

Gadamer's Hermeneutical Openness As a Form of Tolerance

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I would like first to thank Miguel Giusti, the Tübingen-educated professor of philosophy here at the Pontificia Universidad Católica, who is coordinating the Fifteenth Inter-American Congress of Philosophy and Second Ibero-American Congress of Philosophy, for extending an invitation to me to speak today.

To him I want to say I love Tübingen. It is a wonderful city and a great university with many students of Gadamer are serving there or having served on its faculty: for example., Rüdiger Bubner, Manfred Frank, Günter Figal. Tübingen is also the home of Gadamer's publisher: J. C. B. Mohr, now Mohr Siebeck. To you, Miguel, I say, "Et in Arcadia ego!"¹

As most of you know, Professor Hans-Georg Gadamer passed away in his sleep in the evening of March 13, 2002, at the age of 102. Many eulogies have been offered about him, including my own, "How Gadamer Changed My Life: a Tribute," written for a commemorative issue on Gadamer in the Canadian journal, *Symposium*.² A number of commemorative books have also appeared, such as *Gadamer's Century*,³ and *A Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*,⁴ and most recently a significant tribute was given by Jacques Derrida, not to mention innumerable German newspaper eulogies published at his death.

Before launching into my subject, I myself would like to take a moment to salute four things about Professor Gadamer: First, the diversity of his philosophical knowledge that ranges over the history of ancient and modern

philosophy and is found today in the ten volumes of his *Gesammelte Werke* (1985-1995) now inexpensively available in paperback (only about \$90 for the set of ten volumes)⁵, plus a recent supplementary volume, *Hermeneutische Entwürfe*;⁶ second, his remarkable patience with me—may I say, tolerance!—back in 1965 when I came to him to study hermeneutical philosophy at age 32 with only a doctorate in comparative European literature and little philosophical knowledge; third, I want to point out the great respect in which he is held even by those who disagreed with him, like right-wing philosopher Hans Albert,⁷ or Neo-Marxist Jürgen Habermas,⁸ or deconstructionist French philosopher, Jacques Derrida; and fourth and finally his enlightened philosophical leadership in exploring the meaning and possibilities of a “philosophical hermeneutic” in *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik* (1960)⁹ based on a breakthrough insight of his master, Martin Heidegger. This work was a great gift to philosophy and the world.

With regard to my topic as given in the program, in the notice I received in advance of this conference, I find my session is titled “Gadamer and the Dialogue with Tradition.” I would agree that certainly Gadamer was famous for his dialogue with tradition, but I would also like to add to this that his hermeneutical philosophy is concerned not only with dialogue with tradition but *dialogue with each other*, and how it is possible to understand another human being in dialogue now, today, in this very moment in history. And now to my paper.

My paper today will try to see what Gadamer’s hermeneutical openness can contribute to achieving greater tolerance today, since tolerance is the general theme of this conference. In this paper I assert that Gadamer in his hermeneutical openness represents *a special kind of tolerance* that is relevant to the present-day world. I will try to explain at least some of what Gadamer offers towards the topic of tolerance.

But to begin my paper, as a long preface to my discussion of Gadamer's contribution, I would like to devote some attention to the word "tolerance," and what I hear in the implications of its meaning.

I. Some comments on word *tolerance*

When I consult my computer's "*Hyperdictionary*," I find the various definitions of tolerance include: "allowing freedom to move within limits, [or] a *disposition* to allow freedom of choice and behavior, [and also] the power of an organism to endure unfavorable environmental conditions, [and finally,] a willingness to recognize and respect the beliefs or practices of others."¹⁰

Webster's 1913 Dictionary is also referenced on that same website, and here we find, as is usual with dictionaries, the etymology of the word, which it traces back to the Latin "*tolerantia*," the French "*tolerance*," and also, obviously, the Spanish "*tolerancia*." The first definition of tolerance in this famous *Webster's Dictionary*, follows the etymology of the word, which means "*to endure*": "the power or capacity of enduring; that act of enduring; endurance." The second definition is more directly relevant today: "the *endurance* of the presence or actions of objectionable persons, or of the expression of offensive opinions, toleration." The general idea is putting up with differences of opinion, practice, and belief. This sort of respect is an important courtesy in all communication.

