

# IN PURSUIT OF A PHANTOM QUOTATION

## GADAMER AND PIETIST HERMENEUTICS

In an essay titled "Philosophie und Philologie", the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer pays homage to the great classical scholar Ulrich Wilamowitz-Moellendorff.<sup>1</sup> The *leitmotif*, as it were, of this essay is a certain "intrinsic affinity"

between the Greek words for philosophy and philology. As one might expect, Gadamer envisages the synthesis between these two forms of knowledge to be attainable with the guidance of *sophos*. To be sure, the philosopher cannot dispense with philology, yet this is so only because of the finitude of the human spirit. On account of this finitude, we cannot know "what we are supposed to come to know" without a linguistically mediated tradition (the *logos*). The philosopher must rely on philology, yet he is also supposed to transcend the latter by virtue of the "exertion of concept". In contrast to the philologist, the philosopher is not primarily interested in the verbatim form of the text. Gadamer ties philology to the concept of tradition; yet, precisely by observing the primacy of philosophy within the relation between philosophy and philology, he reiterates the premises of this philological tradition. And hence the eloquent laudation to the philologist boils down to a fairly straightforward message—to wit, that there is good philology and bad philology, and to decide what counts as good philology is, of course, up to philosophy.

Philosophy in its turn begins, according to Gadamer, with the recognition that "interpretation is a central form of our accessing the world [*Weltzugang*]"<sup>2</sup> The same could be said about good philology, which is informed by an awareness that the text can only be accessed by way of tradition and interpretation and that any talk of "the simple apprehension of an unproblematically given text" is vacuous. Mindful of "the risk of interpretation, we have to smile when someone says 'but this stands written in text' (*Aber das steht doch da*). To be sure, that is a very significant fact. What we want to understand, however—and that is indeed what we must understand—is *what* stands written in the text. Yet can we know what stands written in the text before understanding it? This is the famous hermeneutic circle."<sup>3</sup> Thus Gadamer ridicules the kind of philology which ignores the notorious *circulus*. Indeed, he may well be right in his discontent with uncritically naive philology. Still, we must ask whether the condescending

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LASZLO KISBALI

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*"Pass no judgment about a book  
if you have not read it"*  
Christian Thomasius

tone of his remarks is justified. Does a philology moving in the hermetic circle really stand so high above traditional philology that it can look down upon the latter with a patronizing smile? Is naive philology incapable of rais-

ing any questions which would, after all, seem to call for an answer? What if, in the midst of the battle of interpretations, the disparaged philologist suddenly raised his voice and said: But there is nothing written in that part of the text; the passage that you are interpreting (in one way or another) is not to be found in the text at all? It may be thought that this hypothesis is implausible to the point of absurdity. After all, who would try to interpret a non-existent passage? Yes, you've guessed right, esteemed reader: Gadamer himself has attempted this absurdity. What is more, he not only attempted it, he has also earned success by doing so—tremendous success.

Surveys, reviews, and reference works written on the subject of hermeneutics after the Sixties seldom fail to point out that Pietism inaugurated a new chapter in the history of hermeneutics. The novelty introduced by Pietism is generally supposed to be the tripartite division of hermeneutics, according to which the theory of *interpretatio* and *explicatio* is followed by a third part, namely, the theory of *applicatio*. Again and again, and almost exclusively, the only example

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■ The Hungarian version of this article appeared in *Holmi*, 1998/9, pp. 1275–1289.

1 ■ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 6 (Griechische Philosophie II). Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1985, pp. 271–277.

2 ■ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

3 ■ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

4 ■ This strategy is followed by Ineichen's reference work for philosophers (Hans Ineichen, *Philosophische Hermeneutik* [Handbuch Philosophie], Freiburg/München: Verlag Karl Alber, 1991, p. 186) as well as one of the latest and best reference works in theology (Henning Schröder: "Hermeneutik IV," *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*. Band XV. Berlin/New York: W. de Gruyter, 1986, p. 150)

5 ■ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Transl. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. London: Sheed & Ward, 1993, p. 307.

