following is an account of how Seerveld has sought to rework (and simplify) Vollenhoven's historiographical categories upon which a christian transcendental critique can be based. This means to ask "christian questions within the other thinker's assumed framework"(Seerveld 1973: 136).

The category of *dualism* and *monism* has to do with the modal coherence of the temporal horizon of human experience. Monism makes one of the modal aspects a law for the rest. In a dualistic view the world and humankind are split by two antagonistic functions.

The category of *structuralism*, *geneticism*, and *mythologizing philosophy* has to do with the origin and structure of the cosmos. Seerveld explains as follows:

...Structuralist philosophy treats genesis *as* a structural matter and Geneticistic philosophical theory *would* dissolve structure into actual process (Seerveld 1973: 137).

Mythologizing philosophy focuses on the problem of cosmic order and the problem of change, whose solutions are of a theosophical nature. Paradoxically, processes cannot be distinguished from the *order for* those processes. In other words, the genesis of those processes is itself a repetitive process. There is no recognition of the *ephapaxic*, that is, the non-repeatable character of historical events. In addition, the course of history lacks any *eschatonic* character, that is, there is no final consummation (Seerveld 1993: 28-48).

The category of *subjectivism*, *objectivism* and *realism* has to do with the selection of an archè which guarantees the order within creation. Subjectivism stresses the role of a subject constituting the world whose properties are conferred by the subject. Conversely, objectivism acknowledges that perceptible and mathematical properties constitute a state of affairs independent from any intervention of a subject. Realism seeks the guarantee of order beyond objects and subjects ¹². The answer lies in "paradigmatic models" or ideas. Platonism is its best representative.

The category of *universalism*, *individualism* and *micro-macrocosmoi* has to do with the problem of relating the data of creation either in terms of “creational modal structuration” which allows for grouping things after their kinds, or in terms of the particularity each thing has. Universalism stresses the existence of kinds and societal bonds. Individualism regards these groupings as mere labels and names under which unrelated individuals must stand. Micro-macrocosmoi show the proximity of, and correspondence between, an all-encompassing system and, on a smaller scale, other universes. Seerveld speaks of “partial individualism” and “partial universalism” as two variants.

...while some declare that the Individual part is the most critical factor, giving integrality to general elements (Partial Individualism), some believe that the Universal part links up and integrates the Individual matters like the mold to jello particles or purpose to instruments (Partial Universalism)...(Seerveld 1973: 140).

3.2.1.7.3 *Time-streams*

The last category has to do with the nature of the *Zeitgeist* which leads philosophical as well as other cultural activities in a particular direction. These *Zeitgeister* are in conflict with the Spirit of the Lord. Seerveld contends this last category refers to real powers and not to post-facto constructions historians fabricate.

For Vollenhoven it is the question about the position of the law that constitutes the time-streams which are completely unique in the course of history. The position of the law can be described as a movement from without to within, in other words, there is a progressive internalization of the laws or norms. As Bril describes it succinctly:

Plato, according to Vollenhoven, still saw the law as a separate ontic reality beyond the cosmos. Hereafter an ongoing apriorising took place in history; a subjectivising of the law from an extra-mental to intra-mental position. Thus, since Galileo, the secondary qualities, such as the redness of the flower, were apriorized. The same has occurred with respect to norms. This process of apriorisation or subjectivising, reached its summit in Kant and the post-Kantian

Idealism. The criteria for good and evil are found, so one is told, in humankind. Kant spoke of "Das moralische Gesetz *in mir*" ("The moral law *in me*"). Man is autonomous. [...] Central in Idealism is the "Selbstgesetzgebung der Vernunft", ("the autonomy of Reason"). The content of the Bible is regarded as something heteronomic; an authority that only comes *from without* [...] The question as to the place, the position of the law is a transcendental question. Either one trusts in God, who reveals himself in the Scriptures, or one places his confidence in what Luther had named "die Hure Vernunft" (Bril 1995: 134).

There were at the beginning three conflicting explanations regarding the position of the laws upholding creation, namely subjectivism, objectivism and realism. Subjectivism has predominated in the course of Western philosophy, because the different time-streams, although antagonistic to one another in side issues, sided with one another in rejecting the other two positions.

Vollenhoven has divided modern times into the following time-streams: scienticism represented by Descartes; the Enlightenment represented by, someone such as Rousseau; idealism represented by Kant, Fichte and Schelling; positivism represented by Comte and Darwin; and irrationalism represented by "Lebensphilosophie" and existentialism. Besides these Vollenhoven later added neo-Enlightenment, neo-idealism and pragmatism (Bril 1995: 127). Vollenhoven has tried to bring a more complex set of paradigms (conceptual deep structures) to modernity, in comparison with Dooyeweerd's generalized nature-freedom ground-motive.

Let me end this introductory chapter by stating my conviction that Vollenhoven's problem-historical method can be made useful for the project of ideology critique applied to conceptual deep structures. Especially his "types" and "time-streams" become useful tools in uncovering the ideological bent present in the content of any philosophical discourse. The particular answers given to the basic questions to which types and time-streams refer pre-scientifically determine the direction which the different cultural spheres take. In other words, these types and time-streams become a paradigm for cultural formation.

Notes

1. Gadamer says: "Reality does not happen "behind the back" of language; [...] reality happens precisely *within* language" (Gadamer 1976: 35).

2. I borrow from J.P. Faye the idea of "deep structure" used in his narrative analysis of ideological discourse. According to John Thompson, Faye adapts Chomsky's definition to suit his analysis of an ideological "topography" as follows: "The topography is not an abstract model imposed upon the historical terrain, but rather a structure implicit in the narratives produced therein, a structure in terms of which the narrators define themselves, their friends and their enemies[...]The field of positions is a 'deep structure' which *generates*- that is, both limits and renders possible - the kinds of narratives which appear in the historical domain. It renders possible and renders *acceptable*: this *mise en acceptation* is the outcome of a process which underlines the production and circulation of narratives[...] Just as Chomsky sought to elaborate a linguistic theory which would show how surface forms could be derived, via rules of transformation, from underlying syntactic structures, so too Faye wishes to move beyond the surface form of narratives and to reconstruct the formal configurations which underlie them" (Thompson 1984: 210).

3. In the course of my own analysis of conceptual deep structures, these notions of laws that govern the existence of something like a philosophical text will become clearer.

4. Here I deliberately use the term "confession" in the sense of an ultimate belief or conviction, which is religious in essence. To Dooyeweerd's mind, the faith aspect as a modality is different from religion. According to Schoeman "...(*religion* is here understood, not in the - modally restricted - sense of *faith* or *worship* that relates to the meaning nucleus of the *pistical function* of humans, but in the *supra-modal* sense of "in a bond" [*re* = again + *ligo*, *ligare* = to bind] with either the true, or a supposed *archè* [origin] of temporal reality..." (Schoeman 1997: 39).

5. In the words of the translators of Dooyeweerd's main work, ontic or ontical is defined as "...exclusively related to empirical reality in its integral sense which includes all modal aspects and individuality-structures"(Dooyeweerd 1969 I: 39 n.l.).

6. In the words of the translators of Dooyeweerd's main work, intentional is defined as "...a merely mental directedness towards the "Gegenstand", a sense akin to that of the phenomenological usage (BRETANO, HUSSERL)" (Dooyeweerd 1969 I: 39 n.l.).

7. "A religious belief is any belief in something or other as divine. 'Divine' means having the status of not depending on anything else" (Clouser 1991: 21-22).

8. According to Dooyeweerd, the ground-motives seize our selfhood, which is the supra-theoretical point of reference. The entire temporal human existence is concentrated in the human I-ness (Dooyeweerd 1969 I: 88).

9. The recognition of the need of a standpoint or Archimedean point or archè is one of the most important contributions of the philosophy of the cosmonomic idea. There must be a fixed point in reality where one can get a perspective into the structure of reality in its origin, unity (totality) and diversity "...if I am not to lose myself in the modal speciality of meaning during the course of philosophic thought, I must be able to find a standpoint which transcends the special modal aspects. *Only by transcending the speciality of meaning, can I attain to the actual view of totality by which the former is to be distinguished as such* [...] our selfhood makes the discovery that the view of totality is not possible apart from a view of the origin or ἀρχή of both totality and speciality of meaning"(Dooyeweerd 1969 I: 8).

10. In Gadamer's view we can speak of the older ideal as the Enlightenment prejudice, which actually was meant to promote the domination of nature.

11. "Gegenstand" is the "abstracted special aspect of reality which limits [the] field of research [of the special sciences]"(Dooyeweerd 1969 I: 84). Wolters discussing

Vollenhoven's problem-historical method defines it as "fields of inquiry" (Wolters 1979: 240-241).

12. Seerveld speaks of subject-functioning and object-functioning qualities (Seerveld 1973: 138).

CHAPTER 2

THE NATURE OF CONCEPTUAL DEEP STRUCTURES: A REVISED APPROACH

1. Introduction

The analysis of conceptual deep structures is an alternative way of practising *transcendental and immanent criticism*, because any critical approach to the line of thought of a given philosopher or school of philosophy, will be grounded in the analysis of its discourse. Furthermore, this kind of analysis stresses the recognition of paradigms and models that steer theoretical activity in certain directions. The analysis of conceptual deep structures is restricted to the discourse analysis of philosophical discourses of which the content is essentially constituted by abstracted reality. The possibility of applying the analysis of conceptual deep structures to other kinds of discourses will not be discussed in this chapter. With this transformation of Dooyeweerdian and Vollenhovanian philosophical assumptions, certain advantages might be gained. A very important advantage is that critical analysis is now specifically directed to discourse and that the analysis does not presuppose the explicit starting-point of faith (which nevertheless, I hold as true). Another reason is that it incorporates some recent findings in semantics, metaphor analysis and ideology theory.

2. Rethinking the nature of conceptual deep structures

Conceptual deep structures are the logical and lingual scaffolding by means of which philosophical discourses are erected. An analysis of conceptual deep structures is a discursive kind of analysis, which aims at looking at the rules for philosophical conceptualisation. Referring to one level of this conceptualisation, it has also been called *logosemantic* analysis.

Logosemantics is a theory about philosophical discourse. (Not only the discourse belonging to the individual subject: philosophy, but also

discourse from other disciplines, as far as this contain pronouncements of a philosophical nature.) The basic premise of logosemantics is that, just as we may study the syntactic structures of everyday language, so we might study the conceptual (logico-semantic) structures of philosophical discourse (Visagie 1998: 342).

Logosemantic analysis starts off by exposing the presuppositions underscoring philosophical discourse. These presuppositions refer to the ideas about states of affairs, which form the ground on which philosophical discourses are produced. These ideas are in fact an account of the origin, unity (totality) and diversity of created reality in Dooyeweerd's sense, but a bit more complex. The personal commitment each philosopher or school of philosophy holds is also reflected therein. These presuppositions are the theoretical conditions under which a theoretical discourse is uttered.

According to Dooyeweerd, being aware of the *pre-theoretical* presuppositions held by a philosopher or a school of philosophy is the only means of ensuring true dialogue between philosophers and schools of philosophy.

Those who participate in such a discussion should penetrate to each other's supra-theoretical presuppositions, in order to be able to exercise a truly immanent criticism of each other's philosophical views. Then they will also be prepared to learn from one another by testing their divergent philosophical conceptions of the empirical world by the real states of affairs within the structural order of human experience, which order is a common condition of every philosophy (Dooyeweerd 1960: 56).

For instance, Dooyeweerd points out that it is necessary for every philosopher to accept a structured temporal cosmos as a common presupposition before entering into a dialogue.¹ This is the criterion Dooyeweerd establishes for a true philosophical dialogue. Otherwise, it will only turn out to be a cul-de-sac. Like Strauss says:

Geen wetenskaplike gesprek sal immers op dreef kan kom wanneer die gespreksgenote bloot hul eie standpunte teenoor mekaar stel sonder dat wedersyds ingegaan word op die teenoorstaande standpunte nie. Wie só te werk gaan eindig by die byna spreekwoordelike: 'ek sê dít en jy sê dát, so **what?**' (Strauss 1978: 1).

The analysis of conceptual deep structures is meant to indicate the way in which the interrelation of selected functions or entities is explained in a philosophical discourse. And once the theoretical presuppositions have been specified, it is then possible to pay attention to the inconsistencies present in the conceptual construct of the text. Basically, they are what Dooyeweerd calls absolutisations and dogmatisms which cause an inner conceptual tension, which is a reflection of a theoretically disrupted ontic state of affairs.

Conceptual deep structures - as I want to employ the term methodologically - consist of three components, namely a key-formula, its metaphorical articulation, and its ideological slant. The premises of the transcendental ground-idea, which imply the theory of the modal aspects, inspired the analysis of the key-formula. The ground-motive and time-stream analysis that was discussed in the previous chapter, will be combined and translated into what I will call an ideology analysis. Apart from, but related to these analyses, will be my attempt to discern some basic metaphors that guide Gadamer's thought. The metaphorical analysis is an additional analytical tool, which was never contemplated by Dooyeweerd nor Vollenhoven, for it is the product of the so-called linguistic turn, which is the hallmark of the present philosophical era.

The fact that the analysis of conceptual deep structures is a discursive analysis, immediately relates it to lingual aspect of reality. Nevertheless, such analysis wants to highlight the intricate interrelation between the logical and the lingual aspect of a philosophical discourse, whereby the interrelations of selected functions and entities are expressed. It attempts to bring forth by means of analysis the deep presuppositions and ontological tensions exemplified by means of a key-formula. The metaphor analysis can often point to the analogical relations between different modal aspects expressed in mappings of one conceptual domain onto another. These mappings are a metaphorical procedure. The absolutisation of any modal aspect or entity is present within the discourse in the form of an ideological bias.

The presuppositions underscoring philosophical discourses are never completely new but are always part of a cluster of ideas which are worked out differently in every age. In

other words, these presuppositions are part of a history of ideas. It is then necessary to search for the link between the ideas of a specific thinker and the cluster to which they are related. The analysis of conceptual deep structures will endeavor to expose the conceptual ties to which the discourse belongs.

...logosemantic propositions nearly always function within an interpretative framework of some sort: some kind of tradition, or worldview, or school of thought [...] which paradigm provides the immediate conceptual context within which a proposition is advanced (Visagie 1998: 369).

Hence, following Vollenhoven, one can state that the different philosophical discourses are generated within time-streams (= philosophical ideologies) and that they belong to different philosophical types (= key-formula types). The analysis of conceptual deep structures can make this clear as will be indicated in terms of the categories (such as subject and domain) metaphors used in the conceptual relations. For instance, a monistic type in Vollenhoven's sense will have only one *subject* controlling the elements on the *domain-side*. A dualist type will have two *subjects*; the one will restrict the action of the other in the same discourse. Or for instance, metaphor analysis can help classifying philosophical discourses in terms of the metaphors selected to stake a philosophical claim, that is, certain philosophical time-frames (ideologies) can be distinguished by the metaphors and models employed. Metaphors necessarily point back to the key-formula underlying the text, reinforcing the sustained conceptual hierarchy.

In the case of postmodern thought for example, such figures are mostly meant to communicate a questioning of foundationalist thought. Typical examples are: labyrinth, network, abyss, void, absence, and so on (Visagie 1998: 345).

In closing, I hold that a developed theory of conceptual deep structures has the possibility of reforming some of the critical tools of Reformational philosophy into methods for textual analysis.

I will now explain more extensively the nature of conceptual deep structures. The following sections can be understood as a kind of a modal analysis of the nature of philosophical discourse in its structure and content.

3. The structure of a key-formula

3.1 The key-formula and the modal aspects

3.1.1 *The nature of concepts and ideas*

I would like to discuss the nature of a concept by first calling attention to the main problem surrounding the nature of a concept: *nominalism*. Let me begin by briefly discussing briefly Strauss' distinction between the universal and the individual side of reality; it is upon this distinction which concept formation is possible. The problem lies in the fact that the universals present in reality have been denied ever since the course of philosophy has followed a definite nominalistic trend.

To start this discussion on the nature of concepts, it must be mentioned that it has been taken for granted that conceptual knowledge is grounded upon the universal side of reality. This has been the case ever since Aristotle realised that it is impossible to conceptualise any individuality in a strictly individual way. Therefore he came up with the metaphysics of substances.

Dooyeweerd only considered universality as a specific trait of law-side. Nevertheless, Strauss wants to point out that universality is also to be found in the factual-side. The fact that Dooyeweerd only acknowledged the existence of individuality in the factual-side testifies how he could not escape from the effects of nominalism as a philosophical ideology. Strauss has argued that the distinction between law and law-conformity must be acknowledged. The former must be understood as the order *for* created reality and the latter as order *of* created reality, namely, its orderliness. This latter term refers to that part of the structure of every entity which entails its subjection to the given laws. In other words, the subjection to the laws, which is part and parcel of the being of any entity, is the correlate on the factual-side to the ontic laws on the law-side.

Concept-formation is always bound up with the universal order for, and the universal orderliness of things (Strauss 1981:165).

Conceptual knowledge is the nature of scientific knowledge. The fact that conceptual knowledge is the abstraction of ontically universal and constant features of entities, distinguishes it from the everyday knowledge of reality which is given in an integral dynamics (Strauss 1981: 163).

In connection with the nature of universals, another important distinction to be made is that between entities and functions (modal aspects). The latter are the universal features of the former, in other words, the modalities in which they function. This distinction is relevant for a type of concept formation which is dependent on concrete abstraction.

...in our everyday life we form general concepts that presuppose the relatively constant conditions of anything comprehended. These concepts are formed by means of the lifting out of certain universal characteristics which is accomplished by simultaneously disregarding specific features not belonging to entities of the category under consideration. This act may be labelled as *concrete abstraction* and it enables one to form general concepts such as: a human being, a tree, a horse, a state and so on. The subsequent identification of any (changing) individual entity (this human being, this tree, this horse, this state, and so on) is accomplished through the recognition of those universal features implied in the concept of the respective entity. Thanks to the fact that these universal characteristics are also present in any particular human being (tree, horse or state), one can recognise *this* person (tree, horse or state) as *a* human being (tree, horse or state) (Strauss 1981: 164-165).

The distinction between entities and functions allows us to address briefly the insightful distinction between concept and idea. Strauss argues that although it has been taken for granted that knowledge, especially rational knowledge, is defined in terms of concepts and that it is impossible to have any conceptual knowledge of individualities, nevertheless, it is possible to have an idea or limiting-concept of the latter. The distinction between a concept and an idea is grounded in the specific role the modal aspects play in the description of a state of affairs. In the case of modal concepts, the state of affairs is located within the limits of a modal aspect for its depiction. In the case of an idea, the description of states of affairs is made by employing the modal aspect beyond its

limits. It is in the context of an idea that the universality, individuality, constancy and dynamics in created reality can be discussed and explicated. I also believed that this distinction bears on the relation between concept and metaphor, which will be discussed later.

It has been seen how important the notion of universality and individuality within the framework of the modal aspects is for concept formation. Strauss, in a discussion of van Riessen's work, has referred to the modalities as the points of entry into the structure of human experience and created reality within the context of an idea. Just to give a brief example of how this statement should be understood, it must be argued that concept formation is only possible on the grounds of constant features as a structural part of the dynamics of an entity.

Plato realized, be it in a metaphysical speculatieve (sic) way, that any changes (sic) can only be detected on the basis of something constant (Strauss 1981: 164).

This constancy and dynamics that we are speaking of as important for concept formation, refer to the kinematical and physical modal aspects. They function here as points of entry into the structure of human experience. The terms universality and individuality are, in turn, grounded in the spatial and arithmetical modal aspects.² And because of this modal distinction, it is not possible to reduce the one to the other.

It should be then concluded that the concepts have an ontological basis in which they are grounded. The modal aspects as the laws which constitute the order for created reality are the ontic givens in which concepts are grounded.

Our cosmomic idea about the nature of created reality uses the first four modal entries in the following way: we experience creation in its *universal conditioning order* which *constantly determines* the *cohering diversity* in its *on-going dynamics* (Strauss 1981: 171).

The preceding discussion sets the stage for my description of the structure of key-formulas, because, to my mind, these implement idea-knowledge of modal realities in identifying the ultimate grounding relations that philosophical discourse deals with.

3.2 The components of the key-formula and an example of its application

The first part of my discussion deals with the basic formula or set of formulas in which any theory is grounded and which sums up the paradigm at work behind a particular philosophical line of thought. When the unity of the diversity of meaning within the temporal horizon of our experience is lost sight of, theorists often cannot escape from grounding their account of the whole of reality in a sole modal function of our temporal horizon of experience. In other words, they reduce the wealth of meaning to one single aspect because of the lack of an overall view (which Dooyeweerd refers to as the Archimedean point). This reductionism is captured in the formula.

Therefore the first step in the analysis of the mechanism which sets a whole philosophical theory in motion, is to find the (so-called logosemantic) key-formula. The coherence of the discourse is dependent on such a formulation, since it actually constitutes the core of the argument. At issue is a central conceptualisation:

...sustaining any body of genuine philosophical discourse, a proposition that can usually be reconstructed from actual expressions featured in the discourse (Visagie 1998: 342).

Getting hold of this formula facilitates an even-handed criticism, which sorts out the moments of truth from tensions and inconsistencies to be found in a given paradigm. This allows for a real dialogue among theorists and schools as each one of them is then fully aware where they stand in relation to their own beliefs and dogmas and in relation to the fundamental philosophical problems summarised in the formula.

The formula consists of three main parts. The controlling aspect or *subject-category* is to be found on the left-hand side. On the right-hand side is found the controlled aspect or *domain-category*. Both are linked by an *operator-category*, which, in actual texts, is usually expressed as a transitive verb such as the following: to cause, to constitute, to lay the foundation, to control, etc. All of them pertain to the *control Wortfeld* (semantic field) of philosophical language as they express control in a specific ontological sense.

The *subject-category* covers that particular function, entity, structure, process, etc., that the discourse presents as the explanatory discovery of the author, as the important "thing" that in some way structures the whole of reality or large parts of reality [...] The *domain-category* covers those sectors of reality that are in some way dependent on the posited subject [...] The *operator-category* indicates the precise action(s) performed by the subject on the domain ... (Visagie 1998: 343).

On both sides of the equation there are concepts (textually expressed as adjectives) qualifying both elements. These adjectives or *attributes* (to use the technical term) usually operate as pairs of antonyms; each one of them is located on each side of the formula. The set of attributes is a definite one: (1) unitary vs. multiple (simple vs. complex); (2) finite vs. infinite; (3) constant vs. dynamic; (4) knowable vs. unknowable; (5) necessary vs. contingent; (6) universal vs. individual.

...from the time of Greek philosophy, we see a relatively small set of pairs of contrasting concepts that are used, again and again, to specify the domain and especially the subject of logosemantic propositions (Visagie 1998: 343).

...all of these pairs are also classic philosophical concepts: they crop up again and again when philosophical discourse has to say something about the logosemantic subjects it is always dealing with (Visagie 1998: 349-350).

It is apparent how modal ideas of some of the most basic modal aspects enter into the construction of key-formulas. What also enters into the attribute-category are modally anchored ideas of universality/individuality, necessity/contingency and so on.

Note how a philosophical discourse that features a strong conceptualisation of the dynamic nature of the key-subject (and possibly of its domain) points to what we may call (following Vollenhoven/Seerveld) a geneticist type of conception. Selecting the opposite of this attributive item (constant instead of dynamic) renders a typically structuralist conception. Geneticist formulas will be attracted to operators like *generate* and structuralist formulas to operators like *order* or *structure*.

Below is a simple schematic representation of a specific key-formula in 3 main parts: x , y , and z . The x represents the subject-category; the y represents the operator-category; and the z represents the domain-category. The attributes qualifying x and z appear in the initial and final brackets.

Diagram 1

[att simple] [x mathematico-physical laws] [y determine] [z reality] [att complex]

Note concerning formula notation: In this and all the subsequent formulas-analyses I will use the notation method of square brackets, indicating the different parts of the formula. For simplicity I will use the x , y , and z labels for categories instead of the technical-theoretical terms like subject, operator and domain. If attributes are relevant, these will be indicated by the square brackets labelled "att". Also, whenever the y -category is not a specified concept or immediately relevant for the analysis, I will rather fill in the category brackets with an arrow. Note also that in the formal representation of the key-formula, the concept denoted in the operator slot is not formulated in a syntactically correct way (as the verb of a sentence), since we are dealing here with a conceptual reconstruction which is abstracted from syntactic rules. Finally, whenever the y -category is to be specified in terms of two or more operators, I will indicate this element of choice by putting the operator in curly brackets.

With respect to the above formula, it is a typical reductionistic account of our temporal horizon of experience, though it also points out the modal universality of the mathematical and physical aspects. This proposition (which Galileo could have underwritten) sheds light on the way in which the entities and we function in these basic aspects of reality (number, space, movement, physical laws). Yet the reduction of our horizon of temporal existence to mathematico-physical laws is just half true. This statement is typical of a mechanistic view which reduces reality to a complex of natural scientific functions.

Galileo's significance lies in his contributions to the construction of a mathematical science, which was designed to explain the orderly processes in the universe. All this was built on the idea of a mechanical world. Note that this view tended to set the stage for the belief that the only real reality is that which can be scientifically explained in mathematical terms (Van Dyk 1969, 1970: 74).

Comparing the above analysis with the structure of Dooyeweerd's ground-idea, we see that the structure of the key-formula provides for (1) complex *subjects* which may be of a modal or an entitary nature, (2) detailed distinctions between the *action* and the *domain* of these subjects, (3) detailed consideration of attributive qualification, (4) a combination of ground-idea characteristics with certain Vollenhovian typological distinctions.

4. The structure of metaphors

4.1 Reformational philosophy and metaphor theory

It is remarkable that Dooyeweerd did not give any credit to the role metaphors play in meaning. Furthermore, he downplayed it by saying, "[b]ut in philosophy we are not concerned with the visionary world of the poet"(Dooyeweerd 1969 III: 68).

Metaphors were never thought of as points of entry for our human experience of temporal reality. Metaphors were considered then as language which belongs to naïve experience. Conversely, theoretical language was thought to be, *exclusively*, based upon concepts which derived from the modal analogies and therefore having real epistemological value. This is so because analogies are considered by Dooyeweerd as a true ontological account of the temporal coherence of meaning.

Let us explore some basic distinctions in the field of metaphor theory in order to determine how its contributions are serviceable to our discourse analysis. It will also be of value to discuss how metaphor theory can be integrated into the tradition of Reformational philosophy.

4.2. The nature of a metaphor

George Lakoff has made valuable contributions in metaphor theory which have implied the definite recognition of metaphors as having a legitimate epistemological character. Elaine Botha's discussion on the fundamental role metaphors play in scientific activity integrates the views of Black, Ricoeur, Hesse, Lakoff and some others with some assumptions of Reformational philosophy. Thus Lakoff's and Botha's views constitute the theoretical background against which metaphor analysis related to conceptual deep structures is discussed in this section.

Let us keep in mind that that modern metaphor theory has moved away from the classical distinction between literal and metaphorical meaning. According to Lakoff the literal meaning theory is grounded in objectivist semantics which holds that the meaning of any linguistic expression comes from the direct correlation with the real world without the mediation of the subject.³ In this way, literal meaning fits reality. Hence, literal meaning can be objectively true or false, whereas figurative meaning simply does not fit reality. Therefore, it does not have meaning at all. This is the case with metaphors and other speech figures, which cannot be included in any objective definition. They lack the so-called direct correspondence with entities and categories.

The problem is the external perspective - the God's eye view. We are not outside of reality. We are part of it, *in* it. What is needed is not an externalist perspective, but an internalist perspective. It is a perspective that acknowledges that we are organisms functioning as part of reality and that it is impossible for us to ever stand outside it and take the stance of an observer with a perfect knowledge, an observer with a God's eye point of view [...] We can know reality from the inside, on the basis of being part of it (Lakoff 1987: 261).

4.2.1 *The relation between concept and metaphor*

Lakoff and Turner plead for a new understanding of metaphors. Metaphors are devices which *map* conceptual domains onto others. They believe that concepts are in the first place the ground for metaphors and that metaphors can help us to understand other

concepts by means of *mappings* between conceptual domains. These mappings are possible thanks to the fact that concepts have complex internal structures. Metaphors are serviceable to such complex structures, since some of those aspects are understood through metaphors and some without. It is in this sense that not everything is a metaphor. According to Lakoff and Turner there are metaphorical and non-metaphorical elements intertwined within the complexity of the structure of a concept. He speaks of conceptual domains where concepts are “understood and structured on [their] own terms” (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 57). The metaphorical side of a concept only refers to those parts of the structure of a concept which are set at play with other parts of the structure of a concept belonging to another domain. In this case, Lakoff and Turner speak of metaphorical mappings.

Metaphorical mappings take place when the objects, relations and properties of the *source domain* get mapped onto the objects, relations and properties of the *target domain*. Lakoff and Turner call these objects, relations and properties “slots” (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 61). Some of them are already available in the target domain, but some others are created during the mapping. In other words, the results of mapping certain “slots” from the source domain onto the latter can be seen in the creation of structure in the target domain. The understanding of the latter is broadened by means of the structures created by the mappings.

Lakoff and Turner base their discussion on the nature of concepts by recognising the fundamental importance of conventional knowledge when interpreting, for example, a poem. Conventional knowledge is a guideline, which leads into various ways of understanding the purported target domain. Conventional knowledge of the source domain will always imply the recognition of its several slots, which will constitute blank positions to be filled in by the target domain.

Lakoff and Turner argue that some metaphorical mappings can constitute schemas, because they gradually become too conventional in order to be noticed and therefore they are accepted without hesitation.⁴ Lakoff and Turner believe that knowledge is ultimately

organised in terms of these schemas which will become cognitive models. These models help us to understand certain aspects of our experience of the world as well as our understanding of the way we experience.

We understand and reason using our conceptual system, which includes an inventory of structures, of which schemas and metaphors are established parts (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 62).

For the same reasons that schemas and metaphors give us power to conceptualize and reason, so they have power over us. Anything that we rely on constantly, unconsciously, and automatically is so much part of us that it cannot be easily resisted, in large measure because it is barely even noticed. To the extent that we use a conceptual schema or a conceptual metaphor, we accept its validity (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 63).

Lakoff and Turner also refer to the non-metaphorical parts of a concept as understood directly and automatically. These aspects conform to what they call a conceptual domain. A conceptual domain originates in "what we take to be our forms of life, our habitual and routine bodily and social experiences":

Things that we think of as being straightforwardly physical - rocks and trees and arms and legs - are usually things that we have conceptualized not metaphorically but rather in terms of what we take to be our bodily experience. In addition, the source domains of many metaphors are typically understood without metaphor. Thus, departures, journeys, plants, fire, sleep, days and nights, heat and cold, possessions, burdens and locations are not themselves metaphorically understood, at least insofar as they form a basis for the metaphorical understanding of other concepts (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 59).

Not all of the aspects encompassed and implied in a concept are used at once in a mapping; they are selected depending on how relevant they are to the understanding of the structure of the concept onto which they are transposed.

...aspects of one concept, the target, are understood in terms of non-metaphoric aspects of another concept, the source (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 59).

4.2.2 *The nominalist stance of Lakoff's and Turner's theory*

Let me at this stage make a critical remark. Lakoff and Turner remain too philosophically obscure and restricted in their justification of the non-metaphorical part of the structure of a concept. They argue that conceptual domains are given unto us by means of direct bodily experience and indirectly by means of culture. I argued in the previous chapter that the range of aspects of our experience of reality is much broader.

Thus, people who have never see millstones can nonetheless learn, via their culture, that they are used in mills to grind grain, and that they are the enormous round flat stones that rotate about an axis. Cognitive models that are acquired via our culture are typically models that are long-standing in the culture. Cultural models of this sort are often at variance with our scientific knowledge (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 66).

To my mind, this restricted ontology is trapped in the age-old conflict between subjectivism and objectivism. For them knowledge must be mediated by a subject which in their view is defined in terms of its biological and social aspects. This subjectivistic slant in their theory of cognitive models and metaphors as epistemological tools reveal the strong influence of the nominalistic tradition of western thought. They will ascribe to the rational type of nominalism, which accepts the existence of universals (words, concepts) only in the mind (Strauss 1988: 632).

Their nominalist view is evidenced when they speak against objectivism:

Of course, just because these conceptualizations are non-metaphoric does not mean that they are mind-free. It does not mean that they are somehow given to us directly by the objective world [...] But their grounding is not metaphoric. It is instead in patterns of what we take to be habitual and routine experience, both biological and social, that we know unconsciously and in rich interactional detail, because we live these patterns (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 59).

Lakoff's and Turner's nominalism becomes even more explicit when they speak of "the Great Chain of Being". Supposedly they need an Archimedean point and a way to explain unity regarding the structure of knowledge as well as its diversity. And this is it:

...we will introduce a large-scale cognitive model - the Great Chain of Being - which ranges over the full gamut of forms of being in the

universe. It is a cognitive model that we use to make sense of, and impose order on, the universe. It is acquired culturally, at least in its extended forms, and in describing it we are, of course, not suggesting that the universe really conforms to the model [...] We have called them “cognitive models” here to stress their mental nature and to distinguish them from any claim that they represent scientific reality (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 66-67).

In terms of key-formula analysis, nominalism comes down to the following:

[x mind] [y {order, structure }] [z reality]

In addition, the domain [reality] is strongly qualified by the attribute [individual] – contrasting with the [universal] concepts of the mind. Note how this analysis makes plain that the subject “mind” is *separated* from the domain of “reality” and empowered over the latter.

4.3 The heuristic and constitutive role of metaphors in science

4.3.1 Hypothetico-structural explanation

Let us now move on to Elaine Botha’s discussion of the importance of acknowledging the role that metaphors play in science. She understands their role in terms of *inter alia* models, conceptual displacements, metaphorical mappings and meaning shifts. All of these states of affairs are part of what she calls a *hypothetico-structural explanation*. Through such a theoretical device we can gain a better understanding of scientific activity, especially in its relation to language. In addition, she suggests the possibility of understanding theory as a lingually and not logically qualified tool. Her whole argument rests on the metaphorical nature of language.