Perhaps the meaning of the word will come more sharply into focus if we consider its opposite: "*intolerance*." This brings to my mind Voltaire's *Candide*, an 18th century work that was a call to arms against "*bigotry*, *intolerance*, and *fanaticism*,"—and there are abundant examples of each of these in *Candide*. Indeed, if we think about it, bigotry and fanaticism would seem to be themselves sub-categories of intolerance, and so that tolerance would seem to entail the overcoming of bigotry and fanaticism in favor of tolerance, an attitude of "live and

let live.” For instance, if you are a Catholic, you put up with the non-Catholics, and if you are a non-Catholic, you learn to live with Roman Catholics. When discussing matters concerning the many religions one finds in different countries and in one’s own, some of my friends in despair will come to a point in their discussion when they say, “Oh, well, at least *we all believe in the same God.*” Not quite! If we think about it more closely, this seeming act of tolerance is not so tolerant after all! What about *nontheistic* religions like Buddhism, or *polytheistic* religions like Hinduism, or *humanistic* religions like Confucianism? The statement about believing in “one God” requires at least some further amendments and qualifications if one is to include these religions, too. Indeed, it is Judaism, Christianity, and Islam that are “religions of the book,” while most or many others are not. In the “religions of the book,” the importance of the act of *believing* certain statements of faith, believing in a particular assertion or text, puts *an emphasis on specific belief* that might make even some Christians uncomfortable. The amount of further stretching that one is willing to “endure” to extend tolerance to all is, again, a measure of one’s own tolerance.

I recall a verse in the *Gospel of John*, “No man comes to the Father except by me!”(14:6) This assertion would seem to exclude the Jews, the Buddhists, the Hindus, and the Confucians, among others. In *Candide*, which I mentioned earlier as an 18th century attack on intolerance, you will recall that a woman dumps a bucket of excrement on Candide’s head from the second story balcony after she hears Candide tell her pastor husband that he, Candide, has never heard anyone say that the Pope was the Anti-Christ. The woman must have wondered: How could Candide say such a thing? Did not everyone in Holland agree about this? Again, Voltaire is driven to comment, “Oh, the extremes to which women are driven by religious zeal!” Anyway, Voltaire in *Candide* seems to be pleading for Catholics and Protestants, at least, to live together in peace, to live together with **tolerance** of

each other's religious beliefs. Even if neither side is willing to change its views, the two sides should try to live together in peace. The Muslim tolerance of Jews in their countries Middle Eastern countries in the Middle Ages seems to be an example of tolerance, while the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492 would seem to be a prime example of **intolerance**, of unwillingness to go on living together with the Jews in peace. This would seem to be an early form of "ethnic cleansing."

We may note from these examples that intolerance seems to manifest itself in actions of **attack** on those it disagrees with, while tolerance manifests itself in **non-action**, of enduring or putting up with differences without necessarily conceding that the other person or group could be right.

Today, with the growing emphasis of "human rights" around the world, people are increasingly willing to respect the rights to others to believe differently, practice living differently, and to dress differently—within clear limits in certain countries, of course! With the growing respect for human rights worldwide, **tolerance** is today put in a new and more urgent perspective. Tolerance of other races means refusal to endure racism, so tolerance in the broader sense means the **active** refusal to endure the denial of human rights.

In Central and South American countries, reference is sometimes made, I believe, to Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt's "four freedoms. Even today, the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute in the United States asserts on the Internet that the four freedoms "are essential to a flourishing democracy." With a bold and even utopian vision of the future, Roosevelt on January 6, 1941, asserted some basic human rights in his famous speech on "Four Freedoms." This, as you will remember, was a time on the brink of the Second World War. I quote:

In the future days which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

The first is *freedom of speech and expression*—everywhere in the world.

The second is *freedom of every person to worship God in his own way*—everywhere in the world.

The third is *freedom from want*, which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world.

The fourth is *freedom from fear*, which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor --anywhere in the world.

