Mediating between the Humanities and the Sciences: Gadamer on the Inner Voice

by

Andrew Fuyarchuk

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Abstract

Gadamer is alleged to have conflated knowledge with private languages, which in turn entails adopting anti-thetical attitudes toward inter-subjectively verifiable facts produced by the natural sciences. As a result of this influence, a cultural and institutional divide has developed between the humanities and the sciences at the university. In reply to this assessment of Gadamer’s work, I argue that his philosophical hermeneutics includes a dialectical interplay between two modes of cognition and their corresponding dispositions; the auditory and visual that are typically employed in the humanities and sciences. There is on this basis justification in his hermeneutics for scientific explanations of phenomena. These explanations are undertaken with respect to that in which the universality of hermeneutics is said to consist by Gadamer, the inner word. Contrary to the belief that this “word” belongs to either a metaphysical or mental realm, I draw upon phenomenology and argue that it refers to an inner voice between speakers in the middle voice and is thus amenable to cognitive scientific and evolutionary explanations. While those explanations are developed in relation to contemporary fields of research, e.g., S. Mithen, M. Donald, E. Thompson, the relevance of Gadamer’s dialectic of standpoints to natural science is argued for on the grounds that scientists either presuppose the said dialectic, or require it in order to resolve conundrums generated by their own systems, e.g., E. Wilson, E. Slingerland, B. Bergen, H. Helmholtz. The method employed in the dissertation to defend Gadamer’s relevance to the question of
mediating between the two departments of learning is thereby enacted in the interest of clarifying what the inner word is and how it functions to weave harmony between opposing sides of a question. Gadamer’s hermeneutics is thus not responsible for a “post-modern” opposition to the natural sciences. In fact, hermeneutics includes a way of thinking about phenomena that relates different ways of understanding to one another insofar as the speakers are attuned to the inner voice in language.
Acknowledgments

The McLuhan inspired approach to the interpretation of Gadamer is in debt to Phil Rose who first introduced me to the Toronto School about a decade ago in Hamilton. Media Ecology and the Toronto School continue to open new directions for me in philosophy. I am also grateful to David Ross for friendship and comradrie throughout my academic career. His sense of humor and insight into the many dimensions of music in language, physics and life, not to mention his courageous and tenacious character during years of adversity is remarkable. The rigors of the empirical method were first introduced to me by Mike Tiittanen whose expertise in linguistics continues to present challenges about the real value of philosophy to the sciences. I expect that we will continue to grow together in our respective scholarly pursuits.

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This work is dedicated to Beijia Lin.
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Introduction

In the Afterword to *Truth and Method*, Gadamer explains that in 1959 he wondered if his “attempt to reassess the value of traditional and historical thought was not by then almost superfluous.”¹ What he calls “the wave of technological animosity to history” and “correlatively” the rise of American analytic philosophy were fostering a “new ‘positivistic’ self-conception” that was marginalizing “the humanistic tradition of romantic *Geisteswissenschaften*” in which he had been educated. His prognosis was prescient. Since the 1960’s intriguing aspects of his work including non-reductive naturalism and insights into the music of language have been eclipsed by a cultural backlash against the sciences in the humanities.² Scholars in the humanities have narrowed his hermeneutics to representing a linguistic turn in the tradition of philosophy the sole consequence of which is assumed to be that epistemology is one discourse among many. Post-modernism has declared itself his progeny and through its influence any pretense toward universal and objective understanding in the humanities is identified with imperialistic meta-narratives and logo-centrism.³ Post-modernism is so out of sync with Gadamer’s endeavor to restore universality and objectivity to the humanities one is baffled to explain how he could have been so completely misunderstood. He might well counter the claim that philosophical hermeneutics is antithetical toward science with the argument that post-modernism and the humanities in general have ignored his warning at the outset of *Truth and Method*. They continue to define themselves in terms of the scientific method. By defining themselves against its notion of objectivity they have reduced themselves to the only logical alternative; that their enterprise never rises above subjectivity. Consequently, the humanities have lost sight of the common ground they and the classically inspired philosophers of the Romantic era share with the Enlightenment philosophers to unite all forms of knowledge.

It is against the tendency of humanists to counterpoise themselves against the sciences that I argue Gadamer’s hermeneutics is not the source of a post-modern antipathy

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² By “non-reductive naturalism” I mean a constellation of forces within an organism and between an organism and its environment whose dynamic cooperation yields a capacity for self-organization or life.
³ Edward Slingerland believes that post-modernism’s core feature “is a model of humans as fundamentally linguistic-cultural beings” combined with the belief that our experience of the world is mediated by language “or culture all the way down.” *What Science Offers the Humanities: Integrating Body and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 78. Although eschewing a single definition of post-modernism, Gadamer is listed as an entry in Victor E. Taylor and Charles E. Winquist, ed., *Encyclopedia of Postmodernism*, (New York: Routledge, 2001), 143-144.
toward science in the humanities. On the contrary, he not only expressed regard for standards of scientific credibility, but in addition the question that motivates his philosophy; how do we understand one another in language, includes a manner of thinking that has validity for a unity of understanding in the sciences not yet recognized by science. The manner of thinking occurs in the middle voice and involves the participation of the knower in the process of acquiring knowledge. According to Gadamer, this does not undermine objectivity and instead, produces a different kind of objectivity than that produced by the scientific method. Moreover, he holds that the two forms of objectivity are not opposed or as he says “really separated” and instead, stand in correlation with one another. They are not “really separated” because both forms of objectivity are a function of a particular way of relating toward beings that are in a reciprocal relationship that is not self-involving.

According to a phenomenology of the senses, the objectivity of the sciences is derived from a visual comportment toward beings, and that of the humanities is grounded in an auditory disposition. While he argues for differentiating them, he does not believe that they ought to function independently of one another and instead, when in dialectical interplay correct one another’s excesses. The key to maintaining a balance between them is the inner word. The inner word is the medium for their inter-mediation and is thus crucial to understanding how the sciences and humanities coalesce to form universality of understanding. This in turn calls for a scientific explanation of the inner word, otherwise the very basis for truth claims in the humanities would be one-sided and beyond criticism.

Part One, “From the Inner Word to the Inner Voice” has three objectives: (1) to position the argument in relation to both detractors and contemporary Gadamer scholarship; (2) to explain the dialectical method and concepts and related themes used to develop a theory about the mediation between the humanities and sciences and; (3) to employ the thought of Gadamer and where relevant Heidegger to build a case for a non-metaphysical and instead phenomenological-acoustic account of what the inner word is and how it functions in language that is amenable to a scientific explanation. The first two objectives are addressed in chapter one. “Gadamer the Post-Modern” presents the challenge as posed from the side of both the sciences and philosophy by philosophers who are advocates of objective realism.

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that Gadamer’s hermeneutics is responsible for the rise of a post-modern antagonism toward standards of knowledge and judgment independent of a private language or discourse. If knowledge is indistinguishable from a private language, then there ensues a bifurcation between one’s subjective mental life and the external world of publicly verifiable facts. Edward Slingerland deems this bifurcation a “folk intuition.” He charges Gadamer and his progeny with having exacerbated it. The primary threat to their solipsistic worldview is a confrontation with the brute facts of reality. While this is precisely the interpretation of Gadamer’s hermeneutics I challenge, the folk intuition or duality between the mind and body attributed to him by Slingerland is nevertheless discernable in scholarship about Gadamer’s philosophy.

After having defined the nature of the dialectical method that is used here to answer the challenge on the basis of Gadamer’s reading of Plato’s *Lysis* and findings of other scholars whose research and dilemmas attest to the import of the topic to the nature of thought, this being the second objective of chapter one, chapter two “Folk Intuitions about the Embodied Word” explains how six contemporary philosophers of Gadamer’s work develop interpretations of the inner word that move toward yet ultimately recoil from phenomenology in favour of a position that perpetuates the tradition of metaphysics or “folk intuition.” Of the six scholars studied, James Risser, Philippe Eberhard and Walter Lammi have contributed the most to reconfiguring the inner word as the inner voice audible in the dialectical structure of a dialogue. However, this “reconfiguration” is also incidental to their concerns, which range from a hermeneutics of the voice to the influence of the Greeks on Gadamer’s thought. Consequently, a phenomenology of the inner voice is left undeveloped by them, which in turn places me in a position to revisit the force of their arguments in order to take them a step further.

Chapter three, “The Inner Voice and Being-as-a-Whole” initiates the first step in a reply to the criticism that Gadamer’s hermeneutics is responsible for the rise of post-modernism by picking up the momentum of chapter two and establishing the grounds for studying the inner word in the acoustics of living language. This is accomplished by explaining (1) the role of the intermediary realm of rhythm in the transcendence of human subjectivity and (2) the implications of this act of transcendence for understanding Gadamer’s phenomenological-ontology. Walter Lammi’s *Gadamer and the Question of the Divine* (2008) is the basis for both endeavors. With reference to the rituals of a Greek religious festival upon which Lammi argues Gadamer modeled his understanding of the
experience of a work of art, overcoming subjectivity consists of being immersed in rhythms and vibrations of song and dance. These musical dimensions of the festival are associated by Lammi with the “intermediary realm of rhythm” between self and world of which Gadamer speaks in “The Nature of Things and the Language of Things.” This phenomenological interpretation of the inner word or middle medium in language has implications for an analysis of Gadamer’s ontology in that the acoustic dimensions of the inner voice can be mapped onto three tiers of “being-as-a-whole,” i.e., experience of the divine as Lammi calls it. Rhythm of language corresponds to aion zoon, tone to bios and harmony to being-with-one-another.

Chapter four, “Harmony of the Dialogue Form,” continues the phenomenological analysis although within the range of a greater degree of specificity. Rather than interpret the inner voice and the structure of “being-as-whole” on the basis of an ancient Greek religious festival, chapter four explains what the inner voice is on the basis of an existential analysis of Dasein informed by Heidegger’s study of hearing and hearkening in Being and Time and by Gadamer’s study of the structure of a Platonic dialogue. The primary finding is that the inner word is the middle between speakers in language that mediates between their understandings in the form of rhythm, tonal affinity and harmony, which in turn functions to bind their understandings together (or form common ground between them).