6 ■ In the 18th century original, the text reads "*caussis*" [my note, L. K.].

7 ■ "Klassische und philosophische Hermeneutik," *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 2 (Hermeneutik II: Wahrheit und Methode, Ergänzungen). Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1986, p. 97. This is an extended version from 1968 of the encyclopaedia article, reprinted in Gadamer's collected works.

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adduced to substantiate this claim is a work entitled *Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae variis observationibus copiosissimisque exemplis biblicis illustratae*, written by an author named Rambach.<sup>4</sup> Another feature of such surveys is the curious fact that Rambach, the ostensible prototype of Pietism, is never quoted otherwise than by way of Gadamer. The only exception to this rule is the entry on hermeneutics in the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, an outstanding reference work in the history of philosophy, in which the author refers directly to Rambach rather than to the quotation in Gadamer's *Truth and Method*. Too bad that this summary, which has played such a pivotal role in the dissemination of the history of hermeneutic application, was written by Gadamer himself. To sum up, there is no royal road to Rambach by which we could bypass Gadamer.

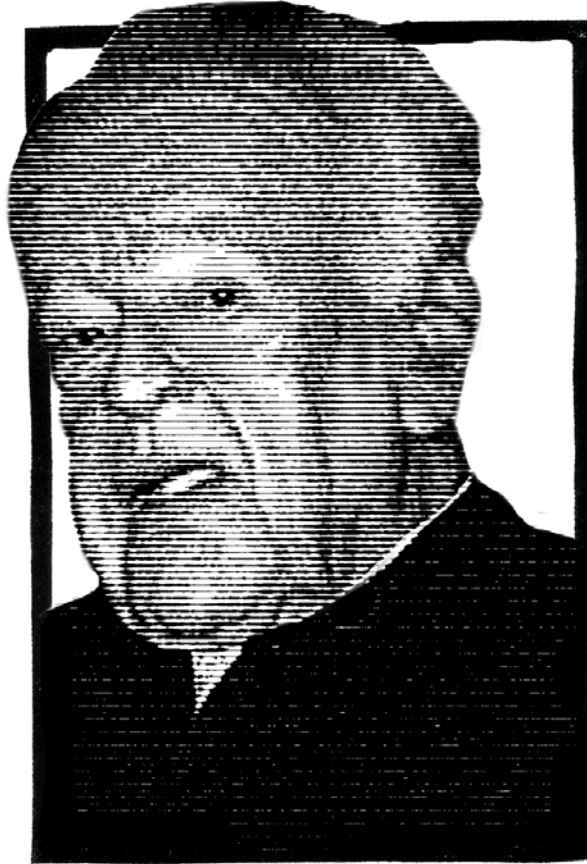
We might as well take a look at the much-cited passages in *Truth and Method*. The main text suggests that hermeneutics has an "earlier" tradition, which "was completely invisible to historical self-consciousness" after Romanticism and in which the concept of application, so crucial for Gadamer, still "had its systematic place. Hermeneutics was subdivided as follows: there was a distinction between *subtilitas intelligendi* (understanding) and *subtilitas explicandi* (interpretation); and pietism added a third element, *subtilitas applicandi* (application), as in J. J. Rambach. The process of understanding was regarded as having these three elements. It is notable that all three are called *subtilitas*—i.e., they are considered less as methods that we have at our disposal than as talents requiring particular finesse of mind".<sup>5</sup> And it is at this juncture that we come across the ominous footnote Nr. 235/206, which includes a quotation without translation: "Rambach's *Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae* (1723) are known to me in the compilation by Morus. There we read: '*Solemus autem intelligendi explicandique subtilitatem (soliditatem volgo vocant) tribuere ei, qui cum causis<sup>6</sup> et accurate [.....] intelligibit atque explicat*'. (Morus 8) Here the humanist *subtilitas*

was misconstrued as a consequence of the methodological ideal of the Enlightenment."