Both Hesse’s (1966) and Kuhn’s (1973: 202) emphasis on the pivotal role of language in models, and scientific descriptions were certainly significant contributions to an alternative understanding of the structure of science and the nature of scientific language. [...] The decisive contribution of Black’s theory of metaphor to the existing body of knowledge concerning the function of metaphorical language, is the fact that it provided valuable new insights into the dynamic nature of language

and the creative process of meaning disclosure and meaning variance (Botha 1988: 145).

What is a hypothetico-structural explanation? It is a hypothesis which proposes a structure in order to give an account of the state of affairs to be explained. This structure is called a model. This model cannot be observed. In other words, a hypothetico-structural explanation is a theoretical model which "provide[s] us with a metaphorical and tentative idea between the unknown and the observed properties" (Botha 1988: 150). Botha's argument regarding the lingual qualification of theories lies in the necessary distinction between theory and models. A theory becomes a set of propositions which explain a hypothetical structure or model. It is within the context of hypothetico-structural explanations that the role of metaphors becomes evident.

Speaking metaphorically on the basis of a model, a scientist is enabled not only to posit but to refer to theoretical entities by the use of terms which transcend experience in that their semantic context is not fully determined a priori by the empirical conditions for their application (Botha 1988: 151).

To exemplify what the role of metaphors in hypothetico-structural explanation is, Botha selects the explanation of the nature of electrical energy which is made by using the model of a fluid. Terms such as "rate of flow" are metaphorical and derived from this model. Models then serve as a source of terms which are coined when required to explain a state of affairs. The existence of theoretical entities and their relations are supposed in the model. They can later on be confirmed by the success of the explanation.

Botha's account on the role of metaphors in scientific progress consists of three moments, namely "an imaginative perceptive moment (to 'see' or 'seeing-as...' (sic)), a moment of logical identification and distinction (logical concept formation), and the linguistic formulation of such a concept which leads to a restructuration of semantic fields" (Botha 1988: 164-165).

4.3.2 Metaphor models

The most important result of the use of hypothetico-structural explanations is the recognition of the heuristic and constitutive role of metaphorical models. Structural accounts based on metaphor models aim at uncovering the functional analogies present in the temporal cosmic order.⁵

The hidden structures, which condition the existence of the observable phenomena, studied in scientific disciplines, are approximated by theories developed on the basis of models which facilitates conceptualization and conceptual problem-solving (Botha 1988: 147).

Let us now consider the structure of these metaphorical models within the context of the theory of metaphors espoused by Botha. In the first place, the structure of a metaphor entails an inner tension similar to the one depicted by Dooyeweerd in the Gegenstand-relation (Botha 1988: 144). This tension reflects the complexity and coherence of reality. The tension is based on the "similarity-in-difference relationships fundamental to all human experience" (Botha 1988: 144). The interactive view of a metaphor elicited the recognition of the role language plays in theoretical activity. The interactive theory introduced the classification of metaphors in *epiphors* (which express obvious comparisons between two domains) and *diaphors* (which suggest comparisons which are not too obvious). It is the latter which supports the insights of interactive theory. Botha is convinced of the productivity of metaphorical models regarding concept formation and as indicators of structural relations in a given state of affairs.⁶

Language functions as vehicle (sic) in the process of theoretical analysis and yet metaphorical models in fact represent more than language; they function as intuitive approximators of similarities-in-difference. What characterizes the effective scientific metaphor is its ability to offer possibilities for suggestive hypotheses concerning the structure of the actual behaviour of the phenomena under consideration...Yet, the nature of concept formation is in fact the synthesis of a multiplicity of moments in a unity and as such logical abstraction, identification and analysis is presupposed (Botha 1988: 165).

There is a relation between metaphor and experience and cosmic temporal order:

The meanings ascribed to the metaphors-in-context are constrained by experience, which in turn is limited by the boundary conditions set by the structures or nomic conditions of reality (Botha 1988: 159-160).

On these grounds, there is a true metaphorical disclosure of our understanding of the world.

The fact that metaphorical redescriptions of the primary domain of the explanandum in science leads to a deepening of understanding and an extension of insight into certain structural aspects, must be attributed to the 'new way of seeing' which the metaphor makes possible. This does not only constitute a figurative or symbolic manner of speaking about the primary subject, but *actually refers* and *truly describes* some aspects of the structure of the primary domain (Botha 1988: 153-154).

4.3.3 *Scientific language*

Regarding scientific language, hypothetico-structural explanation involves novelty in the sense of conceptual displacement and conceptual innovation. These events take place through shifts in meaning. Meaning is then constantly shifting and it occurs by means of mappings between two domains. These mappings show new structural correspondences between these two domains. These mappings whereby new structural correspondences are exhibited are based upon a process of selection which singles out certain traits of entities, leaving out others. This can well be called a process of abstraction because similarities and differences are sought out. Metaphorical mappings are at the basis of meanings shifts which are given in the interaction between two domains, constituting a better understanding of reality and lexical development. By means of these mappings scientific vocabulary can be developed.

Conceptual problems create opportunities for scientific progress and can be solved through metaphoric reformulation. These conceptual problems originate when one theory conflicts with another. They also derive from internal inconsistencies within a theory. Metaphoric reformulation implies the reorganisation of the semantic field of the conceptual domain. Conceptual innovation is based upon ontological analogies and by means of scientific imagination, avenues are opened for new insights into the structure of

reality. Meaning is then constantly generated in this way. In scientific activity these two domains might well be two theories which intersect, rendering a new perspective of reality. This implies conceptual displacements and conceptual growth. Metaphors produce meaning disclosure of hidden aspects of reality. Why? Because the analogical structure of reality is the basis for metaphorical mapping.

Often a metaphor approximates such a purported analogy by expressing or articulating the contours of the existing analogical resemblances which characterize the analogical relationship (Botha 1988: 152).

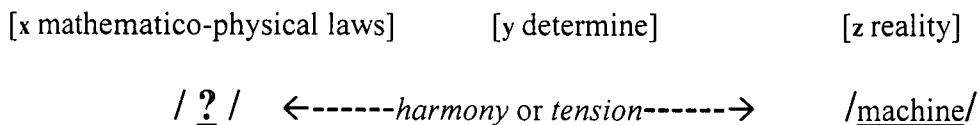
4.4 Metaphor analysis in connection with key-formulas

Let us now exemplify metaphor analysis in terms of the function of key-formulas.⁷ Especially the *x* and the *z* parts of a key-formula are often conceptualised in metaphorical relation to other concepts.

...logosemantics provides for a different level of representation – where account is given of the images and models that always complement these concepts (Visagie 1998: 344).

In the first place, it is necessary to determine the source-target relations of metaphors as this applies to the elements of the formula. To this end one has to take a close look at the language of the relevant texts. Let's assume for example that a given text featuring the formula analysed in diagram 1 consistently portrays the domain concept *reality* in terms of a machine or mechanistic images. Then this complication can be analytically captured in the following representation.

Diagram 2



With regard to the notation above, here and throughout this study metaphorical structure will be indicated as shown above – with the source concept enclosed in a “metaphor box”.

In this particular formula, the notion of "reality" and the picture of a machine are set at play. The outcome can be, for instance, a reality which is constructed upon a rather simple fixed order, which determines its "functionality", which is complex. Slots such as gears can, for example, lead us to think of the world as consisting of ongoing chains of causes. Correspondingly, a machine also implies controllable processes, which are exemplified in scientific experiments.

Given the metaphorical mapping of the domain-category z in our example, we can expect this to have consequence for the conceptualisation of the subject x . The laws in question may themselves be referred to as the "central mechanism" of the universe, for example. This particular conceptualisation would then fill the *question-mark box* in the above formula. Or the source of the subject metaphor may be such as to invite critical analysis of an inconsistency: when the ordering laws are conceptualised as an "organism" for example. (It is interesting to note that in some of his very earliest publications, Dooyeweerd spoke of the complex of divinely created laws for the cosmos in this way.)

Having made clear the link between key-formula and metaphor, it is also necessary to point out that the latter can be regarded as a conceptual deep structure in its own right. It is possible to abstract and analyse the guiding metaphors of a discourse without subsuming the latter to formula structure.

Regarding the structure of metaphors, I reject a certain logicism that strips metaphors of the unique conveying power which I believe is proper to the lingual aspect. The relation between the source domain and the target domain has a surplus of meaning which is difficult to grasp in a sheer analytical formula.

5. Ideology analysis

5.1. Ideology and Reformational philosophy

The analysis of conceptual deep structures should include the idea of conceptual domination present in philosophical discourses. By conceptual domination I mean instances where the absolutisation or privileging of one concept implies the domination of another. The idea of conceptual domination is already present in Dooyeweerd's model of religious ground-motives which offers a general explanation of the rise of Western culture and thought, and in Vollenhoven's model of types and time-streams which treats the various schools of thought from different periods as one conflicting continuum by referring to a fixed set of problems which is interpreted differently in different historical periods.

However, let us now explore the context in which one should understand these ground-motives, and type and time-streams as *ideological forces*.

5.2. Ideology as a critical term

Traditionally ideology is understood in the context of domination of one group over another. As Schoeman says:

All ideologies relate to cherished and legitimate ideals and goals of groups of peoples, especially of those who suffer from the structures of domination imposed on them by oppressors, despots, dictators, tyrants, and the like (Schoeman 1997: 11).

Thompson distinguishes two kinds of conceptions of ideology. According to him there are the neutral type and the negative type. The first type does not define ideology as a distortion, since ideology in this sense is a necessary part of social life. In other words, the neutral conception of ideology considers it as a structural component of our social life. Societies are not bound by consensus but by antagonisms.

The stability of our societies may depend, not so much upon a consensus concerning particular values or norms, but upon a lack of consensus at the

very point where oppositional attitudes could be translated into political action (Thompson 1984: 5).

Thompson uses the example of a political programme as supposedly a type of necessary ideology. He employs metaphorical language to make his point:

Like military hardware or tactical know-how, ideology may be a weapon which is orientated towards victory but towards no particular victor, since it is in principle available to any combatant who has the resources and skills to acquire and employ it (Thompson 1990: 53).

Conversely, the negative conception defines ideology as “misleading, illusory or one-sided” (Thompson 1990: 54). It is judged in terms of being either “abstract or impractical”; “erroneous or illusory”; “expressing dominant interests”; or “[sustaining] relations of domination” (Thompson 1990: 54). He contends that critical social theory should keep to the negative sense inherent in the term ideology. Schoeman also reminds us of the negative denotation ideology has always had.

Ideology always represents a reductionist and warped (slanted) perspective of reality and is coercive without exception (Schoeman, 1997: 12).

5.3 Ideology and language

Thompson compels us to abandon the restricted notion of the term ideology, which is pretty much related to Marx’s view on class domination and false consciousness.⁸ In his critical account of ideology as a socio-historical phenomenon, Thompson pays special attention to the symbolic aspect through which relations of domination are upheld. This is a much broader approach to ideology than the traditional one. Let us briefly note his argument.

...to study ideology is to study the ways in which meaning serves to establish and sustain relations of domination. Ideological phenomena are meaningful symbolic phenomena in so far as they serve, in particular social-historical circumstances, to establish and sustain relations of domination. In so far as: it is crucial to stress that symbolic phenomena, or certain symbolic phenomena, are not ideological as such, but are ideological only in so far as they serve, in particular circumstances, to maintain relations of domination (Thomson 1990: 56).

In order to find out whether symbolic forms are being applied for ideological purposes, they must be viewed within social-historical contexts where meaning and power are set at play. According to Thompson, these symbolic forms need not be illusory or misleading, for they might as well be contingent features in the context of relations of domination. Thompson focuses on the way these symbolic forms are used for domination purposes. The latter then are not necessary false.⁹

...once we recognize that ideology operates through language and that language is a medium of social action, we must also acknowledge that ideology is partially constitutive of what, in our societies, is 'real'. Ideology is not a pale image of the social world but is part of that world, a creative and constitutive element of our social lives [...] We are constantly involved in extending the meaning of words, in producing new meanings through metaphor, word-play and interpretation; and we are thereby also involved, knowingly or not, in altering, undermining or reinforcing our relations with others and with the world. To study ideology is to study, in part, the ways in which these creative, imaginary activities serve to sustain social relations which are asymmetrical with regard to the organization of power (Thompson 1984: 5-6).

Relations of domination are born out of the creation of symbolic forms and the creation of symbolic forms is dependent on the relations of domination. According to Thompson, Marx overlooked other forms of domination which extend beyond relations of class domination. There are relations of domination between sexes, ethnic groups, between first-world and third-world countries, and the like.

What are these symbolic forms? "...a broad range of actions and utterances, images and texts, which are produced by subjects and recognized by them and others as meaningful constructs" (Thompson 1990: 59). They are not necessarily linguistic in nature. They can also be visual.

Thompson explains the modes of operation of ideology based on what he came to call strategies of symbolic construction. He has identified general modes of ideological operation. Each one of them applies strategies of symbolic construction which are relatively typical to that mode. The following strategies are identified:

1. **rationalisation** (providing convincing arguments for the justification of certain social relations);
2. **universalisation** (the assumption that positions of power that serve individuals are in fact accessible to all);
3. **narrativisation** (nostalgia for the days of glory is a valuable source of stories which depict states of affairs as if they have always been so);
4. **displacement** (terms which are normally used to refer to a specific group or relation, are now applied to other groups or relations in order to avoid the negative connotations implied in the usual use);
5. **euphemisation** (terms with negative connotations are replaced by other terms with positive connotations);
6. **trope** (figurative language -synecdoche, metonymy, metaphor- employed in the discursive justification of domination);
7. **standardisation** (symbolic exchanges are made within a standard framework which is supposedly shared by all the groups involved);
8. **symbolisation of unity** (the employment of inclusive symbols under which the identity of a group is developed);
9. **differentiation** (the differences between groups are magnified);
10. **expurgation of the other** (a specific group is targeted as the common enemy to be defeated);
11. **naturalisation** (cultural products are regarded as the outcomes of nature);

12. **eternalisation** (cultural outcomes are depicted as a-historical states of affairs); and
13. **nominalisation/ passivisation** (grammatical strategies are applied to hide the subject responsible for certain actions, by turning these actions into (anonymous) nouns or passive forms).

Thompson (1984: 99-100) contends that ideological critique should not be satisfied with accomplishing structuralist analyses of discourses but should also be in the position to point out the practical reasons for the production of this kind of discourses.¹⁰ It is a similar gap in ideology theory that the analysis of conceptual deep structures attempts to overcome by pointing out not so much concrete social or historical circumstances, but rather pre-theoretical forces and commitments, especially as these touch on philosophical discourse.

5.4 The locus of ideology

To my mind, the taxonomy of presuppositions proposed by Schoeman and the 'launching sites' described by Visagie (1996a: 75) are serviceable to understand how and where ideology operates. Schoeman has distinguished three levels of a priori conditions in terms of how proximate or distant they are in connection with our thoughts and actions. Philosophy and philosophy of the special sciences constitute the proximate level of presuppositions. They are concerned with epistemological issues. World-views, ideologies, and "ethos" represent the remote level. They are concerned with cosmological issues. The ultimate level is conformed by the basic driving motives which have to do with transcendental issues such as the origin of created reality (Schoeman 1997: 24-25).

To my mind, the fact that Thompson (1990: 145) speaks of socio-historical contexts regarding the symbolic forms linked to ideology, bolsters Schoeman's taxonomic description of ideology as being intimately related to the world-view and the ethos of a community. The latter can easily shelter ideologies due to their nature. A world-view is a non-scientific and integral account of the reality of the world and of human nature.

Furthermore, it is meant to be a kind of existential frame of reference in relation to self-knowledge and conduct. It also provides certainty and security in the face of circumstances, which are always unpredictable. The ethos refers to the extra-logical motivations or dispositions of individuals and communities, which determine their decision-making (Schoeman 1997: 35-39).

Likewise, Visagie distinguishes three different cultural spheres, namely social culture, theoretical culture and aesthetic culture. His analysis aims at describing the 'launching sites' where the *privileging* of certain norms, values, practices and the like conceptually takes place. He also distinguishes two levels of ideological operation, namely a macro-level, which affects the direction the culture spheres take, and a micro-level, which affects the private life of the individual. Visagie labels as "steering powers" those norms, values and practices which have been *favoured* and operate at a macro-level. These *steering powers* are upheld by *mythologising grand narratives*. (Visagie 1996a: 75).

Of course it should be noted that my accommodation of Thompson's concept of group domination (and the discourses that facilitate this) to social or cultural value-constellations that are in themselves ideological (on account of conceptual domination relations), will probably not be accepted by John Thompson. The overall aim of his model is precisely to move away from what he perceives as the insurmountable problems arising from any effort to target in ideology critique on false perceptions of reality. In his opinion the uncontestable relations of domination between social subjects provide a far better criterion.

5.5 Ideology as a hypernorm

With reference to the ideological manipulation of symbolic forms, I would like to contend that ideology as related to relations of domination can be conceived of as a subtle domination of one discourse over the rest which shapes societal structures and the whole of human life. The term ideology refers in this context to those discourses which have been raised to a privileged position in order to control the manifold normative activities structured by the diversity of normative spheres and aspects of human experience. Their

exclusivity distorts our world-view as well as our self-understanding, because one aspect, relation or activity is raised at the expense of the legitimacy of the other aspects, relations or activities. Following Visagie, these favored discourses will be called *hypernorms*.

...a "hypernorm" is revealed when some or other practice, a value, concept or institution is illegitimately elevated to a position of hegemony. When such an illegitimate shift in significance takes place, other practices, values, concepts, institutions and the like that all have legitimate claims to diverse and unique spheres of competence and existence are subordinated to this hypernorm (Schoeman 1997: 13).

The relevance of the concept of hypernorm for the analysis of conceptual deep structures is better understood by means of a metaphorical mapping, in the sense that in ideology analysis of philosophical discourses, it is possible to speak of *conceptual relations of domination*.

The relations of domination in the pre-theoretical and theoretical dimensions become evident through *diaphorical transpositions*. Especially, when I refer to powers which certain aspects or entities or activities are granted in a discourse, I am mapping onto it the social power which individuals possess in different degrees.

Individuals situated within socially structured contexts have, by virtue of their location, different quantities of, and different degrees of access to, available resources. The social location of individuals, and the entitlements associated with their position in a social field or institution, endow them with varying degrees of 'power', understood at this level as a socially or institutionally endowed capacity which enables or empowers some individuals to make decisions, pursue ends or realize interests. We can speak of 'domination' when established relations of power are 'systematically asymmetrical', that is, when particular agents or groups of agents are endowed with power in a durable way which excludes, and to some significant degree remains inaccessible to, other agents or groups of agents, irrespective of the basis upon which such exclusion is carried out (Thompson 1990: 59).

This brings me to what I conceive of as the basic aim of ideology theory: to unite the sphere of discourse - facilitated group domination (referring to Marx's conception) with the sphere of dominant discourses in culture or society. Dooyeweerd's ground-motive analysis - specifically the critique of the absolutisation of both human freedom and

scientific control - would of course be situated in the latter sphere of ideology. In the form of ideological discourses, his humanistic ground-motive would interact with several other ideological discourses on the macro- and micro-level. These interconnected discourses are in various ways also linked to the subject relations of domination that Thompson is concerned about. The ideological formations one can place within the sphere of dominant discourses would include not only Dooyeweerd's freedom-science nexus, but also, for example, the ideologies identified by Bob Goudzwaard (1984): ethno-nationalist ideology, the prosperity ideology, national security ideology and the revolution ideology.

Furthermore one might conceive the modern preoccupation with (hyper-normative) self-expression as another important contemporary ideology, intricately linked to the others. On the micro-level there are what we can call various pastoral ideologies to be distinguished.

...a category of pastoral havens: formations that constitute the truly 'existential' ideologies of our culture, each one tailored to provide the most concrete answers to the individual's quest for personal meaning here and now. Think for instance of the consolations of love and sex, prestige and power, money and consumerism, art and moralism (Visagie 1996a: 75).

Finally, the time-streams that Vollenhoven analyzed can also be integrated into this model. They would form part of the theoretical sphere of ideology referred to previously. Again it can be seen how the approach to conceptual deep structures advocated here, is a complex one, integrating (and modifying) what have previously been quite separate methodologies in Reformational philosophy.

5.6 Ideology and the key-formula

The ideals of autonomous freedom and scientific knowledge constitute the core of the discourse of modernity which has dominated the cultural atmosphere since the Renaissance. Due to the pre-theoretical dialectic inherent in the discourse of modernity, which Dooyeweerd has described in general terms as the nature-freedom ground-motive

and which Vollenhoven has specified in a series of time-streams, a number of discourses, the philosophical “-isms”, have arisen, emphasizing one or more of the ground-motive poles. Amongst the preminent discourses are, for example, the following: positivism, pragmatism, existentialism and post-structuralism. In every case it can be shown that some or other key-formula underlies these different philosophies. Furthermore, as has already been indicated, these various formulas will be differentiated according to (amongst other things) geneticist or structuralist preferences.

5.7 An brief example of ideology analysis

Our above example of a key-formula illustrates the conceptualizing of science in a privileged position. Science can become an ideology when it is placed as the ultimate layer amongst other cultural institutions which also have the right to make their contributions to cultural development. If the world is ordered by natural-scientific laws, then by getting hold of them man can master it in its complexity. Phenomena can be predicted and anticipated thereby. Here the science ideal (scientism) becomes the ideology which more or less inaugurated the whole of modern age. Science – one of the dominant steering powers of our culture - controls and has given to our lives a certain shape. There is no doubt that it has taken the lead of cultural development for a long time. But it can be argued that Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven underestimated the role of technocracy and economism alongside scientism.

In connection with the ideological steering power of science, I have chosen positivism as a time-stream which is helpful to illustrate how scientism can shape cultural activity in general. Late rationalism, which was predominant in the middle of the 19th century, characterized reason more as an activity than as a specific content; that is, it was more a matter of method than judgements and concepts. Scientific reason was expressed in positivism. Its influence on every scientific field is best understood if we consider how the humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*) were modeled on its achievements. Efforts were made to study, for example, history in a “scientific” way; that is, with the use of a methodology to which the historical Gegenstand had to conform (Bril 1986: 212-213).

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2. For an important discussion regarding the modal descent of the terms individuality and universality, see Strauss 1988: 618-621.
 3. Lakoff says that at the centre of objectivist semantics lies a transcendental rationality, which goes beyond any being. To reason correctly means to be able to correctly manipulate symbols in order to mirror that transcendental rationality which gives to the world its structure. As said, these symbols are actually concepts which have fixed correspondences with entities and categories. Real knowledge deals with concepts, meaning and rationality excluding any intervention from the human body. Real knowledge is expressed in a God's eye view (Lakoff 1987: 173-174).
 4. It is appropriate to compare Lakoff's views on the power of conceptual schemas with Gadamer's view on tradition as conditioning and predetermining knowledge and understanding.
 5. Strauss restricts the use of the term "analogy" to modal analogies and the term "metaphor" to entities. Botha (1988: 163) thinks it is difficult to draw the line between them because both of them presuppose each other.
 6. Structures are *for* reality. These are the "laws governing and conditioning the regularities perceived in phenomena"(Botha 1988: 151).
 7. The term metaphor used in our analysis is an inclusive term which denotes the *figurality* aspect of the discourse.
 8. The restriction of the use of the term ideology with regard to relations of domination is characteristic of the reductionism Marx made of the economic aspect, for he understood ideological domination only in this sense. According to Schoeman, Marx was right to ground the aesthetic, juridical, ethical and pistical aspects in the historical and economic aspects. Nonetheless, he was wrong when he tried to explain these former (irreducible) aspects in terms of the latter. (Schoeman 1997: 12).

9. On the one hand, his account of the structure of ideology points out an analogy between the lingual aspect and the social aspect. On the other hand, his explanation seems very close to Wolters' fruitful distinction between *structure* and *direction*, which is entailed by every entity of the temporal cosmic order - in this case, symbolic forms (Wolters 1985b: 9). But it is precisely the false thought that can (largely) be captured by the notion of ideology. And it is this false direction that must be presumed to be arguably false as an absolutisation - quite apart from the possible connection to relations of group domination (Thompson's preferred criterion).

10. The latter alludes to the Chomskyan distinction between competence and performance, which is understood not in an abstract way but in relation to the circumstances originating such discourses (Visagie 1996a: 78).

Part 2:

THE CONCEPTUAL DEEP STRUCTURES OF GADAMER'S HERMENEUTICS

CHAPTER 3

GADAMER'S VERSION OF CONCEPTUAL DEEP STRUCTURES: AN OVERVIEW OF PHILOSOPHICAL HERMENEUTICS

1. Introduction

After having indicated my starting-point and having described my analytical tools, I shall now discuss the main concepts and issues of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics before submitting the latter to critical analysis.

For the purpose of this chapter, certain terms have been regarded as conceptually fundamental. These terms are the building blocks of Gadamer's discourse. One needs to explain them in order to have a general idea of the whole conceptual scope of his theory. In the following part, the formula illustrating the way in which the conceptual network is interwoven, is presented. A series of statements quoted from Gadamer's main works will be examined closely in order to deduce the key formula undergirding Gadamer's discourse. Chapter 5 will look at the metaphorical structures determining Gadamer's concept of philosophical hermeneutics. However, in the present chapter we will be concerned with gaining an overview of what might be characterized as Gadamer's own understanding of "conceptual deep structure". Later in this chapter, it will, for example, become apparent that one of Gadamer's "conceptual deep structures", the element of historical tradition, in some respects comes close to what has been described as ideological culture in the previous chapter.

2. Fundamental concepts

2.1 Nature and purpose philosophical hermeneutics

To begin with, philosophical hermeneutics is basically concerned with the *conditions* of the *event* of understanding.¹ Thereby, Gadamer has already given a hint as to its nature,

namely that understanding is an event. His definition stands in opposition to conceiving understanding as an *activity*, which entails a subject acting upon an object playing a passive role. His way of approaching understanding as an event implies the acknowledgement of the object of understanding as another subject and, therefore, its equal footing with the subject of understanding.² Gadamer grants autonomy to the text vis-à-vis the reader, enabling both of them to take part in a circle of question and answer, namely the *hermeneutical circle*. In other words, reader and text are related to one another in a *dialogical* way, that is, the event of understanding is explained in terms of a dialogue. The dialogical structure of understanding does not occur in isolation nor is it free from any pre-determination, but it takes place within the boundaries of history, which has the pervasive effect of pointing out the radical finitude of our knowledge.

Wir hatten gezeigt, daß das Verstehen nicht so sehr eine Methode ist, durch die sich das erkennende Bewusstsein einem von ihm gewählten Gegenstande zuwendet und ihn zu objektiver Erkenntnis bringt, als vielmehr das Darinstehen in einem Überlieferungsgeschehen zur Voraussetzung hat. *Verstehen erwies sich selber als ein Geschehen*, und die Aufgabe der Hermeneutik besteht, philosophisch gesehen, darin zu fragen, was das für ein Verstehen was für einer Wissenschaft ist, das in sich selbst vom geschichtlichen Wandel fortbewegt wird (Gadamer 1976a: 329).

2.2 Hermeneutics, understanding, history and language

History and language are evidently the most fundamental concepts for philosophical hermeneutics.³ And the explication of conditions of the phenomenon of understanding is the main issue at stake. Hence, it is the impact that the relation between history and language has on the genesis of understanding to which Gadamer wants to call our attention.

In which ways do history and language become conditions for understanding the reality of human beings and of the world? What is the nature of understanding? In what ways are history and language related to each other here? What happens when we understand? Is there a correct way of understanding? In other words, what are the standards by which we

can judge if we have actually understood anything at all? Are there such standards? Is it valid to speak of the intention of the author as one of those standards? Can methodology be a guarantee for a correct understanding? All of these questions are the concern of philosophical hermeneutics.

2.2.1 Understanding

What is understanding? Gadamer broaches this issue by characterizing it in two ways, namely, as an event and as the most fundamental mode of our existence. Let me discuss briefly what he means thereby.

2.2.1.1 *Understanding as an event*

The event of understanding is something that *happens* and that happens *to us*. In this way, Gadamer rejects the Cartesian way of comprehending understanding, which is conceived of as an activity of the gnoseological agent performed upon an epistemological object. (Bernstein 1983: 113-114). It is important to notice that it is not the purpose of his theory to establish principles or rules for understanding. This is a remark of capital importance, since a *historicistic* hermeneutical theory under the influence of positivism, aimed at prescribing a specific methodology, endeavours to achieve an *objective* understanding of the text.

The new position accorded to the hermeneutical object necessarily runs against the foundations of methodology which is the cornerstone of the modern age of science. Gadamer offers an alternative especially to the *Geisteswissenschaften* which were modelled upon the natural sciences. From a positivistic stance, the latter operates under the presupposition of a “*vergegenständliche*” (objectifiable) reality. He rejects the ambitions of method to become the master key to understand anything at all. Method is not the purveyor of truth. At most, it can only guarantee degrees of certainty about repeatable processes, which can be controlled. Gadamer argues against the monopoly method purports to have over truth and emphatically denies that method is all we need to

attain it. He will contend that theory and method have limitations based upon the finitude of man and the infinity of the subject-matter or *Sache*, and that reason is subject to historically evolutionary process. In this sense, *method doesn't exhaust truth*. It seems then that this is the central thesis of his main work: *Wahrheit und Methode*. Warnke even suggests that *Objectivity and the Limitations of Method*, as a possible title, fits perfectly (Warnke (1987: 3)).

2.2.1.2 *The ontological character of understanding*

The second way in which Gadamer understands the nature of understanding makes his definition quite singular. In keeping with Heidegger's existentialism, he not only shifts its definition from an activity to an event, but grants to it the status of being the *primary way of human existence*. In terms of our paradigm of modalities, he has shifted the status of understanding to a function or *mode of being*, as well. Indeed, understanding becomes for Gadamer the most fundamental *function of our existence*. This is a quite remarkable change for he gives to understanding a deeper meaning than it traditionally has had.

Verstehen ist [...] die ursprüngliche Vollzugsform des Daseins, das In-der-Weltsein ist. Vor aller Differenzierung des Verstehens in die verschiedenen Richtungen des pragmatischen oder theoretischen Interesses ist Verstehen die Seinsart des Daseins, sofern es Sein können und "Möglichkeit" ist (Gadamer 1960: 245).

The ontologization of understanding in philosophical hermeneutics is its most radical consequence. But what does the concept that understanding becomes the most fundamental characteristic of man's existence mean? It means that man experiences the world *hermeneutically*. Philosophical hermeneutics has elaborated upon the implications Heidegger's existentialism has for the structure of understanding. Philosophical hermeneutics does not offer any methodology which can be used in order to discover possible mechanisms and is therefore susceptible to being controlled. Gadamer, on the contrary, following the existential train of thought, is interested in the way human existence is related to the world as something given. Objective knowledge opposes the *temporality of Dasein*. Gadamer believes that that relation is essentially *interpretative*.

Man is related to his world by interpreting it. Man is a temporal being who interprets his world through words.

We are always already biased in our thinking and knowing by our linguistic interpretation of the world. To grow into this linguistic interpretation means to grow up in the world. To this extent, language is the real mark of our finitude. It is always out beyond us (Gadamer 1976b: 64).

2.2.1.3 *The experiential structure of knowledge*

A historically formed consciousness has the structure of experience. The hermeneutic experience is different from the way experience is taken in the natural sciences, which is summed up in the concept of experiment, through which the scientist merely acquires information.

Ervaring wordt hier echter zodanig geobjectiveerd dat ze voor iedereen herhaalbaar wordt. [...] In dit perspectief wordt de ervaring teleologisch gericht op het verwerven van wetenschappelijke vaststaande gegevens (Vandenbulcke 1973: 118-119).

Gadamer opposes the definition of experience as repetition with a definition of experience as integration (fusion), where one experience does not overthrow the other. Moreover, for philosophical hermeneutics, life-experiences are intrinsically related to language which acts in the formation of understanding on a pre-theoretical dimension. Likewise, they constitute the basis for scientific activity.

Maar de vraag van de wetenschap kan slechts gesteld worden wanneer de eenheid en algemeenheid van de dagelijkse ervaring reeds gerealiseerd is (Vandenbulcke 1973: 120).

Gadamer does not agree with Hegel when he insists in overcoming every experience by object and consciousness reaching a complete identification with each other upon arriving at absolute knowledge. True experience is knowing that our planning and expectations are limited and finite. This also implies that truth is reached by the integration and not the succession of experiences, and that the experienced person is not dogmatic because he does not pretend to have reached an absolute knowledge, but is

always open to new experiences. So openness is the name of the game. To be willing to be addressed is to be essentially open.

Experience in terms of openness also entails a communitarian or moral dimension: what counts is the "we" and not the "I". Understanding is then a matter of agreeing with each other upon the subject-matter to be understood.

Het 'gij' is immers geen voor-werp, want het kiest zelf een houding tegenover ons.[...] De ander wil in zijn persoon geëerbiedigd worden. Volgens Gadamer is de zedelijke ervaring van de mens wellicht de fundamentele vorm van de ervaring (Vandenbulcke 1973: 124).

These two ways of defining understanding constitute the two pillars which are necessary to argue against the monopoly of method over truth. In other words, Gadamer's irrationalistic or anti-rationalistic stance bolsters his criticism of the ideology of method as the absolute purveyor of truth.

2.2.2 *The historicity of understanding*

To Gadamer's mind, the event of understanding is basically characterized by its historicity and its linguisticity. These are the two prominent aspects, which build up the structure of understanding. I shall begin by discussing the historical aspect for two reasons, namely because this is the order Gadamer follows when addressing them in *Wahrheit und Methode*, and, according to our paradigm of the modal aspects, the historical aspect precedes the lingual aspect.

In this section I shall discuss Gadamer's explanation of the consequences for the structure of understanding, when it is accepted that history conditions understanding.