That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation. That kind of world is the very antithesis of the so-called "new order" of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb.¹¹

These famous “freedoms” that Roosevelt struggled in the Second World War to secure, unfortunately remain today a distant vision, although we have made some progress in the past half-century. Roosevelt was destined to hear of many more distant crashes of bombs and to die of a brain hemorrhage before the Second World War was over. Even after the war was ended and after the United Nations was established in 1948 as a peacekeeper, the bombs still did not stop crashing—in Korea, in Vietnam, in Kosovo, in Afghanistan, and now in Iraq. Indeed, today the arms merchants of the world are manufacturing even more terrible bombs and radioactive anti-tank weapons equipped with “**depleted uranium**” bullets whose radioactive harmfulness to health will linger on for billions of years!¹² In Arab countries, using these weapons is openly considered a war crime, and the lingering after-effects on millions of innocent lives for millions of years make it, in the opinion of some, a “**weapon of massive destruction.**”¹³

In his speech, Roosevelt called for the human right of all persons to freedom in speech and in worship. And his third freedom, freedom from want, is more than just a freedom; it is a minimum human right that is still far from being realized in world filled with bombs and terrible weapons. The freedom from want is *a demand for justice* that refuses to tolerate hunger and starvation, lack of adequate housing, lack of work, land, or living space in anyone, anywhere in the world. This is a human right that has not yet been attained today, the right to food, shelter, jobs, for persons “*everywhere in the world*,” he says.

Nor has the fourth human right, to “freedom from fear,” been attained today. In *The Flight of the Eagle*, and *On Fear*, and other writings, the religious thinker, Jiddu Krishnamurti, traces many human problems back to fear. In his case, this is, first of all, fear on the individual scale. An individual must be free of fear to live a life with the blessings of freedom. But it applies on a national scale. The Israelis and the Palestinians today live in fear of each other. Fear holds people in its grip in many countries today on a national and international level. And, as Roosevelt rightly notes, this is directly connected to the crashing of bombs, with the destruction of innocent human lives. This fourth freedom has not yet been attained.

It is not my purpose here to get into issues of international politics, but I would at least like to note that, in my view, to invade Iraq, a country that had been under heavy UN surveillance and sanctions since 1991, a country that appears now to have had neither weapons of mass destruction nor any special friendship with the terrorist Asoma bin Laden, since Saddam Hussein was a socialist ruler and not a conservative Muslim on the order of the Taliban, was illegal and unwise. This was not tolerance but aggressiveness based on power combined with fear.

And today, the invasion and occupation of Iraq are presented to the American public as part of a “war on terrorism.” When a militarily powerful country invades and occupies a distant, oil-rich foreign country in the Middle East

without the permission of the U.N., this does not seem to be an example of respect for law but of the misuse of military power. Indeed, the abuse of great military power only incites more terrorism against the U.S. around the world and in Iraq. My own special concern, the unprincipled use of radioactive weapons containing “*depleted uranium*,”¹⁴—recently banned by the European Union—in the invasion of Iraq, does not seem to show a respect for life.

Of course, colonialism itself *was not a practice of tolerance* but of intolerance and disrespect for basic human rights. Even after the colonized countries of Africa, India, and the New World were freed from the mother countries after the Second World War, the after-effects of colonialism and intolerance remain. In the United States, there are very few native Americans left to make a claim for justice. But it seems that now, with the theme of this conference, the claims of *tolerance*, of respect for the rights of others, *are now asserting themselves with a vision of a better future, a fairer world*—even though put forward by a harmless minority, the philosophers!

Perhaps pleas for tolerance and respect for human rights are not enough, especially from philosophers, who customarily envision the best but can never bring it about! It is not enough even when a large oppressing segment of society may extend a helping hand to an oppressed segment of population. Nor is the further violence of a Marxist revolution that levels everyone in society actually a step toward peace and justice. I think the “cultural revolution” in China—the one that put the professors out on the farms—was a disaster! *What is needed, beyond mere tolerance*, I think, is *justice for everyone*.

I am not talking of justice defined in terms of *retribution* for past wrongs but a new *distributive* justice, the justice of John Rawls’ *A Theory of Justice* (1971).¹⁵ Rawls, a Harvard professor in the midst of an affluent society for many, demands a

kind of justice where you design a society so fair to everyone that you are willing to occupy any position at all in the society from top to bottom.

He calls this “original position.” When you design the society, you do not know what your position in the society will be when you set it up, but the structure of laws will be such as to be fair to all humans in it, such that you are willing to occupy any station in it. Rawls did not call for a society without differences at all, but a society where one is willing to be on either side of a difference in income or power. Indeed, for Rawls, a society where inequalities exist is allowable if the less equal party economically still feels himself benefited by the general structure of society and has an opportunity to have a good life. This would be a justice of national and international reconciliation perhaps impossible in the present world. But we must move toward it. *Tolerance* today would be a necessary first step toward such a just new world, a first requirement of a just society, but under the present circumstances, *tolerance is not enough!* We should demand justice for all. That is my view. But now to my remarks about Gadamer and tolerance!