Now it doesn't take a highly advanced knowledge of Latin to realize that the footnote does not in the least support what is said in the main text. What is said in the citation is neither more nor less than the following: We attribute the "subtlety" (or in common parlance, the "solidity") of interpretation to him who is capable of reasonably and accurately interpreting and explicate something—where, by the way, "explanation"

is to be understood more along the lines of exposition. *Subtilitas*, in its turn, is probably best translated as "refined skill". If we recall the context, we remember that this citation was supposed to illustrate (at the very least) the thesis that the Pietists distinguished between three sorts of "subtlety". However, the footnote seems to provide no more than two kinds of subtlety. Even more important, the concept of application does not appear in any form whatsoever in the citation. What is absent from the passage is the very element that would justify Gadamer's comments on the text that he chooses to quote.

Although the thesis about Pietist hermeneutics is of extraordinary importance in Gadamer's argument, the only passage in which he means to justify it is the one just discussed. For instance, in the reference work that I already mentioned, Gadamer emphatically reiterates his claims as well as his reference to Rambach's *Institutiones*, and he adds a remark whose precariousness will, I hope, become apparent very quickly: "The expression *subtilitas* (refinement), which presumably derives from the humanist attitude of competition, elegantly suggests that the 'methodology' (*Methodik*) of interpretation (*Auslegung*)—just like any application of rules in general—requires the faculty of judgment (*Urteilkraft*), which in turn cannot be secured through rules". The text continues: "Moreover, as an auxiliary discipline of theology, hermeneutics continues to seek reconciliation with dogmatic interests (for example, in Ernesti and Semler)".<sup>7</sup> In other words,



Gadamer suggests that Pietist hermeneutics, led by A. H. Francke and Rambach, engaged in a fight with *historical Bible criticism* (and its most influential representatives, Ernesti and Semler) and “its negative, enlightening effect”.<sup>8</sup> Gadamer thus repeats his earlier claim without any alteration, although in a slightly more differentiated context. We shall call attention to the importance of this more differentiated perspective; for now, suffice to say that Ernesti’s and Semler’s principles for the interpretation of the Scriptures are representative of precisely that movement which Gadamer condemned as an Enlightenment tendency in the passage already quoted from *Truth and Method*.

To be sure, Gadamer’s correction only complicates things. After the quotation from Rambach/Morus, we read the following brief sentence. “Here the humanist *subtilitas* was misconstrued as a consequence of the methodological ideal of the Enlightenment.” Considered in isolation, this proposition is hardly conspicuous. After all, it is one of Gadamer’s most important claims, one that he seizes every opportunity to illustrate and consolidate, that the concepts originating in humanism were “emptied and intellectualized by the German Enlightenment”.<sup>9</sup> This time, however, it is not that easy to tell just who is supposed to be a proponent of Enlightenment. Obviously, it cannot be Morus, for he is only cited as the one through whose mediation we know the passage from Rambach. The only remaining possibility is that Rambach himself is a proponent of the Enlightenment. Yet Rambach is introduced in the first place as a representative of precisely that Pietism which Gadamer takes to be the antipode of rationalistic Enlightenment. So who is this man Rambach—a Pietist or an *Aufklärer*? Are we supposed to like or dislike him?

The footnote in question opens the chapter on “The Hermeneutic Problem of Application”, setting the tone, as it were, for the entire argument. Moreover, we know that “application”, and the related concepts of “effective history” and the “fusion of horizons”, are important not only because they play a pivotal role in Gadamer’s hermeneutics, but also because they establish the basis for the widely influential reception of *Truth and Method*. Contemporary disciples and critics alike see the primary source of the fruitfulness of Gadamer’s approach in the theory constructed along the lines of these notions.<sup>10</sup>