Chapter five “Gadamer and Helmholtz” moves the basis for defining the inner voice into the natural sciences on the basis of Gadamer’s claim that Hermann von Helmholtz’s notion of tact presupposes Bildung. Tact is the capacity to discern unity in difference or the common ground between disparate points of view. While Helmholtz understood this, he also covered it over by not reflecting, argues Gadamer, on the “mode of knowing and mode of being” presupposed by the notion of tact. He argues that Helmholtz confined tact to the

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8 TM, 14.
9 “Tact” is also defined by Schleiermacher to be the talent for combining various points of view for which there are no pre-given rules. Rules may have at first been applied, but over the course of time and practice of observing thought in others and oneself, they become unconscious. Schleiermacher, Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Essays, trans. Andrew Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 124; 128. John Dewey’s description of tact is more technical than that of Schleiermacher. He explains that intuition integrates the universal and particular, actuality and possibility, the new and the old, objective material and personal response. John Dewey, Art as Experience, (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2005), 309.
10 TM, 15.
mental chamber of the mind and therefore had a deficient understanding of Bildung, which consists of being open “to other, more universal points of view.” However, upon closer examination Helmholtz’s view of tact, although based on a theory of sense perception that tends to be psychological as Gadamer argues, also builds upon ideas for which Gadamer is renowned. Gadamer’s conviction that everything that can be understood is in language and his regard for thinking through the senses is developed from the side of science by Helmholtz. The result is that the alleged opposition between the spokespersons for the humanities, Gadamer, and for the natural sciences, Helmholtz, is removed and a complementary relation between them is created that traces the capacity to hear the inner voice to a physiological disposition and nerve impulses between bodies, more precisely, between resonating voices (since hearing is immediately connected to the nervous system) wherein meaning is heard. This final chapter of Part One acts as a bridge to the task of Part Two to use modern theories of cognitive science and evolution to explain the inner word.

Part Two, “Hermeneutics and Science: Dialogical Integration” re-visits the objections raised in Part One, chapter one that hermeneutics is opposed to science and scientific standards of universality and objectivity at a higher level of analysis. Chapter six critically evaluates attempts from the side of science to bridge into the humanities and argues that unless a dialectical interplay of auditory and visual relations toward beings is taken into account, the probability of successfully mediating between the humanities and sciences is diminished. The last two chapters (seven and eight) explain what the inner word is and how it functions in language in terms of cognitive science and theories about the evolution of language without losing sight of the said dialectic thereby exemplifying how the middle of language binds opposing sides together in the interest of unifying knowledge and contributing to the universality of understanding.

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
Part One: From the Inner Word to the Inner Voice

Chapter One: Gadamer the Post-Modern

1 The Challenge

Edward Slingerland speaks from the side of science in *What Science Offers the Humanities*. He acknowledges that both Heidegger and Gadamer were oriented away from Platonic metaphysics toward Aristotle’s embodied practical wisdom, but that they did not stay the course. Rather than explore the implications of ideas having been derived from the senses they retreat into the private realm of experience, culture and language in which we have no direct access to knowledge about a state of affairs. If knowledge is mediated by both language and culture, then we cannot escape our own language and culture. Everyone is imprisoned in a world of their own making. Although working with a different concept of science than Slingerland, Ernest Gellner concurs with this assessment of hermeneutics. In *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*, he writes, “Everything is meaning, and meaning is everything, and hermeneutics is its prophet. Whatever is, is made by the meaning conferred on it.” For Gellner, the “meaning” to which Gadamer refers is subjective and formed in cultural packages that are impossible to translate between cultures let alone from one individual to another in the same culture. He calls this “narcissism-hermeneuticism.” The influence it has had at the academy is evident in Slingerland’s description of post-modernism. “The core feature of post-modernism is a model of humans as fundamentally linguistic-cultural beings, combined with the belief that our experience of the world is therefore mediated by language or culture all the way down.” For both Slingerland and Gellner, on account of holding that there is no knowledge of facts independent of a linguistic-historical context, hermeneutics is a proto-post-modernism and thus ultimately responsible for the institutional and cultural divide between the humanities and sciences.

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13 Slingerland holds that knowledge is mediated by perception, Gellner is an objective realist.
15 Ibid.
Given the extent to which post-modernism via hermeneutics has fostered a climate of equating truth-claims with personal investment of one kind or another, one is hard pressed to understand how the post-modern fiction is intelligible to even readers of post-modernism. Slingerland finds a reply in Gadamer’s fusion of horizons. As he explains: “According to certain understandings of the process of interpretation, evidence plays little or no role: interpretation is the result of the free apprehension of spirit by spirit, unfettered by the sort of appeal to concrete evidence or proof that we require in our more mundane interactions with the physical world.”

Free apprehension by spirits has religious overtones. Slingerland characterizes Heidegger’s insight in similar terms; as an ecstatic exposure to the disclosure of beings. In this rendering the highest achievement of learning for both Gadamer and Heidegger is thus completely divorced from a public forum of discussion. They replace the latter with what is called in religious circles “witness.” As a result of their influence departments of the humanities have become a magnet for secular prophets shoring up personal agendas in sectarian camps masquerading as legitimate scholarship. Some are Straussian, some are Rawlsians, some are rationalists and others are Daoists. E. O. Wilson concurs and explains that post-modernism’s notion of reality is “a state constructed by the mind, not perceived by it” and thus without any objective truth, “only prevailing notions of truth disseminated by ruling social groups.” As a result of its influence in the universities and colleges the humanities “have dissolved their curriculum into a slurry of minor disciplines and specialized courses” and thus lost sight of the Enlightenment ideal of unity.

Gadamer’s own words seem to bear out Slingerland’s and Gellner’s critique.

Consider the oft quoted passage from *Truth and Method*:

Being that can be understood is language. The hermeneutical phenomenon here projects its own universality back onto the ontological constitution of what is understood, determining it in a universal sense as language and determining its own

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17 Ibid., 226. He writes of the fusion of horizons in his “Mind-Body Dualism and Two Cultures,” “The interpreter comes into contact with the object to be interpreted (a text, a scene, a work of art), opens herself to this object in some manner, and thereby understands it—a process as mysterious and magical as the Vulcan mind-meld because it cannot be explained in physical terms.” In Edward Slingerland and Mark Collard eds., *Creating Consilience: Integrating the Sciences and the Humanities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 75.


20 Ibid., 13.
relation to beings as interpretation. Thus we speak not only of a language but also of a language of nature—in short, of any language that things have.21

The first sentence could be construed as an allusion to Heidegger’s pronouncement, “Language is the house of Being. In it man dwells.”22 Assuming for now that Heidegger’s metaphor captures what Gadamer means,23 Gadamer is claiming that since we belong to language, understanding anything independently of our talk about it is impossible. In a supplement to Truth and Method, Gadamer is explicit and writes, “no one will deny that language influences our thought. We think with words.”24 But the metaphor and first sentence mean more than that as well. In the words of James DiCenso commenting on the famed phrase by Heidegger in On the Way to Language, “Language allows things to be presented, to appear as something, and it is formative of the modality of this as.”25 The “modality of the as” refers to the fact that we understand objects of knowledge according to a prior understanding of what they are. Putting aside the possibility of modifying prior understanding, it clearly structures how we experience the world from which it is impossible to escape, claim Gadamer’s detractors. If then meaning is “created through cultural and historical activity,”26 science itself is one among many discourses without any unique claim to truth and knowledge.

Andreas Graeser, Stanley Rosen and Richard Wolin have raised the alarm in this regard from the side of the humanities. According to Graeser, on account of understanding being historically effected, there is no position independent of whatever happens to be happening from which to reason about what has been understood. Against all reason, it is possible for Gadamer to understand that ‘p’ but impossible to disapprove of it.27 The upshot

24 Ibid., 42.
26 Ibid., 42.
27 Andreas Graeser, Issues in the Philosophy of Language Past and Present: Selected Papers (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 175.
is that hermeneutics is a philosophy of ambiguity, ambivalence and non-commitment. Because hermeneutics has not the wherewithal to develop a defensible position, it is “open” and “tolerant” to the point of embracing positions that undermine it. Stanley Rosen’s assessment concurs with Graeser’s. He argues that by denying that eternity is accessible hermeneutics transforms history itself into eternity and essence with the result that “Each finite historical epoch is an appearance of the essence of being.” In other words, once the trans-historical standards for gauging truth and goodness are obliterated by historicism human beings are separated from their own nature and mistake those standards with whatever happens to be happening. Rosen echoes Gellner on the narcissism of hermeneutics: “When, however, man becomes detached from things, or lost in speech, he comes to think of himself as a radically or exclusively historical being, a being who is nothing but self-inquiry or, more accurately, self-interpretation.” Since there is no aim or goal independent of self-interpretation we are always on the way toward understanding (or toward the meaning of Being). The journey tends to vacillate between two polar extremes; the identification of a being with Being ( idolatry or fanaticism) or complete and utter lethargy and resignation induced by the “bad infinite” from which one escapes with divertissements. Rosen concludes in his characteristic tone of voice, “Nietzsche’s creative superman is transformed into a passive spectator.”

Richard Wolin’s criticism of hermeneutics is on the surface more aggressive than Graeser’s, but in the course of making his argument sides with him and Rosen. Wolin argues that Gadamer was complicit in the rise of National Socialism, and states, “what is striking about the recent scholarly findings is the remarkable ease with which more traditional German nationalists such as Gadamer embraced Nazi policies.” And yet, at the end of his

30 Ibid., 42. Rosen is at this point criticizing Heidegger for being unable to distinguish Being from beings because Heidegger believes meaning is based on nothingness (or nihilism). In fact, Rosen’s criticism of Gadamer is not quite so severe. He acknowledges that for hermeneutics there is a core meaning available to readers because “they share a common humanity that transcends variations in historical context.” Rosen believes that the common ground is the Platonic Good, whose function in language I will explain with a theory about the evolution of language. This point about Rosen was brought to my attention by Richard Cobb-Stevens, “Husserlian Hermeneutics: Mathematics and Theoria” in Babette E. Babich, ed., Hermeneutic Philosophy of Science, van Gogh’s Eyes and God: Essays in Honour of Patrick A.Heelan (Dordrecht: Springer, 2004), 154.
essay Wolin wrestles with whether Gadamer’s securing of a professorial chair was motivated by opportunism or a sincere support for the political ideology. Yes, Gadamer voluntarily attended a political rehabilitation camp or Dozentendbund in 1936 that may have facilitated his promotion at the university,\textsuperscript{32} but Wolin also reports that he referred to it as paramilitary non-sense;\textsuperscript{33} yes, it is possible to construe his philosophy as defending authority and tradition,\textsuperscript{34} but Wolin also quotes Gadamer stating of Hitler, “He impressed me as being simple, indeed awkward like a boy playing at being a soldier”;\textsuperscript{35} yes, Gadamer’s 1934 essay “Plato and the Poets” might place him “in line with the political Platonists and their glorification of the Republic as a contemporary political model,”\textsuperscript{36} but Wolin also states, “One should be clear that ‘Plato and the Poets’ is hardly a Nazi text.”\textsuperscript{37} These nuances in his interpretation that can be translated into equivocations and inconsistencies do not mean his argument that Gadamer was a Nazi sympathizer is invalid. In fact, his self-referentially incoherent argument might mirror Graeser’s and Rosen’s assessment of Gadamer’s hermeneutics because that is what hermeneutics is, non-committal.