The idea of absolute Reason overlooks the fact that Reason can only actualize itself in historical conditions. Even the most neutral application of the methods of science is guided by an anticipation of moments of tradition in the selection of the topic of research, the suggestion of new questions and the wakening of interest in new knowledge. It is therefore the task of a philosophical hermeneutic to evidence the historic moment in the comprehension of the world and to determine its hermeneutic productivity (Bleicher 1980: 109).

2.2.2.1 *History and causality*

As an introductory remark to the implications of the historicity of understanding, it must be pointed out that, in philosophical hermeneutics, understanding history does not amount to subsuming historical events to causal laws. Gadamer does not believe in the existence of historical laws resembling natural laws through which historical events are explained and methodologically predicted. To his mind, contingency and possibility ground historical events.

...-die Geschichte wiederholt sich nie. Darin besteht gerade ihre Wirklichkeit, zu sein und uns zu bestimmen, ohne dass sie je durch Kausalanalyse beherrschbar würde. Das aber heißt: die Art von "Ursachen", die in ihr waltet, steht in einem teleologischen Zusammenhang [...] Dem wollenden und vorwärtsblickenden Menschen zeigen sich lauter Möglichkeiten und Aufgaben. Geschichte erscheint ihm als das, was den Spielraum der eigenen Möglichkeiten begrenzt und das Geschehene als seine (gute oder böse) Tat (Gadamer 1967: 200).

Once Gadamer's idea of history has been stated, we can proceed with the discussion of the consequences, according to Gadamer, of historicity for the process of understanding.

2.2.2.2 *The finitude of human knowledge and historical pre-understanding*

Philosophical hermeneutics is a hermeneutics of the radical finitude of human knowledge. This idea was already present in romantic-historical hermeneutics, but it was not developed to its uttermost consequences.

Al wilden de vertegenwoordigers van de romantisch historische hermeneutiek zich verzetten tegen het absolute weten van het spekulatieve idealisme, zij slaagden er niet in de eindigheid van het menselijke kennen radikaal genoeg te denken (Vandenbulcke 1973: 105).

The finitude of human knowledge refers, in the first place, to the historicity of man whose consciousness is limited by his historical situation. There is a fundamental historical dynamic in our understanding. When the historian approaches the past, he does not present it before his reason, but his "thinking subjectivity" is pervaded by the dynamic of the past. Our knowledge is the product of the continuum between past and

present. However, the historian will most of the time be unaware of the power of history acting on his consciousness.

Es wird also nicht gefordert, daß man die Wirkungsgeschichte als eine neue selbständige Hilfsdisziplin der Geisteswissenschaften entwickeln solle, sondern daß man sich selber richtiger verstehen lerne und anerkenne, daß in allem Verstehen, ob man sich dessen ausdrücklich bewußt ist oder nicht, die Wirkung dieser Wirkungsgeschichte am Werke ist. Wo sie in der Naivität des Methodenglaubens verleugnet wird, kann übrigens auch eine tatsächliche Deformation der Erkenntnis die Folge sein. [...] Das gerade ist die Macht der Geschichte über das endliche menschliche Bewußtsein, daß sie sich dort durchsetzt, wo man im Glauben an die Methode die eigene Geschichtlichkeit verleugnet. Die Forderung, sich dieser Wirkungsgeschichte bewußt zu werden, hat gerade darin ihre Dringlichkeit - sie ist eine notwendige Forderung für das wissenschaftliche Bewußt sein (Gadamer 1960: 285).

Dat is de grote kracht van de geschiedenis en haar macht over ons eindig menselijke bewustzijn (Vandenbulcke 1973: 111).

It is impossible to think of reason without a pre-understanding, whose intervention Gadamer, following Heidegger, cannot help stressing. It comes down to history bridging the gap between past and present. It is important to highlight that this insight derives from the existential assumption that human beings are essentially temporal beings.

Es bedarf einer grundsätzlichen Rehabilitierung des Begriffes des Vorurteils und einer Anerkennung dessen, daß es legitime Vorurteile gibt, wenn man der endlich-geschichtlichen Seinsweise des Menschen gerecht werden will (Gadamer 1960: 261).

Es war nach Gadamer ein Wahn des Historismus, unsere Vorurteile durch sichere Methoden beseitigen zu wollen, um so etwas wie Objektivität in den Geisteswissenschaften zu ermöglichen. [...] Sobald die Metaphysikabhängigkeit des szientischen Erkenntnisideals mit Heideggers Hilfe demaskiert ist, kann man ein angemesseneres Verständnis der Geisteswissenschaften gewinnen, das die ontologische Vorstruktur des Verstehens in der Bestimmung der Objektivität der Geisteswissenschaften zum Tragen kommen läßt. [...] So identifiziert sich Gadamer mit Heideggers Idee, dass die allererste, kritische Aufgabe der Auslegung darin bestehen muss, ihre eigenen Vorentwürfe auszuarbeiten, damit sich die Sprache ihnen gegenüber Geltung verschaffen kann (Grondin 1991: 144).

Historical distance should not be conceived of as an obstacle for objective knowledge. On the contrary, the continuity of past and present has the potential of disclosing new aspects of the subject-matter by virtual interpretations. Each new interpretation is the result of experiencing the surplus of meaning in the manifold aspects of the subject-matter brought forth by the dialogue with the text.

Nun ist die Zeit nicht mehr primär ein Abgrund, der überbrückt werden muß, weil er trennt und fernhält, sondern sie ist in Wahrheit der tragende Grund des Geschehens, in dem das Gegenwärtige wurzelt. Der Zeitenabstand ist daher nicht etwas, was überwunden werden muß. [...] In Wahrheit kommt es darauf an, den Abstand der Zeit als eine positive und produktive Möglichkeit des Verstehens zu erkennen. Er ist nicht ein gähnender Abgrund, sondern ist ausgefüllt durch die Kontinuität des Herkommens und der Tradition, in deren Lichte uns alle Überlieferung sich zeigt (Gadamer 1960: 281).

Door het voortschrijden van de tijd worden steeds nieuwe aspecten in een overleveringsgegeven vrijgemaakt en naar voren gebracht. Iedere nieuwe interpretatie kan als een historische potentialiteit van het overleveringsgegeven worden gezien (Vandenbulcke 1973: 112).

The radical finitude of knowledge will necessarily affect the grounding of any kind of methodology.⁴ The myth that objectivity can be secured by anchoring it in a method is radically shattered when the historical conditions of the latter are laid bare. Furthermore, the historicity of understanding manifests itself in respect of the pre-understanding of the subject-matter or *Sache* of any field of inquiry provided by the cultural whole within which the researcher stands. Correspondingly, this historical condition concerns both: the natural as well as the social scientist, who play the role of interpreters having to confront an object of interpretation. When they practice science, they perform the role of interpreters. Likewise, the scientist and interpreter are always biased, since no mind is neutral. The historicity of science curtails the desideratum of objectivity. Method can never transcend it to safeguard a neutral, that is, unbiased knowledge.

For all the modern sciences possess a deeply rooted alienation that they impose on the natural consciousness and of which we need to be aware. This alienation has already reached reflective awareness in the very beginning stages of modern science in the concept of method. Hermeneutical reflection does not desire to change or eliminate this

situation; it can, in fact, indirectly serve the methodological endeavor of science by making transparently clear the guiding preunderstandings in the sciences and thereby open new dimensions of questioning (Gadamer 1976b: 39).

...Our circumstances and experiences [...] are always already informed by the history of the society and culture to which we belong. [...]. Those experiences make of us who we are and we cannot transcend them to evaluate them according to standards formulated independently of them (Warnke 1987: 168-169).

The fact that interpreter and text or text-analogue are characterized by their *Zugehörigkeit* to history, is a fundamental principle of philosophical hermeneutics. This belongingness to history is the socio-historical determination of our understanding on the level of our pre-understanding. In other words, the interpreter finds himself in a certain historical 'situation', from where he opens up to the whole cultural universe, which conditions and orientates his understanding.

And also only in this manner do I learn to gain a new understanding of what I have seen through eyes conditioned by prejudice. But this implies, too, that the prejudgments that lead my preunderstanding are also constantly at stake, right up to the moment of their surrender – which surrender could also be called a transformation. It is untiring power of *experience*; that in the process of being instructed, man is ceaselessly forming a new preunderstanding (Gadamer 1976b: 38).

Therefore, any interpreter should not be oblivious to the fact that he cannot be an a-historical autonomous self. But he is subjected to historical contingency. The contingent force of history intervenes in every interpreting act. Furthermore, it affects the relation between the text and the interpreter, which in philosophical hermeneutics can no longer be described in terms of a knowing subject dominating his *Gegenstand*.

The historicity of reason compels the historian to become aware of the need of a perspective where actions and events get their significance in relation to other actions and events. Furthermore, the consequences of events and actions can only be appreciated fully within a specific perspective and not so much from the intentions the agents originally had (Warnke 1987: 42).

2.2.2.3 *Historicity of reason and the authority of tradition*

The concept of tradition is linked to the idea that our historical experiences limit our rationality.⁵ Let us discuss the role of tradition plays in *rational progress*. To start with, the content of tradition has a bridging power between past and present.

Traditie als gebeuren is het zich doorzetten, met de verplichtende macht van zijn gelding, van een inhoud die overgeleverd en bewaard wordt. Vandaar dat de tijd niet een gapende afgrond is. Hij is gevuld door de continuïteit van het overleveren. Want de onmiddellijke zeggingskracht van een groot werk duurt fundamenteel onbegrensd voort (Vandenbulcke 1973: 128).

Tradition is always forming our present lives, although we are unaware of this most of the time. It also binds both text and interpreter. The past placed us in a certain locus from which we get a specific view. Within it, a common pre-understanding is given to the interpreter. It is through a legitimate pre-understanding that we are able to understand the text in the way of anticipations of meaning.

Op grond van onze gemeenschappelijke vooroordelen [pre-understanding] kunnen we de tekst begrijpen. Er zijn dus legitieme vooroordelen [pre-understanding]! [...] Het deelhebben aan dezelfde traditie als waaruit de tekst spreekt, maakt de anticipatie van zin mogelijk, die ons verstaan van een tekst leidt (Vandenbulcke 1973: 129).

Tradition shapes the context in which the event of understanding gets its meaning, that is, it is placed in a network of connections, which take the form of a *hermeneutic circle* entailing a movement from the parts to the whole and back to the parts. The hermeneutic circle is always determined by the pre-understanding tradition provides us with. In other words, history acts as that medium which *shapes* our experience of the truth of the text, and constitutes that network. The relation between interpreter and the text or text-analogue is always historically biased:

Thus we understand modern art within the framework of a tradition that moves from realism to impressionism and beyond; we understand poetry and drama in the context of a tradition informed by the work of Shakespeare, Milton and so on; and we evaluate ethical-political issues in light of a cultural understanding of the importance of such values as freedom, equality and justice. This means that we never assess the beauty

of painting or worth of an action in light of a suprahistorical standard of rationality but are always indebted to the aesthetic, scientific, and ethical-political traditions to which we belong (Warnke 1987:169).⁶

The implications of accepting the historicity of reason leads us to recognize the latter as part of an open-ended process or event. Tradition gives to knowledge a particular orientation. Gadamer, likewise, bolsters the authority conferred to tradition in order to give direction to the disclosure of rationality and to exclude any arbitrariness. In the midst of a myriad of fluctuating interpretations, tradition provides us with the standards needed in order to discriminate among them. The best interpretation is that which sheds light on the truth the text or text-analogue holds.

...this historical experience [the historical experience of the community] limits the potential arbitrariness of my understanding for, in so far as my understanding of a given object is rooted in a whole history of interpretations of that object, I am protected from an entirely idiosyncratic interpretation of it (Warnke 1987: 80).

Both MacIntyre and Gadamer define rationality, then, as a willingness to admit the existence of better options. The awareness that one's knowledge is always open to refutation or modification from the vantage point of another perspective is not a basis for suspending confidence in the idea of reason, but rather represents the very possibility of rational progress (Warnke 1987:173).

The interpreter must recognize himself as placed in a tradition where past and present are fused. Heidegger and Gadamer conceive of the relation between the past and the present as a productive continuum, which is concretized in the rehabilitation of tradition and pre-understanding in the form of *prejudices*. "Heidegger's temporal interpretation of Dasein points at Time as the ground in which the present finds its roots." (Bleicher 1980:110).

My thesis is – and I think it is the necessary consequence of recognizing the operativeness of history in our conditionedness and finitude – that the things which hermeneutics teaches us is to see through the dogmatism of asserting an opposition and separation between the ongoing, natural "tradition" and the reflective appropriation of it. For behind this assertion stands a dogmatic objectivism that distorts the very concept of hermeneutical reflection itself. In this objectivism the understander is seen – even in the so-called sciences of understanding like history – not in relationship to the hermeneutical situation and the constant operativeness

of history in his own consciousness, but in such a way as to imply that his own understanding does not enter into the event (Gadamer 1976b: 28).

A fundamental trait of the Enlightenment was its rebellion against any "authority" which in this case tradition represents. And historicism tried to break free from the influence of any tradition whatsoever by following the model of natural science. On the contrary, Gadamer opposes *recognition* to *blind obedience* or *acceptance* (Gadamer 1976b: 33). I would like to refer to the different ways in which this authority must be understood according to philosophical hermeneutics. To begin with, the so-called *objective judgement* or *rational decision* is defined by tradition (Warnke 1987: 80). The relation between tradition and science is evidenced in the fact that tradition takes the lead in scientific enterprise as it determines the topic of research and the questions to be asked. For instance, in the science of history the historian is already bound to the event or text he/she wants to query because of the tradition to which he belongs (Vandenbulcke 1973: 130-131). Tradition plays a fundamental role in concept formation. For instance, the historian must reflect on the terms which he wants to use to describe his/her Gegenstand. His/her opinions and conceptual apparatus are given to him/her by his/her time. However, it is not a matter of refusing to use those terms, since it is precisely by means of the language spoken by the historian that the meaning of the text is voiced. A conceptual transformation takes place when the words of the text and of the interpreter are played off against each other.

Wat wij ons koerant voorstellen bij het woord 'natuur' is helemaal anders dan wat Aristoteles of Thomas daarbij dachten. De rijkste betekenis van dit begrip bij Aristoteles of Thomas zullen we echter alleen bereiken, wanneer we ook onze eigen visie in het gesprek betrekken. Alleen zo wordt aan de begrippen uit het verleden hun echte zeggingskracht teruggegeven (Vandenbulcke 1973: 133).

Different authors prefer not to speak of tradition as one single unit, rather they speak of the different sides or elements contained in a tradition. This state of affairs allows for the possibility of challenging and revising an aspect of tradition by emphasizing another (Warnke 1987: 103). In addition, MacIntyre characterizes tradition as an established or "canonical set of issues and problems" which puts to test the rational ability of tradition in providing a solution (Warnke 1987: 172). Finally, every new interpretation is never

independent from the authority of tradition but actually derives from the different readings sanctioned by tradition (Warnke 1987: 90).

Chapter five is the right place to discuss the ideological danger implied in the so-called conservative stance Gadamer has taken regarding the role of tradition in the historical disclosure of reason. Tradition is presented by him as an insurmountable given for which there is no way out. Tradition and the prejudices it contains constitute the sole criteria for an internal revision. It is impossible to think then of an external judgment which can be passed on an all-encompassing tradition. The historical condition of reason and of the interpreter seems, then, to be an impasse. To become "ideological supporters" is the logical conclusion drawn from this conservatism.⁷

In closing, Gadamer's project does not overthrow faith in reason but points to its very historical conditions determining its further development.

...openness to the constant possibility of developing one's perspective or conceptual framework is a crucial feature of rationality itself, one that he [Gadamer] further explores in his comments on hermeneutic experience (Warnke 1987: 171).

"Still, if others have used the insight into historicity to jettison the idea of reason itself, Gadamer does not. Our historical situatedness does not only limit what we can know with certainty; it can also teach us how to remember and integrate what we must forget" (Warnke 1987: 174).

As said, the most important historical condition of rationality is its finitude.

De onvolmaaktheid ligt in het denken zelf. Het is het menselijke denken zelf, dat niet werkelijk weet wat het weet (Vandebulcke 1973: 231).

2.2.3 *The linguisticity of understanding*

We now come to what I shall call the linguisticity of Gadamer's hermeneutics. The problem of language is the central matter philosophical hermeneutics grapples with. Here the first insight into the linguisticity of understanding is the unbreakable correlation between understanding and interpretation and application. This relation is founded upon the universality of language, which is justified by Heidegger's radical and dogmatic

statement: "language is the house of Being". The problem of language, as Heidegger understood it, has given to hermeneutics an ontological status: ontological means universal.⁸ As Grondin says:

Language is the fundamental mode of operation of our being-in-the-world and the all-embracing form of the constitution of the world (Gadamer, 1976b: 3).

Ontologisch besagt hier, wie so oft bei Gadamer: universal (Grondin 1991: 144).

This state of affairs depicts man as a linguistic being through and through, who exists responding with words. In fact, the last part of *Wahrheit und Methode* is an extensive elaboration on the consequences the universality of language - as Heidegger understood it - has for a theory of understanding.

The 'ontological turn of hermeneutics under the guidance of language' acquires its penetrative capacity through the incorporation of the work Heidegger produced after his own famous 'turn', which is best reflected in the single statement that "language is the house of Being". [...] Hermeneutic philosophy is no longer seen as a theory but as the means of interpretation itself, the focus of which is not given in terms of an understanding of existence but in terms of understanding language, or rather, to understand existence itself in terms of a language that addresses us from inside it. Language cannot, therefore, be conceived of as an objectivation but is itself that which speaks to us. A text, consequently, should not be examined in respect of the author's intention but in view of the subject-matter contained within it which addresses itself at us and to which we respond with our words. Man's nature itself has to be defined as being linguistic: he exists, by *ant-worten*, responding with words, to the claims of Being (Bleicher 1980:115).

Gadamer's definition of language is certainly linked to the problem of understanding and interpretation. In the first place, the nature of language is such that its *presentation* is always a constant *self-interpretation*. Another important fact about language is that there is no language without a world and no world without language. The world does not exist prior to language. The word is the picture of the world.

Nicht nur ist die Welt nur Welt, sofern sie zur Sprache kommt –die Sprache hat ihr eigentliches Dasein nur darin, daß sich in ihr die Welt

darstellt. Die ursprüngliche Menschlichkeit der Sprache bedeutet also zugleich die ursprüngliche Sprachlichkeit des menschlichen In-der-Welt-Seins (Gadamer 1960: 419).

A picture is an interpretation of what it pictures. In being no copy, a picture exemplifies the principle of interpretative creativity, namely, that a genuine interpretation is never identical to what it interprets. Yet in being an image, a picture exemplifies the principle of correctness as well, in that it cannot be absolutely differentiated from the thing it pictures insofar as it is a picture *of* that thing and so belongs to it (Weinsheimer 1991:109).

In terms of pictures, we can say being that is picturable appears, presents itself, images itself. Language is the appearance of being, its own image, its own self-reflection. In terms of interpretation, we can say that being that images itself interprets itself in language (Weinsheimer 1991:111).

In addition, language resists any *formal* description because it goes against the indivisibility of language and world, and against its historicity which entails then that language is not a fixed substance, but a process: an "ongoing history" (Weinsheimer 1991: 113).⁹ Language as a process means as well that the reader is taken up and carried along in the lingual event. There is no agent or subject in the dynamic of language but language itself is its own agent.

In order to understand the nature of language it will be useful to discuss a couple of conceptual antonyms such language as *Aussage* over against language as *Gespräch*; and to conceive of a word as a *sign* versus to conceive of a word as a *symbol*.

I would like to discuss these pairs of antonyms against the backdrop of Greek metaphysics. To begin with, it has always been difficult for Western philosophy to separate language from thinking. Furthermore, it has been taken for granted that thinking processes such as concept-formation and demonstration have priority over language. This has been the case since Plato.

De taal en het spreken zijn zo innig met het denken verbonden, dat men in het milieu van de erkende filosofie de hele geschiedenis door –vanaf de *Kratylos* van Plato tot onze dagen- te gemakkelijk taal en woord kon beschouwen als sekundair tegenover het logische denken met zijn abstraherende begrijpsvorming en zijn strikte bewijsvoering. De Griekse

Aufklärung met haar ideaal van wetenschap is zich eigenlijk nooit bewust geweest dat de dialoog van de ziel met zichzelf in de grond toch een gebondheid aan de moedertaal insloot. Daarom konden ze zo gemakkelijk het denken tegen de taal uitspelen. Het resultaat van de *Kratylos* is dat aangetoond wordt dat taal en woorden geen eigen inbreng hebben in het kengebeuren (Vandebulcke 1973: 225).

However, philosophical hermeneutics reminds us that it is not possible to objectify language because every thinking process happens only in language; and therefore it is not possible to have reason judge language. Conversely, Gadamer contends that language as dialogue represents the *living* element of reasoning whereby the latter acquires a collective dimension.

Ons denken woont in het spreken van een taal. Wij kunnen nooit volledig van ons spreken onzer taal afstand nemen, om ze vóór ons te bregen. Alle denken over de taal gebeurt nog altijd in een spreken van onze taal. [...] Vanuit de primauteit van het spreken gedacht, zouden we het denken veeleer moeten bepalen als het gemeenschappelijk menselijke medium, waarin – door de gemeenschappelijke mogelijkheid van het menselijke gesprek- inzicht tot stand komt op een niet beheersbare wijze (Vandebulcke 1973: 223).

2.2.3.1 *Aussage versus Gespräch*

Logical thinking has been linked from the beginning to the idea of a fixed universe of meaning. And this was reflected in the stationary being of statements (*Aussagen*). According to Greek philosophy, language in the form of *Aussagen* gets its meaning by its relation to the substance of things. Philosophical hermeneutics opposes the rigid logic of language appropriate to science with the pre-theoretical logic of experience, which is grounded in the force of metaphors. Through it things of different kind can be related to one another. Furthermore, philosophical hermeneutics affirms language as an infinite dialogue whereby reality comes into being.

...het logische denken [onthult] de vaste structuren van het zijnsuniversum, [...] Zij [*Aussagen*] brengen immers vaste structuren ter sprake. [...] Taal als een oneindig gesprek waarin de wereld eerst tot stand komt, komt bij de Grieke niet aan bod (Vandebulcke 1973: 227-228).

In het Griekse denken werd het woord gedegradeerd tot een louter teken. Het werd een instrument waarmee men een voorafgegeven systeem van

zijnsmogelijkheden afgebeeldde en zichtbaar maakte. [...] Wat aan het woord komt is niet een woordloos voorafgegeven iets. Eerst in het woord ontvangt het zijn bepaaldheid, wordt het iets. De taal die de dingen spreken is niet de 'logos ousias'. Zij is geen afbeelding van de logische wezenheden (Vandebulcke 1973: 229).

Gegen die Aussagelogik, fuer die der Satz eine sich selbst genuegende Sinneinheit bildet, erinnert die Hermeneutik daran, dass eine Aussage sich nie von ihrem Motivationszusammenhang, d.h. aus dem Gespraech, in das sie eingebettet ist und aus dem allein sie Sinn gewinnt, herauslösen lässt. Die Aussage ist schliesslich eine Abstraktion, der man im Leben einer Sprache nie begegnet. So fordert Gadamer daraus: "Gibt es solche reine Aussagesätze, und wann und wo? (Grondin 1991: 152-153).

Gadamer hereby in fact opposes symbolic (formal) logic, which aims at eliminating any experiential trace found in any expression. As Dooyeweerd explains it when arguing against the "supposed purely analytical character of modern symbolical logic":

It is supposed that it would be possible to substitute every factual content by the logically empty form "something" and to eliminate everything "accidental" by a change of the factual form into the propositional form of unconditional universality [...] The formalizing spoken of by HUSSERL at once confronts us with the mental sphere of modern symbolic logic, which also pretends it can operate with purely formal analytical basic concepts and axioms (Dooyeweerd 1969 II: 451-452).

Moreover, Gadamer cannot accept Von Humboldt's definition, because Von Humboldt postulates that language is energy that can be set apart from content. Language is an abstract "Formalimus eines Könnens" which brings to expression the whole thought. Language cannot stand over against its content because the essence of language is to express the truth things hold. Language is the language of things. Language is not only the language of things, but the language of a community. What has been said and thought is kept within their language. Furthermore, our experiences, of our world and of ourselves are also registered in our language.

Demgegenüber ist freilich zu betonen, dass die Sprache erst im Gespräch, also in der Ausübung der *Verständigung* ihr eigentliches Sein hat. Das ist nicht zu verstehen, als ob damit der Zweck der Sprache angegeben wäre. Verständigung ist kein bloßes Tun, kein zweckvolles Handeln, etwa eine Herstellung von Zeichen, durch die ich anderen meinen Willen übermittele. Verständigung als solche bedarf vielmehr überhaupt keiner

Werkzeuge im eigentlichen Sinne des Wortes. Sie ist ein Lebensvorgang, in dem sich eine Lebensgemeinschaft darlebt. [...] Alle Formen menschlicher Lebensgemeinschaft sind Formen von Sprachgemeinschaft, ja mehr noch: sie bilden Sprache. Denn die Sprache ist ihrem Wesen nach die Sprache des Gesprächs. Sie bildet selber durch den Vollzug der Verständigung erst ihre Wirklichkeit. Deshalb ist sie kein bloßes Mittel zur Verständigung (Gadamer 1960: 422).

According to Gadamer we grasp what language is by its dialogical character, but never *per se*. The essence of language lies in its being an ongoing dialogue leading to an agreement. Terms are coined as they are applied –not in a mechanistic or utilitarian way– to the needs of the community which strives to reach an agreement. Likewise, the dialogical character of language discloses new relations between us and the world. The truth of things is given to us within language, whose dialogical power overwhelms us, carrying us along. Thus, language can never be *objectified*.

In de woorden van het gesprek binnen een levensgemeenschap wordt de overeenkomst opgebouwd. In het overeenkomen gebeurt de schepping van de passende woorden (Vandebulcke 1973: 238).

Denn die Idee der Methode bezieht ihre Kraft daher, daß man im Experiment gewisse Bereiche oder Vorfälle isolieren kann, um sie beherrschbar zu machen. Solche Isolierung tut aber der Sprache Gewalt an. Sprachverstehen reduziert sich nämlich nicht auf die intellektuelle Erfassung eines objektivierbaren, isolierten Sachgehaltes durch ein Subjekt, es resultiert ebenso sehr aus der Zugehörigkeit zu einer sich fortbildenden Tradition, d.h. zu einem Gespräch, aus dem allein das Ausgesagte Konsistenz und Sinn für uns gewinnt (Grondin 1991: 153).

In short, language cannot be then understood as a series of loose and isolated enunciations. On the contrary, it can only *be* through the dynamic of a dialogue. When language is handled methodologically as a linguistic Gegenstand, its essence escapes us. Gadamer replaces the formality of symbolic logic by the logic of dialogue, which consists of an endless swing between a question and its answer.

2.2.3.2 Sign versus Symbol

Plato contends that words do not have any meaning in themselves outside thinking. Therefore, early Greek philosophy made a difference between *eikoon* and *semeion* when

discussing the *being* of language. Due to the primacy of logic over language, the latter was preferably not described in terms of image – *eikoon* - but in terms of *semeion* - sign. The former reveals the reality it represents by initially drawing the attention to itself. Conversely the latter manifests the reality it stands for by basically pointing beyond itself.

Hij [Plato] beweert alleen dat de woorden geen zelfstandige betekenis hebben tegenover de logische kennis, die op de ideeën gericht is (Vandebulcke 1973: 226).

Naar het afgebeelde verwijst het 'eikoon' door zijn eigen zinvolheid. Het verwijst door bij zich te laten verwijlen. [...] Het teken is de abstraktie van het pure verwijzen. Het echte teken mag alleen *verwijzing naar* zijn. Het mag geen eigen inhoud en gehalte opdringen (Vandebulcke 1973: 226-227).

The substitution of image for sign was intended to refer to the wordless essence of things. Words were only instrumental to show that the truth of things exists outside language and that will come to expression through the voice. Ideas were conceived of in terms of a wordless monologue of the soul.

Het woord is de stroom die door de mond tot geluid komt en die uitgaat van het denken der ideeën. Dit laatste is een dialoog van de ziel met zichzelf, zonder woorden (Vandebulcke 1973: 227).

Let me connect these reflections on the nature of a sign and a symbol by contrasting structuralist and semiotic stances with the hermeneutic stance.

A dualistic conception of the linguistic sign underscores structuralism in two ways. On the one hand, language is supposed to be split into *langue* and *parole*. The former constitutes a kind of an ideal lexical system, which is performed in the latter. Meaning is produced by relevant differences within the given system of "langue". On the other hand, a word is considered to be constituted by an arbitrary relation between a signifier and a signified. It is arbitrary in the sense that there is no intrinsic bond between them, and therefore the former can be dispensed with, leaving the latter without alteration.

Briefly, it can be argued that a structuralist stance is based upon the metaphysical copy-theory of knowledge, which supposes a realm of concepts lying behind language. The "copytheory of knowledge" is known in modern times as the "autonomous structure of signification"(Weinsheimer 1991: 96).

This is an unacceptable explication for philosophical hermeneutics, which cannot conceive of a "wordless world and of a worldless word" (Weinsheimer 1991: 112). Therefore, the correspondence between word and world can never be typified as arbitrary. Gadamer's model of a dialogue makes it impossible to accept such a split because the essence of language lies in a "dialogical parole", that is, the way a community of speakers uses language. This highlights the temporality of language which leaves a definite and particular stamp on the whole lingual system.

Semiotics closely follows the model of mathematics, because it considers words as imperfect numbers. It reduces language to isolate propositions in order to express pure relations. Hence, it is by following the example of mathematics that language was understood as a sign-system. Words were reduced to numbers. The idea of a number underlies the postulation of a closed sign-system. There is an evident tension between linguistic symbols and mathematized symbols. Nevertheless, this denatures language in its inherent relation to the "life-world", which must come to expression. In other words, the being of a "life-world" is mediated by language

Semiotic progress consists in refining away correspondence and developing an autonomous structure of signification [...] The 'freedom' of science from its objects is corollary to the fact that its concepts are non-referential and systematic: free concepts are precisely those that are, first, not copies or images but independent of what they conceptualize and therefore, second, useful in controlling it. The sign as such is not an appearance or image of what it represents, and it exists to dominate the sensible particular and by reducing it to law and system, making it predictable and hence subject to will and desire (Weinsheimer 1991: 96).

Word as a semiotic sign is founded upon a mechanistic view. The semiotic ideal conceives of language as an instrument for controlling processes and the laws in nature. Language as a tool is directly related to the humanistic ideal of science as a way of ruling

nature. An arbitrary correspondence between the representation and the object of representation allows systematization. Gadamer is overtly opposed to a "linguistic instrumentalism": signs are just a tool for communication thanks to the fact that they are "non-referential, non-correspondent, and fictional" (Weinsheimer 1991: 95).

Language is by no means simply an instrument, a tool. For it is in the nature of the tool that we master its use, which is to say we take it in hand and lay it aside when it has done its service. That is not the same as when we take the words of a language, lying ready in the mouth, and with their use let them sink back into the general store of words over which we dispose. Such an analogy is false because we never find ourselves as consciousness over against the world and, as it were, grasp after a tool of understanding in a worldless condition. Rather, in all our knowledge of ourselves and in all knowledge of the world, we are always already encompassed by the language that is our own (Gadamer 1976b: 62).

Philosophical hermeneutics instead picks out the model of a symbol to explain the nature of language in its almost unbreakable bond with the world. A symbol is never empty and it cannot be divided from what it symbolizes completely. Nevertheless, there is an inner tension within the symbol. On the one side, it reflects what it symbolizes, but on the other side, it is different from the entity it symbolizes. The interrelation between language and world is better captured by a symbol in its speculative character.¹⁰ A symbol and what it symbolizes are united in two ways.

Words are for Gadamer like symbols, because words take on the "speaker's point of view". For Gadamer a symbol resists any inner differentiation between signifier and signified. A symbol is what it is. Two things are inextricably united in a symbol since they belong to each other. The fact that there is a symbol is sufficient to justify its existence. It has meaning, for it exists; it refers to itself. A symbol erases the line that separates "form from content, the how from the what, the appearance from the idea, form from content"(Weinsheimer 1991: 91).

In a symbol the *manifestation* of the entity, which is symbolized, is in itself meaningful. Drawing on the nature of a symbol, philosophical hermeneutics contends that language is bound in a non-arbitrary way to the concrete world. Language cannot be reduced to pure

relations which exclude the "life-world". Where signs relate to the agents that create them, symbols relate to the things they are embedded with.

Everyone agrees that the best model for understanding language is not that of nomenclature, the assigning of signifiers ex post facto to things given beforehand (Weinsheimer 1991: 112).

The main feature is then that language is always referential since the connection to concrete objects and processes is never broken.¹¹ Language was never meant for "pure relations" (Weinsheimer 1991: 99). Gadamer draws his idea of words as images from the fact that words are not numbers; thus no 'semiotic process of refinement' is capable of fitting words into a pattern like numbers are. A word is bound to its 'intuition'. It is a symbol that cannot stand apart from what it symbolizes.

This suggests that words are not merely imperfect numbers but are not, in essence, numbers at all. Words cannot be conceived just as signs (incipient numerical symbols)... (Weinsheimer 1991: 99).

A word is not a sign understood in the formal way. But it is fixed to the situations in which it is used and to its referent. Nevertheless, words as symbols are not what it symbolizes. They always keep a certain distance from the symbolized entity.¹²

In short, words are more like symbols and less like signs because the link between word and world can never be arbitrary. That means, they can never be understood as the product of a subject and are therefore not susceptible to be manipulated. Words are not the creation of an individual genius but are transferred by tradition which is anonymous. The recognition of the role of tradition in the formation and preservation of symbolic forms, breaks with the idealism of a free maker of symbols.

...to deny the arbitrariness of the word and assert its indivisibility from the world is to deny that the speaking subject can be understood as the maker of symbolic forms or the manager of its world [...] when the symbol comes to be seen as a mind-forged expression of the spirit, it becomes indistinguishable from allegory, for an allegorical representation by definition has no natural connection to the thing represented, and so has to be explained in the same way as the sign: not as an image of the thing

meant but rather as an expression of human subjectivity (Weinsheimer 1991: 101-102).