What is the significance of Gadamer’s specious reference to Rambach? To begin with, every reader of Gadamer will have noted the frequency with which he uses specific examples from the history of hermeneutics for the purposes of illuminating systematic issues. Secondly, beyond this illustrative role, Gadamer intends to ground his own hermeneutic program in historical reflection. Thus,

in *Truth and Method*, he presents his claims as responses to questions articulated in the course of the history of hermeneutics. Thirdly, Gadamer attributes a restorative function to his own theory. To be sure, the history of hermeneutics is the point of departure and the basis for Gadamer’s endeavour; however, this endeavour is meant to actualize only those intentions of hermeneutics which are historically viable. To use Gadamer’s words, the “paradoxical” task he means to confront is to “revive the old truth and the old unity of the hermeneutic discipline within modern science.”<sup>11</sup> His hope is that “[t]he old unity of the hermeneutical disciplines comes into its own again.”<sup>12</sup> The history of hermeneutics is, therefore, at the same time the *illustration*, the *foundation*, and the *aim or the intended object* of Gadamer’s hermeneutics—and this three-fold significance should be reason enough to take questions concerning the history of hermeneutics seriously. Central to the strategy of Gadamer’s argument is the ambition to anchor his theory in historical reflection. “The current state of the hermeneutical discussion is what occasions my emphasizing the fundamental importance of this point,” he writes in reference to application, and adds: “We can appeal first to the forgotten history of hermeneutics”.<sup>13</sup> The decisive feature of this story is the “old unity of hermeneutical discipline”.<sup>14</sup> If we wanted to know when such a unified hermeneutics based on the unity of application actually existed, however, we would have to rest content with the only answer usually offered by Gadamer: “a long time ago”. Imprecise as this formulation is, the theoretical strategy followed by Gadamer would, presumably, only be vitiated by some chronological “limitation”. For the chief function of this “old hermeneutics” is, in fact, merely to justify Gadamer’s critique of mod-

8 ■ Ibid.

9 ■ *Truth and Method*, p. 30.

10 ■ See, for instance, Eric Donald Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967, p. 42, pp. 245–65, 252–258; Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*, Vol. 1: *Handlungsrationalität und gesellschaftliche Rationalisierung*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985, pp. 195–96; Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et récit, Tome III: Le temps recouvert*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, pp. 285–286.

11 ■ *Truth and Method*, p. 325.

12 ■ Ibid., p. 340. Gadamer’s italics.

13 ■ Ibid., p. 308.

14 ■ Ibid., p. 325.

15 ■ Ibid., p. 333.

16 ■ Ibid., p. 31.

17 ■ Johannes Jacobus Rambachius, *Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae variis observationibus copiosissimisque exemplis biblicis illustratae*. Cum Praefatione Joannis Francisci Buddei. Jena: Sumptibus Ioan. Wil. Hartungii 1752, p. 9.

18 ■ Ibid., pp. 805–822.

19 ■ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik und Kritik mit besonderer Beziehung auf das Neue Testament: Aus Schleiermachers handschriftlichem Nachlasse und nachgeschriebenen Vorlesungen hg. von Dr. Friedrich Lücke* (Sämtliche Werke, I. Abteilung, Bd. 7) Berlin 1938. It was precisely due to Gadamer’s encouragement that this edition was superseded by Heinz Kimmerle’s.



ern scientism, to serve as a foil against which “modern hermeneutics” can be repudiated as the outcome of a decline.

Gadamer’s opponent—often, indeed, his enemy—is first and foremost the Enlightenment. While the most frequent targets of his criticism are Schleiermacher and Dilthey, it is when Gadamer recognizes the heritage of the Enlightenment and of historical Bible criticism in their works that the tenor of his arguments shifts toward an openly polemical register. For, according to Gadamer, the monopoly of a rationalism based on the paradigm of natural science and of a hermeneutics based on the primacy of the historical method could only emerge when the question of application was no longer considered a legitimate issue. Modern science began, in other words, when a negative answer was given to the question “does application essentially and necessarily belong to understanding?”<sup>15</sup> And it is at this juncture that Pietism enters the scene with its resolute opposition to the spirit of modernity. Gadamer’s account is as follows: “Of course other Pietist theologians have emphasized application against the dominant rationalism in the same way as Oetinger, as we can see from the example of Rambach, whose very influential hermeneutics also dealt with application. But [...] pietistic tendencies were supplanted in the later eighteenth century.”<sup>16</sup> These abandoned Pietist tendencies are now taken up in Gadamer’s program. Hence the strategic significance of the history of hermeneutics. Historically speaking, then, Gadamer wants modern hermeneutic theories to find themselves between the devil and the deep blue sea: preceded and contested by the “old hermeneutics” on the one hand, followed and refuted by Gadamer’s “universal hermeneutics”, which resuscitates and brings to triumph the intentions hidden in the former, on the other. The slogan of this restorative crusade is application, which is turned into a militant motto of “universal hermeneutics”; with this battle cry on their lips the heirs of the Pietists launch their assault on the armies of the Enlightenment.