The aforementioned arguments against Gadamer support the contention that hermeneutics is a precursor to post-modernism in the sense of removing grounds for judgment and criticism. And yet, it is possible that Slingerland, Gellner, Graeser and Rosen are tapping into but one side of his thinking and exaggerating it. They never consider claims made by Gadamer that challenge their point of view. For example, Donatella DiCesare reports of Gadamer, “In a retrospective interview conducted in 1996 he clearly warns: ‘But no, I have never meant and never said that everything is language.’”\textsuperscript{38} We cannot be sure what he means, but it cannot be what his detractors mean if but a few of the critical dimensions of Gadamer’s philosophy count for anything. Against Heidegger’s contention that Aristotle is the first phenomenologist, Gadamer contends that Aristotle is a metaphysician (and not Plato). He writes, “I would label the metaphysics that shaped

\textsuperscript{32} This claim by Wolin must however be weighed against Steven P. Remy finding that while young scholars were pressured to join the party, “a professor could continue to be promoted, conduct research, publish, travel, and teach without these memberships.” “Humanities and National Socialism in Heidelberg” in Nazi Germany and the Humanities, 42.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 110.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 113. Also, for example, according to E. D. Hirsch, Gadamer’s notion of prejudice “connotes the idea of a preferred habitual stance” that cannot be altered. Quoted from DiCenso who disagrees with Hirsch in Hermeneutics and the Disclosure of Truth, 97-98.
\textsuperscript{35} Wolin, “Fascism and Hermeneutics,” 110.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 119.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 120.
\textsuperscript{38} DiCesare, Gadamer, 155.
medieval thinking under the influence of Aristotle and that flowered under the conditions
of the reading culture in modernity 'monologocentrism.'"³⁹ For Gadamer, metaphysics is not
only a theory, but in addition represents an attitude expressed in speaking and relating to
others. He traces it to Aristotle’s non-dialogical treatise and considers it an influential pre-
figuration of both a medieval didactic mentality and the mono-logo-centrism of modernity’s
reading culture. In a supplement to Truth and Method, he concludes, “It is then, a genuine
question of contemporary importance to discover whether it is really because of the baleful
influence of language that we find ourselves in our present predicament.”⁴⁰ Strictly didactic,
auto-didactic and deductive reasoning being the unwanted habits of a solitary contemplative
do not anticipate dialogue with another person and are for that reason intellectually
impoverished or self-limiting. By supporting the idea of a dialogue Gadamer is encouraging a
spirit of contestation. He critically evaluates the positions of such heavy-weights as
Heidegger and Aristotle. This suggests that he abides by standards of judgment and
understanding which his critics have not bothered to invest the time and energy to
understand.

2 Method

This dissertation has set for itself the task of opening up new possibilities for research in the
humanities that interface with contemporary science. This is also the aim Daniel Dennett
claims for himself in Freedom Evolves;⁴¹ however, in contrast to his naturalism that tends to
insist upon the veracity of the scientific method alone, a method is employed here that
respects the assumptions of both departments of learning. The validity of the scientific
method is deemed to depend upon a spectator position; that of the humanities on the position
of being a participant to an inquiry about something that is not self-involving because it
demands a de-centering of subject’s subjectivity. They are not mutually exclusive of one
another when understood in terms of their respective modes of perception; the visual and the
auditory. This way of thinking about thinking in the humanities and sciences meets the
expectations of an embodied cognitive science and phenomenology. Both reject the
conviction that objectivity is possible without examining the ways in which our
understanding of beings/entities is mediated by perception. The fact that arguments by

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⁴⁰ TM, 547.
scientists discussed in Part Two, e.g., cognitive psychologist Merlin Donald, and theorists about the evolution of language Ray Jackendoff and Steven Brown, exemplify movement between the two aforementioned stances suggests that the mode of cognition characteristic of the humanities has already bridged into the sciences. However, this cross-over has not for the most part been acknowledged by scientists. In the rare instance of Donald who cites Marshall McLuhan and Northrop Frye as influences, the implications for the scientific method as well as for conducting research in the humanities has not been addressed. In order to bring about a rapprochement between them, dialogue must include cross-fertilization. This has not been recognized by the distorted and one-sided portrayal of hermeneutics presented by Slingerland, et. al. possibly on account of his decision about the history of philosophy that does not pass the universal acid test; those who do not learn from history are bound to repeat its mistakes. Gadamer takes this adage to heart. His research into the origins of philosophy brought to his attention the interplay of standpoints in the middle voice (of the auditory disposition) that is a pre-condition for developing a double account of an object of knowledge. His contribution to the problem of how to mediate between the humanities and the sciences is thus couched in terms of his interpretation of Plato’s *Lysis* and is deployed here in order to introduce concepts and themes that surface throughout the dissertation including the following: (1) visual and auditory dispositions and modes of cognition, (2) the dialectical interplay between them, (3) the ontologically unique auditory disposition, (4) the middle medium between contraries that imparts movement to creative thinking. However, in order to circumvent the criticism that the question of what the inner word is and how it functions in language is of purely antiquarian historical interest that does not go beyond particular statements by Plato, the said themes are examined in light of contemporary works by mathematicians, consultants in creative thinking, scientists and phenomenologists. This interdisciplinary approach to the topic is evidence of its relevance to working across the disciplines, to thinking in general, which for Gadamer is always mediated by language and hence, although how the middle medium appears to us varies according to the historically


44 For defense of the dialectical method relative to contemporary endeavors to negotiate the divide between the humanities and science see chapter six where the approaches tabled by E.O. Wilson, E. Slingerland, Benjamin Bergen (inspired by Vilayanur Ramachandran’s thesis about mirror neurons), and Evan Thompson are scrutinized.
embedded terms it relates to one another, it is through language that they are related to one another. Language includes both an historical and biological inheritance, hence, so too must explanations associated with the humanities and sciences be given their fair due in a study of the inner world.

Edward deBono contrasts the two kinds of cognition that interface with Gadamer’s dialectic as follows: “Logic is step-by-step processing so that everyone can follow the steps to the conclusion. Intuition is more field-effect processing. Many factors are fed into the field and gradually the outcome forms itself.” This statement contains the seeds of Gadamer’s dialectic between dispositions. On the one hand, logic or what deBono calls “White hat thinking” on account of its neutrality deduces arguments from agreed upon premises that purport to adhere to the facts. This is without a doubt the case when the model for knowledge is mathematics. Mathematical computations are themselves without value because numbers are impersonal. And yet, upon reflection computational thinking also reflects a particular decision about the role of the senses in the acquisition of knowledge about which deBono is silent because he is not interested in the history of concepts. Nevertheless, his assertions function to define the boundaries of his thinking, and thereby refer to the region of the unsaid to which I turn next within the context of modern progenitors of the spectator standpoint towards objects of knowledge.

In *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* (1628) René Descartes argues for truth being a simple, immediate, certain and indubitable apprehension by the mind. He is not referring to

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45 In the tradition of Christology the middle medium is a spirit that unites the Father with the Son, in Plato and Aristotle’s philosophy it is a *dunamis* or potential that binds the soul into one harmonious whole, in physics the middle medium is a vital force or energy and in the philosophy of language it refers to the inner word whose acoustic dimensions move the inquiry into the realm of the natural sciences.

46 Friedrich Schleiermacher anticipates the point being made here when he writes, “Every utterance can, further, only be understood via the knowledge of the whole of the historical life to which it belongs, or via the history which is relevant for it. The science of history, though, is ethics. But language also has a natural side; the differences of the human spirit are also determined by the physical aspect of humankind and by the planet. And so hermeneutics is not just rooted in ethics but also in physics. Ethics and physics lead, however, back again to dialectic, as the science of the unity of knowledge.” Accordingly, there are two sides to language; ethics and natural science. For Schleiermacher, language is ethical because it is handed down. When we learn to speak we are formed in the tradition of our culture and people. A language is understood via its history, and history is ethics (shared). But at the same time, language has a natural side. We speak with our bodies and thus are related to nature, even the planet. Language itself is thus dialectical—it unites contraries of biology and history, which are the two inheritances transmitted to us in language. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, trans. Andrew Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 8.


a flash of intuition, but to a clear and self-evident arithmetic or geometrical demonstration/deduction. This is the criterion for knowledge that stands behind what deBono calls “White hat thinking.” It is impersonal, value neutral and universal. There is, however, evidence of it being derived from a particular way of perceiving the world. Steven Crowell writes succinctly of Patrick Heelan in this regard: “Heelan argues that such a mode of perception is historically specific and learned. What he calls ‘Euclidean vision’ is made possible by the codes embedded in the specific artificial environment that became predominant in the ‘early fourteen hundreds’. “49 Crowell is referring to an environment that conditions people to perceive things according to a spatial frame of reference defined by units of length, width and depth.50

The other kind of thinking deBono calls “water logic”51 or “Green hat thinking” referred to by him as intuition. It does not move by certain steps from the self-evident to the obvious or by calculating outcomes by managing the means of production with hypothetical imperatives, and instead is characterized by leaps of insight. Nagataki contrasts these two forms of thinking with reference to the game of chess between the computer named Deep Blue and Garry Kasparov in 1997. Whereas computers “just calculate as many moves as possible up to the limit of physical resources,” says Nagataki, “For a great player like Kasparov there can be a move, made without knowing what makes him/her choose it, which nevertheless proves to be extremely insightful. It can only be described as a stroke of genius that prompted him/her to do so.”52 The human mind therefore differs from a computer because humans have a capacity for non-logical thinking that computers lack. He calls it “a stroke of genius.” The problem with associating “water logic” or the alternative to logical thinking with an inexplicable talent is that, as Gadamer argues at the outset of Truth and Method, it indicates that one is interpreting tact from a narrowly conceived scientific point of