Part II: Gadamer’s contribution to moving toward a just society

Gadamer, we must say in advance, does not come forward with a program or concept of justice. Yet the hermeneutical philosophy of Gadamer does have something to offer, because in fact *something more than tolerance is needed*—something more than **enduring the presence of the Other**, or putting up with oppressed people who are asking for their rights, or even asking for reparations—if we are to move forward together in justice and peace. We need to understand the Other. What we need also are international rules of fairness and justice for all, not powerful states pursuing only their own economic gain through a process they call “globalization.” What is needed is a new sense of justice and respect and fairness in international trade. But where Gadamer can help us is with some principles of

dialogue and a sense of what is involved in the processes of understanding and also what Gadamer calls Verständigung—reaching agreement in understanding.

A. Some Principles of Dialogue

I would like first to describe a six elements of this modest yet important hermeneutical factor in moving forward toward agreement in understanding, and then, in a subsequent section, to examine Gadamer’s project of restoring respect [this is related to tolerance] to the humanities and fine arts.

1. *eumeneis elenchoi*. In entering a dialogue, one should follow the Socratic principle of good will, of *eumeneis elenchoi*—**the other person could be right!** In a genuine dialogue, like a dialogue with Socrates, one is not seeking to win an argument or to score points but to understand the other person’s viewpoint and to work out a mutually satisfactory agreement in understanding. This requires a *hermeneutical openness* to the other person’s viewpoint and his claims, not just openness to an ancient text and its claim. You could have something to learn from the other person. At the end of a conversation I recently edited, Gadamer unexpectedly replied to a classicist professor who understood him to be saying we really must go back to the ancient Greeks to find wisdom today, saying: “Yes, but perhaps we have something to learn from the East....”¹⁶ Here he is showing respect for another tradition with another history, suggesting that he could have something to learn from another culture. And this same respect we must accord a person from another tradition. This is *hermeneutical openness and humility*.

I am tempted to say this represents Gadamer’s most important contribution: We must enter a dialogue with a genuine sense that the other person could be right! This means: with an open mind. What would our problems today be like, if we entered discussions with a sense that the other person could be right? What would

it be like if we entered the discussion not in order to score points in a debate, or show where the other person is wrong, but to work toward a win-win situation where both sides benefit from the agreement that is attained through negotiation.

2. **Common ground.** It is important to look for **common ground**, for things you both agree on, things you both are seeking. First carve out areas of agreement and commonality before trying to deal with your disagreements. Be willing to learn from your disagreements! This is a basic principle of dialogue.

3. **Respect.** Above all, treat your dialogue partner with respect. You should not demonize or dehumanize your partner or seek to undermine his or her standing or claim. No. Demonizing is a strategy of military thinking in order to justify violence and murder of the other person. For example: “At least we deposed Saddam Hussein!” Twenty years before, he was our powerful friend in the region. Half the demonizing stories about him, such as using poison gas on his own people, are half-truths. Rhetorically, this is called **ad hominem**—“arguing against the person” instead of the issue. Rhetorically, **ad hominum** is an underhanded way of avoiding the issue!—and of not reaching an agreement in understanding! It is a way of not settling a dispute. If you really want to settle a dispute, this is the wrong way to go.

4. **Tolerance.** Understand the difference between **intolerance**, which **attacks** the partner, and **tolerance**, which **accepts differences** in the partner, and which gives the partner the right to be different. Respect and appreciation of the person are lubricants of a good discussion. **A dialogue is not a debate** you are trying to win but a mutual effort to reach an agreement in understanding.