Yet the passage quoted by Gadamer is not to be found in Rambach’s ominous *Institutiones*! There is some talk of *applicatio*, to be sure (*adplicatio* in Rambach’s spelling), but there is no trace of *subtilitas*, *explicandi* or *intelligendi* in this part of the book, or anywhere else, for that matter. Indeed, with veritable hermeneutic cunning, we shall demonstrate that even if someone happened to chance upon the quote in Rambach’s book, it could not have, or should not have, been written in it. We may recall that the view attributed to Rambach by Gadamer has two major components. The first is that hermeneutics has three parts in Pietist teaching, the

third part being the discipline of application. The second is that the difference between the three parts is best understood as a difference between three kinds of *subtilitas*.

Let us consider the first point: What are the main parts of hermeneutics according to Rambach? Due to theoretical considerations,<sup>17</sup> his *Institutiones* is divided into four books. The first concerns the “foundations”, the theoretical basis for the interpretation of the Scriptures. The second and the third books are devoted to the various immanent and exogenous means of uncovering the meaning of the Scriptures, and to the conditions of possibility of such procedures. In the fourth book, Rambach addresses the question of what we can do with the meaning thus clarified. Since Rambach believes that there are three things one can do with meaning, this fourth book is further divided into three chapters, one on the communication of meaning, one on its demonstration, and one on its application. Hence hermeneutics consists of two major divisions for Rambach, one concerned with the uncovering of meaning—which can be viewed as hermeneutics proper by virtue of its significance and the length of exposition that it demands—and the other concerned with the use we can make of the clarified meaning. In this latter context, the issues discussed are, firstly, how we can communicate what we have understood, secondly, how we can prove to others the correctness of our interpretation; only thirdly are we to consider the practical consequences of understanding for our own way of life. Even this conception of application extends well beyond the nexus of implications emphasized by Gadamer. At the same time, we may see a good indication of its relative import with respect to the entirety of hermeneutics in the fact that it takes up less than twenty pages out of eight hundred.<sup>18</sup> But regardless of the quantitative proportions among the various parts of hermeneutics, what is immediately clear is that they have nothing to do with *subtilitas*. The term *applicatio* on the second page of Rambach’s book is related to another concept: the text features *sapienter adplicare*, not *subtilitas applicandi*. Yet this minor piece of evidence betrays a highly significant connection. First of all, it indicates that the understanding of application which was held by Rambach is at odds with the anti-Enlightenment interpretation of Pietist hermeneutics imposed by Gadamer. Furthermore, it helps us find the true “source” of Gadamer’s quotation.

For a long time, Schleiermacher’s hermeneutics was only known in the 19th century edition of Friedrich Lücke.<sup>19</sup> Beside gathering the most important relevant texts, Lücke also supplemented them with his own commentary. This was necessary primarily because Schleiermacher’s argument, in its turn, took Johann August Ernesti’s lectures on the exegesis of the New Testament as its point of depar-