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50 Gadamer explains how sight articulates meaning and contrasts it with hearing meaning in music TM, 79. He also indicates how what is seen is constrained by the construction of the human organism. “Let us also remember the tendency to invariance operative within vision itself, so that as far as possible one always sees things in the same way” (ibid.). Mathematical science arises from these two inheritances; the environmental and biological conditions that define the nature of perception. For this insight into the physical constraints on the sense of sight I am in debt to David Jalal Hyder, “Helmholtz’s Naturalized Conception of Geometry and His Spatial Theory of Signs,” in Philosophy of Science: Supplement Proceedings of the 1998 Biennial Meetings of the Philosophy of Science Association, Part 1, 66 (September 1999): 15


view. Gadamer resists this tendency. He argues that this “stroke of genius” is acquired by an education in aesthetics. If knowledge is mediated by perception, then one’s dominant mode of perception-understanding must be challenged in order to achieve a degree of objectivity about a given subject-matter. The implication for the debate about distinguishing Artificial Intelligence from human intelligence is that the basis for distinguishing them from one another shifts from disputes about whether or not the manipulation of design networks by a computer can be called a “stroke of genius” to bio-physiological processes and perception, which computers self-evidently lack. At this point, the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty might be consulted. He is celebrated for having introduced the importance of the body and perception to understanding human cognition. His argument is dealt with in the context of its revival by Evan Thompson in Part Two and is thus put aside here. Given the overall goal to negotiate the barriers between the humanities and sciences with a method that combines contraries, it is apt to consult a scientist who stands opposed to both Nagataki’s position on insight and Gadamer’s contention that embodied cognition is lingual.

In contrast to Nagataki who distinguishes the human mind from a computer on the basis of insight, Daniel Dennett argues that the human brain functions according to the same algorithmic procedures as that of a computer and that Deep Blue was better than Kasparov at applying good design principles.\(^{53}\) In a sense, Dennett is correct. Contra what Nagataki suggests, insight is not simply gifted to a genius, but rather is a skill that has been acquired by training in how to extract principles from prior learning or programming of rules. In support of these rules and design principles being mental mechanisms and processes operating at a “sub-personal level” that is not accessible to the “personal level” of consciousness, especially self-consciousness,\(^{54}\) Dennett however argues in a way that undermines that very claim. He quotes Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and the painter Philip Guston admitting that they themselves disappear into the creative process and as a result cannot explain how they create. Dennett includes himself among them and names twenty-two co-authors of his essay “In Darwin’s wake, where am I?”\(^{55}\) And yet, by listing the names of his co-authors and assuming he is not trying to be erudite, has he not brought to


\(^{55}\) Dennett, “In Darwin’s wake, where am I?” 373.
consciousness the design networks that have shaped his thinking? Has he not lost himself in other’s ideas and then gained his own self back again? He does not deny being the author of “In Darwin’s wake, where am I?” When his language is treated as performance rather than propositional he disappears into linguistically constituted worlds of meaning other than his own in order to refine the boundaries of his thinking in language. Listing the names of artists, poets and writers at the end of his essay is thus not evidence of cognitive processes being operative about which he is not aware and instead, the opposite. The list is evidence of his ability to bring to consciousness design networks about which he had not been aware while immersed in thinking about where he had been in the midst of thinking about a topic.

This argument against Dennett’s attempt to separate thought from language is not without precedent. Assuming for now that he could not claim to be an author without having a sense of self (which he in fact, not surprisingly, argues is impossible), Giorgio Agamben explains that philosophers such as Emmanuel Kant and Edmund Husserl, who tend like Descartes to model knowledge on mathematics, cannot avoid slipping into reasoning that a linguistically constituted self is a condition of objectivity. Agamben demonstrates, as I have attempted here with respect to Dennett, that their words attest to the fact that “the subject has its site and origin” in language “and that only in and through language is it possible to shape transcendental apperception as an ‘I think’.” The capacity to view experience from the outside of experience and from there separate thought from language, i.e., Dennett’s position, is itself a feat of language. According to Agamben, it follows from this that not only desires, but the very concept of the self must be negated. This is effectively Dennett’s starting point for thinking about thought. Since thinking consists of algorithmic processes about which we can never be conscious, a conscious self is “just impossible.” Or rather, it is “impossible” until we examine his use of language and test his words against what he does. This does not however mean that the claim to objectively valid knowledge is impossible.

For Gadamer, the value-neutral standard for knowledge, i.e., mathematics, as well as the concept of the self or non-self it presupposes, is justified for the very reasons tabled by Descartes. The “spectator standpoint” yields distance from and clarification about an object

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56 Giorgio Agamben, *Infancy and History: On the Destruction of Experience*, trans. Liz Heron (London: Verso, 2007), 51. The alleged purity of mathematics and knowledge modeled on it is a function of separating the thinking subject in language from the body and biological processes. For Agamben postulating and identifying with the transcendental subject distorts and destroys the possibility of undergoing and having experience (or being affected by it). His solution is to position the formation of the self in language between biological and cultural inheritances (ibid., 65).
of knowledge. He does not discount the validity of “White hat thinking” or what is here being called a visual orientation toward possible objects of knowledge. Instead, he recommends that it be balanced against the auditory mode of cognition evinced by Dennett when he constructs his arguments by thinking about what others have thought. As mentioned, this move by him confutes his argument about thought being depersonalized. In so doing it opens up other avenues for thinking about the nature of thought being other than an algorithmic process. If Dennett’s words are any indication, another way in which to characterize thought is lateral or assymetrical. According to DeBono, lateral thinking involves the disappearance of the first-person perspective (which is likely the self with which Dennett identifies) and indeed operations of the mind that presuppose entering into a dialogue with others about a topic. To make this clear consider the main features of lateral/assymetrical thinking: it reverses the meaning of ideas, extracts content from an idea, relates that content to opposing ideas, changes concepts and perceptions, reorganizes a system of beliefs, and performs these operations without knowing where it is going in advance, i.e., while stiving toward “something absent.” The sort of thinking that incorporates these skills tends to recognize patterns in works whose operating assumptions are alleged to diverge from one another. Asymmetrical thinking thus exercises the capacity to combine mutually exclusive positions while retaining their independence from one another, which is precisely how Gadamer characterizes the dialogue form in Plato’s philosophy. Assymetrical or lateral thinking originates in the moment when philosophy is “brought down from the heavens.” This is accomplished by enacting the shift in orientation Socrates recounts in his turn toward the logoi at Phaedo 99d. The shift is from a pretense toward pure perception to a distinctly different ontological dimension than thinking.

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57 There are four principles of “lateral thinking” that challenge the first person perspective: (1) recognition of dominating polarites among ideas (2) search for different ways of looking at things (3) relaxation of rigid control of vertical thinking (4) use of chance. Edward DeBono, The Use of Lateral Thinking (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 68. The first is exhibited in Gadamer arguing for the complementarity of the alleged opposing philosophies of Aristotle and Plato, the second in his account of the history of hermeneutics, the third and fourth in his aversion to philosophical systems and preference for modeling philosophy on a dialogue whose outcome is unpredictable.


59 I am in debt to a “You-tube” interview by Tom Palmer with Terrence W. Deacon for this idea assumed by Gadamer to be implicit in the dialogue form. The notion of the mind striving toward something absent is typical of Gadamer’s characterization of being led by a question in a dialogue. Deacon explains this so called absence with constellations of teleodynamic forces beyond our conscious minds. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BvFE1Au3S8U (accessed Dec. 15, 2015).
This auditory way of relating toward beings does not cancel out the visual aspects of a thing and instead, takes them into account, but not uncritically. The auditory method collects and divides sense impressions according to prior understandings rather than family resemblances and thus involves an ear to the underlying conditions for anything said.

The dialogue that Gadamer focuses upon in order to expose the limits of thinking that is overly determined by the sight of sense impressions and demands a resolution to the contradictions it generates, which in turn brings a distinctly different ontological dimension for thinking to the fore is Plato’s *Lysis*. In the *Lysis* Socrates demonstrates that defining friendship on the basis of its aspects or characteristics generates a contradiction. Friendship is neither like to like nor unlike to unlike and thus cannot be defined. In fact, the *aporia* is intended to compel the speakers to reflect upon the limits of how they understand things and thereby instigates a change in their way of thinking. This is made clear in Socrates’ discussion with Hippothales. Gadamer writes, “In a typically Socratic fashion, Socrates makes the boy admit that only he will be esteemed who knows how to do something . . .” Knowing how in this case is not a *techne* in the sense of craftsmanship and instead, tact does not follow ready-made rules or formulas by applying them indiscriminately to a problem

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60 In his commentary on the *Phaedo*, Gadamer conveys what he means by the distinctly different ontological dimension. Simmias and Cebes find themselves at the cross-hairs of a problem. On the one hand, none of their arguments for the immortality of the soul are foolproof (*Phaedo*, 88c). On the other hand, they have a need to explain why the soul is immortal because such a proof would amount to explaining why life is more valuable than death by suicide. The latter seems to follow from their inability to offer a cogent explanation for the immortality of the soul. Upon the realization that there is no reason not to commit suicide yet also believing it to be wrong, and contrary to their religion (ibid., 61c-e), Simmias and Cebes fall silent. This is where Gadamer believes another ontological dimension appears or what he also calls Socrates’ “new orientation.” Gadamer, “The Soul Between Nature and Spirit,” *The Beginning of Philosophy*, trans. Rod Coltman (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1998), 51. He remarks, “The deep despondency of the mood that spreads among the interlocutors is unprecedented by any poem. This points to the fact that the dialogue takes a decisive turn at this moment of highest tension” (Gadamer, “Life and Soul: *The Phaedo,*” ibid., 45). No longer are Simmias and Cebes asserting arguments to befuddle Socrates and manipulating logic to force one conclusion or another to strengthen their beliefs. Instead, they are keen listeners. They have modified their way of relating to him and the topic of discussion. They are participants to the conversation and find themselves caring about the problem in the sense that the destiny of their lives is suddenly implicated in the ideas being discussed. Plato, *Phaedo*, 88c.