In Gadamer's eyes language cannot be a sign. He does not accept that words are arbitrary as if they were a "meaningless event of utterance connected to an intrinsically disembodied and unhistorical idea" (Weinsheimer 1991: 92). The relation between word and world is not arbitrary because a word is like a symbol and because of the relation between language and history, which is given in the idea of anonymous creation.

There is nevertheless also an aspect of a sign in the word, because it cannot be confused with the finite, concrete and particular state of affairs, since a word also possesses intrinsic meaning. In this sense, words are like signs which are closer to numbers. This paradox can be phrased like this: word unites in itself "the world of idea" related to the nature of signs and the "history of the world" related to the nature of symbols. To understand a word more as a symbol and less as a sign refers us to the interrelation between history and language. Gadamer's hermeneutics calls our attention to the fact that language and words change when they are used; they do not remain the same. They are transformed in the event. Language is always in the process of being created.

Language grows, that is to say, and new concepts are formed as words are applied to new circumstances in new times. Language is no fixed form but rather an *energia*, as Humboldt called it; no instrument, because it is ceaselessly produced in being used; [...] And the engine of language's creativity, so to speak, is history - that is, the particular event and the particulars that appear in language in that event [...] That is the source of the *energia* of language: the historical event in which the concrete particular - the unsubsumable special case - interprets itself (Weinsheimer 1991: 118).

The historicity of words becomes evident in the fact that words store the different ways they were used at a particular stage. In short, the diachronic aspect of a word refers to the record of its application.

Words are the tradition of their application: they preserve the occasion and subject-matter of specific occasions of utterance. The historical world leaves an indelible mark on the word, so that language cannot be understood if divorced from what it says (Weinsheimer 1991: 114).

The relation between word and meaning is sanctioned by the authority tradition has over that bond. Tradition itself must be taken as the ultimate reason upon which that relation is grounded. Due to the historicity of words, the relation between word and world cannot be called arbitrary.

Gadamer goes so far as to borrow the metaphor of the Gospel and the incarnation of Jesus Christ, God's *logos*, in order to explain the historicity of words and their meaning.

For Gadamer, Christianity was decisive in showing that meaning appears, in history – that the event of appearance is not incidental but belongs to what appears:...(Weinsheimer 1991: 116).

2.3 Interpretation, reader and text

Having discussed why the historical and the lingual aspects are the two fundamental conditions for understanding, let us now broach the relations existing between interpretation, reader and text. To start with, interpretation is a productive event. There is no text whose meaning is given to the reader at once in a complete and absolute way. Besides, Gadamer thinks of meaning as a progressive opening which is done in terms of successively relative completion. All these partial completions of meaning are part of the general ongoing history of the event of interpretation.

Elke interpretatie is een deel van deze progressive zinsopenbaring. In de interpretatie komt de zinsopenbaring tot een relatieve voltooiing. [...] Het zinsgebeuren in zijn totaliteit waaraan de interpretatie deelheeft, moet wel gezien worden als de voortschrijdende geschiedenis in haar geheel (Vandenbulcke 1973: 176).

Interpretation is to put in words what one has understood. It is not to repeat the text but to come up with a new representation, for the text is realized in its interpretations. Gadamer refers to this ever new re-presentation of the text in its interpretations as the *speculative character of interpretations*, which is based on the dynamic character of language given in close relation between history and language.

The conception of an existence-in-itself of a text is, therefore, quite incorrect and exhibits an element of dogmatism. This is what Gadamer means when he talks about the 'speculative' character of interpretations which are not restricted to the methodological approach. The words used by the interpreter have their origin in the context of language that comes to form an aura of meanings which are quite unique (Bleicher 1980: 123).

Once again Gadamer relies on the Hegelian dialectic to explain the event of interpretation as a productive event. The appropriation of a text is given in the synthesis of opinions which are transformed within the context of tradition. The event of interpretation rests upon certain assumptions. Let us discuss them. The first assumption has to do with the unity and coherence of the text. It must be taken for granted that the text is a coherent whole in order to determine how *adequate* one's interpretation is.

The text must be approached as an internally consistent whole because it is this assumption of self-consistency that provides a standard for keeping or discarding individual interpretations of the text's parts. Conversely, if one denies that a given text is internally coherent from the start, one has no way of knowing whether its inconsistency is the fault of the text or one's understanding of it. For this reason hermeneutic efforts are directed at finding an interpretation that can both make sense out of the individual parts of text and integrate them into a consistent whole (Warnke 1987: 83).

The other important assumption has to do with the truth the text contains. One must assume that the text has something to teach us and therefore one must keep oneself open to the challenges presented to our views by the text. One must grant the text authority on the subject matter as the starting-point. The truth of the text sets the standards by which any arbitrary or idiosyncratic interpretation of a text is ruled out.

For Gadamer, then, the possibility of distinguishing between arbitrary prejudices that distort meaning and those that illuminate it depends on an openness to the possible truth of the object under study. It is essential to grant to the text one is studying a certain normative authority, for it is only by doing so that one can test the adequacy of one's views about either the text or the issues on which it focuses (Warnke 1987:87).

2.3.1 *Author's intention vs. the independence of the text*

If one discards the radical finitude of human knowledge, one would be tempted to look for the intention of the author as the objective knowledge to be sought for. Understanding cannot be explained in terms of a mechanical and methodological *re-creation* of an original meaning. For the author himself is never fully aware of the meaning of his creative act. Therefore the subsequent interpretations deepen the meaning of the subject-matter, because the understanding of the subject-matter of a text is never exhausted in one single interpretation.

The concept of the author's intention is a common prejudice, which entails that there is a fixed meaning of the text. Gadamer starts instead by presupposing the independence of the text. The world of the text is grounded in the idea that the text exists by itself and that it possesses insights the author had overlooked. The interpreter uncovers the subject-matter by the dialectics of question and answer. In the end, the world of the text is widened. In this sense, the interpreter understands better the meaning of the text than the author himself.

It follows that in understanding a work of art we cannot be satisfied with the cherished hermeneutical rule that the *mens auctoris* limits the task of understanding posed in a text (Gadamer 1976b: 102).

We are, evidently, concerned with the content of a text and not with the opinion of the author as such. Methodological hermeneutics objectified the original reader and replaced him with the interpreter. By placing himself within his tradition, however, the interpreter brings into play his own prejudices in the attempt to do justice to the text's claim to truth, thereby superseding his initial isolated standpoint and his concern with the author's individuality (Bleicher 1980: 110).

The subject-matter is the common ground in which text and reader already share. It is handed down by the tradition to which the reader and text belong. We can understand the text due to our expectations which derive from our previously given relation with the subject-matter of the text. We must be open to the meaning of the text.

Nu kunnen de meningen over de zaak waarvan we de behandeling in de tekst verwachten, een grote beweeglijke veelvuldigheid vertonen (Vandenbulcke 1973: 145).

Iedere korrektie van het voorontwerp van zijn heeft de mogelijkheid een nieuwe totale zin te ontwerpen (Vandenbulcke 1973: 178).

The positivistic interpreter abides by the ideal of reconstructing the psychological and biographical conditions of the author's intentions. To Gadamer's mind, to search for the psychological reasons behind the writer's intentions is the easiest thing to do when the interpreter has not understood the text properly. While the positivistic interpreter is busy trying to uncover the author's intentions, he is oblivious to the truth-content of the text itself. Hence, he overlooks the biographical conditions which generated the text or text-analogue. Philosophical hermeneutics believes in the importance of understanding first what a text or text-analogue is, then goes on to explain why. The content of a text comes first, then the reason why it was said. Interpretation is a matter of asking the right questions about the truth of the text and not about the intention of the author.

In short, understanding is then a matter of knowing how to go about with the text. The text is a "levenszin" which stakes a claim and demands a committed answer. Its claim is addressed to the actual reader in his present situation.

Wir vermögen uns vielmehr dem überlegenen Anspruch des Textes zu öffnen und der Bedeutung verstehend zu entsprechen, in der er uns spricht (Gadamer 1976a: 331).

2.4 Understanding and application

One important characteristic of Gadamerian hermeneutics is its *inapplicability*. It offers no methodology of interpretation to be applied. There is nothing to be *done* when we understand. Philosophical hermeneutics has no practical – mechanical - application because it is not concerned with what interpreters do. What happens to us is more important than what we do. Conversely, understanding involves the *transformation* of the initial positions of both text and interpreter in a *fusion of horizons*. What matters, is reaching an agreement over the meaning of the text. Thereby new dimensions of the subject-matter are uncovered. The author's original intention opposes new possibilities of

existence and responsibility. New possible meanings emerge since the world of the text is disclosed. The interpreter must *participate* hic et nunc in what is being said, that is, he must participate in the event of understanding.

Nun haben uns unsere Überlegungen zu der Einsicht geführt, daß im Verstehen immer so etwas wie eine Anwendung des zu verstehenden Textes auf die gegenwärtige Situation des Interpreten stattfinden (Gadamer 1976a: 327)

Gadamer fuses interpretation, understanding and application in one step. Understanding, interpretation and application are simultaneously given in the whole event. Application is derived from our encounter with the past.

De interpreet moet verleden en heden bemiddelend samenbrengen om zijn eigen begrijpen mogelijk te maken. Hierin ligt immers *de konkretisering van de zin zelf*. Om een tekst waarlijk te begrijpen moeten we hem met onze eigen hermeneutische situatie konfronteren. Dit is de betekenis die wij – met Gadamer - aan de term toepassing (Anwendung) geven. Vandaar dat Gadamer zeggen kan dat er nooit een lezer bestaan heeft die eenvoudig leest 'wat daar staat', wanneer hij een tekst voor ogen heeft (Vandenbulcke 1973: 152).

True understanding occurs in the *fusion of horizons*, where a constant creation of a text is presupposed. This is because understanding constitutes a *horizon* which is constantly changing. This is referred to as speculative interpretation.

In the name of objective knowledge the positivist stance leaves out the interpreter's historical situation as participant in a tradition, and rejects the historicity of understanding. The positivist understands the appropriation of the meaning of the text as re-construction of the author's intention. Now how did the positivist reader differentiate interpretation from application, in other words, how were theory and practice distinguished? Gadamer points out that the link between science and method results in objectifications of the text itself, which allows for the interpreter to have control over it. It is taken for granted that scientific method renders a perspective free from values in its approach to the subject-matter, and that those results can be handled in a neutral way. The supposedly neutral handling of the data allows for its re-examination in the hands of

anybody interested, who only needs to follow the same steps. Gadamer, instead, will legitimate truth-claims of knowledge coming from extra-scientific spheres of experience. Gadamer comes up with non-scientific values and norms. Gadamer is against any monological research which rules out a dialogical experience. Thus he rejects application as the outcome of the employment of rules. He also rejects interpretation as recognition and re-creation of the intentions of the author. Interpretation is contained in understanding. The reader is busy understanding, that is, interpreting the truth in its present situation.

Gadamer refers to the Greek concept of *phronesis* to ground his concept of practical knowledge which is related to his idea of application. The interpreter's task is essentially *phronetic*, since it entails a further development of the original knowledge. *Phronetic knowledge* is directed to changing situations and is different from *epistemic knowledge* which is accumulated by the researcher.

Application, in a phronetic sense, comprises two acts, namely, anticipating and learning. It is necessary to start off by anticipating the truth of the text or text-analogue. Interpretation and application merged with one another as transformations occur in the light of new perspectives and historical circumstances.

Traditionally it is taken for granted that application is the subsequent step after understanding. But there is no possibility of new knowledge if understanding adopts more the form of a procedure. Gadamer has pointed out that true application expands one's *categories*.

Understanding is furthered in application. A *dialectical* conception of the relation between the particular and the general elucidates how application alters and expands understanding. Instead of unilateral *action* from the reader, there is *interaction* between the reader and the text. Gadamerian hermeneutics rules out induction and deduction, This is because they do not explain how understanding is furthered and concepts formed. Furthermore, they are unilateral and hierarchical.

The interpreter does not stay the same as he was but undergoes a transformation. This has an ethical implication. The reader is textually transformed. Understanding a text is a question of understanding ourselves in the whole event. The meaning of a text is manifested in an open infinitude taken up in the incompleteness of the hermeneutic circle. The reader understands the text as he understands himself through understanding the text. It means that he searches for the possibilities of the text and he searches for possibilities for himself. It is not that the interpreter first understands the text and then thinks of applying it to a specific situation. In this sense, the meaning of the text cannot be conceptualized.

In de overlevering moeten we onszelf zien te begrijpen. [...] Ons begrijpen van onszelf in de overlevering blijft opengebroken naar de toekomst toe (Vandenbulcke 1973: 144).

Het voltrekt zich niet als het logische gebeuren der rangschikking van het konkrete onder algemene. De tekst is niet iets algemeen, dat de interpreet begrijpt en pas achteraf voor een speciale toepassing in gebruik neemt (Vandenbulcke 1973: 153).

These are the reasons why to understand is to apply the text to oneself.

Finally, it is remarkable that Gadamer's notion of history and tradition as kinds of conceptual deep structures, touches exactly on the historical aspect of the idea of ideology culture introduced in the previous chapter. The model of ideology culture envisioned in chapter 2, comprises a whole "landscape" of ideology, each of them a historical tradition in itself. However, unlike Gadamer's idea of a historical deep structure, the ideology model from the outset combines the idea of criticism with the idea of tradition – in effect achieving a kind of synthesis between Dooyeweerd, Gadamer, and Habermas, Taylor.

Notes

1. I hold that one can properly speak of Gadamer's epistemology, there even being . . . a certain similarity between Gadamer's attempt to explicate the conditions of understanding and Kant's transcendental critique of pure reason.
2. From now on, I shall refer to the object of understanding as *text* or *text-analogue* and the subject of understanding as *interpreter* or *reader*.
3. In my own view, it is important to notice that history and language should be characterized as modal functions of entities. In this case, understanding is the entity and the former are just two of its aspects.
4. Visagie (personal communication) is of the opinion that not history but the object of inquiry grounds any kind of methodology.
6. The assumptions and beliefs which determine our rationality can also be referred to as *meta-narratives*: a technical term from the ideology model that I use in this study. Ideological meta-narratives (the "stories" about reason, history, nature, etc.) support the ideological steering powers of modern western culture (like techno-science, economic power, etc.).
7. The aesthetic, scientific and ethical-political traditions mentioned by Warnke are in fact the 3 spheres of our ideological world – as mentioned in the previous chapter.
8. Warnke explains that although pre-conceptions are structurally necessary, an absolute agreement with all elements of a tradition is never compulsory. And this is the point Gadamer misses.

In reducing the second sense of the agreement to the first, moreover, he slips from an investigation of the conditions of understanding to the basically conservative thesis according to which we are not only members of a tradition but also its ideological supporters (Warnke 1987: 106).

9. To DFM Strauss' mind (personal communication), Gadamer hints at the modal universality of the lingual aspect (that is: the lingual aspect encompassing in itself analogies of all the other aspects.)

10. The view of Dooyeweerd's systematics of an opening process in language is contrary to any mechanistic view entailing *constancy* in terms of a fixed natural order. Conversely, the idea of a process is closer to an organicistic view implying *dynamics* in terms of a changing state of affairs.

11. The speculative character of language implies that things reflect themselves in the words which are, nevertheless, like the image of the mirror: they are ungraspable. The term speculative here is indirectly related to the Hegelian definition of speculative thought.

Volgens Hegel is een spekulatief denken een denken dat zijn zelf vindt in de voortdurende terugkeer op zijn gedachte door het telkens oproepen en uitspreken van het tegengestelde van de vroegere bevestiging. De beweging van het gedachte is het zelf. Er zit dus een dynamiek in de zin. [...] Op dezelfde wijze is ook het woord waarin een zin eeuwen later opnieuw sprekend ter sprake komt, ongrijpbaar naar zijn eigenheid tegenover de zin en toch werpt het het beeld van de zin zich in hem aan, zuiver terug (Vandebulcke 1973: 245-246).

12. Cf. with Umberto Eco's definition of meaning as non-referential.

13. For Gadamer language is not a sign. He is against any semiotic conception of language and therefore against the *sign-mode* of reality stated by Dooyeweerd ("symbolic signification" to be precise). This raises a series of difficult questions. To what extent has Gadamer rightly pointed out an illegitimate reduction and to what extent is semiotics justified? Can we speak of signs? Are signs necessarily numbers? To what extent should we also speak not only of the mathematization of language but also of its 'logicalization', that is, to reduce it to pure logical relations? Is it unwarranted to speak of a formalist, semiotic linguistics? Is it a contradiction in terms such as of *molecular biology*?

CHAPTER 4

THE KEY-FORMULA ANALYSIS OF GADAMER'S PHILOSOPHICAL HERMENEUTICS

1. Introduction

After having discussed the grounding concepts or conceptual deep structures of philosophical hermeneutics, I shall continue with a discourse analysis of the latter in order to analyze the key-formula of Gadamer's philosophical thought. The discourse analysis will be based on different expressions or utterances mainly out of *Wahrheit und Methode* and also out of *Kleine Schriften I*. Four remarks are in order here. Firstly, it is from actual (textual) utterances of Gadamer's that underlying *xyz*-propositions, in a more or less abstract form, will be derived. Secondly, these propositions will tend to elucidate the modal concepts playing a role in Gadamer's formulation. Thirdly, through various *xyz*-forms will be considered, I shall attempt finally to expose, in single formula, the ultimate conceptual synthesis underlying Gadamer's hermeneutics. Fourthly, to my knowledge, the kind of problem that I shall be addressing here, namely an analysis of the precise conceptual grammar determining the relation between two root concepts in Gadamer's discourse, has never been previously addressed in such a systematic way.

2. The key-formula for history

Philosophical hermeneutics has made an important contribution towards our understanding of the structure of understanding, especially in its historicity. As an example of Gadamer's perspective on the importance of the historical aspect, consider the following statements:

- (i) Historische Vernunft gibt es nur, weil das menschliche Dasein zeitliches und geschichtliches ist. Weltgeschichte gibt es nur, weil dieses zeitliche Dasein des Menschen ‚Welt hat‘. Chronologie gibt es nur, weil das geschichtliche Dasein des Menschen selber Zeit ist (Gadamer 1967:7).

Note that he only points to the dynamic aspect of existence and not to the relative invariance of human nature. This might be the first clue towards the postulation of the key-formula, where his attribute-component selectively favours change over constancy.

(ii) Historisches Verstehen bedeutet ständig Zunahme an Selbstbewusstsein, ständige Erweiterung des Lebenshorizontes. Da gibt es kein Halt und kein Zurück (Gadamer 1967: 6).

(iii) Es bedarf einer grundsätzlichen Rehabilitierung des Begriffes des Vorurteils und einer Anerkennung dessen, daß es legitime Vorurteile gibt, wenn man der endlich-geschichtlichen Seinsweise des Menschen gerecht werden will (Gadamer 1960: 261).

When considering the statements (i), (ii), and (iii), one can see that Gadamer binds time and existence together. Human existence is temporal through and through. Hence, human consciousness must be essentially historical, which means that it is finite. In other words, it is determined and worked out through an endless historical process. Conversely, history is infinite and dynamic.

(iv) In Wahrheit gehört die Geschichte nicht uns, sondern wir gehören ihr. Lange bevor wir uns in der Rückbesinnung selber verstehen, verstehen wir uns auf selbstverständliche Weise in Familie, Gesellschaft und Staat, in denen wir leben. Die Selbstbesinnung des Individuums ist nur ein Flackern im geschlossenen Stromkreis des geschichtlichen Lebens. *Darum sind die Vorurteile des einzelnen weit mehr als seine Urteile die geschichtliche Wirklichkeit seines Seins* (Gadamer 1960: 261).

In (iv) Gadamer describes this historical consciousness as the product of what Dooyeweerd called "cultural formation". It is always the case in philosophical hermeneutics that the knowing subject is never able to stand apart from his possible *Gegenstand*, due to his historical condition. Instead, he is always taken up into the "historical life".

(v) Ein wirklich historisches Denken muß die eigene Geschichtlichkeit mitdenken. [...] Der wahre historische Gegenstand ist kein Gegenstand, sondern die Einheit dieses Einen und Anderen, ein Verhältnis, in dem die Wirklichkeit der Geschichte ebenso wie die Wirklichkeit des geschichtlichen Verstehens besteht. [...] Verstehen ist seinem Wesen nach ein wirkungsgeschichtlicher Vorgang (Gadamer 1960: 283).

(vi) Indessen scheint mir, daß zwischen Tradition und Vernunft kein derartig unbedingter Gegensatz besteht (Gadamer 1960: 265).

Gadamer does not oppose *tradition* to *reason*, since for him the former, as holding an *x*-status, encompasses the latter. He does not believe in an a-historical reason, but rather in a kind of reason which is finite and temporal. Undoubtedly, there is an intimate relation between history and reason. Likewise, understanding occurs as a result of their mutual relation. Nevertheless, in hermeneutical terms, it seems then that the logical aspect of our existence is enclosed by the historical aspect. Hence one of the aspects dominates in the relation.

Besides being characterized as dynamic and infinite, it seems that (v) characterizes history as bringing unity to the diversity.

(vii) Sowohl die aufklärische Kritik an der Tradition als auch ihre romantische Rehabilitierung bleiben darum hinter ihrem wahren geschichtlichen Sein zurück (Gadamer 1960: 266).

(viii) Auch die Geschichte der Mathematik oder der Naturwissenschaften ist ein Stück Geschichte des menschlichen Geistes und spiegelt seine Geschehnisse (Gadamer 1960: 267).

Since natural sciences share in the historicity of human existence, it is then impossible to bracket them, for, according to Gadamer, this amounts to ignoring their truly historical nature, namely, their finitude and temporality.

(ix) Nun ist die Zeit nicht mehr primär ein Abgrund, der überbrückt werden muß, weil er trennt und fernhält, sondern sie ist in Wahrheit der tragende Grund des Geschehens, in dem das Gegenwärtige wurzelt. Der Zeitenabstand ist daher nicht etwas, was überwunden werden muß. [...] In Wahrheit kommt es darauf an, den Abstand der Zeit als eine positive und produktive Möglichkeit des Verstehens zu erkennen. Er ist nicht ein gähnender Abgrund, sondern ist ausgefüllt durch die Kontinuität des Herkommens und der Tradition, in deren Lichte uns alle Überlieferung sich zeigt (Gadamer 1960: 281).

(x) Die Ausschöpfung des wahren Sinnes aber, der in einem Text oder in einer künstlerischen Schöpfung gelegen ist, kommt nicht irgendwo zum Abschluss, sondern ist in Wahrheit ein unendlicher Prozess. [...] Der Zeitenabstand, der die Filterung leistet, hat nicht eine abgeschlossene

Grösse, sondern ist in einer ständigen Bewegung und Ausweitung begriffen (Gadamer 1960: 282).

The productivity of temporal continuity in terms of the manifold possibilities opened up in the event of understanding, clearly relies on the attributes of *dynamic* and *infinite* being ascribed to history. (Cf. (viii) to (x)).

(xi) Wenn wir aus der für unsere hermeneutische Situation im ganzen bestimmenden historischen Distanz eine historische Erscheinung zu verstehen suchen, unterliegen wir immer bereits den Wirkungen der Wirkungsgeschichte (Gadamer 1960: 284).

(xii) Es wird also nicht gefordert, daß man die Wirkungsgeschichte als eine neue selbständige Hilfsdisziplin der Geisteswissenschaften entwickeln solle, sondern daß man sich selber richtiger verstehen lerne und anerkenne, daß in allem Verstehen, ob man sich dessen ausdrücklich bewußt ist oder nicht, die Wirkung dieser Wirkungsgeschichte am Werke ist. Wo sie in der Naivität des Methodenglaubens verleugnet wird, kann übrigens auch eine tatsächliche Deformation der Erkenntnis die Folge sein. [...] Das gerade ist die Macht der Geschichte über das endliche menschliche Bewußtsein, daß sie sich dort durchsetzt, wo man im Glauben an die Methode die eigene Geschichtlichkeit verleugnet. Die Forderung, sich dieser Wirkungsgeschichte bewußt zu werden, hat gerade darin ihre Dringlichkeit - sie ist eine notwendige Forderung für das wissenschaftliche Bewußt sein (Gadamer 1960: 285).

Philosophical hermeneutics compels us to recognize the contrast between the finitude of our historical understanding over against the infinite release of the truth of the subject-matter which takes place within a historical distance. This historical distance should not be eliminated but recognized as the necessary condition for understanding. It is distorted understanding of the subject-matter is distorted when a-historical consciousness tries to get hold of it. The power held by history, the x element, over human existence, the z factor, is evident in (xii).

(xiii) Was wir geschichtlich erkennen, das sind wir im letzten Grunde selbst. Geisteswissenschaftliche Erkenntnis hat immer etwas von Selbsterkenntnis an sich (Gadamer 1967: 42).

(xiv) Jedenfalls aber wird man nach den Konsequenzen fragen dürfen, die Heideggers grundsätzliche Ableitung der Zirkelstruktur des Verstehens

aus der Zeitlichkeit des Daseins für die geisteswissenschaftliche Hermeneutik hat (Gadamer 1960: 250).

Gadamer in a sense moves on to say that history constitutes our self, for knowing something implies self-knowledge. This is because of the existential framework within which philosophical hermeneutics was developed. Gadamer wanted to elaborate on the consequences the existential temporality of man has for science, and for the humanities as well.

With reference to (xi), (xii) and (xiii), we might now postulate the following xyz-formula:

(xiv)
[att infinite] [att dynamic] [x history]
 [y enclose]
 [z self, reason, society] [att finite] [att dynamic]

Let us now proceed to another of Gadamer's key-concepts: language.

3. The key-formula for language

Consider the following two statements.

(xv) Language is the fundamental mode of operation of our being-in-the-world and the all-embracing form of the constitution of the world (Gadamer 1976b: 3).

(xvi) Die Sprache ist nicht nur eine der Ausstattungen, die dem Menschen, der in der Welt ist, zukommt, sondern auf ihr beruht, und in ihr stellt sich dar, daß die Menschen überhaupt *Welt* haben. [...] Dies Dasein der Welt aber ist sprachlich verfasst. Das ist der eigentliche Kern des Satzes, den Humboldt in ganz anderer Absicht äußert, dass die Sprachen Weltansichten sind. Humboldt will damit sagen, daß die Sprache gegenüber dem Einzelnen, der einer Sprachgemeinschaft angehört, eine Art selbständigen Dasein behauptet und ihn, wenn er in sie hineinwächst, zugleich ein bestimmtes Weltverhältnis und Weltverhalten einführt (Gadamer 1960: 419).

(xv) and (xvi) refer primarily to the ontological status of language. "The fundamental mode of operation of our being-in-the world", which is an English translation for "Dasein", implies a *Verhältnis* or "relation" between human existence and the world

rather than a *Gegenstand* which implies a self-contained consciousness standing apart from the world which it tries to subject. According to these statements, man relates to the world primarily in a lingual way. In other words, the world is *re*-presented to us through language. The latter is the key to the former.

(xvii) ...die Sprache, die wir sprechen und in der wir leben, hat eine ausgezeichnete Stellung. Sie ist zugleich die inhaltliche Vorgegebenheit für alle nachkommende logische Analyse (Gadamer 1967: 52).

For Gadamer, the totality of human existence is contained within language. This privileged position language holds in philosophical hermeneutics, refers to the pre-understanding man has about the world his existence relates to.

(xviii) The principle of hermeneutics simply means that we should try to understand everything that can be understood. This is what I meant by the sentence: "Being that can be understood is language" (Gadamer 1976b: 31).

Statement (xviii) seems to echo the Heideggerian adage: "language is the *house* of being". Gadamer has changed the formulation in order to explain what that "house" is all about. Whereas Heidegger hinted at defining (in my terms) the nucleus of the lingual aspect by placing it in an existential dimension, Gadamer denotes this existential dimension as "understanding". Man is basically committed to understand the world to which he is related. That is his main duty. Furthermore, this fundamental mode of operation in fact occurs in language. In this sense, Gadamer moves on to qualify understanding as a lingual event. In other words, Gadamer reduces conceptualization to signification. (Cf. xvii).

(xix) Reality does not happen "behind the back" of language; [...]reality happens precisely *within* language (Gadamer 1976b: 35).

(xx) Er [Humboldt] hat gezeigt, wie schief diese Frage [nach dem Ursprung der Sprache] ist, sofern sie die Konstruktion einer sprachlosen Menschenwelt einschließt, deren Erhebung zur Sprachlichkeit irgendwann und irgendwie vor sich gegangen sei (Gadamer 1960: 419).

(xxi) Nicht nur ist die Welt nur Welt, sofern sie zur Sprache kommt – die Sprache hat ihr eigentliches Dasein nur darin, daß sich in ihr die Welt darstellt. Die ursprüngliche Menschlichkeit der Sprache bedeutet also

zugleich die ursprüngliche Sprachlichkeit des menschlichen In-der-Welt-Seins (Gadamer 1960: 419).

(xxii) ...in der Sprache stellt sich die Welt selbst dar. Die sprachliche Welterfahrung ist "absolut". Sie übersteigt alle Relativitäten von Seinssetzung, weil sie alles Ansichsein umfaßt, in welchen Beziehungen (Relativitäten) immer es sich zeigt (Gadamer 1960: 426).

Gadamer wants to do away with the positivistic ideal of manipulation of objects. Language overthrows any *Dinge-an-sich*, for the Kantian phenomenal realm must come to expression. To experience the world lingually rules out "objective" viewpoints. If the existence of language presupposes its relation to man, human existence pre-supposes its relation to the world by language. Again Gadamer makes it virtually impossible to separate world from language. Gadamer rules out the possibility of imagining a wordless world. Every determination of Being is integrated into language. But at the same time language is determined by those determinations of Being. The world to which man's existence is related must be represented in language and language only "is" when it represents the world.

(xxiii) *Der Grundbezug von Sprache und Welt bedeutet daher nicht, daß die Welt Gegenstand der Sprache werde. Was Gegenstand der Erkenntnis und der Aussage ist, ist vielmehr immer schon von dem Welthorizont der Sprache umschlossen. Die Sprachlichkeit der menschlichen Welterfahrung schließt nicht die Vergegenständlichung der Welt in sich (Gadamer 1960: 426).*

(xxiv) Denn es gibt keinen Standort außerhalb der sprachlichen Welterfahrung, von dem her sie selber zum Gegenstand zu werden vermöchte (Gadamer 1960: 429).

(xxv) Vielmehr liegt in jeder Sprache ein unmittelbarer Bezug auf die Unendlichkeit des Seienden. [...] Wer Sprache hat, "hat" die Welt (Gadamer 1960: 429).

Language cannot be turned into a Gegenstand, for language constitutes the most fundamental building block of man's existence in relation to the world. If language is the most fundamental dimension of "Dasein" and the "world" to which it relates, then there is no possibility of methodologically abstracting language, for this abstraction can only happen in language.

(xxvi) For language is not an object in our hands, it is the reservoir of tradition and the medium in and through which we exist and perceive the world (Gadamer 1976b: 29).

Now this statement holds the key to understanding the relation between language and history. The historical aspect which is presented in the concept of tradition seems also to be contained in language. I shall try to unravel this rather confusing relation between them later on. To say that language is "not an object in our hands" speaks of the transcendence or majesty of the x-factor which seems to be not only history (as we saw previously) but also in some sense language.

To capture the conceptual relation between history and language, we might propose the following formula:

(xxvii)
[x language] [y enclose] [z history]

In this sense history can be said to participate in language, to be present in language, to be *contained* in language.

(xv) can also hold an initial clue to the way language relates to history. The latter might even be part of that reality which is within the grasp of that "all-embracing form" in (xv), thus corroborating the analysis of (xxvii).

(xxviii) Understanding is language-bound. [...] It is indeed not true that we live within a language, but language is not a system of signals that we send off with the aid of a telegraphic key when we enter the office or transmission station. That is not speaking, for it does not have the infinity of the act that is linguistically creative and world experiencing (Gadamer 1976b: 15).

There is no possibility of reaching a definite understanding of the world because it creatively unfolds in language. Hence in contrast with human existence, which is finite, language has been qualified too by the attribute: infinite. If language entails endless possibilities then understanding becomes a productive enterprise.

(xxix) Sein [Humboldt's] Ausgangspunkt ist, daß die Sprachen Erzeugnisse der menschlichen "Geisteskraft" sind. Überall, wo Sprache ist, die ursprüngliche Sprachkraft des menschlichen Geistes am Werk, und eine Sprache weiß den allgemeinen Zweck, der mit dieser natürlichen Kraft des Menschen intendiert ist, zu erreichen (Gadamer 1960: 416).

(xxx) Er hat den lebendigen Vollzug des Sprechens, die sprachliche Energie als das Wesen der Sprache erkannt und dadurch den Dogmatismus der Grammatiker gebrochen (Gadamer 1960: 419).

Gadamer partially grounds his description of language as a *dynamic* entity upon Humboldt's insights. Language is "energy" and "life". This description of it is suggestive of an anti-rationalist conception on the part of Gadamer, especially, as he contrasts the *dynamics of language* over against the rigidity of grammars, which presupposes an order and a set of rules.¹ Noteworthy is that the attribute "dynamic" has been chosen over the attribute "constant/changeless". As pointed out in chapter 2 this is typical of a geneticistic *x*-conception, as opposed to a structuralist conception.²

(xxxii) Demgegenüber ist freilich zu betonen, dass die Sprache erst im Gespräch, also in der Ausübung der *Verständigung* ihr eigentliches Sein hat. Das ist nicht zu verstehen, als ob damit der Zweck der Sprache angegeben wäre. Verständigung ist kein bloßes Tun, kein zweckvolles Handeln, etwa eine Herstellung von Zeichen, durch die ich anderen meinen Willen übermittele. Verständigung als solche bedarf vielmehr überhaupt keiner Werkzeuge im eigentlichen Sinne des Wortes. Sie ist ein Lebensvorgang, in dem sich eine Lebensgemeinschaft darlebt. [...] Alle Formen menschlicher Lebensgemeinschaft sind Formen von Sprachgemeinschaft, ja mehr noch: sie bilden Sprache. Denn die Sprache ist ihrem Wesen nach die Sprache des Gesprächs. Sie bildet selber durch den Vollzug der Verständigung erst ihre Wirklichkeit. Deshalb ist sie kein bloßes Mittel zur Verständigung (Gadamer 1960: 422).