5. **Preunderstanding** and “**prejudice.**” One needs to understand the difference between **prejudice** which belittles and discredits the “enemy” in advance, and the term **preunderstanding**, a term Gadamer uses in reference to the required knowledge one needs to understand and deal with a problem. Gadamer is

famous for his controversial assertion that “prejudices can be fruitful.” He could have saved himself a lot of trouble if he had simply called them by the Heideggerian word, *Vorverständnis*, preunderstanding, instead of the usual word for prejudice in German, *Vorurteil*, prejudgments. What he really meant is *preunderstandings*. With this doctrine he is pointing out that each side brings different prior knowledge, perspectives, goals, understandings, to a discussion—a different *horizon*. This occurs when one understands anything: a situation, a text, an issue, a person. A fruitful encounter brings what Gadamer calls “a *fusion of horizons*.” In a successful dialogue, prior understandings (*Vorverständnisse*) of facts, of situations, of intentions, of persons, are *transformed*. Again, a fruitful dialogue need not be only with the tradition and traditional texts—although this can happen—it can also be here and now with a living partner with whom you want to reach an agreement about a situation, issue, text, or the intentions of a person. A successful dialogue brings a *transformation* in understanding—of oneself and of the topic.

6. *Tradition* and *Authority*. This is a difficult topic in Gadamer. He has been attacked as an unquestioning defender of tradition and authority. This is not true, because for him a dialogue with tradition involves an *active use of reason* to find answers to questions. It is not an unquestioning acceptance. Sometimes the answers can come from a forgotten aspect of an older tradition, because the tradition is a rich resource.

As regards respect for *authority*, Gadamer does not have in mind what we call “**arguing from authority**” but rather recognizing the fact that **authority is not always illegitimate**, as certain advocates of violent revolution maintained, in the French revolution, or in the Enlightenment, or later. To prove his point, Gadamer mentions examples of **legitimate authority**, such as the authority of one’s teacher, one’s superior, or the expert in a field of knowledge. In these cases, one

recognizes that the person “in authority” **knows more** and should be respected, although one is still free to question this authority with reason. But one does not start with the *presupposition* that authority or tradition is simply wrong or illegitimate. Gadamer notes that we accept the authority of a doctor because we recognize that he knows more than we do. This is not a blind trust or obedience to authority but a rational recognition that it pays to follow advice and direction of someone with more knowledge than oneself.

Both Catholic and Protestant theologians found in Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics the more moderate attitude toward tradition, authority, and the texts of tradition, in contrast to the Enlightenment and 19th century scientific attitude often of categorical and *intolerant* rejection of tradition, authority, and the claims of religious texts on the basis of the absolute authority of science. So spelling out the conditions for dialogical openness may be a contribution Gadamer can make to tolerance and justice.

B. The Project of Gadamer’s Masterwork, *Truth and Method*

The rejection of tradition, of authority, and of the claims of religious texts in the last two centuries brings us to the related problem of a waning respect also for literature, art, and the humanities in general. In the face of this decline in respect, including the declining respect for ancient philosophy, fine art, and literature, and at the same time, the growing success of science and technology, **a new kind of prejudice arises**, a prejudice against the status and truth-value of literature, the arts, and philosophy. In the face of this, Gadamer undertook to restore the status of the truth of the humanities and the fine arts. (A principle of hermeneutical thinking is that one should seek the question to which a theory offers itself as an answer. In this case, the question Gadamer poses to himself in *Truth and Method* (1960) is

how to restore a general recognition of the validity of the humanities and fine arts outside the validity processes of the sciences.)

Again, a new kind of tolerance was called for, a respect for things that have no immediate practical use. This tolerance is not the tolerance of *putting up with* them, with art, architecture, literature and music—although this might seem to be called for in light of some of the nonrepresentational art and cacophonous music of our day!—but a *positive openness* [tolerance] that accords respect and appreciation to the humanities and their venerable antiquity. This means that we need to have respect for their role in modern life **even if** (a) the humanities as disciplines do not make new scientific discoveries in chemistry, biology, physics and the other disciplines that make the world more controllable and life more comfortable, and **even if** (b) they do not make practical discoveries that improve agricultural production or health through medicine or communication through enhancements of the mass media, and **even if** (c) the humanities and fine arts do not build bombs, planes, giant tractors, fancy cars, computers, or cell phones, nor teach eager students in the military how to drop them, fly them, or operate these and the host of fancy gadgets of today.