61 The definition of friendship being like to like is refuted on the grounds that people who are like each other cannot be useful to one another, which offends the very idea of friendship (214d-215a). The definition of friendship being unlike to unlike such as between a poor and a rich man is a problem since it entails that enemies are friends (215d-216b). Both definitions on the basis of similarity and difference of characteristics are self-cancelling.

in order to force a calculated outcome that advances what one already believes. Rather, tact entails relinquishing one’s pre-determined habits of mind for the sake of understanding the thing itself. This relinquishing of a prior-understanding from a standpoint that is not subjective demands a change in ethos. Hippothales is stifled by his lack of ethos. Rather than confront the object of his desire and correct his false beliefs, he stands at a distance from Lysis and preserves them. When Socrates inquires into the nature of his desire Ctesippus speaks on his behalf. Socrates takes leave of him and brings the importance of experience in the acquisition of knowledge to the fore. He does this by demonstrating the limits of reaching conclusions about something on the basis of sense impressions alone. When each of the definitions of friendship based on fixed properties put forward by Lysis is refuted the result is the famous aporia of the Platonic dialogues. The aporia or “neither/nor” realization unlocks a sense of not-knowing and therefore a sense of lacking that has two consequences: (1) it turns a passive neutral spectator into a lover of knowledge and (2) it turns acquisitive desire into care for the good of the thing being discussed. Both (1) and (2) require a change in how we relate to others, i.e., the distinctly different ontological dimension, for which not all mathematicians have an ear. This is evident in Socrates’ criticism of Theaetetus. He persists in thinking that the senses are passive in the process of seeking knowledge (like Descartes) and therefore never realizes how the body’s way of relating to and interacting with beings plays a role in determining what we think they are. Like many a mathematician, he separates aesthesis from noesis. This separation, represented in Plato’s “ladder of love” in the Symposium, is necessary in order to reason in precisely the way celebrated by Descartes, but is also but one side of the equation and is not without epistemological ramifications.

Gadamer explains the positional epistemologies at play in the argument in the Lysis when after referring to conditional friendships based on pleasure in which the reasons for being friends always changes he writes:

On the contrary, where friendship and love exist, there is something primary and fundamental: an unconditional being dear of something which is dear in itself and which lies outside the whole chain of things which are held dear as means to an end . . . Here the cause as the “because of” (dia ti) and the purpose as the “for the sake of” (heneka tau) are clearly distinguished. But Socrates can nevertheless still interchange dia ti and heneka tau just as in German one interchanges wegen and umwillen . . . Means do present themselves as purposes; they are encountered in a context of getting to a goal. Thus we are not dealing here with a logical mistake, i.e., the
confusion of a causal determination with a final determination, but with the intertwining of both determinations in human experience.63

Dia or “on account of” pertains to causal explanations of the idea of friendship; heneka tau or “that for the sake of which” to the thing itself or the state of being friends in reality (toi onti). In the Lysis they are in a “tension-laden relationship” to one another yet are also intertwined in human experience. The tension resides in the causal explanations proceeding from an orientation toward beings that is opposite to that of “for the sake of which.” The former way of thinking consists of defining friendship, e.g., like to like and unlike to unlike on the basis of fixed properties or observable physical characteristics.64 This is a viable starting point, but as mentioned insufficient as well. Gadamer specifies above that causal reasoning includes a lack or “presence of something bad” that treats the object of inquiry as a means to its own good (utility), which as he points out “destroys the communal basis of the relationship”;65 that very basis is however opened up by the other signification for reasoning about the topic—“that for the sake of which.” “That for the sake of which” refers to another mode of cognition and consists of “another mode of being altogether” in which one “transcends everything conditional and rises to what is truly real, to ontos on.”66 In contrast to causal explanations whose regressive analyses reduce the object to being the effect of a preceding cause, thinking in terms of the thing itself preserves the good of the thing, yet on the basis of another mode of cognition, which is typical of friendship that “has its basis in a ‘neither/nor’ which longs for the positive, longs for the good.”67 In other words, there is a way of relating to objects of knowledge that is analogous to how we relate to friends. Just as friends want what is best for the other for their own sake so too does one want what is best for the object of inquiry—that its potential and possibilities be fully developed for its sake.68

According to Gadamer, the two modes of cognition are expressed in a double account about an object of inquiry.69 This is an approach to understanding and knowledge and to the

63 Ibid., 16-17.
64 Plato, Lysis, 214a-216b.
66 Ibid., 17.
67 Ibid., 15.
68 See Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, VIII v.
69 For Plato on this double account see Phaedrus, 229d (mytholegein). The double account resurfaces later in the dialogue in the parable of the charioteer that is “like” the proof for the immortality of the soul (ibid., 245c-246b). In the Phaedo, the change from natural scientific explanations for change to mathematical ones involving unity is hardly noticeable (96e-97a). Gadamer explains that when Socrates found a solution to causation, he had also (“along with this”), found how two comes to be from out of one. Accordingly, every
question of how to relate the humanities and sciences to one another that has been advocated by such philosophers as Martin Heidegger, Michael Wheeler, Patrick Heelan and Evan Thompson. Gadamer surpasses them in that for him the two accounts although distinct merge in the course of thinking about the topic. P. Christopher Smith alludes to it. After pointing out that, for Gadamer, “dialectic” refers to the back-and-forth of reply and address, and, to the collection and division according to essence, he points out that Gadamer intentionally allows “them to merge with one another.” Smith has found in Gadamer’s thought exactly what Gadamer finds in Plato’s Lysis. Both need and fulfillment co-exist together for Socrates in his quest for knowledge as they do among friends. That is to say, from the standpoint of a non-lover need is instrumental and has no bearing upon goodness. Consequently, language is little more than a tool for jockeying around for advantage. With respect to a lover of learning, and the kind of goodness that belongs to them, Gadamer


Rafael Winkler explains, “Heidegger has in mind the institution of an internal connection between philosophy and science by means of the hermeneutic circle. It is in this circle that scientific concepts can be phenomenologically cleared from the presumed measure of the positive sciences.” This cannot but involve ambiguity because the sciences, according to Heidegger, had defined every sphere of life and would be reluctant to accept a philosophical reflection on the meaning of their terminology, e.g., biology and zoology; human and animal life. Rafael Winkler, “Heidegger and the Question of Man’s Poverty in World,” International Journal of Philosophical Studies 15, no. 4 (2007): 532. In addition see David E. Storey, Naturalizing Heidegger, His Confrontation with Nietzsche, His Contributions to Environmental Philosophy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 71; Miguel de Beistegui, Thinking with Heidegger: Displacements (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 105. Michael Wheeler claims that his approach to mediating between the disciplines is in debt to Heidegger and explains, “In other words, modern science has the property of obscuring the fact that any way of making sense of entities (including its own) involves, as its concomitant flip-side, a necessary concealing of the plenitude of other (e.g. cultural, religious) ways in which those entities may have become intelligible” Michael Wheeler, “Naturalizing Dasein and Other (Alleged) Heresies,” in Julian Kiverstein ed. Heidegger and Cognitive Science, 180. He does not discount the position of modern science. He aligns it with what he calls “enabling understanding” that is dedicated to causal explanations for phenomena. However, in addition to the latter he argues for “constitutive understanding” and explains, “It concerns the identification, articulation and clarification of the conditions that determine what it is for phenomena to be the phenomena that it is” (Ibid., 182-183). The two modes of inquiry; the “enabling” and “constitutive understanding” ought not to function independently of one another and indeed, as he points out on behalf of McDowell, constrain one another in a “perfectly intelligible interplay” (Ibid., 185). According to Wheeler, this interplay consists of phenomenology making available in a systematic way the material for science to explain, which may in turn “lead us to revise our conception of what the phenomenon under investigation are” (Ibid.). Patrick Heelan writes of his book Space-Perception and the Philosophy of Science, “The theme of the book is space perception. I show that, despite the fact that we perceive a visual Cartesian world, our natural mode of unaided visual perception is hyperbolic; mediating our everyday perception of a Cartesian world is the carpentered environment that we have learned to ‘read’ like a ‘text’.” Patrick Heelan, Space-Perception and the Philosophy of Science (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), xiii. Heelan shares the assumption of this dissertation that “realistic knowing and that scientific theories become knowledge by transformations of our perceptual frameworks” (Ibid., 2). He also argues for a dialectical interplay of sculptured Euclidean and unaided hyperbolic perception of depth and distance at the end of his book, chapters 14 and 15. Evan Thompson’s argument is discussed in chapter six of this dissertation.

highlights the term oikeon. It refers to that which belongs to the self or one’s own good about which one is needy. He then remarks that das Angehörige includes overtones of das Zugehörige, “of that which is proper to the household.” For Socrates, the process of preserving what one has and being at home or dwelling with what is most one’s own transpires through language; specifically through a dialogue with friends similarly disposed to wanting to understand what they also have. “Friends hold everything in common” is a Pythagorean proverb and is a refrain in Plato’s dialogues. Friends help one another care for the things or ideas held in common and this entails distinguishing one’s assumptions from the thing itself by calling them into question. Attending to assumptions, prior understandings and motivations is the beginning of friendship because it entails understanding how another person reasons about something not for the sake of one’s own advantage, but for the sake of understanding the topic itself. Gadamer grasps this teaching from the Lysis in Truth and Method as follows:

Now the hermeneutical experience that we are endeavoring to think from the viewpoint of language as medium is certainly not an experience of thinking in the same sense as this dialectic of the concept, which seeks to free itself from the power of language. Nevertheless, there is something resembling dialectic in hermeneutical experience: an activity of the thing itself, an action that, unlike the methodology of modern science, is a passion, an understanding, an event that happens to one.

Gadamer is contrasting two experiences. When one is free of the power of language the experience of knowing is without passion or love and characteristic of “White Hat” or logical thinking mentioned above by deBono. The hermeneutic experience, however, is just the opposite—the lover of things themselves experiences the “back love” of the topic when it acts upon them. The lover becomes a beloved in Love. Gadamer purifies the hermeneutical experience of these erotic dimensions. Nevertheless, they are implicit to what he says above about the activity of the thing itself being an action that is unlike the methodology of science because it is an event that happens to the knower. The event of understanding the thing itself in a hermeneutical experience is in the non-self-involving and instead self-transcending middle voice wherein one is both active and passive, lover

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72 Ibid., 18-19.  
73 Plato, Lysis, 207c; Phaedrus, 279c.  
74 TM, 460.  
75 Plato, Phaedrus, 255e. Capitalized in order to represent the event of understanding in which the thing itself is announced in the middle voice.  
76 And Heidegger brings this out when he states that phainesthai is the middle voice construction of phaino or light. BT, 51; SZ, 29.
and beloved in Love with a topic or idea that had been in one’s home before, but had not been noticed until it made a claim on one’s life (on account of having been neglected). Gadamer grasps the middle voice condition that Plato recognizes in friendships of virtue as follows: In “Text and Interpretation,” he explains, “The separated horizons, like the different standpoints, merge with each other.”77 The process of standpoints merging with one another transpires in the middle voice or in friendships in which speakers endeavor to promote each other’s good for the sake of knowing things themselves independently of whatever properties with which things may have been confused. Participating in this hermeneutical experience requires, as Gadamer suggests hearing (hörren) or an auditory rather than visual mode of cognition. However, he is not always explicit about the dialectic consisting of a movement between modes of perception in a self-regulating harmony of voices. This is why he has an underdeveloped phenomenology of the inner word in his hermeneutics of the voice.