(xxxiii) Die Sprachlichkeit der Menschen Welterfahrung gibt unserer Analyse der hermeneutischen Erfahrung einen erweiterten Horizont. [...]

The first step in figuring out the relation between history and language is to specify which elements reside in the z-factor. These formulas describe the domain of each one of them. But the difficulty here is that, although Gadamer stresses the historicity of human existence, he actually focuses on the linguistic constitution of the world which obviously includes our human existence. Furthermore, it could also be possible to shift one of the formulas completely to the z-factor of the other.

In the light of these difficulties, I conclude that the only complex formula which really captures Gadamer's intent is:⁵

(xl)
 [x history] [y enclose]
 [z [x language] [y {enclose, mediate}] [z self, reason, society,...]]

This case can be called the *double x-factor* to differentiate it from the dualistic *x-factor*. I think (xl) depicts more accurately Gadamer's further elaboration of the implications of Heidegger's existential philosophy, namely, language mediates the relation of Dasein to the world. History, on the other hand, is the condition of our human existence. This explains why Gadamer confronts human existence whose historicity renders it as finite, over against the infinite possibilities language as a dynamic function has.

It is possible to give a *problem-geschichtliche* description of Gadamer's conceptual deep-structure considering the attributes attached to the formula, as follows: Gadamer's concept of historical reason makes him a *cosmogonic* or *genetisist* for he conceives of knowledge as an endless process. Regarding the relation between language and history, it is misleading to think of him as a *dualist* for he has repeatedly stated the primacy of language over any other aspect as well as the causal power of history, without stipulating separate realms for these two totalities. Hence philosophical hermeneutics falls under the category of what I would call *geneticistic monism*, to use a term appropriated from Vollenhoven and Seerveld. But note that in the present analysis the terminology receives a distinctive technical theoretical interpretation.

5. Concluding remarks

Let us briefly review the highlights of the foregoing analysis.

In the first place, all the preceding statements can be reduced to key-formulas, which constitute the most fundamental propositions upon which Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics rests. The key-formula represents the first step of the analysis of the conceptual deep structures of any thinker. The key-formula analysis shows how any philosopher draws on an imaginary philosophical lexicon in order to state his all-important convictions. This lexicon has what can be termed as *ontological entries* such as mind, culture, society, nature, knowledge, etc. In philosophical hermeneutics, entries such as *language* and *history* figure at the top of the list, for they occupy the *x*-position. The rest of the entries appear in the *z*-position. In addition, this lexicon contains transitive verbs such as to ground, to enclose, to cause, to transcend, to found, to constitute, to root, to organize, to integrate, to pervade, to form, etc. And to my mind, *to mediate* must be included in this lexicon, since it is one of the main actions performed by language and history in philosophical hermeneutics. To mediate is a form of empowerment in the sense that *it holds the key to or is the access to z*. Note that in establishing the ontological formula that underlies all the preceding statements, we have to "translate" the words of the sentence into abstract and generally recognizable ontological concepts. Connectors such as "and" and words such as "is" "of", etc., although they help to read the meaning, do not belong to the simple categorial (ontological) concepts of the formula itself.

Noteworthy is the fact that the relation between history and language of Gadamerian hermeneutics remains blurry and at times leads to an immanent contradiction, especially when Gadamer explains the ultimate constitution of the self. Is it history or language that takes the lead? The interpreters of Gadamer – at least those that I have come across- do not seem to recognize that there is even a problem here. Theories construct facts and not the other way around. Hence, the analysis of conceptual deep structures resulted in a key-formula that does make the problem apparent –whatever the authorial intentions of Gadamer himself might be.

Within the framework of the modal aspects, the following remarks can be made. Contrary to Hegel, who holds out absolute knowledge as an attainable goal, Gadamer states the finitude of our factual understanding as its fundamental condition. How do we understand? Our understanding of an issue is in constant expansion by means of its historicity and linguisticity. To my mind, Gadamerian hermeneutics points to the way in which understanding, which is logically qualified, can function in the historical, lingual and even social aspects.

Having abstracted, the transcendental conditions of understanding, it is then impossible to speak of a self-determined logical ego that escapes the effects history exerts over the latter through language. The fact that our thought is determined by our culture is analogous, on another level, to Dooyeweerd's religious ground-motives, and to Vollenhoven's philosophical types and time-streams. Gadamer makes it clear that our understanding is shaped by our pre-understanding which rests upon the views, insights, beliefs handed down to us. So understanding is not a matter of making alienated logical connections operated by a transcendental logical ego. On the contrary, this ego must realize how much it is within the grip of *tradition* and of its own *present hermeneutical situation*. In the end the prejudice of Enlightenment against anything which could block the idealism of an objective knowledge and a free-determined ego must be given up. Gadamer's project pursues similar ends to those of Dooyeweerd in opposing the idealistic belief of a self-determined ego. Dooyeweerd unmasks the dogma of the autonomy of the logical ego as the product of a dialectic of two religious forces, namely the freedom-nature ground motive. Hence, modernity evolves around the idea of an ego standing in opposition to the laws of nature it discovers in order to exert control over reality. So against this background, an autonomous ego is dogmatically postulated. Gadamer, Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven point out the need for recognizing the insufficiency of the self. Whereas one can explain Gadamerian hermeneutics as a pronouncement for the historical and lingual determination of *Reason*, Reformational philosophy underlines the religious character of the self including its logical function.

Gadamer tries to develop the consequences of Heidegger's renewal of the ontological question: What is the essence of things? He opposes any "objectification" (*Vergegenständlichung*) where a self-contained consciousness manipulates objects in the world. This consciousness is supposed to be a-historical. Gadamer stresses the fact that it is not a matter of surrendering the world to our consciousness but of relating us to the world. This relation is *mediated* through language. The historical, and therefore finite, condition of human existence and the importance of letting the truth of the text speak to us, are the shift Gadamer makes in order to explain under what conditions the *Geisteswissenschaften* must operate. He does not devise a methodology which presupposes the possibility of absolute knowledge and therefore of control over the subject matter. However, I shall return to his ideology critique of positivism and analyze the connection with existentialism in chapter 6.

Gadamer's hermeneutical theory aims at explaining the event of understanding as a lingual phenomenon. Understanding would then seem to be qualified by the lingual aspect and grounded upon the historical aspect as any cultural event is. Gadamer sheds light on the inter-modal relation among the historical, the lingual and the social aspects. Precisely these three modalities in this exact order constitute the grounds upon which Gadamer has developed his hermeneutical theory in his attempt to explain what understanding is all about.

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics sheds light on the way in which the entities and we ourselves function in the lingual aspect. Nevertheless I would like to stress the fact that the examples analysed above are altogether a rather reductionistic account of our temporal horizon of experience. However, what apparently fascinates Gadamer is the modal universality of the lingual aspect as ontically given. In Dooyeweerd's terms it means that in general any entity is either lingually subjectified or lingually objectified.

In my view, Gadamer's ontology and anthropology are half-right because we are more than a lingual self and the entire world is more than a lingual phenomenon, for we function in other aspects which are variously connected to the lingual one. And yet, that

does not exhaust what we are. In addition, none of the modal aspects can be reduced to the lingual one. It should be clear that the lingual aspect is not to be ontologically favoured at the expense of the other aspects of our existence.

Although Gadamer has convincingly explained the historical and lingual conditions of understanding which place it beyond a pure logical process, I shall discuss at the end of this study how problematic his position can turn out to be. Furthermore, I would like to refer to it as the *dogma of the hermeneutical ego*, which can be encapsulated in the following key-formula:

(xli)

(1) [x history] → [z lingual → self]

(2) [x language-effected-self] → [z world, experience, etc.]

Though this representation is very similar to (xl), there are important detail-differences. Firstly, this structure makes it clear that language first unites with the self, before governing the other aspects of experience. Secondly, the language-effected-self acquires more authentic x-power than in (xl), where both language and self belong intrinsically to the immediate domain of history. In (xli), self not only unites especially with linguisticity, but this combined factor at level (2) is conceptualized more as an x-factor in its own right than in (xl). This representation also does more justice to the anthropological notion of the centrality of a "self". If this representation comes closer to capturing some of Gadamer's pronouncements, we can even see structural analogies to Dooyeweerd's ontology. In the latter case, level (1) would give x-status to God's law for the self (coming to expression in, inter alia, language). At level (2) the self centralises all aspects of experience.

Notes

1. Nevertheless, Humboldt himself may be situated within the Western rationalist tradition. Cf. for example the kind of reference that a modern rationalist like Chomsky makes to this important figure in the history of linguistics.

2. In terms of formal structure, a typical geneticist formula would look like this:

[att dynamic] [x] [y engender/ generate] [z] [att dynamic]

Contrast this to a typical structuralist (in Seerveld's sense) formula:

[att changeless] [x] [y structure/ order] [z] [att changeless]

3. With reference to the y -power of enclosing, by means of a formula - internal movement rule, this concept might even take on x -status itself. Compare, for example, Jasper's notion of "*Umgreifendes*". This kind of movement is also possible for attributes. Compare, for example, the notion of contingency in, say, Rorty's thought.

4. In the following formulas I have left out the attribute-component as it is not relevant to the argument, but I shall return to the issue in the final paragraph of the present section. For simplicity I also reduce the y -factor of ensuing formulas to one element.

5. These z -elements do not differ fundamentally from (xxxiii). In fact, I present different approximations to show various possible interpretations of z -factors.

CHAPTER 5

METAPHOR ANALYSIS

1. Introduction

In a sense, the previous analysis extends Dooyeweerd's concept of a philosophical ground-idea and Vollenhoven's types and time-streams. But now we shall move into an area that was never explored in the older Reformational philosophy, namely, metaphor analysis.

Philosophical hermeneutics has intertwined a network of metaphors serviceable to explain the the historicity and linguisticity of the event of understanding. The very same definition of understanding as an *event* is in fact the initial metaphor which justifies the selection of the other main systematic metaphors: (*Wirkungs*)*geschichte*, prejudices, dialogue, horizon, and game. The network is so strongly built to the point that these metaphors become interchangeable.

The linguisticity of Being found expression with Gadamer in such concepts as *Wirkungsgeschichte* (effective-history), *Zugehörigkeit* (belonginess), *Spiel* (game), and *Gespräch* (dialogue) - which are almost completely interchangeable and point at the possibility of truth as disclosure, or *Horizontverschmelzung* (fusion of horizons) as Gadamer refers to it (Bleicher 1980: 118).

I am aware that this study does not exhaust the wider universe of metaphors found in Gadamerian texts. Hence, I will limit my exposition to those noted above for they are argueably the principle ones.

And in terms of the logic of conceptual mappings, which justifies the heuristic value of metaphors, I further contend that Gadamer's use of understanding a work of art as a model for understanding in general is one of these cases. The issues that surface here will be explored more thoroughly in the next chapter.

I have reserved the discussion on the Gadamerian concept of truth for chapter 6 as it seems to be more appropriate to discuss its implications as part of our ideology analysis. However, to understand truth as disclosure (*aletheia*) is definitely a metaphorical operation.

Certainly it is unusual to conceive of *Wirkungsgeschichte* and prejudices as metaphors, but I have labeled them as such in terms of the logic of conceptual mappings, through which Gadamer highlights certain aspects of the historicity of understanding.

Let us then proceed to examine the Gadamerian constellation of metaphors in order to figure out in what ways historicity and linguisticity as conceptual deep structures of philosophical hermeneutics are thereby explicated.

2. *Wirkungsgeschichte* and prejudices

Wirkungsgeschichte and prejudices refer in the first place to our historical situation in terms of our *Zugehörigkeit* to history. This belongingness must be understood as the link of our present with the past. Furthermore, this link sustains the *dialogical* relation between the interpreter and the text. The historical situation of the interpreter affects him as he forms part of a tradition which hands down the prejudices that will *determine* his understanding. Likewise, *Wirkungsgeschichte* *underlies* and *hovers* on the recognition of the truths and insights rendered by the text.

In its context, the interpreter finds himself in his own 'situation' from where he has to understand tradition by means of the prejudices he derives from within it. Any cognition of the historical phenomena is, therefore, always guided by the results of effective-history which determine in advance what is to be regarded as worth knowing (Bleicher 1980: 111).

2.1 Wirkungsgeschichte

The radical finitude of our consciousness is expressed in the metaphor of *Wirkungsgeschichte*. A *wirkungsgeschichtliche* consciousness must be understood in two ways: the first one refers to a form of consciousness internally formed and determined by history, and the second way refers to the fact of being conscious *of the fact that our consciousness is formed by history*.

Hier gaat het dus om *het zich bewust zijn* van een bepaalde vorm van het bewustzijn. In tweede betekenis wordt het begrip 'door de geschiedenis innerlijk gevormde bewustzijn' refleksief gebruikt (Vandenbulcke 1973: 113).

Hence, Gadamer maintains that understanding is an *effect of history*. It must be noticed that this metaphor has the status of a *principle*. By principle it is must be understood as a *tragende Instanz* permanently at work in understanding. In other words, it is operating above any conscious manipulation from our side. Its power need not be recognized in order to be set at work.

Wenn wir aus der für unsere hermeneutische Situation im ganzen bestimmenden historischen Distanz eine historische Erscheinung zu verstehen suchen, unterliegen wir immer bereits den Wirkungen der Wirkungsgeschichte (Gadamer 1960: 284).

Es wird also nicht gefordert, daß man die Wirkungsgeschichte als eine neue selbständige Hilfsdisziplin der Geisteswissenschaften entwickeln solle, sondern daß in allem Verstehen, ob man sich dessen ausdrücklich bewußt ist oder nicht, die Wirkung dieser Wirkungsgeschichte am Werke ist. Wo sie in der Naivität des Methodenglaubens verleugnet wird, kann übrigens auch eine tatsächliche Deformation der Erkenntnis die Folge sein. [...] Das gerade ist die Macht der Geschichte über das endliche menschliche Bewußtsein, daß sie sich dort durchsetzt, wo man im Glauben an die Methode die eigene Geschichtlichkeit verleugnet. Die Forderung, sich dieser Wirkungsgeschichte bewußt zu werden, hat gerade darin ihre Dringlichkeit - sie ist eine notwendige Forderung für das wissenschaftliche Bewußtsein (Gadamer 1960: 285).

Es genießt ja bei ihm [Gadamer] den Status eines "Prinzips", aus dem sich seine gesamte Hermeneutik nahezu deduzieren lässt. [...] Die Wirkungsgeschichte steht nicht in unserer Macht oder unserem Verfügen.

Wir unterliegen ihr mehr, als wir uns vor Bewußtsein führen können [...] Es durchdringt unsere geschichtliche "Substanz" in einer Weise, die sich nicht zu letzter Deutlichkeit und Distanz bringen läßt (Grondin 1991: 147).

As historical beings we are under the grip of *Wirkungsgeschichte* which, thus, becomes the *sine qua non* for understanding. But how? By representing the productive possibility of understanding, *Wirkungsgeschichte* is the "toekomstsheppende aktieve geschiedenis", which opposes speculative philosophy. The latter equates being with reasoning and maintains the possibility of finally getting an *absolute* knowledge of history, which would preclude the inherently *projective* (*toekomstsheppende*) power of every historical event. This power is structured by the relation of being with its past and its future possibilities.

The fact that our consciousness is essentially historical and that it is under the grip of *Wirkungsgeschichte* challenges the whole project of the Enlightenment, for Reason now must recognize its limits. Historicism, modelled upon the natural sciences, tried to suppress the role of *Wirkungsgeschichte* by pursuing an objective knowledge of history.¹

Conversely, *Wirkungsgeschichte* points out that knowledge is historically characterized by being incomplete and subject to revision. *Wirkungsgeschichte* makes us also aware of our limitation and finitude as historical beings, which is not an obstacle. On the contrary, it has the virtue of rendering productive the historical distance between text and reader within a hermeneutical situation.

Wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein ist zunächst Bewußtsein der hermeneutischen *Situatio*. [...] Der Begriff der Situation ist ja dadurch charakterisiert, daß man sich nicht ihr gegenüber befindet und daher gegenständliches Wissen von ihr haben kann. Man steht in ihr, findet sich immer schon in einer Situation vor, deren Erhellung die nie ganz zu vollendende Aufgabe ist. Das gilt auch für die hermeneutische Situation, d.h., die Situation, in der wir uns gegenüber der Überlieferung befinden, die wir zu verstehen haben. Auch die Erhellung dieser Situation, d.h. die wirkungsgeschichtliche Reflexion ist nicht vollendbar, aber diese Unvollendbarkeit ist nicht ein Mangel an Reflexion, sondern liegt im Wesen des geschichtlichen Seins, das wir sind. *Geschichtlichsein heisst, nie im Sichwissen aufgehen* (Gadamer 1960:285).

The productive power of history was denied when historicism compelled the reader to look instead for the intentions of the author, which supposedly must be reconstructed in order to understand the text. Conversely, Gadamer compels the historian to reckon with the opening of the *horizon of meaning* each text presents and that he wants to understand.

Wirkungsgeschichte overpowers and overwhelms the activity of a transcendental logical subject, which is the dogma held by rationalism. Philosophical hermeneutics by means of this metaphor compels the reader to be aware of his/her belongingness to a hermeneutic tradition and to remain open to it. The reader is never master of his own hermeneutical situation.

Since philosophical hermeneutics recognizes the bond between history and language, the metaphor of *Wirkungsgeschichte* stands in service to establishing the dialogical (lingual) relationship between interpreter and text which follows the dialectic of question and answer within a historical context.

All understanding is linguistic and the "linguisticity of understanding is the concretion of effective historical conscience"; the agreement emerging from the dialogue, as in the interpretation of a text, i.e. of a subject-matter, takes place in the medium of language (Bleicher 1980: 116).

Finally, we must now reflect critically on the metaphor under discussion, as it functions in Gadamer's discourse. In my judgement, the metaphor as such, in connection with human understanding, presents no problem. (Compare also what Dooyeweerd would term the historical analogy in the analytical aspect.) But the way this metaphor functions in Gadamer's discourse is actually related to the *geneticistic* kind of thinking discussed earlier. And no other leading metaphor in this discourse balances this one-sided modeling of understanding.

2.2 Prejudices

To begin with, it is important to take note that Gadamer reformulates the meaning of prejudice in opposition to *the prejudice of the Enlightenment against prejudice*; there it was taken as unfounded (Gadamer 1960: 255). The Enlightenment holds that any homage paid to authority blocks the use of reason, for every authority is arbitrary. Hence prejudices were considered to be obstacles to self-determination and to hinder any attempt at arriving at the ideal of objective knowledge. However, this was, indeed, its prejudice in favour of the autonomy of Reason.

Es kann jedoch kein Zweifel sein, daß die wirkliche Konsequenz der Aufklärung eine andere ist: die Unterwerfung aller Autorität unter die Vernunft (Gadamer 1960: 262).

However, Gadamer contends that it is a rational act to recognize that someone has better knowledge than oneself does. In addition, he points out that the German Enlightenment recognized that Reason is too weak to be without prejudices.

Die Autorität von Personen hat aber ihren letzten Grund nicht in einem Akte der Unterwerfung und der Abdikation der Vernunft, sondern in einem Akt der Anerkennung und der Erkenntnis ... (Gadamer 1960: 263)

Every interpretation is mediated by the prejudices of its time. Prejudices should be understood as the *productive instance* of the dialogical relation between the past and the present. In this context a prejudiced understanding can never amount to misunderstanding. Nevertheless, it must also be considered how these same prejudices can also conceal the text.

Gadamer refers to prejudices as the actual pre-conditions of understanding, that is, the text or text-analogue is always understood in terms of prejudices sustaining a hypothesis or anticipation, which orients the interpreter. Likewise, the knowledge of the subject-matter is developed by putting our prejudices *at play*. However, it is necessary to discriminate among the prejudices in order to lift out those which are *productive*, that is, those which make understanding possible.² They belong to pervasive history, which

means that they are given to the reader and are not at his disposal. In the context of Gadamerian hermeneutics, it is more appropriate to speak of the legitimacy of prejudices, because prejudices can only be textually legitimate or illegitimate, but never *true* or *false*.

Wer einen Text verstehen will, vollzieht immer ein Entwerfen (Gadamer 1960: 251).

Diese Beschreibung ist natürlich eine grobe Abkürzung: daß jede Revision des Vorentwurfs in der Möglichkeit steht, einen neuen Entwurf von Sinn voranzuworfen, daß sich rivalisierende Entwürfe zur Ausarbeitung nebeneinander herbringen können, bis sich die Einheit des Sinnes eindeutiger festlegt; daß die Auslegung mit Vorbegriffen einsetzt, die durch angemessenere Begriffe ersetzt werden: eben dieses ständige Neu-Entwerfen, das die Sinnbewegung des Verstehens und Auslegens ausmacht, ist der Vorgang, den Heidegger beschreibt (Gadamer 1960: 252).

The prejudices contained in the interpreter's present situation which are projected onto the text take part in a dialectic, which interrogatively revolves from the past to the present and vice versa. It means that this circle consists of a series of questions and answers ad infinitum. In order to understand a text the interpreter's task is, on the one hand, to formulate, on the basis of his pre-understanding in the form of prejudices, the appropriate question to the answer the text is rendering, and, on the other hand, to give an answer to the question that the text comes up with. This dialectic brings the text into an actual historical possibility. The actualization of the text expands the worlds of both text and interpreter as they *fuse*. This is the way in which the inter-play of prejudices is carried out in any cultural sphere, and therefore also in scientific activity.

In conclusion then, I want to argue that Gadamer links the concept of understanding to what at first seems like a non-logical kind of emotive pre-conditionedness. He then explains how this is in reality a pre-condition for creative understanding. But what we basically have here, is clearly a metaphorically grounded kind of reasoning. The element of truth conveyed by this metaphor is not to be denied. It illuminates part of the inherent structures of human understanding.

3. Dialogue and fusion of horizons

3.1 Dialogue

The fact that a text intends to address the reader in his present situation in a relevant way, is captured in understanding interpretation as carrying out a dialogue with the text.

In de interpretatie is het er ons niet om te doen het ontstaan van de tekst te achterhalen. Het komt er op aan te vernemen wat hij tot onze tijd wil zeggen. Wij zoeken in de tekst waarheid voor onze tijd. Daarmee hopen wij het ware wezen van de tekst te vrijwaren. Want een tekst die een levenszin vertolkt wil tot iedere tijd spreken. Hij wil tot iedere tijd zijn boodschap richten (Vandenbulcke 1973: 150).

There the text challenges the reader. The hermeneutic duty is to start a dialogue with the text by letting it speak to us and eventually through us.

The understanding of a text has not begun at all as long as the text remains mute. But a text can begin to speak. [...] When it does begin to speak, however, it does not simply speak its word, always the same, in lifeless rigidity, but gives ever new answers to the person who questions it and poses ever new questions to him who answers it. To understand a text is to come to understand oneself in a kind of dialogue. This contention is confirmed by the fact that the concrete dealing with a text yields understanding only when what is said in the text begins to find expression in the interpreter's own language. Interpretation belongs to the essential unity of understanding. One must take up into himself what is said to him in such fashion that it speaks and finds an answer in the words of his own language (Gadamer 1976b: 57).

Partners in a dialogue do not carry it out, but are carried along in the dialogue. None of them knows where the dialogue will take them. Dialogical reasoning is the kind of reasoning where the subject-matter takes the lead.

In philosophical hermeneutics, the structure of understanding necessarily encompasses a social aspect. For interpretation is not a monologue, but a dialogue. It never happens in isolation. It always takes an "I" and a "thou" to understand the subject-matter of the text.

Demgegenüber ist freilich zu betonen, daß die Sprache erst im Gespräch, also in der Ausübung der *Verständigung* ihr eigentliches Sein hat. Das ist nicht so zu verstehen, als ob damit der Zweck der Sprache angegeben wäre. Verständigung ist kein bloßes Tun, kein zweckvolles Handeln, etwa eine Herstellung von Zeichen, durch die ich anderen meinen Willen übermittele. Verständigung als solche bedarf vielmehr überhaupt keiner Werkzeuge im eigentlichen Sinne des Wortes. Sie ist ein Lebensvorgang, in dem sich eine Lebensgemeinschaft darlebt. [...] Alle Formen menschlicher Lebensgemeinschaft sind Formen von Sprachgemeinschaft, ja mehr noch: sie bilden Sprache. Denn die Sprache ist ihrem Wesen nach die Sprache des Gesprächs. Sie bildet selber durch den Vollzug der Verständigung erst ihre Wirklichkeit. Deshalb ist sie kein bloßes Mittel zur Verständigung (Gadamer 1960: 422).

Let us discuss these issues thoroughly.

Understanding as dialogue entails a *learning experience*. A dialogue opens up the possibility to expand reason in the sense that once every participant is being informed of the positions of others and they become less partial than before. A good discussion is always characterized by an openness to the other and to new experiences. Ultimately, a dialogue reveals the truth of the subject-matter through which the partners in the dialogue are transformed.

It is necessary to lend an ear to the other participants in order to know their position. Besides appropriation, a dialogue also implies confrontation. It must be a true learning experience where each participant is busy expanding his knowledge of the subject-matter by assessing his own positions over against the opinion of the others. Thereby each one of the participants is on his way to the truth of the subject-matter.

The conversation leads the participants into a *consensus* where the original positions each one has are better articulated. This consensus is actually the configuration of a deeper understanding of the truth of an issue. This deeper understanding consists of the *fusion* of all those moments of truth found in divergent perspectives. In order to become a true consensus the positions of each participant must be considered. The main purpose behind this consensus is that all participants are now better informed of the positions of others.

Maybe they will agree or maybe they will disagree from each other, but in any case their horizon will have been broadened.

In the same way as conversation, then, genuine understanding involves the attempt to uncover the light an object or interlocutor sheds on the concerns in terms of which we understand them. [...] Understanding thus represents a new unity of judgement or, as Gadamer puts the point, understanding (*Verstehen*) is equivalent to reaching an understanding or consensus (*Verständigung*)...(Warnke 1987: 102).

The intrinsic dialogical relation between the interpreter and the text is under the auspice of an *agreement*. That means, a communality is established on the grounds of the linguistic aspect of understanding. The essence of the intrinsically linguistic condition of understanding which Gadamer speaks of, consists of this communality whereby interpreters take part in forming a common perspective regarding the way we experience the world.. In this sense, understanding is indeed a process of communication, which allows for the transformation of perspectives on the grounds of a common language.

The metaphor of the dialogue also points to the finitude of our knowledge, which is formed by *Wirkungsgeschichte*. The finitude of human knowledge means that we cannot fabricate knowledge nor are we the standard of truth. Likewise, a dialogue underscores the idea that there is no fixed universe of meaning but a “meaning continuity” which is realized in every interpretation (Vandenbulcke 1973: 164).

An on-going dialogue is based upon *language games* whereby the participants come to an agreement about a subject-matter. An agreement in Gadamer’s terms implies the concession of authority to the text which in principle has a better knowledge of the subject-matter than the reader.

His [Gadamer’s] argument is rather that an *openness* to the *possible* truth of the object is the condition of understanding, that one must at least provisionally concede authority to one’s object, even if this concession may ultimately be rescinded (Warnke 1987: 89).

The linguistic game has a hold on the subjectivity of the participants. The game is a swing of interrogation and reply. The question is what gives to the dialogue its impulse.

Questions endow the reader to work out his particular prejudices together with the prevailing opinions about the text.

What is a question? Gadamer answers as follows:

Fragen sehen heißt aber, aufbrechen können, was wie eine verschlossene und undurchlässige Schicht geübter Vormeinungen unser ganzes Denken und Erkennen beherrscht. So aufbrechen können, daß auf diese Weise neue Fragen gesehen und neue Antworten möglich werden, macht den Forscher aus. Jede Aussage hat ihren Sinnhorizont darin, daß sie einer Fragesituation entstammt (Gadamer 1967: 54-55).

And what is an answer? He explains:

Wenn jemand eine Behauptung aufstellt, die man nicht versteht, dann sucht man sich klarzumachen, wie er dazu kommt, welche Frage er sich gestellt hat, auf die seine Aussage eine Antwort ist. Und wenn es eine Aussage ist, die wahr sein soll, so muß man es selber mit der Frage versuchen, auf die sie eine Antwort sein will. Es ist sicherlich nicht immer leicht, *die* Fragen zu finden, auf die eine Aussage wirklich Antwort ist. Es ist vor allem deshalb nicht leicht, weil auch eine Frage wiederum kein einfaches Erstes ist, in das wir uns nach Belieben versetzen können. Denn jede Frage ist selber Antwort. Das ist die Dialektik, in die wir uns hier verstricken. Jede Frage ist motiviert. Auch ihr Sinn ist niemals vollständig in ihr anzutreffen (Gadamer 1967: 54).

Questions have the ability of laying open possibilities. They must expose the problematic of the subject-matter and project an horizon, which contains manifold answers. That means that questions set in motion the possibilities of the subject-matter. Questions set alternatives free from the imposed opinion. Nevertheless, questions are not arbitrary or undetermined. False (illegitimate) questions are those which block any openness. Questions have directional force (*richtingskracht*) through which they point to a meaningful answer. Obviously, meaningful questions give rise to meaningful answers.

Questions can have an affirmative or a negative answer. This means that in its horizon different arguments are played off against each other in the fashion of the medieval

method of disputation, where every argument was considered in its own right. Questions get hold of us penetrating the fixed opinions we hold fast to.

Every statement is an answer to a question which is the key to understand the statement. Philosophical hermeneutics focuses more on the questions asked, for which the content of a particular text constitutes its answer.

The true state of our being is to have finite knowledge and the nature of questions point that out.

The event of interpretation begins with the question the text posits. There is a chain of questions which is inaugurated by the question posited by the text. There is an original disagreement between the reader and the text. Our interpretation is always delimited by the question the text poses.

Deze laatste vraag is de aanvang van het hermeneutische gebeuren. Het is omdat de tekst ons een vraag stelt, dat wij hem willen interpreteren. Dat er geen vanzelfsprekende overeenstemming bestaat tussen de inhoud van de overlevering en onze eigen vooroordelen, maakt het mogelijk dat wij aan de tekst een hermeneutische ervaring opdoen (Vandenbulcke 1973: 146).

Hence, to formulate a question is a fundamental heuristic principle, because one puts to test different possibilities. The *projective* (*toekomstschepende*) power of *Wirkungsgeschichte* delimits the questions and the object of inquiry. In the widest context, through an inquisitive process of questioning, our interpretation constitutes the answer to the question that tradition puts to us. At the same time new aspects of the subject-matter are released.

The semantic creativity implied by the metaphor of the dialogue challenges the logicism of rationalism in respect of concept formation. The constant concept formation carried out in every dialogue is rooted in the dynamic productivity of the "concrete and exemplary case", which sharply contrasts with deductive procedures. To Gadamer's mind our thought is not so much occupied sorting out logical-deductive relations, than it is directed at clarifying the relations given in the circumstances brought about by life.

3.1.1 *The difference between dialogue and Hegelian dialectic*

Hermeneutical dialogue in terms of which interpretation is explained has a dialectic structure, where the subject-matter takes the lead and gets hold of the reader and where the subject-matter becomes richer in every interpretation. The leading role of the subject-matter can be explicated by referring to Hegel's concept of pure thinking: the Spirit is on his way to itself by thinking itself time and again, and by recognizing itself in his contrary. The essence of pure thinking in Hegelian terms lies in the unity of the contrary points of view and not in the methodo-logical activity of a subjectivity. Thus the logic of the dialectic self-movement of the subject-matter implies *transcending* deductive logic based on syllogisms.

The reader and the text would undergo this dialectical operation in order to achieve a better self-understanding, which would culminate at a stage of absolute knowledge. However, it is this last assumption Hegelian dialectical experience entails that philosophical hermeneutics rejects, because the most fundamental experience is the experience of the finitude of human existence (Bleicher 1980: 111, 113). This fact does not constitute an impasse but, on the contrary, it opens up the very same possibility of an ever-expanding self-knowledge. Self-knowledge can never be complete. It is not a matter of accumulating information, but of being open to new experiences.

Gadamer opposes speculative philosophy with his hermeneutic dialectic which is always given in the context of language and which portrays the radical finitude of human knowledge. The infinity of the word expressed in what has been said and the unsaid comes to be captured in the finitude of the interpretation, which harbors, nevertheless, possibilities for the future.

Finally, we must reflect critically also on the use of this metaphor. I will make two remarks in this regard. Positively, the concept of dialogue does indeed illuminate a normative concept of the will-to-communication. But negatively, we can say that, by

itself, the use of this metaphor is not able to reflect the reality of *ideologized* culture and society. And this is a reality that severely *limits* the ideal of dialogical agreement.

3.2 Fusion of horizons

The dialogical (lingual) experience of understanding and the effects of history on it can be explained in terms of the metaphor of a *fusion of horizons*. Gadamer uses the metaphor of the *horizon* to refer to that which contains the life-world of the reader and that of the text. In a sense it also constitutes a *locus* where one has a certain perspective. It is the *situation* where one finds himself.

Zum Begriff der Situation gehört, daher wesentlich der Begriff des *Horizontes*. Horizont ist der Gesichtskreis, der all das umfaßt und umschließt, was von einem Punkte aus sichtbar ist. In der Anwendung auf das denkende Bewußtsein reden wir dann von Enge des Horizontes, von möglicher Erweiterung des Horizontes, von Erschließung neuer Horizontes usw (Gadamer 1960: 286).

These horizons are actualized by particular language, which withholds the universe of values and opinions of the reader and of the text. These horizons are dynamic because of their lingual and historical nature.

The hermeneutic situation of the interpreter is always a dynamic one. There is a dynamic continuity between the horizon of the present and the past. The horizon of the present is the hermeneutic situation of the interpreter. This present horizon is formed by the presuppositions derived from tradition. The metaphor of the fusion of horizons describes the *continuous* formation of our present situation as dependent on our past.