ture. Parts of Lücke's commentaries are now included in the widely available paperback edition of Schleiermacher's hermeneutic texts, albeit in very small print.<sup>20</sup> In Manfred Frank's edition, one of Lücke's remarks reads as follows: "*Gegen die herrschende Definition seit Ernesti Instit. interpret. N. T. ed Ammon p. 7: Est autem interpretatio facultas docendi, quae cujusque orationi sententia subjecta sit, seu, efficiendi, ut alter cogitet eadem cum scriptore quoque. — Interpretatio igitur omnis duabus rebus continetur, sententiarum (idearum) verbis subjectarum intellectu, earumque idonea explicatione. Unde in bono interprete esse debet, subtilitas intelligendi et subtilitas explicandi. Früher fügte J. Jac. Rambach institutiones hermen. sacrae. p. 2 noch ein drittes hinzu, das sapienter applicare, was die Neuern leider wieder hervorheben.*"<sup>21</sup> It should be apparent now that all the elements we have been looking for are present in Lücke's commentary: Rambach is there, Ernesti is there, and so are *subtilitas intelligendi* and *subtilitas explicandi*. To be sure, *subtilitas applicandi* is missing, but there is reference to *sapienter applicare*. Even more important, as far as the general content of the passage is concerned, it suggests a principal opposition between Pietist hermeneutics and historical Bible criticism, an opposition having to do with the concept of application. In other words, we have found everything we were seeking in a Latin quotation which is not identical to the one cited in *Truth and Method*.

And now that we finally know what we are looking for, we might as well have a glance at the passage in Morus cited by Gadamer. Samuel Friedrich Nathanael Morus (1763–1792) was a disciple of Ernesti's, who edited the methodological treatise of his teacher,<sup>22</sup> supplementing it with a lengthy commentary.<sup>23</sup> On page eight, where he discusses the requirements that the good interpreter must satisfy, he writes: "*Quae quum ita sint, duo maxime ab interprete bono postulantur, subtilitas intelligendi et subtilitas explicandi (4). Nam qui vult alios docere, debet ipse primum id, quod traditurus est, intelligere. Solemus autem intelligendi explicandique subtilitatem (soliditatem volgo vocant) tribuere ei, qui cum causis et accurate (genau und gründlich) intelligit atque explicat*". Here, then, is the passage quoted by Gadamer. Too bad that there is not even the vaguest reference in it to Rambach or the Pietists.

To sum up, we may surmise that either the two texts became conflated in Gadamer's mind or two flash cards got mixed up on his desk. From Lücke's commentary, he adopts the thesis that what separates Pietism from contemporary hermeneutics is the concept of application. He then ties this concept to Rambach's name and work in a manner that is completely ungrounded.

Misreading Lücke's word *sapienter* as *subtilitas* in a way which suits his overall purpose, Gadamer formulates a grandiose proposition about the history of hermeneutics. The only evidence that he adduces he derives from a commentary by Morus on Ernesti, which Gadamer presents as a quotation from Rambach. Quite apart from the context, there can scarcely be any excuse for such sloppiness, especially on the part of a philosopher who avowedly understands himself as a philologist by predilection and training. However, since Gadamer is, of course, first and foremost a philosopher, we should not bypass the obvious question: Why make such a fuss about a mere philological blunder? Why make an elephant out of a flea?

*Respondeo dicendum:*

1. For a flea, this one is quite sizeable.

2. Moreover, it is a flea which has been indefatigably jumping from citation to citation, from book to book for almost four decades. I cannot say I have read all the relevant works, but one would think that if someone had pointed out the "blunder", Gadamer would have corrected it. Yet even the 1986 volume of his collected works features the citation without any alteration. This time, though, one might have heeded the divine portent: German precision notwithstanding, the footnote in question was printed with an egregious typing error that produces a non-grammatical Latin sentence.<sup>24</sup>

3. Crucial to Gadamer's line of reasoning is the positing of a peculiarly Pietist tradition of

20 ■ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik und Kritik*. Mit einem Anhang sprachphilosophischer Texte Schleiermachers. Edited and with an introduction by Manfred Frank. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993.