77 Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Text and Interpretation,” in Diane Michelfelder and Richard E. Palmer, ed., Dialogue and Deconstruction: The Gadamer-Derrida Encounter (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), 41. Gadamer is referring to the tension between the horizon of a text and the horizon of a reader which I consider analogous to the tension between the visual and auditory stances and that which they disclose, what is said and how it is said. The same reciprocal movement is evident also in the movement of language.
Chapter Two: Folk Intuitions about the Embodied Word

1 Introduction

Although by no means exhaustive of the available literature, this chapter intends to show a pattern in commentaries on the inner word in Gadamer’s thought. The pattern consists of moving toward a medial location in which to think about the phenomenon of the inner word, that being a living dialogue, and a recoiling from it toward concepts and ideas of the mind. By re-asserting a folk-intuition of dualistic thinking, hermeneuts derail the phenomenological trajectory of their own inquiries that is leading, in the words of Slingerland, to “the most crucial dimension of human conversation: its dualistic connection to a physical world that all human beings share as a result of our embodiment.” Dualistic thinking occurs when scholars “tend to conceptually sort information from the environment into mutually exclusive categories.” But it is an intuition because the habit of mind is, in the words of K. Mitch Hodge, “dispositional and is formed without the subject being aware of the mental processes involved in making or justifying that belief.” Assigning to it the attribute of being “folk” is justified by Paul Bloom’s argument that the said habit of mind is a product of evolutionary forces from which no one is exempt. In his view, human beings are “natural Cartesians”; nevertheless, our dispositional Cartesianism is also corrigible by taking into consideration evidence that falsifies it. The scholars of the inner word examined for being entangled in this way of reasoning include Jean Grondin, John Arthos, James Risser, Philippe Eberhard and Walter Lammi.

2 Jean Grondin

In his essay “Gadamer and Augustine” Grondin reaches a point where a phenomenology of the inner word is about to break open, and then aborts the momentum by retreating into a notion of the inner word that is metaphysically encased in the sense of being of a wholly intellectual

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80 Ibid., 390.
nature. This is evident in the way in which his treatment of Gadamer’s philosophy is at first wedded to the phenomenological-existential character of Augustine’s and Heidegger’s (early) thought, and then becomes divorced from it. He starts on the first footing when he writes of Heidegger’s relation to Augustine’s *De doctrina Christiana*:

Heidegger was surely impressed by the unmistakable connection that Augustine advances between simply understanding the text and the zealous stance of the person who not only seeks to understand, but whose singular concern is to seek the living truth. This connection lends his hermeneutics an unmistakable ‘existentiell’ tendency, which for a long time has earned Augustine the reputation of a protoexistentialist. The desire to understand a written work is not an indifferent and purely epistemological process that occurs between a subject and an object; it is always a self-understanding that bears witness to the fundamental uneasiness and way of being of a *Dasein* who strives after meaning.

Augustine guided Heidegger to realize that there is a difference between a neutral observer’s reading and understanding of a text and that of a person who is wrapped up in it for the sake of a “living truth.” Gadamer reports that Heidegger appeared to him as an Aristotle *redivivus*. If his testimony is any indication, in the early to mid-1920’s Heidegger was able to bring Aristotle’s arid treatises into so called “life” presumably with a mimetic playfulness that hinged on Aristotle being the first phenomenologist to challenge metaphysics by reviving pre-Socratic philosophy. For Heidegger, Aristotle was a radical opponent of Plato and spoke directly to Heidegger’s intensely critical stand toward onto-theology. This approach to Aristotle and philosophy in general agrees with Heidegger’s hermeneutic of facticity in which interpretation is a way of gaining access to the movement of meaning in existing historical life. It is not just Heidegger’s own subjective quest for meaning that was activated by Aristotle’s writing, but rather a “living truth” of historical life; repeatable but original.

Some of the most renowned philosophers of the 20th century were captivated by his dramatic manner of teaching; Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, Hans Jonas, Gerhard Krüger, Karl Löwith and of course, Hans-Georg Gadamer. Grondin notes that it was this early Heidegger, he specifies “even ‘oral’ Heidegger” to whom Gadamer returned when he developed his hermeneutics. Not the architect of language in *Being and Time*, but the animated Heidegger inspired by Augustine’s restless pursuit of self-understanding (refigured by Heidegger into a hermeneutics of facticity) was the basis of Gadamer’s later thinking according to Grondin.

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83 Ibid., 176, Note 10.
Insofar as Gadamer thematizes dialogue or a living conversation with a text, he hearkens to the oral Heidegger who internalized, embodied and translated Aristotle’s philosophy into a form that resonated with his students.

Further to the point of arguing that Gadamer’s interpretation of the inner word returns to the play of philosophy exhibited in the teaching of the early Heidegger; after emphasizing that the derivative character of the proposition in Augustine caught Heidegger’s attention, Grondin concludes:

Accordingly, for Heidegger, the ‘hermeneutical’ aims at that which stands behind every word and which alone makes its understanding possible. For his part, Gadamer agrees that he used the word ‘hermeneutical’ in connection with a way of speaking developed by Heidegger in his early days, as he admitted in the important essay on “The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem” (1966), which set in motion the debate with Habermas.  

In the 1966 essay to which Grondin refers, Gadamer explains the infinity of language on analogy with the struggle to speak a foreign language. When speaking a foreign language one is never quite at home and always hears in one’s mind one’s native language even if there is no deliberate effort being undertaken to translate. Gadamer suggests that this might account for stammering. Stammering is an obstruction, yet also, he specifies, an “opening to the infinite realm of possible expressions.” So too, Gadamer reasons is any language infinite. The analogy between translating between languages and stammering is, of course, false except insofar as one who stammers wants to say something that they are unable to utter. It is this medial point between the speaker and speech that Gadamer is driving at and that Grondin lands upon when he writes: “The universal dimension of hermeneutics is not so much one of language itself (which would amount say, to a linguisticism of sorts), but of an openness or quest for understanding, a mode which is less actual language itself than a striving for words for what urges to be said and heard.”  

The medial point between the subject (speaker) and act of uttering something is taken up, according to Grondin’s words above, by an opening, a quest for understanding, a “striving for what urges to be said and heard.” The location in which the inner word is heard, needless to say, is of an auditory mode of perception. Being open consists of striving to hear, or active listening. Hence, it is not unusual for a person who

84 Ibid., 102.
stammers to cease stammering when they sing. There is something about adjusting their habit of mind to music that enables their speech to become coherent. Granted, Gadamer does not go into these questions, but he lays down the framework for them by drawing attention to an actual struggle, one that we can imagine ourselves in, in order to convey what he means by the inner word (or infinity of language).

However, even though Grondin has referred the reader to this “oral” tradition in Gadamer’s explication of the inner word in “The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem,” he quickly bypasses it when he reasons, “the hermeneutical aims at that . . . which alone makes understanding possible.” By shifting to this question Grondin has imported the logic of transcendental conditions into his interpretation and thus, propositional reasoning about the nature of reason. Rather than investigate the physiological processes that make listening possible, acoustic space and the affections of the body during a dialogue, Grondin inclines toward Slingerland’s hypothesis and withdraws into a disembodied concept of the inner word. Granted, physiological processes of a certain kind of hearing are not excluded from his assertions, perhaps instead intimated, but certainly not well defined. He states that the inner word is that which “is presupposed in all signs into which it can be translated,” as if it were identical to its formal role in a system of signs. He writes of the inner word, “that which is indicated by this sign, the intended, the thought, or ultimately, the word of reason itself in its universality,” as if the inner word were of a purely Stoic variety detached from external impressions. He even narrows Augustine’s search for himself in God to striving to express “our ‘mind’” and equates the motivation of a proposition with presuppositions that are not asserted. Motivation is not, however, a presupposition. It pertains to memory, association of ideas, impulse and act, and not the order of logical inference as Grondin suggests. Consider his words, “The Augustinian theory turns out, in fact, to be very plastic, in that the words we use cannot, just because they occur to us, exhaust what we have ‘in mind’, i.e., the dialogue that we are.”

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88 Ibid.
89 Augustine makes a distinction between “an actus signatus and an actus exercitus: between what the statement simply says and the completion (Vollzug)” that Grondin had mentioned earlier in his essay “Gadamer and Augustine,” and which Gadamer traces to the Stoics during his explication of a theological concept of the inner word. But the theological interpretation is incongruent with the mimetic location of the verbum and the physicality of the word. Grondin, “Gadamer and Augustine,” 101.
91 Ibid., 146.
writes, “From this it stands out clearly that the universality of language cannot be one of spoken language, but rather of the inner word, as it may be expressed with Augustine, however awkwardly.” He reasons that if language is, as Gadamer says, universal, then it cannot be spoken. But what kind of language is that? He assumes that it must be silent or something like a totality of all possible true propositions lodged in the mind. Any other alternative, for Grondin, would be tantamount to contradicting Gadamer’s claim about the universality of language. For Grondin, there is no middle ground between the sound of the spoken word and the thought of it. They have attributes that are mutually exclusive. Hence, although he quotes the Father of the Church stating, “original speech is a language of the heart” he bypasses altogether the connotations of these words when he explains of them, “This inner speech has no sensuous or material form.” He supposes that if the \textit{verbum} is not sensuous in the sense of a physical sound, then it must be intellectual. He ignores what “language of the heart implies”, i.e., a non-intellectual grasp of the inner word.