Der Horizont ist vielmehr etwas, in das wir hineinwandern und das mit uns mitwandert. Dem Beweglichen verschieben sich die Horizonte. So ist auch der Vergangenheitshorizont, aus dem alles menschliche Leben lebt und der in der Weise der Überlieferung da ist, immer schon in Bewegung. Es ist nicht erst das historische Bewußtsein, das den umschließenden Horizont in Bewegung bringt. In ihm ist sich diese Bewegung nur ihrer selbst bewußt geworden (Gadamer 1960: 288).

There must be a *fusion* of the interpreter's horizon and the horizon of the text in order to fathom the meaning of a text. When both horizons fuse, the interpreter arrives at a new understanding as he experiences how the distance between his horizon and that of the text is transcended in a new generality. In the fusion of horizons the historical horizon is enclosed in the present horizon of the interpreter by means of the circle of question and answer. In this way, the presuppositions of the interpreter are actively intertwined with the meaning of the text.

Through our encounter with the past in the fusion of horizon, our original prejudices are tested and the original questions transcended. Throughout the fusion of horizons and the games played, the interpreter checks his pre-understanding over against the unfolding meaning of the text or of the text-analogue.

Gadamer's terms the elevation of one's own particularity, and that of the 'object' onto a higher generality, the 'fusion of horizons'; this is what occurs whenever understanding takes place, i.e. our horizon is in a process of continued formation through the testing of our prejudices in the encounter with the past and the attempt to understand parts of our tradition. It is therefore inadequate to conceive of an isolated horizon of the present since it has already been formed through the contact with the past (Bleicher 1980: 112).

The fusion of horizons as a metaphor entails a paradox. Although there is a gap between the horizon of the text and the present horizon of the historian, and between past and present, in the event of understanding these factual differences are continually transcended. The historical horizon that the historian tries to understand is not closed but always has a surplus of meaning filled with possibilities. On the contrary, the historical horizon makes sense again through its contact with the horizon of the present. By this token, Gadamer overcomes historicism which commands the historians to leave behind their own historicity, namely, their *place in time*.

Gadamer thinks that reason can progress by means of dialogue and discussion, since in any case all positions after discussing the subject-matter are informed of the other's positions despite having reached an agreement or not. The integration is done in a

Hegelian style. Gadamer draws on Hegel's views on the historicity of knowledge and experience, which is for Hegel dialectical in nature: a new experience does not overthrow an earlier one; but a new stage of knowledge is reached.³ To have a new insight is to know better. Hence, the fusion of horizons is another way of referring to that consensus which allows for an "... integration of differing perspectives in a deeper understanding of the matters in question " (Warnke 1987: 169).

The fusion of horizons constitutes a critique of the Cartesian model of subject and object, which entails a relation of domination. In its place Gadamer speaks of a consensus between the text and the reader. There is no longer any difference between the subject's status and that of the object. Understanding means to find the way to agree about the subject-matter. Nevertheless, under this new model the possibility of criticizing the text is also ruled out.

Again, we must observe that the horizon metaphor is in itself a natural choice for conceptualizing what Gadamer is exploring – an exploration of ultimate origins, grounds and ends (cf. the γ -category of the key-formula). We see this specific metaphor emerge, on the same level, also in Habermas, Taylor and Dooyeweerd. But the latter, for example, employs it to speak about the *structural* apriori and its relative *constancy* in relation to human experience. And this is again the problem in Gadamer's usage of the metaphor. It is one-sidedly attached to particularity, individuality and dynamic becoming. The complementing idea of structurality gets lost from view.

4. The work of art

The nature of interpretation could also be understood in terms of a work of art. Gadamer uses performative art such as music and tragic drama as well as painting in order to explain the event of understanding. It is important to remember that understanding is, in its historical and lingual side, interpretation. It must be noticed that to experience art is to experience its truth. The essence of a work of art cannot be taken separately from its performance. The work of art interprets itself as it is performed.

In the reproductive arts, the work of art must constantly be reconstituted as a creation. The transitory arts teach us most vividly that representation is required not only for the reproductive arts, but for any creation that we call a work of art. It demands to be constructed by the viewer to whom it is presented. [...] it is something that only manifests and displays itself when it is constituted in the viewer (Gadamer 1986: 126).

The work of art imposes itself over the spectators. Its meaning is given in its self-representation which is a closed system. The viewer or reader experiences it as the work of art gets concretized. The work of art is performed in a different way every time; each performance highlights an aspect of the work of art. It is then impossible to speak of the orthodox performance since that would contradict the very idea that its meaning is representational and therefore dynamic (Warnke 1987: 53-54). An objectivistic stance assumes an orthodox performance linked to the author's intention. But to consider the author's creativity is to hamper the autonomy of the work of art.

In fact, an absolute contemporaneousness exists between the work and its present beholder that persists unhampered despite every intensification of the historical consciousness. The reality of the work of art and its expressive power cannot be restricted to its original historical horizon, in which the beholder was actually the contemporary of the creator. It seems instead to belong to the experience of art that the work of art always has its own present. Only in a limited way does it retain its historical origin within itself. The work of art is the expression of a truth that cannot be reduced to what its creator actually thought in it (Gadamer 1976b: 95-96).

To understand is to interpret and this is always done from a certain perspective. Art and history present the world from a certain locus. There is no absolute point of view. They never present the world "as it is". Works of art are never mere copies of reality. For within them certain features will stand out and other will be disregarded. This is the way in which Gadamer understands and uses the Greek idea of *mimesis*. He uses it in connection with Heideggerian idea of *aletheia*. The truth of a work of art is understood in terms of disclosure, in which certain features of reality come to the fore and other remain in the background. The work of art teaches us how to *see* things. It is a real learning experience. The previous understanding of the interpreter is confronted with the authority held by the work of art on the subject-matter. The reader and spectator learn to see the

world in the light of the work of art as he is carried away in the aesthetic experience. In short, understanding is interpretative and perspectival; that means that from a specific standpoint the truth of the work of art is disclosed.⁴

We owe the possibility of escaping the idealistic conception of sense to a step taken by Heidegger in our time. He enabled us to perceive the ontological plenitude or truth that addresses us in art through the twofold movement of revealing, unconcealing, and manifesting, on the one hand, and concealing and sheltering, on the other. He showed that the Greek concept of concealment (*aletheia*), only represented one side of man's fundamental experience of the world. Alongside and inseparable from this unconcealing, there also stands the shrouding and concealing that belongs to our human finitude. This philosophical insight, which sets limits to any idealism claiming a total recovery of meaning, implies that there is more to the work of art than a meaning that is experienced only in an indeterminate way (Gadamer 1986: 34).

By "truth" here Gadamer means that an aspect of human experience has been separated out from others, given an emphasis of its own and thus illuminated for all. To this extent, his conception has affinities with Heidegger's account of truth as *aletheia* or disclosure; it makes an uncovering of some aspect of the world, our lives, a text or the like that was previously occluded (Warnke 1987: 57-58).

Here he argues that art and aesthetic experience are forms of aesthetic knowledge. One learns to see the object represented in terms of the truth that the representation reveals about it. [...] In picking out certain features of their objects they teach their viewers or readers more of their objects than that audience previously understood (Warnke 1987: 59).

Tragedy is a good example of the binding force art has on the reader or viewer. The fate of the characters in the drama is also the fate of the audience, since both of them are deeply involved. Both of them recognize through the play the tragic forces which hover on their lives. This aesthetic experience implies an existential transformation for the spectator.

Wir entnehmen dieser Analyse des Tragischen nicht nur, daß es sich hier um einen ästhetischen Grundbegriff handelt, sofern der Abstand des Zuschauerseins zum Wesen des Tragsichen gehört – wichtiger ist, daß der Abstand des Zuschauerseins, der die Seinart des Ästhetischen bestimmt, nicht etwa die "ästhetische Unterscheidung", die wir als Wesenszug des "ästhetischen Bewußtseins" erkannt hatten, in sich schließt. [...] Die

tragische Wehmut entspringt der Selbsterkenntnis, die dem Zuschauer zuteil wird. Er findet in dem tragischen Geschehen sich selber wieder, weil es seine eigene ihm aus religiöser oder geschichtlicher Überlieferung bekannte Welt ist, die ihm da begegnet, und wenn auch für ein späteres Bewußtsein [...] diese Überlieferung nicht mehr verbindlich gilt, so liegt doch in der Fortwirkung solcher tragischer Werke und Stoffe mehr als nur die Fortgeltung eines literarischen Vorbildes (Gadamer 1960: 126).

Gadamer grapples with the meaning of a work of art by linking it to the situation of the interpreter. Its meaning depends on its representation for an audience. Hence, its *essence* is contingent. The normativity it has is only valid as it is performed and the audience participates in the disclosure of its truth. That is, its validity is circumstantial. Its meaning must be significant to the *hic et nunc* of the interpreter. In this sense, the reader or viewer is taken up in the dynamic of the work of art. The work of art confronts and challenges the lives of its viewers and readers. In this way, any possible aesthetic or historical objectivity is ruled out.

4.1 A comparison between playing a game and aesthetic experience

Playing a game explains the nature of a work of art and of the relation the viewer or reader has to it. To begin with, the nature of a game does not consist of a set of rules but is intended as “pure autonomous regulation of movement” (Gadamer 1986: 24). A game is the playing itself which carries along the players. In other words, the game places the participants in a space where their interests are left out in order to submit to the rules and conditions set by the game. The reaction and attitudes are determined by the authority the game has over the players. The players are taken up into a new reality disclosed in the space of the game, in short, the game rules.

The function of the representation of play is ultimately to establish, not just any movement whatsoever, but rather the movement of play determined in a specific way. In the end, play is thus the self-representation of its own movement. [...] such a definition of the movement of play means further that the act of playing always requires a “playing along with” (Gadamer 1986: 23).

Games and works of art both have an essential priority over the individuals that experience or play them. In playing a game, players enter

a new and total environment. [...] In entering this space the players put aside their own concerns and desires and submit to the purposes of the game itself. Its goals and requirements take over and dictate actions and strategies to the players. The subject of the action in a game is therefore not really the person playing it; the person's actions and aspirations are rather reactions to tasks the game itself imposes and hence it is the action of the game, or what Gadamer refers to as the to-and-fro movement internal to it, that is the decisive factor in any game-playing (Warnke 1987: 48).

Works of art must be then conceived of as self-representations which also dictates norms of their own to which a reader and a viewer must subject. The interpreter then enters into a new environment as he reads or glances at the work of art. Correspondingly, works of art come into being only through a concrete interpreter which takes part in the aesthetic game. If the metaphor is extended further, it also can explain the possibility of a multiplicity of readings a work of art allows. For games are always played in a unrepeatable way. Texts or text-analogues too can be read differently whilst remaining the same. This is the paradoxical nature of works of art which are *conceptually* unfathomable.

... one cannot talk of a simple transference or mediation of meaning there [what is communicated in the experience of art]. For this would already be to assimilate the experience of art to the universal anticipation of meaning that is characteristic of theoretical reason. [...] The weakness of idealist aesthetics lay in its failure to appreciate that we typically encounter art as unique manifestation of truth whose particularity cannot be surpassed. [...] Art is only encountered in a form that resists pure conceptualization. [...] There too we noticed that play is always a kind of self-representation. This fact finds expression in art through the specific nature of *repraesentatio*, that increase in being that something acquires by being represented (Gadamer 1986: 37).

Indeed, games are rarely played the same way twice. Instead, they involve different particular actions, the use of different strategies, an encounter with different circumstances and reactions and finally different results. Thus, although a game remains the same game in some sense it can also be entirely different each time it is played. If the same holds true of a work of art it will also remain self-identical while constantly changing. Indeed, at issue, according to Gadamer are entities that are "only in being different" (Warnke 1987: 51).

In response to Gadamer's handling of the work-of-art metaphor, one again notices a certain one-sidedness. For the work of art does have a potential truth in store for us, as Gadamer claims. At the same time, however, any work of art, just like any speech act, is in principle *criticisable*. This is actually the job of the art critic. And this dimension: the "other side of truth" as it were, is lacking in Gadamer's metaphor.

5. Gadamerian views on metaphor

Gadamer does not have much to say in relation to the nature of metaphor. However, Gadamer refers to the *metaphoricity* of language. This implies that understanding must then reflect this quality. To state that language is essentially metaphorical is to point to its creativity which surpasses conceptual knowledge. However, Gadamer does not confront conceptual knowledge and the metaphorical nature of language.

Metaphor runs ahead of conceptual language because it need not wait for the work of abstraction, the determination of a shared identity, before being able to communicate the similarity of two different things. [...] For Gadamer, as for Ricoeur, metaphorical expression is prior to, and is the occasion for, conceptual development. Yet the fact that conceptual formation relies on the fecundity and plurality of metaphor leads Gadamer, unlike Ricoeur, to the conclusion that there can be no dialectic between metaphorical and conceptual language because language is fundamentally metaphorical (Weinsheimer 1991: 69).

Gadamer wants to free the concept of intuition of its Kantian heritage in which it has been called to supplement conceptual knowledge in the form of examples. In addition, Gadamer wants to contend against the reduction of intuition to the representation of given *sensible* objects. He would redefine intuition in terms of imagination and stress the fact that a work of art stakes claims of truth about the world, needing not be bound to sensible experiences. In this way, on the basis of intuition now understood as imagination, aesthetical knowledge can stand in its own right, although its knowledge is not conceptual. And it need not be. Hence, this is best demonstrated by the art of poetry, especially, by the nature of *metaphors*.

That, however, involves overcoming a certain traditional one-sidedness in the theory of art: it means abolishing the preeminence accorded to the visual arts over the art of poetry in aesthetic concept formation. [...] It [intuition] is, I would say, formed anew through metaphor. [...] The poet suspends every direct correspondence and thereby awakens intuition (Gadamer 1986: 169-170).

6. Final remarks

A *dynamic* and *ever-changing* state of affairs in respect of the structure of understanding is the common denominator underscoring the metaphorical network of philosophical hermeneutics. Furthermore, sometimes Gadamer pinpoints the dynamic aspect of these metaphors by combining them with references to “life” and “energy”.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson maintain that there are basic experiential structures which underlie concept formation regarding objects, actions and properties. These are called *kinesthetic images schemas*. One of them is the *container schema*.

Take, for example, a CONTAINER schema – a schema consisting of a *boundary* distinguishing an *interior* and *exterior*. The CONTAINER schema defines the most basic distinction between IN and OUT (Lakoff 1987: 271).

I borrow the idea of the container schema to suggest a possible meta-metaphor for Gadamer’s network of metaphors. This follows from the fact that all or most of them figure in prepositional phrases such as “in ihr, in der, aus dem” and perform actions such as “umfassen” and “umschliessen”. In addition, it is important to take note that Heidegger’s aphorism of “language as the house of being” is also based on the metaphor of the container in order to describe the way in which human existence functions in the lingual aspect. Perhaps this is a case of inter-textuality which reveals the enclosure of their thought by the same time-stream (in Vollenhoven’s sense).

The universalistic claims of hermeneutics are grounded in this geneticistic stance revealed by the metaphor network.

6.1 Concluding remarks on the metaphors of Wirkungsgeschichte and prejudices

From a Dooyeweerdian perspective, *Wirkungsgeschichte* can be intermodally explained as the intermodal moment of the historical aspect and the physical aspect. It stresses the dynamic relation between the historical aspect and the logical aspect. Prejudices or pre-judgements can be understood as the intermodal moments of the logical aspect and pre-logical aspects. In a philological description Gadamer shows that the term prejudice was originally a juridical term, though.

Im Verfahren der Rechtssprechung heißt ein Vorurteil eine rechtliche Vorentscheidung vor der Fällung des eigentlichen Endurteils (Gadamer 1960: 255).

Gadamer, nevertheless, redefined it under the auspice of Heidegger's idea of *Vorstruktur*, which in a sense props our intermodal analysis of the term, which I considered to be used metaphorically.

These metaphors make the somewhat existentialist position of Gadamer explicit in the sense that they refer to the temporal existence of the reader. The possibility of understanding is part of a dynamic and infinite process which his finite existence cannot fully grasp. This state of affairs underscores the geneticistic stance of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics.

6.2 Concluding remarks on the metaphors of dialogue and fusion of horizons

These metaphors reinforce the Gadamerian characterization of the linguisticity of understanding as dynamic and finite. Furthermore, its linguisticity is part of a "form of life". For language does not exist in abstraction nor is it constituted as a fixed order, but it is in constant "growth" through the mediating role it plays in the midst of the community of speakers. In other words, the social aspect stands out as an essential part of the structure of understanding. In terms of Dooyeweerd's modal theory, the metaphor of dialogue discloses analogical moments of the phenomenon of understanding in the

lingual and the social modal functions. Nevertheless, it must be noticed that Gadamer privileges dialogue over other forms of communication.

Let me suggest a chart of possibilities of communication with the text figured out by some contemporary philosophers. Ricoeur believes in a partial agreement with the text. Rorty says: "I'll meet you halfway". Dooyeweerd and Derrida do not accept any agreement with the text. Gadamer insists on a total agreement with the text. The geneticistic stance of Gadamerian hermeneutics is played off against a structuralist stance, for it leaves no room for the fixity of at least some basic principles of language, perhaps as a faculty of the mind, which *enables* infinite creativity.

"Horizon" and "situation" are the explicit metaphors used to describe the finitude of human existence in its bond to history. As noted, Dooyeweerd (1969 II: 542-565) does use the metaphor of a horizon to refer to the cosmic order which is constant. However, the fact that Gadamer speaks of a fusion of horizons stresses a uniquely dynamic universe. Hence, in his anthropology and cosmology, there is an opposition between the infinite universe of the text over against the finite and conscious universe of the reader.

His existentialist-friendly position is captured by the metaphors of dialogue and fusion of horizons: "Dasein" experiences the world linguistically. That is, a new possibility is produced in every experience of the world which takes place within language. These metaphors refer to this constant growth in the human experience of the world. They also entail the meta-metaphor of the container.

6.3. Concluding remark on the metaphors of work of art and game

Understanding in general in terms of understanding a work of art also implies *dynamics* in terms of participation and co-operation. Certainly, these metaphors point out the relation between the historico-esthetical (work of art) and the socio-esthetical (game), in connection with the event of understanding. This state of affairs reminds us of the modal

universality of the referred to aspects as basic points of entry to our experience of the world.

6.4 Concluding remarks on metaphorical models and idea-knowledge

In closing, I would like to advance the thesis that Gadamer's criticism of the objectivist pretensions of Cartesians is depicted also in terms of the conflict between mechanist and organicist models of reality. These two models can be rendered as overextended metaphors. Furthermore, I would like to compare understanding them as overextended metaphors with the idea-knowledge (cf. chapter 2, section 3.1) derived from the overextended use of modal aspects to describe a whole state of affairs. In this case, the kinematical and physical modal aspects conflict with the biological modality, because the latter is irreducible to the former. The positivist stance is rooted in the former, whereas the hermeneutical position, for Gadamer at least, is grounded in the latter.

It is easy to make a transition from such temporal experiences of life to the work of art. In philosophical thought, art has always appeared in close proximity to life in the fundamental sense of organic structure. Everyone understands when we say that a work of art in some sense maintains an "organic unity". What we mean is readily explained by reference to the fact that every detail or aspect of the picture, text, or whatever it is, is so united with the whole that it does not strike us as something external that has been merely added on; it does not obtrude as if it were some inert element that has simply been imposed in the process of creation. On the contrary, the work seems to possess a kind of center. Similarly, we understand a living organism as a being that bears its center within itself in such a way that the various parts are not subordinated to any particular external purpose, but simply serve the self-preservation of the organism as a living being. This "purposiveness without purpose", as Kant so well described it, is as characteristic a feature of the organism as it clearly is of the work of art (Gadamer 1986: 42-43).

Notes

1. Note that, just as *consciousness* conceptualized as *history* is opposed to history conceptualized by the *methods of science*, so *hermeneutics* is opposed to *historicism*.

2. Time has a meaning productivity, because, according to Heidegger's idea of the temporality of human beings, meaning has a future dimension.

3. Although Gadamer borrows Hegel's dialectic, we should remember that Gadamer stresses the fact that our knowledge is limited in the sense that there is no direct access to the truth. This access is always conditioned by our traditions, in other words, historical and cultural circumstances. This is indeed a valid argument against the positivistic doctrine of objective knowledge. Gadamer disagrees with Hegel on the possibility of attaining an absolute self-knowledge or final knowledge as Gadamer contrasts this with the finitude of our existence as historical beings. Hence, Gadamer's view on the issue can be referred to as a "bad infinite", meaning that any rational position is always prone to expanding. Absolute knowledge is incompatible with the dialogic aspect of an ever-expanding rationality (Warnke 1987: 170-171).

4. Theoretical thought deals with abstractions. Could we also speak of aesthetical abstraction, which is different from what Gadamer understands as such? This kind of aesthetic abstraction can be comparable to theoretical abstraction in that here only certain aspects of reality are brought into focus and therefore one acquires a new perspective.

Diagram 4

The key-formula (cf. chapter 3 (xl) and metaphor analysis of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics

[att{infinite, universal, dynamic}] [x history]

{ y enclose}

[z [att {infinite, universal,dynamic}] x language][y {enclose, mediate}] z{ self, reason, society}][att {finite, individual, dynamic}]

/Wirkungsgeschichte /

/ prejudices /

/ horizon /

/ dialogue /

/ game /

/ work of art /

/ horizon/

CHAPTER 6

IDEOLOGY ANALYSIS

1. Introduction

As stated at the beginning, this study revolves around an ideology theory which defines philosophical paradigms ("time-streams" in Vollenhoven's terminology) as part of an ideological world. These are susceptible to becoming what I would refer to as philosophical ideologies, which can be grouped together in a kind of complex of ideologies: either rationalist or anti-rationalist. To characterise something as "ideological" points to the fact that a modal function, an entity, an activity or an institution has been elevated above other functions, entities, activities, and institutions in such a way as to dominate and distort them. This criterion, the criterion of absolutisation, is the central criterion for all ideology analysis in different spheres and on different levels.

In the following section, we shall look first at the ways in which philosophical hermeneutics constitutes an ideology critique against the ideology of science and conceptual knowledge. The third section deals with Gadamer's perspectives on the problem of truth and the fourth section with the notion of historicism. Finally, in the fifth section, we engage in a critique of the hermeneutic project itself: its own susceptibility to ideology. The ideological aspect of hermeneutics is captured in what I have come to call the dogma of the hermeneutical ego (a topic to which I return in the conclusion). The phrasing of this statement was inspired by Dooyeweerd's philosophical work.

2. Hermeneutics as ideology criticism: conceptualism and scientism

Let me begin by explaining the nature of the kind of knowledge which philosophical hermeneutics portrays, which sharply contrasts with the kind of knowledge science produces. Therefore it can evidence the monopoly the latter has over the idea of legitimate and authentic knowledge. In order to illustrate this, Gadamer has referred to the tradition of practical philosophy.

2.1 What is practical reason?

What is one supposed to understand under the notion of practical reason? Gadamer says:

It is not confined to a particular field. It is not at all the application of a capability to an object.[...] Thus the practical philosophy of Aristotle is something other than the putatively neutral specialized knowledge of the expert who enters upon the tasks of politics and legislation like a nonparticipating observer (Gadamer 1981: 135).

Practical reason stands in opposition to know-how knowledge. Gadamer's criticism against the ideology of science, and his ideas on what the ultimate purpose of hermeneutical thought is, are rooted in this antagonism. Let us consider it in detail.

To begin with, what should one understand by practice? It must be clear that for the Greeks, practice was not formerly opposed to theory, because for Aristotle, practice includes theory and encompasses "...those who are determined by their performance in the realm of thought alone.[...] *Theoria* itself is a practice..." (Gadamer 1981: 90).

Although practice refers, in the first instance, to the impetus of life (*energeia*) which anything alive possesses, Gadamer singles out the fact that only human beings have *prohairesis*, which means they can decide. And this is characteristic of the practice of human beings.

Knowingly preferring one thing to another and consciously choosing among possible alternatives is the unique and specific characteristic of human being. [...] The free decision takes its bearings by the order of preferences guiding one's life conduct, whether it be pleasure, or power and honor, or knowledge (Gadamer 1981: 91).

However, in the context of ancient Greece, practice as such could only be attributed to the free citizens of the *polis*¹. Practice as *prohairesis* is actually delimited in opposition to *poiesis*. *Poiesis* is then the necessary knowledge for the production of goods required by the life of the *polis*, that is, the necessary knowledge about those procedures. In other words, whereas *poiesis* refers to the skills learned by the craftsmen which Aristotle also calls *techne*, practice is the knowledge every citizen has to have in order to choose correctly, guided by his or her idea of *arete* or excellence.

The good is the main concern of practical philosophy for the problem of the good affects the totality of our existence. Be that as it may, practical philosophy and not technical knowledge is what humans need when facing a concrete situation where they have to choose. Practical philosophy does not rely on cosmological, ontological or metaphysical arguments to grapple with practical problems.

Although practical philosophy can be learned as if it were a technique in order to apply it to a specific situation, it differs from techniques, since the person applying it is guided by the question of the best way to live. Furthermore, practice is linked to the idea of *synesis* which refers to an understanding attitude towards others. It also includes the acceptance of advice as well as giving advice within the context of friendship.

One must take note that Gadamer's concept of practical reason is based upon the epistemological distinction among the different kinds of knowledge made by the Greeks, namely *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*. *Techne* or *poietike* and *episteme* would have encompassed what we now understand as science, for it made production possible. For instance, medicine was the *techne* par excellence. Practice gains the upperhand in the context of *phronesis*. Gadamer draws on this distinction, on the one hand, in order to discuss the relation that philosophy and science should have. On the other hand, he grounds his concept of truth and application thereon.

What is theory? According to Gadamer, theory did not originally mean the kind of constructs self-consciousness makes (*poiesis*). In other words, theory did not refer to "...the distance from beings that allows what is to be known in an unbiased fashion and thereby subjects it to anonymous domination"(Gadamer 1981: 17). On the contrary, Gadamer points out that *theoria* actually implies affinity which originally means "...participation in the delegation sent to a festival for the sake of honoring the gods"(Gadamer 1981: 17). The old meaning of *theoria* refers to the participation of the subject in his object. Taking part in the event and being present there is another way of obtaining a "heightening of awareness" which opposes an inward self-consciousness at odds with the external totality.

Regarding the foundation of a moral philosophy, Aristotle made a distinction between theoretic description derived from a universal desire to know, and a "concrete practical discernment" which is more useful when facing concrete experiences. This is in fact the kind of knowledge ethics must lay hands on. Nevertheless, for Aristotle, both kinds of knowledge belong to one another.

2.2 Hermeneutics as practical philosophy

Having gained an idea of what practical philosophy is, we can now look carefully at its link with hermeneutics. I shall explain what hermeneutics is within the context of practical reason, especially in connection with the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis*.

The hermeneutics that I characterize as philosophic is not introduced as a new procedure of interpretation or explication. Basically it only describes what happens wherever an interpretation is convincing and successful. It is not at all a matter of a doctrine about a technical skill that would state how understanding ought to be. We have to acknowledge what is, and so we cannot change the fact that unacknowledged presuppositions are always at work in our understanding. Probably we should not want to change this at all, even if we could. It always harvests a broadened and deepened self-understanding. But that means hermeneutics is philosophy, and as philosophy it is practical philosophy. [...] The connection between the universal desire to know and concrete practical discernment is a reciprocal one. So it appears to me, heightened theoretic awareness about the experience of understanding and the practice of understanding, like philosophical hermeneutics and one's own self-understanding, are inseparable (Gadamer 1981: 111-112).

To begin with, Gadamer claims that hermeneutics is the heir to the tradition of practical philosophy, which immediately has implications for the structure of understanding, especially in connection with Gadamer's idea of application. In the first place, Gadamer relies on it in order to rule out the Romantic distinction between understanding, interpretation and application as three distinctive cognitive moments (Gadamer 1976a: 328).

Instead, he fuses them in one single moment: the event of understanding. In order to support his assertion, he refers to the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis*, which is central to the tradition of practical philosophy. *Phronesis* is a kind of reason which "mediates" between the universal and the particular. It is not a matter of applying a method in order to subsume individual cases to universal

rules in the Cartesian way. On the contrary, *phronesis* prescribes the engagement and transformation of the subject based on his relation to that which he tries to understand. This is radically different from the objectivistic dogma, which commands distancing oneself from that which one tries to understand.

Phronesis is contrasted with two other intellectual virtues, namely *episteme* and *techne*. All of them are related to *aletheia* (truth). Now, the nature and the subject-matter and *telos* of *episteme* is radically different from those of *phronesis*. The former refers to the knowledge of the universal, which is changeless and capable of being demonstrated. The latter refers to the mediation of the universal and the particular given in every decision to be made. Nevertheless, the contrast between *phronesis* and *techne* is more relevant to hermeneutics than that between *episteme* and *phronesis*. Unlike the know-how of *techne*, *phronesis* operates in the ethical sphere implying the transformation of the self every time one decides on the correct means to be applied in a given situation. In sum, understanding is constitutive of the *praxis* of the interpreter.

The "intellectual virtue" of *phronesis* is a form of reasoning, yielding a type of ethical know-how in which what is universal and what is particular are codetermined (Bernstein 1983: 146).

Gadamer draws on the concept of *phronesis* to urge the reader to take into account his own self and his hermeneutical situation when reading a text (Gadamer 1976a: 327). Thus understanding a text requires the practical-moral knowledge of *phronesis*. Gadamer even goes beyond understanding a text to qualify on these grounds the humanities as practical-moral sciences.

As hermeneutical disciplines, they are not primarily directed toward amassing theoretical, "objective" knowledge. Rather, while hermeneutical understanding does require theoretical distancing, it also involves the type of appropriation characteristic of *phronesis*. The type of knowledge and truth that hermeneutics yields is practical knowledge and truth that shapes our *praxis*...(Bernstein 1983: 150).

The universal aspect of the mediation implied in *phronesis* should be understood as the need of specification and concretion of natural law in a particular situation. In this sense, natural laws are no longer eternal nor fixed. Aristotle points out that *phronesis*, however, requires *nomoi* or ethical principles by which the *polis* can abide. Otherwise, *phronesis* without *nomoi* leads to sheer

arbitrariness. And this element is lacking in Gadamer's idea of *phronesis*.

The claim that Gadamer makes about Aristotle's understanding of natural law (the universal element) as something that is essentially open to interpretation and that is only specified when mediated in a concrete ethical situation that demands choice and decision is paradigmatic, for Gadamer, of the application of all ethical principles and norms. But Aristotle stresses, and Gadamer realizes, *phronesis* presupposes the existence of *nomoi* (funded laws) in the *polis* or community. [...] Given a community in which there is a living, shared acceptance of ethical principles and norms, then *phronesis* as the mediation of such universals in particular situations makes good sense. The problem for us today, the chief characteristic of our hermeneutical situation, is that we are in a state of great confusion and uncertainty (some might even say chaos) about what norms or "universals" ought to govern our lives (Bernstein 1983: 157).

On the grounds of *phronesis*, Gadamer dispenses with the plausibility of a rational normativity as a guide for social life, since social engineering amounts to dogmatism. In other words, he does not acknowledge that there is a need for social theories. He contends that praxis can replace the task of giving theoretical account of social states of affairs. Practical-political reason is founded upon the ethos. Practical reason never operates *in abstracto* in order to find the practical means for correct ends. There are normative ideas each one of us obtains through our social life which shape practical philosophy.

For Gadamer, these norms do not represent a fixed state of affairs which cannot be criticised, but they are part of social life which transforms that which is valid at a certain stage and where the communality within which we live brings forth reflective awareness. This contrasts with the ideal of abstract normative norms whose validity depends on a concept of science where observers do not participate at all.

Gadamer grounds his criticism of scientism and the vices of technology in his effort to renew the concept of praxis as it was once understood. Nowadays, every citizen in the hands of the technocrat has been robbed of his right to decide for himself. In this regard, an important remark to remember is that the idea of *phronesis* is linked up with the concept of *synesis*, which refers to friendship. To Gadamer's mind, it is a constituent of understanding, which refers to the need of lending an ear to the other. And it is a salient aspect in Gadamer's definition of the nature of the human sciences, for

it refers to the role of freedom and solidarity. Here the dialogical dimension of mutual respect and consideration steps in to make *phronesis* a reality.

2.2.1 *Practical philosophy and truth*

Hermeneutical truth is not an "adequatio intellectus et rei". On the contrary, Gadamer draws on the Hegelian process of experience and on the Heideggerian notion of *aletheia* or "unconcealment" in order to explain his view on truth. Nonetheless, his definition transcends these two. Gadamer advances a kind of textual truth brought about to a certain extent by way of argumentation. This does not mean that the interpreter appeals to a-historical standards against which he can measure his argument, but a kind of argumentation which can be validated by the social practices hammered out within tradition. Furthermore, it is the truth of the subject-matter which conditions the argumentation.

Nevertheless, this is a weak point in Gadamer's hermeneutics because argumentation necessarily implies criticism. And criticism is in need of an Archimedean point. Gadamer's response to this critical issue lies in the role tradition plays. Gadamer has directed his criticism against the deformation of the concept of *praxis* in the hands of the Enlightenment. Nevertheless, should not the legitimate ends held by the Enlightenment against the abuse of authority be reconsidered, for example? Philosophical hermeneutics overlooks the reality of domination which has actually deformed the concept of *praxis*. So *techne* is really not the enemy to fight but *domination*.

In sum, hermeneutics is related to practical philosophy, in the first place, because understanding has to do more with having to make decisions, than simply applying rules to safeguard one's own interpretation. In the second place, understanding implies a growth in one's own awareness, for a new experience is acquired. Hermeneutics does not promise certainty at all. This state of affairs leaves room for new opportunities, which add to our self-understanding as our horizon of experience is expanded.