21 ■ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

22 ■ Johannes Augusti Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis Novi Testamenti*. Ed. quarta. Curavit Christophorus Fridericus Ammon. Leipzig: In Libraria Weidmanniana 1792 (First edition 1761). It is worth noting the analogy between the titles of Ernesti's and Rambach's work: *Institutio* and *Institutiones*. Here lurks, I am afraid, the cause of the entire confusion. Could Gadamer have mixed up his notes?

23 ■ Sam. Frid. Nathan. Morus, *Super Hermeneutica Novi testamenti acroases academicae*. Ed. Henr. Carol. Abr. Eichstädt. I–II. Leipzig: Sumptibus C. F. Koehleri 1797.

24 ■ All that is left from the Latin text is "*Solemus autem intelligendi explicandique subtilitatem (soliditatem vulgo).*" That's all, the film has been torn. (Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 1: *Wahrheit und Methode*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1986. p. 312.

25 ■ See the essays documenting Gadamer's polemic against Jaeger: *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 2 (Hermeneutik II: *Wahrheit und Methode, Ergänzungen*). Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1986. pp. 276–300.

26 ■ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

27 ■ Rambach, *Institutiones*, pp. 127–128.

28 ■ Johannes Conradus Dannhauerus, *Hermeneutica sacra sive methodus exponendarum S. Literatum proposita vindicata*. Strasbourg: Ex Typis Josiae Staedelii 1654, p. 149

29 ■ *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 2, p. 284.

30 ■ *Truth and Method*, pp. 271–277.

hermeneutics<sup>25</sup> that he fails to submit to detailed scrutiny anywhere else. On no occasion does he adduce any other text to refer to a historical appearance of the problem of application. The only exception to this rule seems to suggest that Gadamer's supposed affinity with Rambach is a cursed one. In his essay titled "Rhetorik und Hermeneutik", Gadamer claims that representatives of Pietist hermeneutics (Francke, Rambach and their followers) were the first to recognize that "the eliciting of affects, an old chapter of rhetorics" functions as a "hermeneutic principle". This is the case because human spirit inheres in every word in the form of a peculiar affect in such a way that the very same word can have differing meanings if it is accompanied by different gestures and affects. According to Gadamer, Schleiermacher's psychological interpretation, and indeed every theory of empathetic identification, (*Einfühlung*) is rooted in a recognition of the kind of affective modulation which informs every speech act (especially predication). Once again, the key witness is Rambach, whom Gadamer quotes in German: "the author's spirit exerts such an attractive force upon the interpreter that the latter gradually begins to feel the author's spirit as his own self".<sup>26</sup> But this time Gadamer gives no bibliographical specification for his reference. He should have checked the passage quoted with his own eyes, though, for if he had done so, he would not have ventured the suggestion that the Pietists were the first to recognize the role of affects in interpretation. For, unlike the first quotation I have discussed, the passage about affects that Gadamer cites does show up in Rambach's work.<sup>27</sup> However, a careful reading of the passage should make it readily apparent that in this context, it can only be a quotation. Indeed, Rambach cites, with precise reference, a remark concerning the trope of the "clothing of the Word in affects" from the same Johann Konrad Dannhauer who was presumably also a teacher of Spener, the father of Pietism.<sup>28</sup> For simple chronological reasons, Dannhauer could at best be called a pre-Pietist. Gadamer, however, denies every significance to Dannhauer in the history of hermeneutics. Indeed, he makes decidedly condescending remarks about Dannhauer's attempt at a "Rationalist reorientation".<sup>29</sup> How odd, then, that Gadamer welcomes a claim actually made by the same Dannhauer, and appreciates it as marking a turning-point, when he mistakenly believes that he is discussing the opinion of Rambach, his favorite Pietist. We might be tempted to preclude further confusion by concluding that Gadamer is strongly prejudiced in favour of the Pietists. Yet that would scarcely be a revealing observation, for, as is well known, Gadamer passed a different, rather peculiar judgment about prejudices.<sup>30</sup>

Ultimately, what is truly embarrassing in this philosophical jumble concerns the philosophical heart of the matter. Having unraveled the bewildering tangle of quotations, names, and concepts, and having considered their implications with respect to the history of philosophy, we can draw the following conclusions.