But how would one be able to restore the status of the humanities in the face of all the challenges and alternatives of modern life? Gadamer undertook to deal with this question in his masterwork, *Truth and Method* (1960).¹⁷ He did this in a way that had broad significance for many disciplines in the humanities, disciplines that previously had followed the craze for validity and recognition through the application of scientific methods. In German, the separation from the sciences is difficult because even the names of *Literaturwissenschaften*, *Kunstwissenschaften*, and *Kulturwissenschaften*, use the term “*Wissenschaften*” (sciences) to designate their disciplines. But the truth that is attained by method, Gadamer points out, is only the answer to its own questions that structure the issue

and context in advance. In the humanities and fine arts, truth can and must come in a way other than method, says Gadamer.

How did he accomplish this new definition/conception of truth? When did the breakthrough come? Certainly, already in the thirties Gadamer had a vision of what he wanted to do in terms of restoring respect for the humanities and fine arts, but he did not have a persuasive means for doing it. Then the war intervened and he did not have the time or disposition to do it. And after the war, a period of hard times came to Germany and he could not pursue this project. Instead, he was developing elementary texts in philosophy that were scarce. Only after 1949, when he came to occupy the chair of Karl Jaspers in the philosophy department at Heidelberg, did he eventually have time to return to this project in the form of a series of lecture courses over the years. But as he was giving these lecture-courses that were the foundation of *Truth and Method* in the 1950s, the breakthrough came in the form of a single Greek word, *alētheia*—“truth” as interpreted by Heidegger in *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*.¹⁸

Alētheia is the Greek word for truth. Literally, it means **unconcealment**. When Heidegger used the word in his lectures on “The Origin of a Work of Art”¹⁹ in 1935-36, he had in mind a kind of *emergence into being*. A work of art brings something into being that was not there before: *the truth of that thing*. The experience of a work of art is an ontological experience, it lets being *be* or more explicitly, lets it come into being in that experience. Art is “true” in a quite new and deeper sense of that word. Not true in the scientific sense but a sense that inwardly confirms that the work is “true.” This means that the truth found the humanities could claim a new respect and validity.

Gadamer made the “*truth of art*—a concept he found in Heidegger’s series of lectures, “The Origin of the Work of Art,”²⁰—the anchor for his philosophical hermeneutics in *Truth and Method*. Significantly, this move called into question

not only the view of art since Kant, that is, the general view or set of assumptions about the “aesthetic dimension,” but also called into question the hermeneutics of Schleiermacher and Dilthey, who viewed artworks, scripture, and even laws as “expressions of experience,”—*Erlebnisausdrücke*.²¹ For Heidegger and then Gadamer, this orientation to “expressions of experience” was too psychological; it traced the work back to an amorphous subjective experience, not to the meaningful content of the experience. In terms of art, Kant’s account of art divided it into “feeling” and “form,” but neither the *feeling* nor the *form* could claim truth. Art after Kant could no longer claim to be true, then, but only an expression of psychological states having nothing to do with “truth.” Gadamer’s hermeneutical philosophy of art, however, restored literature, poetry, paintings, music, to a place of respect because they could claim to be articulating something true.

Encountering a work of art, according to Gadamer, could and should have a *transformative effect*, could and should change one’s view of life, even one’s self-understanding. Heidegger’s work on self-understanding in *Being and Time* (1927) was taken over into Gadamer’s hermeneutical philosophy. Theologians, too, found this transformative effect on one’s self-understanding to be of interest in relation to encountering scripture. Literature professors found a new rationale for the reading of literature and grounds for a new respect for literature. To encounter a work of art or literature was broadening to one’s horizon, a deepening of one’s self-understanding about one’s place in the world. These encounters were like traveling to another country, and one emerged from these experiences more mature, wise, and tolerant. Cultivating the humanities and the arts, then, was not mere amusement or aesthetic pleasure, but a way of becoming more fully a human being, worldly-wise, more tolerant. Thus, there is a connection between an education in the humanities and tolerance! The consequence of reading *Truth and Method*, if understood and taken seriously, is greater tolerance. One encounters the world in a

wiser, more experienced way, more tolerantly. This is another aspect of Gadamer's contribution to tolerance: humility, maturity, respect.

C. Epilogue

The outreach today of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and some slides of Gadamer and Habermas in conversation As a further illustration of Gadamer's remarkable tolerance.