2.3 The relation between philosophy and science

Gadamer uses the word "orientation" to describe the purpose of philosophy and the kind of knowledge that is required in order to make decisions, that is, practical reason. Philosophy and the quest for knowledge began as metaphysics, which means "first science". It was interested in the knowledge of God, the world, and human beings. It came prior to any other kind of knowledge, especially the mathematical sciences.

Gadamer makes a philological analysis of concepts such as philosophy and science. By doing this he uses his own hermeneutical reflection to support his views and positions. Philosophy as *prima philosophia* comprehended science up to the XVII century, when metaphysics and science adopted conflicting positions. Galileo's studies in the field of physics led him to a mechanistic conception of reality, which was grounded on the representation of natural laws as a mathematical construction. The new concept of science replaced metaphysics as the first philosophy. This was tantamount to ruling out any need to inquire about substances as the true form of being.

It was just a matter of discovering these laws in order to analyse any given phenomenon. Thereby nature could be technically transformed according to a purpose. The dawn of Modernity broke with this new concept of science and its reliance on method. Philosophy entered into the crisis as it had to justify its place against modern empirical science, which asserted its right to its autonomy on the presupposition of establishing laws by means of methodologically abstracting them from the contingent and particular cases.

The first philosophy was not only the first among the philosophic sciences but first among all the sciences, which in general are encompassed in the *Summae* of the Greek-Christian tradition. Philosophy means "science". If one wishes to understand the problematic relationship between philosophy and science that prevails at the present time, one has to begin by acknowledging the profound and incisive significance of the seventeenth century. [...] It was especially the idea of method, or of securing the path of knowledge in accord with the guiding ideal of certainty, that brought a unified meaning of knowing and knowledge to the fore (Gadamer 1981: 155-156).

The fact that the relationship between modern science and philosophy became antithetical, isolated from one another the different and divergent fields of knowledge, for our experience of the world

became fragmented. In response to the need for unity, Gadamer contends that philosophy, especially practical philosophy, understood as philosophical hermeneutics, can act as the binding element for the different scientific fields. Philosophy, thus, underpins the logic of research. There are difficulties philosophy faces when it tries to give systematic ordering to the fragmentary state of affairs of scientific knowledge. Nonetheless, philosophy is responsible for giving an account of the totality of human existence, which science cannot.

Especially the increasing significance of science for the technique of forming opinion and judgment within human society forbids an appeal to the reason of *Existenz* at the margins of the scientific world orientation. Not to be able to do this any longer is the signature of our age. Even though philosophy has to restrain itself from intervening in the work of the sciences in a directive or corrective fashion, it has now for the first time to turn itself toward its old task of giving an account for our life as shaped by science (Gadamer 1981: 161).

Although philosophy does not have the positive datum which other sciences have such as positivism, we can, in any case, speak of the scientific character of philosophy.

2.3.1 *Hermeneutics as ideology critique of scientism*

Gadamer takes the relationship between philosophy and science as the leading topic which gives coherence to the entire development of Western history. This topic is useful for him as a way of doing ideology critique with regard to the ideology of science, whose consequences are "...a world transformed on the basis of science into a single huge business"(Gadamer 1981: 6).

Empirical sciences are blind to the presuppositions which predetermine them. They are not neutral, but they hide some dogmas. This voluntary ignorance is connected to the fact that philosophy has been excluded from scientific activity, which pretends to stand on its own and to be free from speculations.

Gadamer is aware that science is in need of an encyclopedic order, which will delimit each scientific field, preventing them from overstepping borders. He describes the scientific arena of his time like this:

Chemistry has been taken by physics; biology has been taken up by chemistry; and the entire classification of the plant and animal worlds has given way to an interest in the transitions and in the continuity of these transitions. Moreover, logic itself increasingly has been taken under the wings of modern mathematics. My own teacher, Natorp, even tried to demonstrate a priori and conceptually the three-dimensionality of space, just as Hegel had done with the sevenfold count of the planets (Gadamer 1981: 11).

Furthermore, Gadamer contends that, since the empirical sciences presupposed mathematical and necessary laws, *Geisteswissenschaften* were left to the realm of chance.

2.3.2 Language and science

A good deal of Gadamer's critique of scientism rests on the problem of language, which was a central problem in the XX century. In particular, the interest in the practical life-world in relation to the question about the whole of human existence, promoted the interest in language.

Gadamer reminds us of the limits of science, because scientific activity is only possible within certain boundaries where the *Gegenstand* can be broken down into pieces (analysed) and rebuilt, but beyond those boundaries there is a resistance to scientific objectification. Conversely, Gadamer's philosophic hermeneutics can be hallmarked as the "flight into the logoi", because of the fundamental role it assigns to language in his analysis of the event of understanding and in the duty philosophy has towards science. Gadamer highlights the fact that science has isolated itself from language by creating systems of signs and symbols which are wordless and incapable of being translated back into the language of everyday consciousness also called the "language of commonsense". In other words, science cannot be related to our life by means of the language of everyday consciousness.

To Gadamer, the essence of language surpasses its reduction to the systems of signs present in monological scientific discourse. On the contrary, according to Gadamer, language exhibits a dialogical character, which transcends any grammatical description of language. Furthermore, the problem of unity in science is posited in the life-world carried by language.

Hermeneutics can integrate the sciences, by sorting out the moments of truth brought forth by the application of methodological procedures to the *Gegenstände* of every scientific field. Gadamer calls those moments of truth "opportunities for knowledge". Nevertheless, hermeneutics transcends the application of techniques as it is the case in practical philosophy. Hermeneutics integrates scientific knowledge into the context of an agreement, which is the context within which human beings exist. This context is just an instance of the tradition, which is an effective element in our lives. This tradition working in us is not a set of methods but philosophy, in the sense that hermeneutics transcends procedures and refers directly to the questions underlying them. Gadamer justifies the universality of hermeneutics by saying that: "These are the questions that are determinative for all human knowing and doing, the greatest of questions, that are decisive for human beings as human and their choice of the good "(Gadamer 1981: 137). In this context, understanding encompassing humanity, placed within tradition, becomes the *Gegenstand* of the *Geisteswissenschaften*.

Nevertheless, Gadamer does not discard the validity of methodological rigor for he still gives credit to critical rationality which constitute an intrinsically valid standard for scientific methodology. But he argues that practical philosophy is the alternative to the idea of acquiring knowledge by applying methods to an object. Furthermore, scientists must recognize the tradition where they stand which provides them with an agenda as to what problems, needs and hopes to attend to.

2.3.3 *The ideology of dedogmatization and progress*

What Gadamer calls "movements of dedogmatization" is also subjected to an ideal of knowledge which is instrumental to the ideal of progress of knowledge. The prejudice of progress lies in the myth of an objective self-consciousness. Hence, Gadamer launches his ideology critique of the primacy of science, whose attempt at dedogmatization rests upon the idea of a fundamental self-consciousness, in other words, the absolutisation of the logical aspect as the key to truth.

The central position of self-consciousness was basically established for the first time by German Idealism and its claim to construct truth in its entirety from self-consciousness precisely by laying down as the foremost premise Descartes' characterization of thinking substance with its primacy in regard to certitude (Gadamer 1981: 13).

Noteworthy is the fact that Gadamer confronts the mechanistic model of science, whose best representative is physics, with statistics, which hinges on a biological model of science. To his mind statistics brings forth new models of self-consciousness. His adherence to *Lebensphilosophie* is evident when he says:

The role that statistics has begun to play even in these domains and increasingly affects our entire economic and social life lets new models of self-consciousness come to the fore in contrast to mechanics and power-driven machines. Characteristic of such models is a type of self-regulation that is conceivable less along the lines of the manipulable than of something living, of life organized in regulated cycles (Gadamer: 1981: 14).

2.3.4 *The freedom-ideal and the science-ideal in philosophical hermeneutics*

Gadamer questions the modern presupposition of progress as incompatible with human existence. He cannot conceive of the "dynamic law of human life" (Gadamer 1981: 104) as a linear course which starts with mythology and ends in Enlightenment. An objective self-consciousness is also incompatible with human existence. The possibility of explaining any fact by searching for its conditions and by following the necessary procedures in order to reconstruct it, is an objectivistic prejudice which contrasts dramatically with the idea of approximation, endeavour, and indefinite states of affairs implied by the terms hermeneutics and interpretation.

Presumably one has to regard the progress of industrial civilization that we owe to science precisely under the apprehension that the very power that men exercise over nature and other men has lost much of its obviousness and that this has brought about a mounting temptation for misuse. [...] But think, too, about the mounting automatism of all forms of social life; about the role of planning, say, for which it is essential to make long-range decisions, and that means removing from our disposal a great deal of our freedom to decide; or about the growing power of administration that delivers into the hand of bureaucrats a power not really intended by anyone but no less inevitable for all that. In this way ever more areas of our life fall under the compulsory structures of automatic processes, and ever less does humanity know itself and its spirit within these objectifications of the spirit (Gadamer 1981: 14-15).

One must remember that Gadamer excludes a rational conception of history that would imply any kind of historical necessity. Therefore, according to Gadamer, the freedom-motive and not the prejudice of progress must be the leading element in the course of the history of mankind.

Here the need of reason would remain utterly unsatisfied if one were to appeal merely to the regularities in the course of history, which, just like the laws of nature, are by their own proper meaning (*Seinssinne*) intended only to formulate what actually occurs (Gadamer 1981: 8-9).

The aprioristic thought that resides in the essence of humankind and that he comes to know in history is the thought of freedom. [...] No higher principle is thinkable than that of the freedom of all, and we understand actual history from the perspective of this principle: as the ever-to-be-renewed struggle for this freedom. [...] This is exactly the case in our example of the freedom of all. Anyone who does not see that this is precisely what history is, that the freedom of all has become an irrefutable principle and yet still requires ever anew the effort toward achieving its realization, has not understood the dialectical relationship of necessity and contingency and also the claim of philosophy to know concrete rationality (Gadamer 1981: 9-10).

3. *Altheia* and the ideology of scientific truth

It is crucial to discuss what is meant by truth in philosophical hermeneutics. The interpreter is in search of the truth that the text or text-analogue has to offer. If it is not by means of an exact methodology, then how does the interpreter get hold of it? Let us consider now Gadamer's answer.

The presupposition that the epistemological object withholds a truth that must be uncovered or laid open hermeneutically, is fundamental for philosophical hermeneutics. A text makes a claim to truth. Philosophical hermeneutics is then concerned with the conditions in which that truth is understood.

It is important to take note of the conceptual distinction exhibited by the contrast between the German terms *Gegenstand* and *Sache*. It shows, to my mind, the confrontation between two conflicting philosophical stances in conflict. I believe that the hermeneutic term *Sache* has been deliberately chosen in opposition the neo-Kantian term *Gegenstand*. *Gegenstand* is used within the domain of the natural sciences to refer to the theoretical object of a scientific field, which stands in

opposition to the integral dynamics of reality. It represents the atomism of rationalism. Furthermore, it can be placed under control, once the laws, which govern it, are discovered. It is evident that it is part of the subject-object scheme, which is characteristic of the positivistic stance. In sum, *Gegenstand* is a fixed object, which can be studied methodologically. Its truth can always be verified.

On the other hand, *Sache* is used in philosophical hermeneutics to refer to the epistemological object within the *Geisteswissenschaften*. It is unrepeatable and non-verifiable. Therefore, it must be handled differently from the way a *Gegenstand* is. It is only on the basis of a subject-subject relation that its truth can be grasped. This subject-subject relation has a dynamic and dialectic nature aiming at an integration of that truth being disclosed along the way. It represents the universalism of anti-rationalism.

Sache, then, refers to the hermeneutical object, that is, the object to be interpreted. This object performs, so to speak, the role of a subject in the sense that it makes an appeal to us and stakes a claim of truth to which we ought to listen.

Apophantic logic lies at the heart of this conception, and guides the formulation of a 'judgement' in which something is predicated with an attribute, i.e. it is shown as it is. Heidegger's monumental re-directing of philosophy rests on counterposing this propositional truth with another kind: *aletheia* (disclosure) (Bleicher, 1980:117).

Gadamer explains his concept of truth over and above the ideology of scientific truth, so to speak. Definitely, the overrated power of science over other instances of Western culture has become the fundamental issue for Gadamer's ideology critique. Science has been granted such a privileged position due to the one-sided conception of truth.

Die Wissenschaft ist - wie man sie auch schelte- das A und das O unserer Zivilisation (Gadamer 1967: 51).

The goal of the natural sciences of controlling nature was transferred to the human sciences which according to Gadamer have a definite historical foundation. The cultural world was supposed to be studied as any other *Gegenstand* and by the very same procedures. The kind of truth guaranteed by method is that certainty brought by the possibility of repeating the steps which led to the

explication of the phenomenon. Method became then the cornerstone of the whole project of modern science.

This biased conception of truth and the need for an alternative concept of truth became evident with the discussion about the scientific character and status of the humanities. Obviously, the first attempt was to emulate the procedures used by the natural sciences which have been labeled as exact sciences. This equation ran the risk of excluding the essence of the human sciences. But what is their scientific foundation? How can the *Geisteswissenschaftler* be sure of the accuracy of his work? Can we speak of the possibility of testing the results within the human sciences? For Gadamer the question is wrongly posed if verification is considered to be the way to gain in certainty. (Gadamer 1967: 44).

The ethos of modern science consists of the need to test the tenability of a truth by following the prescribed steps. True knowledge is supposed to be restricted to that which can be tested. To be able to test the new knowledge acquired by means of a method leads to technological control. Technology is the result of taking verification as the standard for truth. (Gadamer 1967: 50).

Against this, Gadamer argues that the scientific ideal of the Enlightenment hovers over the ideal of freedom, which is the most fundamental possession of man. Human freedom is increasingly restricted by the technological planning of our world. It must be safeguarded from the increasing manipulation of public opinion which exerts a huge influence in social structures such as family and education (Gadamer 1967: 44).

As for the problem of laying a foundation for the human sciences, Gadamer considers history and language as two fundamental aspects of the concept of truth, that is relevant here. In the analysis of Gadamer's key-formula, we already gained an insight into the way these two concepts function in Gadamerian hermeneutics.

3.1 Historicism

History becomes for Gadamer the foundation for the human sciences in two ways: on the one hand, their *Gegenstand* is essentially of a historical character and on the other hand, the subject is also a historical being. Under these circumstances, Gadamer concludes that the humanities are in the end sciences of self-knowledge.

Was wir geschichtlich erkennen, das sind wir im letzten Grunde selbst.
Geisteswissenschaftliche Erkenntnis hat immer etwas von Selbsterkenntnis an sich
(Gadamer 1967: 42).

Obviously, Gadamer is aware of the consequences that a radical historicism can bring. The total surrender of norms and standards to continuous historical processes and transformations constitutes a real impasse and hindrance to scientific activity (Gadamer 1967: 40).

How to avoid the nihilistic consequences of historicism? Gadamer tries to establish continuity in ever-expanding cultural processes. This continuity lies in the authority traditions have over any new scientific enquiry. In particular, Gadamer is thinking of the kind of standards appropriate for the human sciences. These standards brought by tradition are not in fact obeyed blindly, but it is a rational decision to accept them as guidelines giving to an inquiry a special direction. Authority has to do more with the recognition that somebody has better knowledge of the subject-matter and that one would do well in lending him an ear. Tradition in itself carries power. It is not possible for the individual to step out of tradition, since any individual is part of a specific cultural frame of reference. Tradition possesses a perspective of the whole which it is not advisable to ignore and cannot be reached otherwise (Gadamer 1967: 41).

Tradition sets the conditions for understanding the truth of an object. One grasps the claim to truth any object makes always within a hermeneutical situation. The interaction of past and present determines what the historian can know about the events he is busy studying. He cannot avoid being caught in this dialectic.

4. The Gadamer-Habermas debate

4.1 Habermas' critical theory

In the previous sections of the present chapter we have gained an understanding of the main ideological –isms that Gadamer targeted, namely scienticism and positivistic historicism, as well as technology and bureaucracy. These deformations and distortions are indeed positions located on the ideological topography of modern Western culture. Many other ideology analysts have also attested to this, among them the leading German social theorist Jürgen Habermas. But Habermas has also criticised Gadamer's hermeneutics for a certain lack of awareness of ideological factors. To evaluate this criticism, we now turn briefly to the philosophical exchange that took place between Gadamer and Habermas.

To begin with, it must be said that Habermas accepts Gadamer's account of language as being basically dialogic, the fundamental role prejudices play in understanding, and the historical characterisation of our constitution.

Noteworthy is the fact that Habermas at a certain stage of his thinking, modelled his critical theory on psychoanalysis, which to his mind explained very well the purposes of the former in the social context. He also contended that his critical theory can overcome the linguistic idealism of philosophical hermeneutics. Hence he set out to look for the forces operating "behind" those which uphold those relations of domination.

The psychoanalyst uses a unique method that combines hermeneutics and functionalism for the purpose of diagnosing distortions in the life of an individual. When the process is successful it breaks up the power unconscious forces have in determining people's lives and hands back to them the power of true 'self-determination'. Habermas has the same practical ambition for a Critical Theory, which instead of working at the level of individual life-history, will work at the level of historically orientated society (How 1995:147).

Habermas finds in psycholansysis a harmonious description of social reality, a balance between its causality, on the one hand, and its symbolic constitution, on the other. He swings from causes to meaning. His shifts are due to the fact that he cannot understand social action only in terms of the

actor's own linguistically mediated situation. His or her motives are originated elsewhere. It is here where Freud's concept of the unconscious plays an important role. It becomes clear that these unconscious forces shape conscious actions. He accepts the difference between "technical laws of nature" and "the normative rules of social life" (How 1995:150).

To Habermas' mind the virtue of psychoanalysis lies in the fact that it has a general framework similar to that of science. It is a kind of "general interpretative model". It is against this grand narrative that the gaps in individual stories of self-formation can be filled in.

He also sees in psychoanalysis a potent critique against the limitations of a linguistic-hermeneutic sociology. The unconscious forces or 'invisible' social phenomena operate behind tradition which is always conscious. They determine social action. In order to penetrate them, a functionalist approach is needed. Nevertheless, the latter should not put aside the symbolic dimension of the motives for social action.

4.2 Habermas's views on language

Language also constitutes the meta-norm for critical theory. Habermas believes as well that the Gegenstand of the social sciences is to some extent co-constituted by language. With this, it is clear how objectivism has been ruled out from the human sciences. Language, however, does not determine social life practices. It plays a fundamental role in the agreement to be reached in order to have a common understanding, which is the meta-norm for Habermas critical theory, a theory directed toward what he calls "communicative action".

Habermas also believes that meaning is built through social interaction. Nevertheless, he does not agree with the metaphor of language games used by Wittgenstein. Language is not actually a set of rules with a single and strict application to be socially learned. Language is, on the contrary, imperfect and ambiguous. Habermas believes in the need of an effort from each of the participants to cope with the struggle such an imperfect language presents for communication and identity.

Language paradoxically makes room for proximity and distance in the sense that we recognize ourselves as part of a community but at the same time, different from it through language. When understanding a historical text or alien cultures, we are taken up in a dialogic process which aims at a common agreement.

However, Habermas differs from Gadamer in that the latter seems not to recognise that not everybody possesses an equal place in the dialogue. There is no real "ideal speech situation".

The social scientist remains bound to his own presuppositions that his social background imposes on him. Gadamer's view on language holds the key to the understanding of an alien society. The hermeneutic circle implies for the social scientist a projective and corrective process. There is no room for self-effacement.

Habermas appreciates Gadamer's dialogical account of ordinary language. He agrees that language transcends the rigidity of a theoretical language. Language is the "springboard" to further knowledge. Our world which is constituted by language is open in the sense that language transcends it in order to incorporate other worlds upheld by other languages. Speakers are always busy re-interpreting the rules for social interaction. He recognizes too the intrinsic nature of an historical dimension to our linguistic worlds. He believes then that hermeneutics is able to become the foundation for the social sciences due to its concern for 'translation' and 'history'.

Habermas conceives of language as a meta-institution upon which the rest of the social institutions rest. However, Habermas sees language not only as the house of being but the house of power and domination. For there are forces that impinge upon it concealing certain truths. Habermas accuses Gadamer of the naïvité of thinking that there is equality amongst the participants of the dialogue. There are external forces (social forces) that influence language. These social forces are labour relations, and science and technology which reshape linguistic world-views. They portray an instrumental interpretation of the world. Habermas points out a "manipulative action" implied in the "logical structure of purposive- rational action" of language. This manipulative action is connected to the fundamental "material self-preservation of the human species". Although ordinary language is the meta-language, it receives the impact of this manipulative action.

Hermeneutics, he believes, stays at the level of truth as it is expressed by a society, which means that those truths which that society finds unpalatable will be repressed. In absolutizing language, i.e. making it the sole meta-institution, Gadamer overlooks its status as an ideological force that naturalizes relationships of systematic social inequality, in short, it functions to legitimise class domination (How 1995:145).

4.3 Habermas's views on praxis

Habermas finds the notion of praxis important. He rejects the positivistic separation between fact and value. Therefore he draws on the notion of application Gadamer holds. He finds it relevant to include as well the notion of evaluation which is part of our self-understanding.

Habermas also acknowledges the differences among practical, technical and scientific knowledge. Aristotle's practical knowledge defines the purpose of hermeneutics. Human sciences have now a way to go about their Gegenstand, namely, social reality. Technical knowledge is external to us. Practical knowledge is internal to us. It is of a reflective character. There is no room for universal valid laws which operate within the natural sciences.

Our social identity is historical. Our lives belong to a historical tradition and language. Habermas recognizes the fact that history affects understanding and that that we learn norms and values in a process where every generation must re-interpret them. And here the role of tradition becomes very relevant for the human sciences, and for Critical Theory.

Habermas also agrees with Gadamer in that there is a connection between understanding history and self-understanding. History can only be understood within the horizon of our personal life-practice. There is an "indissoluble communicative bond" with our tradition which no method can ever claim to transcend.

According to Habermas, hermeneutics can be capable of setting people in action in order to achieve freedom. Habermas thinks it is possible to override the status quo by the dialectical power of language. Habermas contends that it is possible to step out of tradition. He believes that tradition is

a dialogue where implicit relations of domination produce distortions in language. Habermas thinks there are ways of extricating oneself conceptually.

Science can have a liberating effect. The human sciences are in need of methodologies. Habermas thinks Gadamer is not aware of the way science has been able to break away from tradition. He is not aware either of the utility of scientific language which serves the purpose of technical progress and domination. Science and technology change our daily lives.

What Gadamer has done, Habermas claims, is to absolutize the hermeneutic experience as one that transcends scientific method, and therefore has no need to concern itself with such a thing (How 1995:140).

Habermas pleads for a hermeneutically-enlightened functionalism. The ideological side of tradition can be uncovered by placing it in the context of systems theory. According to Habermas Gadamer has downplayed the role of reflection by stressing a conservative notion of the role of tradition which implies a blindness to the relations of social domination embedded in it. Reflection helps us to underpin the roots of our understanding and therefore it liberates us from dogmatism. To Habermas' mind a prejudice that has been broached loses its capacity to condition our understanding. Habermas says that knowledge should not be equated with the authority tradition holds in the normative framework of prejudices. Otherwise, any challenge to tradition would imply a denial of true knowledge. Nevertheless, this state of affairs is typical of the goals the Enlightenment had in connection with the self-determination of the individual.

4.4 Gadamer's response to Habermas

Gadamer has focused on the interpretative dimension involved in understanding our world. This is the purpose of philosophical hermeneutics. He has paid attention to the linguisticity of our relation to the world. According to him we relate to the world primarily in a linguistic way.

Gadamer explicates the universal validity of the kind of rationality hermeneutics comes up with based on rhetoric. Hermeneutics and rhetoric are concerned with truth which need not be tested but truth that is plausible. Conversely, the rationality science entails demands proof of certainty.

Plausibility of truth corresponds with the kind of rationality our daily life needs. The object demands recognition of its truth by making it evident to our common sense. The art of persuasion comes to its aid by making its truth probable. This is quite different from the kind of truth science offers.

We have a world because of language. Persuasion is a fundamental part of our linguisticity and should not be disregarded as a source of distortion in need of the remedy offered by a critique of ideology.

Science is dependent on rhetoric in order to exert its force upon our daily lives through language. Our daily lives are imbued in a rhetorical dimension. Scientific language happens to be to Gadamer's mind just a compartment of everyday language. However, Habermas wants to bracket off scientific language from everyday language in order to show the limits of hermeneutics.

The language of everyday life for Gadamer has priority over scientific language in a logical as well as a chronological sense, and this marks a difference between him and Habermas,...(How 1995:158).

Habermas seems not to recognize that politics and the social world do not fall within the scope of science in the sense that they are main fields of rhetoric. Their linguisticity is a fundamental characteristic.

Gadamer justifies the universality of hermeneutics by stressing the fact that understanding occurs within language which encompasses human existence. Language can never be a tool. Language offers us a 'world', instead. Everything that is to be understood is mediated by language. Hermeneutics cannot be restricted to rendering texts intelligible. This is just a parcel of its scope. That which is strange is understood through language. This holds true even for Habermas' ideological critique for it is actually a parcel of hermeneutics.

Gadamer argues that science prescribes a kind of "methodical alienation". Thus Gadamer states that hermeneutical experience precedes methodical alienation in that understanding art, for instance, cannot be achieved by following procedures and that before procedures the right questions must be asked regarding the Gegenstand of the social sciences and humanities. Gadamer warns us of the

fact that the social scientist soon wants to sidestep the hermeneutical dimension implied in the social structures he wants to uncover.²

According to Gadamer there is no separation between reflection and tradition. He has a holistic vision in that he tries to find connections between entities, but Habermas, according to Gadamer, opposes reason in favour of tradition which makes his ontological account supposedly dualistic.

Gadamer accuses Habermas of being dogmatic because of the claims he makes regarding the authority of the historian and of the critical theorist. For Gadamer there is continuity between reflection and tradition because we can reflect on tradition and because we live in it. Reflection is possible on the grounds of tradition and it enables tradition to advance. Habermas' critique on tradition makes him fall prey to objectivism because he claims to be able to keep his distance from tradition, making it a *Gegenstand*.

Gadamer says that Habermas is not aware of the fact that his ideology critique can only operate in the same language which legitimises all those deceptions he tries to point out. Tradition and critique of ideology happen in language. Gadamer knows that understanding is never total because tradition reveals and conceals certain features of the subject-matter. Language is like a mirror where everything is reflected. Despite accepting this thesis, Habermas holds that language mirrors an ideologically distorted reality. By this he means that language and reality are two different entities where ideology actually represents an incorrect reflection of reality.

The fact that some players have a better chance to win is not important, but the fact that language is intrinsically a game we are meant to participate is important. In this way Gadamer wants to eliminate the dualism existing in Habermas's account since for him language is per se deceptive and at the same time it holds the key to freedom through reflection. The metaphor of the game refers to the "linguistic-communicative" relations which all of us are part of as members of a society.

Habermas stresses the opposition between reason and authority. Habermas believes that reflection and critique are the key to a true understanding which is blurred otherwise by a distorted life-praxis. Gadamer contests this argument by stating that prejudices condition true understanding.

Habermas' dualism is the product of the prejudice of the Enlightenment, which recommended a reason free of values, norms or affection, in other words, a-historical. A split between tradition and reason has been reintroduced. Habermas' account on reflection still exhibits the traits of a typical subject-object approach.

Gadamer wants to warn us against the alienation in our everyday consciousness produced by scientific method. Gadamer does not deny that method is actually needed in order to do science, but he rejects the possibility of attaining a complete self-understanding by referring back to ideology-critique or psychoanalysis, for the concrete situation encloses them both.

Psychoanalysis must be understood more in a hermeneutical way, than in a scientific way. It wants to fill in the gaps left throughout the life-history of the patient. Freud nevertheless, is following still a positivistic model which he is imposing on social life. According to Gadamer, Habermas does not seem to realise that it is unjustified to apply psychoanalysis to social life. Gadamer calls Habermas' project an anarchist utopia.

How will we make sense of the Gadamer-Habermas debate in the context of ideology theory? I will only make the following comments. Firstly, Habermas hermeneutics undoubtedly located a weak spot in Gadamer's hermeneutics, in terms of a concept of tradition that is distanced from all ideological dynamics: both in the form of ideological *discourses* such as science and technology, and also ideological social relations, such as class domination, for example. Habermas has also diagnosed a kind of ideological dualism in Gadamer thought: that between freedom and science. In this hermeneutical dualism, the ideal of freedom is opposed to that of science, and the concept of method is, associated more or less exclusively with the latter, standing over and against the truth of freedom. On the other hand, Gadamer has rightly sensed the presence of a rationalist ideology underlying Habermas' philosophy. He is aware of the fact that Habermas' communication ideals, based on the power of reason, tend to overlook the ideological situatedness of the participants arguing toward rational agreement. Tradition in this sense rules reason. But, in principle, there is always the chance of coming to a critical awareness of the very tradition that shapes one's thought and even of escaping from this tradition. Habermas' critique of communicative reason trusts in this hope.

5. The ideology of hermeneutical knowledge

In the previous sections, I have discussed the ways in which hermeneutics represents a kind of ideology criticism against scienticism and conceptualism. In this section I intend to demonstrate the ideological side of hermeneutics itself. I will start with a brief description of the ideological time-stream under which philosophical hermeneutics falls. In particular, I shall discuss its connections with Dilthey's and Heidegger's thought. These philosophers are two leading figures in the time-stream which shall be referred to as post-*Lebensphilosophie* anti-rationalism.

5.1 The rise of modern hermeneutics and the crisis of rationalism: a description of post-*Lebensphilosophie* anti-rationalism as an ideological time-stream

5.1.1 A brief account of the rise of modern hermeneutics

In modern times, hermeneutics became a philosophical issue once historical events became distant and therefore in need of explanation. The Holy Scriptures became the object of hermeneutical reflection during the Reformation as the allegorizing method which supported the dogmatic interpretation of the Roman Catholicism of the Bible was ruled out. The hermeneutical reflection of the Protestant church rested upon the slogan that the Bible interprets itself.

Jurisprudence constituted another field where hermeneutical reflection took place. The lack of correspondence between the social and historical state of affairs represented in the texts and the way in which we experience the law *hic et nunc* was felt. Therefore the problem of how the jurist had to make relevant the world of the text to our world, was a hermeneutical question. In other words, he is called to administer the law and therefore make a practical positivisation of it.

The classical texts in Latin and in Greek which were studied anew by modern Humanism represented another hermeneutical challenge. The appeal of these classical texts lies in their exemplary character which questions and orientates the ideals of Humanism. It is a hermeneutical task to explain their exemplary character.

Finally, the Romantic thinkers thought of overcoming the historical alienation between them and the texts by applying the methodology of the natural sciences, which eradicated any intervention of the subject and, at the same time, wanted to guarantee the possibility of verifying the result of the experiment by following the right procedures. Nevertheless, historical consciousness was gradually setting in. The conflicting answers regarding the nature of the Gegenstand of the Geisteswissenschaften and the need to justify their scientific character led to a heightened awareness of the role hermeneutics should play as their ultimate foundation.

5.1.2 The philosophical setting of modern hermeneutics in the XX century

The philosophical problem of hermeneutics in the XIX and XX centuries must be understood in the light of the conflict between the rationalist and irrationalist or anti-rationalist schools (ideologies). Let me briefly describe them.

5.1.2.1 Rationalism

Rationalism is best represented by positivism, phenomenology and neo-Kantianism. Note that I understand the term "rationalism" to denote a complex structured ideological framework. Like its counterpart, the similarly complex structure of irrationalism, this framework belongs to the theoretical sphere of the ideological topography of modern Western culture and society. To be more precise, at issue here is the field of philosophical ideologies. In my characterisation of these ideologies, I will refer to Gadamer's own descriptions.

5.1.2.1.1 Positivism (logical empiricism)

Questions arose about the validity of the relation between consciousness and sense data. Is our knowledge of the world based upon the sense data which are given to our consciousness? Do they exist at all? Or is their validity dependent on the way consciousness uses those building blocks called sense data?

If the apodictic evidence of self-consciousness was revealed by the Heideggerian critique of phenomenology to be an ontological prejudice, so the conception of logical empiricism had a dogmatic element too, which lay especially in the foundation of all knowledge: the immediacy of sense perception or observation (Gadamer 1981: 163).

As is the case with most of the other philosophical ideologies, positivism can be linked to specific key-formulas and root-metaphors. It is plain to see, for example, how sense-perception acquires an x-status regarding the z-category of knowledge. However, in the present context, I will abstract away from these two conceptual deep structures, and concentrate only on ideological frameworks as of conceptual deep structures.

5.1.2.1.2 *Phenomenology*

This development tried to free knowledge from physiological-psychological reductionism by portraying intentionalities, that means, the different modes of consciousness, related to their intentional objects. Consciousness had the intentional duty of getting hold of the logical structure of the world structured by a transcendental ego.

...it is the old answer that the transcendently functioning subjectivity of the ego, by which belief in the world is constituted, may not be confused with the ego that is part of the world and is constituted with all its experiences of the world (Gadamer 1976b: 192).

It was Husserlian phenomenology that considered the *Lebenswelt* as the ultimate ground of our experience of the world. Hence, it is the first condition for science. But this constitutive layer soon conflicted with the ideal of a science of pure consciousness. Phenomenology was essentially self-referential.

This difficulty consists in the fact that the universal horizon of the life-world also necessarily embraces transcendental subjectivity (Gadamer 1976b: 190).

5.1.2.1.3 *Neo-Kantianism*

Neo-Kantianism made an effort to give to philosophy scientific rigor. Epistemology became the most important part of philosophy. The *Geisteswissenschaften* received a transcendental grounding

similar to the epistemological grounding of the *Naturwissenschaften*. The transcendental reflection concerns the conditions which make experience possible for the empirical sciences. This transcendental grounding got hold of culture as well. Hence, values had to undergo a transcendental reflection for their justification. Value was the key to historical fact.

The object of knowledge, Kant's famous "thing-in-itself", is, as it was expressed in the formulation of Marburg Neo-Kantianism, nothing but an "infinite task", and that means "for scientific research"(Gadamer 1981: 152).