In a final instance of moving toward an interpretation centered on embodiment and then recoiling from it, consider Grondin’s interpretation of the following passage from Augustine’s \textit{On the Trinity} XV.X.19:

What one strives to reach is the \textit{verbum}, which proffers itself in no sound, but nevertheless indwells every speech and is presupposed in all signs into which it can be ‘translated.’ When this intimate word of the soul or the heart takes on the sensuous form of a concrete language it will not be expressed as it is, but rather precisely as it can be seen through our bodies.

The passage is convoluted. The \textit{verbum} of the heart proffers itself without sound. Yet it is expressed through our bodies and is, moreover seen. Augustine is merging the auditory and visual perceptions. He is indicating to the reader that the inner word is sensual. Although without sound, it indwells in speech, is presupposed by signs, and is expressed, albeit not as it actually is, in the body. The inner word is thus in some sense both audible and visible. Augustine does not seem to explain how it can be both heard and seen, which is why the question of their relation to one another asserts itself. But none of this occurs to Grondin. Instead, his comment on the passage by Augustine is clipped. He simply reasons that if the inner word is not the word of any language it must be of the mind. He does not consider that there may be aspects of language that are universal yet also sonorous. Arthos is right.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[92] Ibid., 143-144.
\item[93] Ibid., 141.
\item[94] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
Grondin’s version of the inner word is burdened by a subjective idiom that leaves the quintessential dialogical character of Gadamer’s hermeneutics behind. Not unlike Plato in the *Cratylus* (according to Gadamer in *Truth and Method* Part III), he separates thought/reason from language.

3 John Arthos

John Arthos does not recognize that the binary logic of Grondin’s thought is inconsistent with the embodied phenomenon he is interpreting. But this is understandable. Arthos is focused on the theological sources for Gadamer’s thinking about the inner word that spill over into his secular humanism (for which Grondin is an advocate). Accordingly, Arthos argues that Gadamer’s claim that dialogue is the fabric of our communal ethos is a result of his having drawn the Judeo-Christian achievement “back into the humanist tradition.”

Arthos finds this “achievement” mirrored in the following passage from TM III, 3, B:

> Only now can the great dialectical puzzle of the one and the many which fascinated Plato as the negation of the *logos* and which received a mysterious affirmation in medieval speculation on the Trinity, be given its true and fundamental ground. When Plato realized that the word of language is both one and many, he took only the first step. It is always one word that we say to one another and that is said to us (theologically, ‘the’ Word of God)—but the unity of this word, as we saw, always unfolds step by step in articulated discourse.

There are two levels of Gadamer’s discursivity in this passage that Arthos argues are brought together through a re-appropriation of the Word Incarnate. On the one hand, is the speculative dimension of Gadamer’s discursivity. It is expressed as the problem of the one and the many. On the other hand, is the dialogical or practical layer of Gadamer’s discursivity. It is signaled when Gadamer shifts to the first person plural voice and thereby enters into a communal dialogue. Gadamer enacts the very shift from the speculative to the

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95 Arthos suggests this is the case for Grondin when he states, “The fair criticism of Grondin’s characterization of Gadamer’s *verbum* is that he came too close to a subjectivist idiom that does not square with the resolutely social character of Gadamer’s thought.” John Arthos, “The Fullness of Understanding: The Career of the Inner Word in Gadamer Scholarship,” in *Philosophy Today* 55:2 (May 2011): 168.


97 John Arthos, *The Inner Word in Gadamer’s Hermeneutics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 25. Arthos is suggesting that when Heidegger emphasized the authenticity of a non-dialogical and instead solitary existence (projection toward our own most possibility of death), he reverted to a Platonic position in which one’s essence is estranged from being-with-others in language. This he indicates Gadamer overcomes within a secular humanist context by way of the incarnation in which thought comes to language in a community of others.

98 Ibid., 7-8. TM, 454.
dialogical and thus social context that Arthos takes to be the twin layers of his discursivity. According to Arthos, the point of contact between the speculative (universal) and the social (particular) is the Word of God which Christians enact historically.\textsuperscript{99} Whereas Plato, in order to protect aristocratic virtues from being distorted by the rhetoric of sophists, separated thought from language and thus turned the one and the many into a speculative-intellectual problem, Arthos holds that the Incarnation prevented this forgetfulness of language in Western thought.\textsuperscript{100} Stated otherwise, in contrast to Platonic and Pythagorean philosophy where the divine shows itself to us in time while also remaining wholly separate, with the Incarnation God becomes human; cosmic potentiality (as Gadamer puts it) of the Word is a “pure event.” Hence, Plato’s negation of the \textit{logos}, as Gadamer says above, received a mysterious affirmation in Trinitarian theology. This is the support I can muster for Arthos’ argument and seems to follow from Gadamer’s interpolation about “the Word of God” while speaking in a communal (us, we) voice mentioned by Arthos above.

Arthos effectively demonstrates that Gadamer’s philosophical-hermeneutics is derived from and depends upon a prior theology of the Word. He contends, perhaps with Grondin in mind, that “If Gadamer’s point was only to turn our attention to the surplus of meaning beyond what is spoken he need hardly have gone beyond the language theory of Seneca.”\textsuperscript{101} In contrast to Grondin, who claimed that the universality of Gadamer’s hermeneutics can only adequately be understood via Augustine, and then puts forward a secular account of the inner word, Arthos purports to have given Augustine’s theology its fair due. If read this way his insights into the procession of the word can be used to explain what Grondin aimed for, but which his binary logic also foiled. For example, Grondin claims that the dialogical view of language in Gadamer is an echo of the Augustinian theory of the \textit{verbum cordis} mediated by Gadamer’s intent to overcome the West’s forgetfulness of language (fixation on propositions as final).\textsuperscript{102} Similarly, he argues, “The true universality of language lies in this dialectic of question and answer from which a thoughtful hermeneutics nourishes itself,”\textsuperscript{103} and that the dialectic consists of participation in meaning.\textsuperscript{104} As he comments on Gadamer’s 1966 essay, “Genuine speaking in actual dialogue is what truly

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
  \bibitem{99} Arthos, \textit{The Inner Word in Gadamer’s Hermeneutics}, xi.
  \bibitem{100} TM, 413.
  \bibitem{101} Arthos, \textit{The Inner Word in Gadamer’s Hermeneutics}, 6.
  \bibitem{102} Grondin, “Gadamer and Augustine: On the Origin of the Hermeneutical Claim to Universality,” 143.
  \bibitem{103} Ibid.
  \bibitem{104} Ibid., 145.
\end{thebibliography}
opens up a world. Language is integral to the universality of the hermeneutical experience.”105 In all of these examples Grondin is either suggesting or asserting that the universality of Gadamer’s hermeneutics lies in the dialogical view of language. And yet, because he identifies the inner word with something thought in contradistinction to the spoken language, he cannot explain how Augustine’s notion of the verbum cordis is, as he says, dialogical. Grondin’s manner of thinking, as argued, is an impediment to his wanting to explain what he is trying to understand (and asserts). Arthos can be used to complete this missing piece of the puzzle for Grondin.

Rather than separate thought from language and thereby place himself in a position of being unable to explain how participation in meaning during a dialogue is possible, Arthos uses the Incarnation, which he claims is the focal point of Gadamer’s hermeneutics, to explain the phenomenon of language. Just as God (inner word) is conceptualized as being in the Son (word made flesh) without any change of state, e.g., from potency to act, so too does thought come to language without any change of state.106 Accordingly, there is no distinction between thought and language. In the words of Andre Wiercinski:

The statement “Being that can be understood is language” might be interpreted as participation in that totality of meaning, and not as lingual idealism. In Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics, Being, thinking, and language constitute the unity of Being and thinking (meaning ‘thinking of Being’) in language. Thinking is not possible outside of language. That which is thought is experienced as lingual being and is expressed in language, thus not only revealing Being (constituted lingually in itself), but also placing Being within a relationship with Dasein. Thinking and language are indivisible.107

If there is no thought outside of language, then the inner word must be lingual. If the inner word is lingual, then it is inherent to language (rather than being an idea of the mind) and above all for Gadamer inherent to a dialogue. Arthos’ and Wiercinski’s arguments correct Grondin. But at the same time, it is not clear that Arthos does not yield to the same tendency as Grondin. Not unlike Grondin who employs a method of analysis that abstracts from the facticity of historical life modeled by Augustine, by the early Heidegger and by Gadamer’s turn from Hegel’s technical dialectic to a living conversation, Arthos’ position is framed in terms that are inconsistent with the event of language he seeks to explain. This is evident in

106 See TM, 422-423.
both his criticism of Grondin, and argument for the lingual character of the inner word. With respect to criticism, Gadamer has the following advice: “One does not go about identifying the weaknesses of what another person says in order to prove that one is always right, but one seeks instead as far as possible to strengthen the other’s viewpoint so that what the other person has to say becomes illuminating [Einleuchtendes].”108 Strengthening another’s point of view is understandable on analogy to play. In play the subjectivity of the speakers is de-centered by participating in the self-presentation of the subject-matter.109 This self-presentation of the subject-matter is facilitated by the players—interpreters who contribute to its coming to fruition. Like a player in a game, a good willed interpreter participates in the other’s point of view in order to let the truth of the matter (Sache) bubble to the surface independently of what either of them might believe about it.

However, Arthos does not abide by this principle of interpretation that is presupposed by both criticism and judgment. On the contrary, he sunders his criticism of Grondin from an understanding of the latter’s work and thereby overlooks the possibilities that prefigure his own position. In “The Fullness of Understanding,” Arthos abandons the participatory role of the listener and criticizes Grondin by listing seven statements out of context that implicate him in a “subjective idiom.”110 A patchwork of quotations in support of an argument invariably falls to the shortcoming of any de-contextualized method of analysis. In fact, Grondin’s objections to propositional reasoning could be directed against Arthos who claims that “The preferential position of the proposition is a consequence of the fact that one can free it from its dialogical context. Such isolation however does violence to language.”111 Accordingly, there are nuances in Grondin’s manner of reasoning that Arthos bypasses. As noted, Grondin intends to think of the inner word in a dialogical context, a living conversation, but Arthos does not mention this, and thus forfeits his chance to be a good-willed interpreter and strengthen Grondin’s position if not his own as well by explaining that thought, being lingual, is inherent to dialogue.