And now, as an epilogue, I should like to say a word about the growing interest in Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy around the world. By 1994, according to a bibliography of Gadamer's writings compiled by Japanese Gadamer scholar, Etsuro Makita, *Truth and Method* had been translated into ten languages.²² Today, my own book introducing the subject of philosophical hermeneutics has been translated into half a dozen languages, recently including Turkish, Farsi, and Spanish.²³ The Chinese, in particular, have shown an interest in Gadamer's hermeneutics. They invited Gadamer to speak at a major conference in Beijing in 2001, but his health did not permit it. They invited me, also, and my health did indeed permit it! I was invited back the very next year to a special conference on hermeneutics and ontology in June, 2002, at a new "Institute for Hermeneutics" founded by Professor Pan Derong in Wuhu, China. Pan is also a professor of philosophy in Shanghai and arranged for my lectures. As evidence for the interest in hermeneutics, I should note that when I was in the Shanghai region for six lectures in June 2002, Professor Habermas had been already been speaking earlier at the same universities! My two basic lectures delivered there have been translated into Chinese already in the *Journal of the Anhui Normal University*.²⁴ Also, I will teach a two-week "mini-course" on Gadamer's hermeneutics in

Taiwan in May, 2004. So I would say that interest in Gadamer's hermeneutics is growing around the world.

Indeed, after several requests, I put a paper, "The Relevance of Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics to Thirty-Six Topics or Fields of Human Activity," which I delivered in 1999 at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, on my webpage,²⁵ along with several other papers. Several recent books introducing hermeneutics are available by students of Gadamer. An especially good one is by James Risser, [*Hermeneutics and the Voice of the Other: Re-Reading Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics*](#)²⁶ and there are several good ones also by Canadian scholar Jean Grondin, who has just recently published a 500-page biography of Gadamer first in German, and now it has been translated into English: *Hans-Georg Gadamer: A Biography*.²⁷ My own 1989 book on Gadamer and Derrida, *Dialogue and Deconstruction: The Gadamer-Derrida Encounter*²⁸ [edited and translated by Diane P. Michelfelder and myself in 1989 is still available in print (in English), and I was told it is available in Spanish, also. My most recent book, a translation into English of six conversations that Gadamer had with four partners, titled *Gadamer in Conversation*²⁹ is selling well—but it is not a best-seller! Perhaps it will be translated into other languages, also.

In conclusion, I have tried to show that Gadamer's hermeneutical openness goes beyond tolerance to a deep respect for the other person, and in that regard it makes a contribution to tolerance that is of lasting importance to the world.

~~Finally, I would like to show you some colored slides of Gadamer in conversation with Habermas at the celebration of Gadamer's 100th birthday. I took them myself. The cordial relationship between these two thinkers, who differed on major issues, remains a testimony to Gadamer's remarkable tolerance and capacity for dialogue. Also, I have included a couple of pictures of Gadamer and~~

~~myself in conversation, taken by my friend, Etsuro Makita, the biographer of Gadamer, in Gadamer's home in Ziegelhausen in 2001. I came on a mission to carry a dictated version of his greetings to the Chinese on the occasion of my upcoming visit to a conference in Beijing to which he had been invited to be a major speaker. Gadamer's patience and friendliness to me, on that occasion and many others, testifies to his unfailing kindness, and yes, his tolerance.~~

Thank you!

Note: I composed a short paragraph (above) to replace the actual ending of my paper, which was to show some colored slides of Gadamer in dialogue with Habermas. REP

Endnotes

¹ I am referring here to a famous painting by the seventeenth century painter, Nicolas Poussin (b. 1594), in which shepherds are gathered around a tombstone on which is inscribed, "I, too, was in Arcadia!"

² Richard E. Palmer, "How Gadamer Changed My Life: A Tribute," *Symposium: Journal of the Society for Hermeneutics and Modern Thought.*, special issue on Gadamer 6, 2 (Fall 2002): 219-230.

³ See Jeff Malpas, Ulrich Arnsward, and Jens Kertscher (eds.), *Gadamer's Century: Essays in Honor of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2002, xiv + 363 pp.) and my favorable review of it on-line in the *Notre Dame Philosophy Reviews*, June 2002 (<http://ndpr.icaap.org/content/archives/2002/6/>).

⁴ Robert Dostal, editor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, April 2002).

⁵ Tübingen: Mohr, 1999.

⁶ Tübingen: Mohr, 2000.

⁷ See "Critical Rationalism and Universal Hermeneutics," in *Gadamer's Century*, pp. 15-24.