5.1.2.2 *Anti-rationalism*

Anti-rationalism became a powerful criticism which rendered the autonomy of self-consciousness as an illusion. Self-knowledge was called into question in a radical way by Nietzsche. On these grounds, hermeneutics played a much more meaningful role than just having to do with the problem of understanding difficult texts. Hermeneutics was called to expose the dogma of modernity, that is, the dogma of an autonomous self-consciousness. Let me discuss briefly the ways in which anti-rationalism launched its attack against rationalism.

Since Nietzsche's time, at the latest, attacks on Enlightenment conceptions of reason and on the idea of an autonomous, rational subject have become common. They have become familiar through the work of Horkheimer, Adorno and Heidegger, among others, and more recently through that of Derrida, Foucault, and Lyotard. Against strong conceptions of the invariance, universality and *a priori* character of a reason "in itself", such thinkers have emphasized the conventionality of what counts as rational speech and action at any given time, the embeddedness of reason in language and forms of life and, indeed, the incommensurability of different "language games" which cannot serve to legitimate either other or themselves.[...] To the notion of the rational subject, they have contrasted its inextricable situatedness and finitude, and hence replaced an epistemological ideal of certainty with an acceptance of fallibility (Warnke 1987: 167).

There are various ways to explain the rise of anti-rationalism. In the first place, it was soon realized that reason is actually subject to the power of the will. Furthermore, reason is determined by life-contexts which cannot be explained logically.

If there is an entire dimension of unilluminated unconscious; if all our actions, wishes, drives, decisions, and modes of conduct (and so the totality of our human social existence) are based on the obscure and veiled dimension of the conations of

our animality; if all our conscious representations can be masks, pretexts, under which our vital energy or our social interests pursue their own goal in an unconscious way; if all the insights we have, as obvious and evident as they may be, are threatened by such doubt; then self-understanding cannot designate any patent self-transparency of our human existence (Gadamer 1981: 103-104).

But what is the impact of anti-rationalism on science? Freud, for instance, showed that reason is in the grip of unconscious forces and desires. Marx pointed out the social dimension upon which the structure of human thinking remains dependent. Anti-rationalism evidenced that the basic scientific statements were self-contained. Soon it was realised that they got their meaning only in relation to the theory where they were placed. This state of affairs falls under the whole-part relation, which is a fundamental hermeneutical principle. But this then implied that the logical form of induction could no longer be maintained. Especially, Popper's falsification theory was of much help when cognitive certitude could not rely any more on confirmations. Furthermore, Kuhn's theory of scientific revolutions contradicts the idea of a linear progress of science, showing that there are tensions between scientific paradigms. The role questions play in scientific paradigms opens up their hermeneutical side (Gadamer 1981: 164).

What is the nature of an anti-rational ontology? The world cannot be any longer considered as rationally structured. The world is more an irrational, accidental and chaotic place. Thus in the world no meaning can be found. There is no room for objective, neutral observers of the world events. There are many cases of situations which cannot be explained in a rational way. There is no meaning in this world but the one human beings add to their specific situation. There is an interesting shift of paradigms: where rationalism placed an autonomous rational being in a rationally ordered world, anti-rationalism placed a free human being within a contingent situation.

The end of the 18th century witnessed the transition from an *atomistic rationalism* to a *holistic irrationalism*. Whereas the 18th century was by and large in the grip of a strict *atomistic* (individualistic) *as well as rationalistic* mode of thought, Romanticism first accomplished the switch to an *irrationalistic holism* (universalism). [...] Historicism arose as a reaction to the deification of *universal conceptual knowledge* - the epistemic ideal dominating the era of the *Enlightenment*. Historicism particularly appreciates the unique and unrepeatable nature of *historical events* which are, in their supposed *individuality*, beyond the reach and grip of *universality* (Strauss 1999b: 2).

The fundamental question was changed with this shift. Instead of asking how human freedom can be reassured within a rationally determined world and within a network of systems, the anti-rational thinker asks whether there is a place for human freedom within a chaotic world. Does not human freedom fall prey to the meaninglessness of this world? This fundamental question immediately refers us to the crucial ideological conflict on the macro-level of the ideological world: the clash between the ideology of freedom on the one hand, and the ideological steering powers of culture and society on the other: the power of techno-science and economic-administrative rationality.

5.1.2.2.1 *Lebensphilosophie and Dilthey*

Let me consider now the philosophical traditions to which philosophical hermeneutics is in debt, namely *Lebensphilosophie* and existentialism. Both of them are two major anti-rationalist schools (Bril 1986: 203).

Lebensphilosophie aims to attack the "enlightened reason". It is part of a countermovement against the Enlightenment and rationalism. It is the continuation of Romanticism. Reason cannot grasp "life" as such and it actually displays a subordinate role. Every thinker belonging to this school draws on Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Their ontology consists of movement, becoming, and development which stand in opposition to a rigid being. Furthermore, its ontology is organic. Biology is the science which they model their philosophies upon.³ They are anti-rational in the sense that they substitute concepts, logical laws, apriori forms, with intuition, emotional comprehension, non-communicable insight, understanding and experience. Their stance is dualist in the sense that they consider besides "life" some other principle which opposes the former.

They recognise that reality is a constant becoming. There is actually only becoming and action. It is impossible to explain what life is in a concept. Life unfolds into higher and freer forms. It even goes against the mechanical laws which are valid for the physical and chemical aspects, since 'life' is so different from them. Intuition is the form of knowing (Stoerig 1950: 486).

History instead of biology was the scientific field which German *Lebensphilosophie* was modelled upon. This movement was the result of the impulse history had since Hegel and the Romantic

school. There is a definite relativism of values when the historical aspect of reality overrides other modal aspects. For everything arises and sinks by a historical determination.

Dilthey was the most important representative of historicism. His thought evolved from positivism to an anti-rationalist understanding of life and history. He wanted to supplement Kant's investigations of the transcendental conditions of pure reason by writing a critique of historical reason. He and his disciples would formulate a critique on Western civilization from this point of view. Spengler, for instance, conceived of world history as independent cultural forms and contexts succeeding one another in a process of becoming and decaying. Each culture is an organism, which expresses a specific spirit. Each civilization grows, flourishes and fades away like any living being (Stoerig 1950: 491).

Dilthey endeavoured to ground historical knowledge in the same way Kant attempted to lay the foundation for natural knowledge. He tried to formulate logical categories which would be appropriate for the human sciences and which would secure the right understanding of their Gegenstand. These were derived from experience which is the ultimate foundation of the historical world and the Geisteswissenschaften. This implies the abdication of a transcendental subjectivity in favour of "life". Any expression in which life is symbolically structured can only be known through the self-understanding of the interpreter and his pre-understanding of the Gegenstand.

Diese Begriffe sind im Unterschiede zu den Kategorien der Naturerkenntnis Lebensbegriffe. Denn die letzte Voraussetzung zur Erkenntnis der geschichtlichen Welt, [...] ist nach Dilthey das Erlebnis (Gadamer 1960: 209)

Historism contributed to undermine the privileged position of human reason. Troeltsch spoke of historicism as "...das geheime Grundgefühl unserer Zeit" (Klapwijk 1985: 12). But what is historicism? Dilthey showed that human reason is historically determined, and therefore, constantly changing. It is the philosophical school that challenged radically the idea of a fixed concept of human nature and of culture. Instead, it stated that human nature and every cultural activity and institution such as art, science, the state, law, morality and religion are carried away by the flux of history. They were considered as expressions of human life and therefore essentially historical.

The most radical consequences of a historicistic view are the suppression of the belief in transcendental and universally valid truths. The derision of any stability in human society by means of this historical flux does away with any certainty about truths and values. ⁴ Historism obviously privileged the position of historiography over and above the rest of the human sciences.

Dilthey considers human life as *Erleben* which is expressed in objective structures of cultural history which are called symbolic forms. A book, a poem, a work of art, a political and philosophical system are all symbolic forms through which we can understand one another. Nevertheless, all these symbolic forms belong to the flux of history. All these forms are part of a *Lebensverlauf* which is historical through and through and which conforms to the common ground for mutual understanding. There are not isolated individuals but all of them share in a common life. The way someone experiences reality is expressed in these symbolic forms which one is called upon to understand. For Dilthey these three terms, namely experience, expression and understanding, form a triad which can only be grasped on the grounds of other experiences, that is, in a subjective way. Noteworthy is the unavoidable circularity in Dilthey's conception of the mutual dependency of objective structures and subjective experiences. One is called to re-experience the original experience of, say, an artist, by means of the objective structures by which *Erlebnisse* are expressed. One can only understand the artists by means of his works of art, which express the artist's experience, which one will re-experience (Klapwijk 1985: 19).

For Dilthey, hermeneutics happens to be the foundation for the human sciences. He tried to prescribe rules in order to understand not only texts, but every symbolic form (Gadamer 1960: 213; Klapwijk 1985: 20).

Dilthey's teaching on world-views stands out as one of his most important contributions. He believed that truth is only grasped in the form of a world-view. The reason why true knowledge is attained only in the form of a world-view lies in the fact that it is the cultural context which gives meaning to "life". The radical consequence of such a stance is relativism and at the end, nihilism. For there is no truth which escapes historical determination: there are no facts, but only interpretations. Every value dissolves in the flux of changes leaving empty places.

Art, religion and philosophy are three forms of world-views whereby the mystery of life can be better grasped. However, philosophy is the best form of world-view in the sense that it is the best articulated. For Dilthey, philosophy had the task of grounding the different *Weltanschauungen* which originate from "life" which shapes thought. This opened the way for historical relativism. Philosophy and science became totally alienated from one another. Nonetheless, every philosophical world-view is partial and subject to revision. It can only become a theory and a typology of world-views.

To this migration into *Weltanschauung* thinking, with its indissoluble plurality, corresponded the unfolding of historical consciousness. Wilhelm Dilthey, the philosophical proponent of the historical school, considered the task of philosophy to be the grounding of the plurality of *Weltanschauungen* in the "thought-forming labor of life". This meant that for the entirety of the interpretation of the world, which the world view offered, philosophy was no longer taken seriously in its claim to knowledge; instead it had a validity like that of the other cultural creations of humanity (such as art, law, and religion) as an expression of life, which was capable of becoming an object of scientific knowledge but insofar as it is an expressive phenomenon is not itself knowledge. The thought form of this scientific treatment of *Weltanschauungen* was typology (Gadamer 1981: 160).

5.1.2.2.2 *Existentialism and Heidegger*

The development of Heidegger's thought shows influences of neo-idealism and *Lebensphilosophie*, but he is most often associated with so called existentialism. It is in this latter framework that I shall interpret his work in the present context. I shall also concentrate on his ontological philosophy before the famous "Kehre" (as this is more relevant for my purpose).

Philosophy as *Existenzphilosophie* became a private matter. The existentialist tradition was introduced with the realisation that scientific knowledge was of little use for limit situation. So philosophy correlated with our existential condition whereas science was intrinsically correct. Nevertheless, at a later stage, science stepped into the private sphere for instance by offering techniques for forming opinion and judgement (Gadamer 1981: 160).

What is an existentialist? It is someone who does not believe that man is ultimately a rational being, for freedom transcends any rationality. Existentialism is a derived form of anti-rationalism. The questions who and what man are must be answered by man himself.

Heidegger's thought was influenced by Dilthey's historicism and Husserl's phenomenology. From the latter he drew on the idea that objects are not substances, but their being is given in their relation to a subject. Heidegger does not want to refer to the essence of the things themselves, but to the existence of the beings. He wants to address the *Sein des Seienden* (Klapwijk 1985: 30). In the Middle ages a favorite topic was that of the essence and the existence of things. The essence of things contains the properties of a thing. The existence of things is the actual reality (*Vorhandensein*) of things. Western philosophy had for a long time focused on the essence, on the 'what' of the *Seienden*. Heidegger, conversely, focuses on the problem of the *Sein des Seienden*. The *Sein* of the *Seienden* remains hidden. The *Seienden* are the reflections of the *Sein*. The *Sein* lets the *Seiende* appear. Heidegger is interested above all in the *Sein* of the human being. The human *Sein* differs from that of the other *Seiende* because it remains open.

What is existence, then? Heidegger thinks that only human beings can *exist*, while things are. Human beings do not have an essence which is fixed and constant as things do.

Der Mensch weiß von seinem eigenen, individuellen Sein, er besitzt individuellen Seinverhältnis. Man kann auch sagen, er steht in einem gewissen Verhältnis zu seinem Sein (Klapwik 1985: 32).

It is impossible to speak of a "what" human beings are. The *Wesen* of human beings is that they exist, for they remain related to themselves. Their Being is open in the sense that its Being is represented in its freedom and responsibility.

The structure of the human *Sein* is primarily a *Dasein*. The structure of our pre-understanding is grounded in *Dasein*. Instead of predicating a cogito ergo sum, Heidegger postulates a Being-in-the-world. The *Seiende* are those entities in the world which are not *Dasein*. To speak of *Sein* and *Seiende* is to speak of an ontological difference. *Dasein* is busy trying to give an answer to the question of Being. The only way of answering that question is by means of interpretation. Thus *Dasein* is engaged in a transcendental inquiry. Its task can only be achieved hermeneutically.

Interpreting, therefore, does not refer to the acquisition of information but to the working out of the possibilities projected in understanding. In other words, understanding is the potentiality-of-Being of *Dasein*. *Dasein* is what it can be. Understanding as the potentiality of *Dasein* has the structure of an *Entwurf*. Furthermore, time is the horizon within which *Dasein* interprets Being.

Likewise, human beings have an intentional relation to the world in the sense that the world and human beings are not supposed to be separate. Existentialism highlights the unbreakable relation the human being has to the world, to the entities within it and to other human beings. In sum, human beings are nothing without their *Umwelt*.

There are important distinctions Heidegger makes regarding the status of things in their relation to human beings and the condition of human existence. *Zuhandene Dinge* are things hammered out by a human being according to certain purposes at his disposal. However, *vorhandene Dinge* precede the former, in the sense that they signify the primary and basic relations between human beings and the world.

Dasein is the intertwining of the *faktischem Sein* and the *möglichem Sein*, that is, the relation between *geworfenem Sein* and *entwerfendem Sein*. My condition of *Geworfenheit* (*thrownness*) refers to the fact that I did not ask to be; I was thrown into the world. It is a fact that I am what I am. Conversely, I am also a possibility. I am not responsible for what I am, but I am responsible for what I can be. To be a human being is to have self-understanding. This self-knowledge is not an intellectual knowledge but more of a skill. To have self-knowledge means to be in control of one's being. Although I am thrown into the world - and that is a fact - I am responsible for myself.

I am aware of my *Geworfenheit*, especially, when I have *Angst* (fear). I am always afraid of something concrete. But I have *Angst* of things that there are not. And that which is not, is my *Sein*. This *Sein* is always a *noch-nicht-sein*. It is an unknown possibility. *Angst* helps to cope with the fact that *Sein* remains a possibility for which I am responsible. This is a constant preoccupation, which comes along with the fact that we are human beings. *Angst* makes us aware that we are free and responsible. One's feelings of guilt also make us aware of our *Geworfenheit*.

But then what is actually the *Sein* of the human *Seiende*? It is *Sorge* (anxiety and preoccupation), which leads Heidegger to conclude that death is the possibility, the only possibility which is the purest and which is unavoidable. I must die. Animals do not die. My life is conditioned by death. If I do not die, then I am not a human being. Death is a typical human possibility. The *Sein* of human beings is being for death, because it is the last possibility of our existence.

Heidegger was also critical of the modern world, which is greatly dominated by technology. Human beings are hampering their own freedom and responsibility which are taken away by a technological *Umwelt*. Hence they carry out an unauthentic existence.

Human existence remains open. Human existence is orientated in three directions: future, past and present. It is directed towards the future, that is, to existential possibilities. It is directed to the past, which constitutes the weight of the thrownness. It is directed to the present which is actualization of possibilities *hic et nunc*.

Hence, there is time because of human beings. Past, present and future are three dimensions of time which are bound to human beings. They are nothing in themselves apart from the human being. Time is something typically human. Time holds the secret of what a human being is. It is the meaning of his existence. World and time are opened by the existence of the human being

5.1.2.2.1 *The existential explanation of understanding*

Philosophical hermeneutics opposes an existential-ontological interpretation to a theoretical-critical generalisation (Bleicher 1980: 99). As seen, Heidegger ascribes to understanding the place of being the original mode of human existence. To understand something is always an act of self-understanding. Furthermore, to understand something compels us to relate to it. Thereby new avenues of understanding open up.

Noteworthy is the fact that the Gadamerian metaphor of *Wirkungsgeschichte* is related to the *Vorstruktur* of understanding. It consists of *Vorhabe*, *Vorsicht* and *Vorgriff*. *Vorhabe*. It refers to

the anticipation of meaning, that is, to that which we have in advance. *Vorsicht* refers to the point of view which directs our interpretation, that is, something that we already see in advance. *Vorgriff* refers to the concepts and categories that we already have. These three pre-suppositions constitute the object, which is not *in-itself*. The structure of our pre-understanding as Being-in-the-world does not allow for objectifications that would amount to ignoring the existential mode of *Dasein* which is understanding and self-understanding.

Understanding in this regard always implies a future dimension. The existence of the reader is constituted by his thrownness into the world. If man is a thrown being, then his search for meaning becomes for him a possibility for the future. This also entails that his rationality does not have the last word, because his knowledge is finite. Human knowledge holds possibilities for the future and this is why the finitude of the reader can be a productive finitude.

One can understand because one already belongs to the subject-matter one tries to understand. This means that one has been given a previous understanding and thus is in the position of laying open the entailed possibilities. Thus it is not then a matter of presenting reason with objects and it is not a matter of granting meaning, but of working out for ourselves the already given meaning in the world. Herein lies the important role pre-suppositions play in the event of understanding.

Heidegger criticized the idea of consciousness and gave a distinctive answer to the question about being. His answer was the temporality of the human *Dasein*, which refers to the finitude and historicity at our being. *Dasein* was not about replacing the idea of a transcendental consciousness, but about eliminating any attempt at transcendental grounding. Science received an ontological grounding, instead, in *Dasein* and its relation to the world. This became a powerful critique of the ideology of science.

Heidegger's thought that science originates from an understanding of being that compels it unilaterally to lay claim to every place and to leave no place unpossessed outside of itself. But that means that today not metaphysics but science is dogmatically abused (Gadamer 1981: 163).

5.2 Ideology, key-formulas and key-metaphors

In the preceding discussion, I have attempted to sketch the ideological profiles of Diltheyan Lebensphilosophie and Heideggerian existentialism. It is clear how the former leads into the latter. It is also clear, from the discussion in previous chapter of this study, that both frameworks centre on absolutizations of (especially) history, language, and the genetic over the structural. Therefore, especially with reference to the first and last factors, they represent not only an anti-rationalist mode of thinking, but actually an ideological imbalance that can be labelled as a reactionary irrationalism. I contend that, in the last instance, Gadamer's selection of key-formulas as well as his guiding metaphors, can be traced back to this particular conceptual environment in which his thought developed, and which I would call a post-Lebensphilosophie paradigm (that includes also other thinkers, e.g. Habermas at an earlier stage of his thought).⁵

I became aware of something of this for the first time when I met Heidegger in 1923. At the same time he was still in Freiburg, and I participated in his seminar on Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*. We studied the analysis of *phronesis*. Heidegger pointed out to us in the text of Aristotle that every *techne* poses an intrinsic limit: its knowledge is not a full uncovering of something because the work it knows how to produce is delivered into uncertainty of a use over which it does not preside (Gadamer 1976: 201).

To be sure, Gadamer is sensitive to some of the problems that Diltheyan and Heideggerian thought raises. That is why his thought actually transcends the framework of Lebensphilosophie or existentialism as such. Yet, Gadamer remains captive in the wider framework of a geneticist philosophy that is "post" Dilthey and "post" Heidegger in important respects (avoiding Heideggerian elitism e.g.), but is still ideological in terms of its own preferences and tensions.

In terms of the wider dimensions of the ideological topography of Western thought, this putative post-Lebensphilosophie paradigm is in its turn connected to the larger ideological framework of what Dooyeweerd calls the freedom motive of humanism, in its opposition to the power of science and technology.⁶

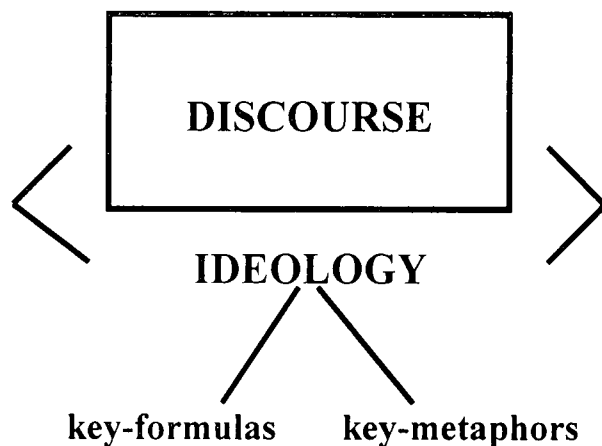
Thus, in the light of the whole preceding analysis, I would venture to say that Gadamer is a competent ideology analyst in his own right and that much of what he says is valuable for ideology

critique – particularly his criticism of various forms of rationalism. But these criticisms should themselves be hermeneutically understood against the background of his own ideological weaknesses.

This perspective is ultimately one of solidarity for every ideology analyst is in the end prone to ideological weaknesses. This is part of our humanity.

It should now be clear to the reader how the analysis of key-formulas, guiding or key-metaphors, and ideological frameworks come together to provide a complex of conceptual deep structures that shape the discourse of a philosopher like Hans-Georg Gadamer (see diagram).

Diagram 5



Notes

1. This is the elitist bent of the term. The main purpose of Aristotle's *philosophia practica* was the well-being of the polis. To my mind, Gadamer is relying here on the presuppositions of Lebensphilosophie.
2. Gadamer does not recognize any social institution as an ontological given, but regards it solely as a process of historical development.

3. This is an example of the kind of root-metaphor or epistemic model that complements the key-formulas of philosophical ideologies.

4. Klapwijk adds that if human beings change with history, then man is no longer a rational animal nor the imago Dei.

5. This common framework that Habermas and Gadamer shared in their early development explains their shared interests in themes like life-world, language, the critique of technology and science, the importance of tradition and dialogue, etc.

6. The ideology model I am using in my analysis allows for elements of previous theoretical philosophical ideologies, such as neo-idealism for example, to be transformed and taken up in post Lebensphilosophie anti-rationalism (P.L.A.). Also, it is evident that the latter in fact encompasses the framework of existentialism, but is at the same time wider, so that we can interpret existentialism as a specific offshoot of P.L.A..

Conclusion

Let me conclude this study by making, first of all, some remarks on the possible link that might be established between hermeneutics and reformational philosophy.

I believe that philosophical hermeneutics has rightfully opposed the presupposition that only conceptual knowledge is true. I believe that the singularity of the truth disclosed by texts, works of art, and other cultural products should be understood in terms of "idea-knowledge", which is the kind of knowledge which cannot be captured in terms of a concept, but transcends it. Idea-knowledge points to the fact that there is a diversity which is more than logical, but at the same time more than historical and lingual as well. I would like to suggest that by extending the boundaries of any modal aspect and through over-extended metaphors and metaphorical transpositions, one can grasp the truth of that which is individual and describe unrepeatable states of affairs.

The text and the text-analogues (other cultural items) are brought about as positivisations of norms. I believe that philosophical hermeneutics helps one understand the nature of these positivisations, which demand making a decision and which should be understood as interpretations. Gadamer's concept of application as an integral moment in the event of understanding shows that a text or a work of art as a positivisation of a normative aspect, establishes itself as a norm whose truth is better understood when we apply it to ourselves in a responsible way. The modal universality of the historical and lingual aspects helps us comprehend the way in which we must carry out our responsibility toward the normative aspects on the factual side. The former is manifested by a constant *fusion* of their various positivisations represented by the creation of texts, works of art, laws, etc., widening our understanding of what the normative aspects are. Each positivisation is the product of a constant process of cultural formation. The latter refers to the fact that man responds (*antwort-en*) to God's word, that is, to God's structural laws, by *interpreting* them and giving them a positive and concrete form. Philosophical hermeneutics helps us become aware that man is a normative and responsible being, and that every positivisation is dependent on the course of a constant cultural formation and interpretation. In other words, a history

of positivisations and of interpretations is constantly written and every possible new positivisation and interpretation is affected by a previous one. Nobody positivises from "nowhere". In addition, every positivisation is essentially interpretative. This implies having to constantly make the best decision as to how to give the best positive form to that norm that would best suit the circumstances and needs *hic et nunc*.

Philosophical hermeneutics points out that theoretical activity as a normative activity exhibits a historical and interpretative character. The way in which it is carried out conforms to the history of scientific endeavours, which should be understood as a history of scientific positivisations. This history is advanced by every scientific revolution which occurs as a matter of a better understanding of what science is. This reflects its interpretative character. However, this does not imply the dissolution of its purpose and theoretical character, which remain qualified by the logical or analytical aspect of reality. The need to give a theoretical account of the whole of reality in its modal diversity cannot be exhausted by the historical and lingual aspects of science and philosophy.

Acknowledging the modal universality of the historical mode and the sign-mode ultimately boils down to the acceptance of the *impossibility* of escaping from our *historical-situatedness* and from *interpreting* whatever we do or think. This is the all-important positive side of *historicism* and "*lingualism*" - these *isms* did shed light upon the fact that the world in which we live is co-constituted and co-determined by these two *modal aspects*. At the same time this assessment entails a radical criticism in this regard, because it is based upon the insight that there is more to reality than its historical and sign-modes. Deifying these two conditions as if they can *explain* all of reality, neglects other equally fundamental *modes of explanation* - an insight from the reformational Christian tradition of philosophizing that cannot be stressed enough in an age that is still stamped by a constructive urge unwilling to surrender to God-given creation order not produced by the human subject (Strauss 1999b: 9).

Having looked at the way hermeneutics might contribute to a better understanding of reformational philosophy, and noted some warnings in this connection, let me now summarise the findings of this study.

To my mind, philosophical hermeneutics substitutes or actually transforms the dogma of an autonomous theoretical ego, which is the most fundamental uncritical axiom and prejudice of rationalist ideology, into the dogma of the universality of the hermeneutical ego. Instead of a transcendental rationality which *imposes* on reality logical categories and a causal logical order, philosophical hermeneutics and the neighboring philosophical ideologies belonging to post Lebensphilosophie anti-rationalism presuppose a historical and linguistic ego which *relates* to a constantly dynamic and infinite universe. Hence, his knowledge of the world is just an interpretation amongst others. A radical and unavoidable relativism (nihilism) of every aspect of the temporal horizon of human experience is the ultimate consequence of such a perspective.

This study has demonstrated the plausibility and effectiveness of an analysis of the conceptual deep structures of a philosophical discourse. The analysis starts with certain presuppositions and anticipations - like the existence of a key-formula, the heuristic values of metaphors, and the ideological slant in every philosophical school. Paying attention to the different structures of discourse, each section of such an analysis builds upon the results of the preceding one, with the purpose of achieving an even-handed assessment of the philosophy in question.

The analysis of the conceptual deep structures deals with the main aspects of the text, which are first of all represented in the key-formula. The presupposition of the existence of a formula reflects the presupposition of the coherence and unity of the text. Conversely, deconstruction begins with the preposition of textual tension and fragmentation. Obviously, this state of affairs cancels out our everyday presuppositions erasing any positive knowledge regarding the subject-matter dealt with in the text, at the same time blocking any possible dialogue. These two last remarks are also presupposed by philosophical hermeneutics.

I firmly believe it is necessary to acknowledge the complexity of textual structures which enable the disclosure of the text's integral truth. Some of these structures - those that are philosophically most relevant - have been approached systematically in this study,

showing their interrelatedness. Consider again, for example, the way in which the most basic conceptual relations sustained by the discourse are deepened by metaphorical transpositions creating a well-knit network. The latter constructs the horizon of the text, which can be characterized as, for instance, dynamic or static, finite or infinite, complex or simple, etc. The network of metaphors can be interwoven under the auspices of a meta-metaphor which constitutes a model describing a hypothetical state of affairs. The meta-metaphor is a source of appropriate terminology for the description of a hypothetical state of affairs. For instance, philosophical hermeneutics captures the *dynamic* of the structure of language in its social aspect with the metaphors of the *game* and *dialogue*. Hence one can refer to the *ludic* and *dialogic* structure of language. Furthermore, the idea-use of modal aspects and over-extended metaphors can constitute theoretical and philosophical models standing in service to the ontology sustained by a philosophical school. For instance, rationalism and objectivism often tend to portray a *mechanical* world whose *atomistic* relations are *mirrored* by presumably neutral reason. This philosophical model obviously clashes with the anti-rational model, which pictures the world as an *organism*, whose entities, relations and categories sink in a *flux*. Therefore, textual analysis lets us see the ideological slant implied in just about any philosophical tradition on the grounds of the key-formula of its discourse, its metaphor network and its *Zugehörigkeit* to an ideological time-stream.

In sum, by grasping the conceptual key-formula and by elucidating the intricate network of metaphors of the discourse, one can sort out the basic theoretical presuppositions sustained by a philosophical school and make an even-handed criticism of its moments of truth and at the same time, of its ideological axioms. The results of the analysis provide textual proofs which help us to place it within a systematic classification charting the history of philosophical thought.

To speak of the conceptual structures of a discourse refers us to the basic presuppositions held by this kind of analysis. I believe in the interrelation of a multiplicity of aspects constituting the structure of a text, which are to be recognised in their own right as ontically given in a totality of meaning. For instance, the analysis entails the interrelation

and the uniqueness of the logical and the lingual aspect. Furthermore, according to the paradigm of the Reformational school, philosophical hermeneutics singles out the relevance of the interrelation of the historical, lingual and social aspects as conditions of the event of understanding. Hence, the acceptance of structuring laws – *order for* - and of the capability of entities to respond to those laws – *orderliness of* – is a fundamental assertion of Reformational philosophy.

The analysis of conceptual deep structures has hammered out, in the form of a discourse analysis, the most fundamental assertions and categories of Dooyeweerd's and Vollenhoven's thought, which constitute the context within which the analysis is done. Obviously, the views of other thinkers such as John Thompson and George Lakoff which belong to other traditions have also been integrated, for they have advanced important conclusions in fields such as ideology criticism and metaphor analysis which were not investigated by Dooyeweerd or Vollenhoven. I should also point out that, despite the influence of Reformational philosophy on the methodology I used, the latter can in fact be practised by philosophers who are not committed to a Christian world-view.

The rational and objectivistic myth of an autonomous self-consciousness which presupposes a gap between itself and reality, has been attacked by an anti-rational and more "existential" approach which presupposes a pre-theoretical relation between the subject and the world. The change in paradigms has much to do with the rise of hermeneutics which has consequences in every cultural domain, including science. Philosophical hermeneutics has shown the historical and lingual conditions of understanding under which the myth of theoretical neutrality and of positivistic science becomes unsustainable. Hermeneutics has revealed the false assumption of the possibility of setting foot in nowhere, that is, getting a perspective of reality from nowhere. On the contrary, history in the form of tradition, *Wirkungsgeschichte*, and prejudices, and language in the form of a dialogue are the actual ground and media in which understanding occurs. In other words, the relation between reader and text, or between science and its *Gegenstand* is only possible when both of them are placed in a historical and lingual context.

Scientific enterprise is nurtured by a life-world reproducing the tradition in which it stands and by language through which it has access to the reality which it wants to analyse. These two conditions have governed the dynamic of scientific revolutions and the shifts of theoretical paradigms. Therefore, their pretended neutrality is dismantled. Instead, hermeneutics has revealed to the scientist that his knowledge and goals are biased and determined by the prejudices which are rolling down along history. They constituting his pre-understanding and anticipation of his *Gegenstand*. The truth of the latter is only reached by a dialectic of question and answer. The construction of a scientific hypothesis can be hermeneutically understood as an answer to a previous question. Therefore, the scientist is carried away by an ongoing dialogue. This presupposes that reaching an absolute and final truth is just an illusion, especially when one realizes one's own finitude. By this ongoing dialogue the truth of the subject-matter is disclosed. In other words, it is not just reconstructed on the basis of a method. Instead, the knowledge that one obtains is produced by a constant fusion of horizons. Every reader and text stands in a historical and lingual horizon which encompasses their whole existence and experience. However, one should understand that this last statement is true in terms of their modal universality and not in terms of their absolutisation.

Although hermeneutics and deconstruction have uncovered the cryptic myths and grand narratives of modernity, they have constituted themselves as the new dogmas and axioms of (post-) modern man. The ontologisation of hermeneutics, that is, its elevation to a cultural hypernorm, radicalizes the alienation of man from his world and from himself by relativizing truth to the point where it is taken as a fable. The most important nihilistic consequence of this cultural relativism is the erasure of the belief in a structured cosmos, which emphasises the unity in the diversity of meaning governed by laws and norms and by the responsive structure of entities. What is left is just a play of interpretations. To accept a structured horizon of human experience does not imply the return to metaphysical speculations nor does it constitute a defense of a transcendental logical demiurge constructing the universe to its rational liking. It implies the acceptance of ontic givens which ought to be recognized if one wants to avoid a fragmented account of

reality. Therefore, one has to conclude on these grounds that not everything is essentially interpretative and that interpretation, which entails a dynamic state of affairs, can only take place on *constant* ground. It is then urgent to delimit the field of interpretation and re-direct its nihilistic project, by acknowledging that the historical and lingual modal functions, constituting the interpretative aspect of the temporal horizon of human experience, are part of a structured reality which is more than historical and lingual.

Hermeneutics has certainly pointed out the wider scope of knowledge and its historical and lingual conditions which make us aware of the need for perspective. Therefore, I believe that every philosopher is compelled to test his presuppositions against the temporal cosmic order, which is the ultimate *horizon*, where every possible dialogue between philosophical schools, scientific paradigms and aesthetic trends should be conducted. Only against an established standard can one become aware of tensions in one's own thought and world-view. This standard is, for me at least, the word of God.

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