1. It is clear that Gadamer is profoundly dissatisfied with the self-understanding of modernity, based as it is on the natural sciences and on "historical consciousness". According to Gadamer, modernity so understood can be traced back to Enlightenment rationalism. He formulates a program which strives to break with this tradition.

2. However radical his critique of modernity, Gadamer's peculiar conservatism, intent on stressing continuity and historical situatedness, leaves only a tradition validated by history as the sole possible justification for his criticism. It is thus incumbent on Gadamer not just to expound a position which can be held against the Enlightenment, but also to present this position as the continuation of a tradition which can be identified in actual history. Gadamer's hermeneutics cannot stand up without a history of hermeneutics. This is the reason why an objection along historical lines can be relevant at all.

3. In Gadamer's eyes, the historical tradition opposed to the Enlightenment is the Pietist tradition, whose anti-intellectualism, anti-scientism, traditionalism, and emotionally inflected theology can provide the historical foundations on which to base "universal hermeneutics". This is the tradition to which Gadamer occasionally refers with the phrase "old hermeneutics".

4. Within the framework of the Pietist hermeneutics that Gadamer means to construct in accordance with what he seeks to demonstrate, the concept which bears the burden of demonstrating historical unity and continuity is the concept of application. According to Gadamer, it is application which grounded the unity of old hermeneutics and which also makes the current hermeneutic revival possible.

5. In search of a historical justification of this thesis, Gadamer chances upon Rambach and the "quote" discussed here. In *Truth and Method*, as well as in Gadamer's later writings, this quote is the only concrete piece of evidence which is supposed to illustrate Pietist hermeneutics; everywhere else, he rests content with general statements, *horribile dictu*, with commonplaces of intellectual history.

6. What a careful examination of the ominous quotation reveals, however, is that a) it is completely irrelevant to the problem of application—which appears even more disconcerting than the fact that b) the quotation is not from Rambach in the first place.

7. Where does the citation come from, after all? a) With respect to the history of ideas, the citation is significant as an ostensible illustration of the opposition between the Enlightenment and Pietism as well



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as providing evidence to support the thesis that this opposition should be understood in terms of the Pietist and Enlightenment hermeneuticians' attitude toward application. This element of Gadamer's argument derives from Lücke, Schleiermacher's commentator. b) The Latin quotation in the footnote is taken from Morus' Latin commentary. c) In terms of the direct meaning that Gadamer attributes to the quotation—the differentiation between two kinds of *subtilitas*—its origin lies in Johann August Ernesti's hermeneutics for the exegesis of the New Testament.

8. Yet Johann August Ernesti, one of the founding fathers of historical Bible criticism, belonged to the rationalist line of the Enlightenment; he belongs to the same company which Gadamer blames for everything that he deplors. Gadamer's "universal hermeneutics" is opposed precisely to the theory of interpretation propounded by Ernesti, and it is Gadamer's wish to get away from that tradition that motivates his return to an "earlier hermeneutics", in particular, to the Pietist conception of application. What our detective work has revealed, however, is that Gadamer's supposed antidote to the Enlightenment actually derives from the alchemist's laboratory of the Enlightenment.

9. If my findings are correct, even on the most charitable reading we must conclude that Gadamer's picture of the history of hermeneutics is opaque, and that his arguments, at least in the form in which he presents them, are not sufficient to support his thesis.

10. What does *not* follow from the above, however, is that the role of Pietism in the history of hermeneutics is irrelevant. The question concerning the relation between Gadamer's program and the Pietist tradition remains open. Likewise, the relation between Gadamer's theory of interpretation and the history of hermeneutics in general ought to be reconsidered. However, such a reconsideration would have to go beyond the revenge of the violated discipline of philology. What we badly need instead is a thorough philosophical examination which is respectful of the historical as well as the systematic point of view, one which might finally bring about the reconciliation between philology and philosophy. □