⁸ See Jürgen Habermas, "Der liberale Geist: Eine Reminiszenz an unbeschwerte Heidelberger Anfänge," in *Begegnungen mit Hans-Georg Gadamer*, ed. Günter Figal (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2000), 51-54. We will show some slides also at the end of the lecture to show the cordiality of their friendship.

⁹ *Wahrheit und Methode* is now volume 1 of his collected works, followed by a second volume his essays in hermeneutics, including replies to his critics that appeared as supplements in the earlier editions of *WM* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1986).

¹⁰ See Hyperdictionary.com.

¹¹ See the webpage of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute. (See <http://www.libertynet.org/~edcivic/fdr.html>)

¹² See Damasio Lopez, “The Case for an Immediate Ban of Depleted Uranium Weapons,” <http://idust.net/EuroText.htm>, for an excellent argument for the banning of DU weapons.

¹³ See Lawrence Smallman, “Iraq’s real WMD Crime,” *Aljazeera*, 30 October 2003 (<http://english.aljazeera.net>), which states that American depleted uranium weapons “have ruined the lives of just under 300,000 [Iraqi] people during the last decade, and the numbers will increase.”

¹⁴ See “Let’s Work Together for a Culture of Peace and Justice,” www.traprockpeace.org and the Webpage of the International Depleted Uranium Study Team, <http://idust.net>.

¹⁵ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971, revised 1999).

¹⁶ In “The Greeks, Our Teachers,” in *Gadamer in Conversation*.

¹⁷ Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1960. The 1975 4th edition was translated into Spanish: *Verdad y método: Fundamentos de una hermenéutica filosófica*. Translated by Ana Agud Aparicio and Rafael de Agapito (Salamanca: Ediciones Sígueme, 1977, 2nd ed. 1984; 3rd ed. 1988; 4th ed. 1991), 692pp.

¹⁸ These Frankfurt lectures took place in 1935-36 and were first published in 1950 in Heidegger’s collection of essays titled *Holzwege [Paths in a Forest]* (Frankfurt: Klostermann), pp. 1-72. See next footnote for further data, including English translation.

¹⁹ See Martin Heidegger, *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* with an introduction by Hans-Georg Gadamer (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1960), earlier in *Holzwege*, *ibid.*, and in English, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Heidegger, Basic Writings*, ed. David F. Krell, revised and expanded edition (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), pp. 139-212. Only the expanded edition has the complete translation.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ See Richard E. Palmer, *Qué es la hermenéutica? Teoría de la interpretación en Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*, trans. Beatriz Domínguez Parra (Madrid: Arco/Libros, 2002), pp. 144-46

²² Makita, Etsuro, *Gadamer-Bibliographie (1922-1994)* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1995)

²³ See Richard E. Palmer, *Qué es la hermenéutica?* above.

²⁴ “Seven Key Terms in the Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer,” *Journal of Anhui Normal University (Hum. & Soc. Sci)* 30, 5(2002): 502-508. (In Chinese.) Also, see my “Heideggerian Ontology and Gadamer’s Philosophical Hermeneutics,” in *Between the Human and the Divine: Philosophical and Theological hermeneutics*, edited by Andrzej Wierciński (Toronto: The Hermeneutic Press, 2002). One of my lectures, “Eleven Assertions about ‘das Bild’ in Gadamer’s ‘Wort und Bild: So wahr, so seined!’ “ will

appear in English and Chinese in a new Chinese (Taiwanese) journal *Universitas: Monthly Review of Philosophy and Culture*, no. 346 (2004): 1-20 and Chinese: 21-36, and another lecture from my China tour will appear in a Festschrift to Professor Chung-yuan Cheng, edited by On-cho Ng, celebrating his 70th birthday (Pennsylvania State University Press) in 2004 or 2005.

²⁵ (see www.mac.edu/faculty/richardpalmer/relevance.html)

²⁶ Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997.

²⁷ Translated by Joel Weinsheimer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002). See also Jean Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*, translated by Joel Weinsheimer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), and the collection of Grondin's writings, *Sources of Hermeneutics* (Albany: State University Press, 1995).

²⁸ [edited and translated by Diane P. Michelfelder and Richard E. Palmer (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 352pp.

²⁹ *Gadamer in Conversation: Reflections and Commentary*, edited and translated by Richard E. Palmer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 176pp.