109 See TM, 105-108.
111 Ibid., 144.
With respect to his argument about the inner word, Arthos’s metaphysical intuitions take hold. There are roughly three arguments from the introduction to his book *The Inner Word in Gadamer’s Hermeneutics* that are based upon elevating an idea above the warp and woof of historical existence. He argues that since “Augustine’s analogy of the *verbum interius* feeds on the epochal achievement of the Church” by re-appropriating the link between incarnation and *Sprache*, Gadamer is feeding on the same link; he is deriving his own vision of human solidarity from the Church. \(^{112}\) Arthos is arguing that Gadamer’s vision of human solidarity is Catholic because he “re-appropriates” the theology of the word in his own explication of thought coming to language. But this might not be the case. Gadamer’s re-appropriation is not a repetition. Whatever epochal achievement of the Church Augustine’s thought feeds on cannot be considered “the same” as Gadamer’s unless Gadamer is thinking within the same context and with the same question in mind as Augustine. \(^{113}\)

Second, Arthos argues that the Incarnation was a pivotal moment in both history and Gadamer’s hermeneutics. He writes, “That the word of God unfolds in human history as the nexus between the transcendent and immanent procession will be a kind of touchstone for the idea of discursivity Gadamer develops throughout his career.” \(^{114}\) The touchstone is significant, or rather unique and unparalleled since Arthos then asserts that “the idea that the Church of Christ is the historical community of faith . . . heightens Gadamer’s ideal of ancient dialogue when he finally comes back to it” (at the end of *Truth and Method*). \(^{115}\) If this is the case, then there must be something invariable about the Incarnation Gadamer affirms centuries later. But this does not agree with the principle of his historically affected consciousness or the re-appropriation of the past in a way that responds to our own questions and hermeneutical situation. Nor is it clear that the incarnation is a singular event without precedent. It could be that the mysterious affirmation of the *logos* in Trinitarian theology makes explicit what Plato really thought and to which he had an inclining. According to

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\(^{112}\) Arthos, *The Inner Word in Gadamer’s Hermeneutics*, 3.

\(^{113}\) Along similar lines he suggests that Gadamer “took the leitmotif of the *verbum interius* as a project he carved out for himself” from Heidegger’s re-appropriation of the *verbum* in his 1920-21 lectures on Augustine’s *Confessions* (ibid., 5). He may yet have drawn the notion of the inner word from other Heideggerian sources since, notes Arthos, “elements of the *verbum* are everywhere in Heidegger in his thoughts on *logos*” (ibid., 393, Note 11). But as mentioned with reference to Gadamer, can we be sure that what Heidegger means when he quotes Novalis on the word is the same as Augustine? Novalis’ (Georg Philipp Friedrich von Hardenberg, 1772-1801) background was Lutheran.

\(^{114}\) Ibid., 12.

\(^{115}\) Ibid., 13.
Gadamer, in the “second voyage” in the *Phaedo* (99d), Socrates turned away from inquiring into ideas directly (they bedazzled his eyes) toward studying them indirectly or from how they are spoken about in everyday language. Thus, language was not entirely forgotten by Plato (as Gadamer says in “Language and Verbum”). What Plato retained in the figure of Socrates was saved from metaphysics by the Word Incarnate, but still in terms prefigured by Plato. This is the sort of logic that guides Gadamer’s interpretation of Aristotle (and later Plotinus) as having clarified ideas bundled together in Plato’s philosophy. Accordingly, the incarnation is not a singular and unsurpassed event in history. In terms of their conceptual significance, both it and the Resurrection were for Gadamer prefigured by Heraclitus’ view of generation (revived by Christian Platonists such as Noetus and Hippolytus, says Gadamer). The Christian doctrines are an articulation of a previous notion in the ongoing process of concept formation continued by Hegel and Gadamer. To suggest that Gadamer’s thoughts are those of the theologians discussed in “Language and Verbum” depends upon abstracting from this process in the same way Gadamer believed Schleiermacher did in his interpretation of Plato, i.e., tapping into the intentions of the author.

Finally, with respect to the second layer of discursivity, the dialogical and practical (rather than the speculative), Arthos claims that Gadamer thinks about the dialogue form after having journeyed through theology in *Truth and Method* Part III, and thus carries theology into his interpretation of Plato. He writes: “Whatever direction Gadamer goes in, it is always tracking with a sympathetic resonance that picks up the harmonics of the tradition, in the same way that the notes of a stringed instrument in its lowest registers contain all of the overtones.” Consequently, for Arthos the idea that the Church of Christ is the historical community of faith and the body of Christ is His Word unfolding in the life of individual Christians, as he puts it, “heightens Gadamer’s ideal of ancient dialogue.” Theology is, he says, the “special value added” to the notion of Platonic dialogue at the end of *Truth and Method.*

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116 TM, 453.
120 Ibid.
But it is not clear that the scholars with whose thoughts Gadamer interacts constitutes a cumulative order of intentionality that carries forward, like strings strummed on a guitar, to culminate in a resounding chord at the end of *Truth and Method* about Plato’s dialogue form. Gadamer converses with philosophers, theologians, atheists or whomever not because of their personal beliefs, but because of the ideas they express about a subject-matter that concerns him. In “Hermeneutics and the Ontological Difference” Gadamer explains that he entered into a conversation with Plato and Plotinus, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, “or whoever, in order to at least partially gain ground in my attempt to find the right language for what I myself was seeking.” Interestingly, Arthos attests to this dimension of Gadamer’s thought when he writes, “Because Gadamer sees the various contributions to his idea of *Sprachlichkeit* from so many different sides, the distinctions between the various perspectives tend to lose their edges. Such a compositing of ideas is characteristic of Gadamer’s mode of reasoning.” There are different sides to an idea for Gadamer because like Heidegger he understands that a unitary phenomenon appears different depending on the perspective we take to it. According to Arthos then, thinking is not, in fact, characterized by an accumulation of ideas into a single melodious conclusion. On the contrary, Gadamer’s mind is filled with a plurality of many voices that converge around a question. However, rather than abide by this implication of his own argument, in the footnote to that same passage quoted above from *The Inner Word in Gadamer’s Hermeneutics*, Arthos exempts Gadamer from a blurring of edges in his thinking about Augustine. It is only possible to argue for Gadamer’s having exempted Augustine from the “the process of picking up the harmonics of the tradition” if Arthos believes that Gadamer and Augustine have the same intentional will.

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121 Gadamer, “Hermeneutics and the Ontological Difference,” in *The Gadamer Reader*, 371. Gadamer clarifies the Christian idea of the Word of the Father “becoming” the Son with Plotinus’s notion of emanation in *Truth and Method*. After explaining the relevance of emanation to the problem of thought becoming word with the help of Plotinus, he concludes, “Thus we can see how the creation of the word came to be viewed as a true image of the Trinity” *TM*, 423. Gadamer returns to the role of Plotinus in his 1980 essay “Thinking as Redemption: Plotinus between Plato and Augustine.” In *Hermeneutics, Religion and Ethics*. Translated by Joel Weinsheimer. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999. In his discussion of how science narrows the concept of experience he draws Dilthey, Greek tragedians, Husserl, Bergson and Schleiermacher into the conversation about the history of *erlebnis* (*TM*, 53-61).


123 Ibid., 393, Note 19 where Arthos states, “The complexity of his vision, however, is in all likelihood truer to his subject matter. The palimpsest of the Augustinian reception of Greek antiquity is a case in point, . . .” and he quotes from Heidegger’s 1921 lectures on Augustine.

124 *TM*, 419. Stated otherwise, Arthos claims that Christian thought is important to Gadamer “because for Christian thought too the incarnation is closely connected to the problem of the word” (ibid., 418). Hence,
Neither Grondin’s nor Arthos’s method of inquiry is adequate to the phenomenon of the inner word. They both rely upon a mode of reasoning that militates against an account of the word in contexts and terms they acknowledge is fundamental. Grondin’s “subjective-cognitive idiom” does not square with the inter-subjectivity of a dialogue that he affirms constitutes the universality of hermeneutics; Arthos’s justification for the universal Church as the substratum of Gadamer’s humanism depends upon a psychological method that detaches the idea of the Incarnation from an historically effected consciousness and hence, is inconsistent with the lingual nature of the inner word that would account for the formation of relations of solidarity in language in different ways at different times and places. Arthos thus does not so much correct Grondin’s “folk intuitions” as repeat it in a different form. This is evinced as much by what Arthos says as by what he does not say. For example, he reasons that Gadamer’s Forward to Grondin’s The Philosophy of Hans Georg Gadamer is indirect criticism. Arthos quotes from Gadamer’s introduction:

Hermeneutics encourages not objectification but listening to one another—for example, the listening and belonging with (Zuhören) someone who knows how to tell a story. Here we begin to glimpse the je ne sais quoi that we mean when we refer to people’s understanding one another. It is Grondin’s special merit to have worked out this ‘inner’ conversation as the real foundation of hermeneutics which (as I indicated in Truth and Method) plays an important role in Augustine and in other contexts such as process theology.125

According to Arthos, Gadamer is pointing out that the inner word is not precisely as Grondin emphasizes, a silent dialogue of the mind with itself, but rather belongs to a conversation. It is to Arthos’s credit to have explained how the procession of the word in Augustine’s Trinitarian theology accounts for dialogue being the locus for the formation of community. But at the same time, just as Grondin had bypassed reflecting upon the significance of the word of the heart and what is seen in the body while translating Augustine in On the Trinity, he consults the Fathers of the Church not because they are Christian, but because they thought about the problem that concerns him. The incarnation offers, as he later says in the same paragraph, the phenomenology of language to “philosophical reflection.” Moving along a horizontal axis, from Idea to ideas, Gadamer’s thought expands in a way that modifies everyone’s voice in the interest of understanding an idea that is neither Plato’s, although likely Platonic, nor Augustine’s although likely Christian. Augustine and Aquinas do not “add special value” or “heighten” Gadamer’s interpretation of Plato at the end of Truth and Method because it is the phenomenon of language about which Gadamer is thinking, and not their theology. By distinguishing the author from the idea, where conflating them is tantamount to reducing philosophy into psychology, Gadamer is able to think about the phenomenology of language for himself. The theology of the Incarnation interests Gadamer insofar as it is analogous to the human relationship between thought and speech.

so too does Arthos not reflect precisely on the words by Gadamer that he quotes above. He does not investigate what Gadamer might mean by “listening to one another” and “belonging with (Zuhören),” which are surely crucial to a dialogue. To sort out what might be at stake I defer to Philippe Eberhard. He parses Zughörigkeit into its component hören (to hear, to listen) and explains of the latter:

[they] imply, more than do seeing and looking, a medial relation to one’s surroundings. If it is possible to look the other way if one does not want to see something, one cannot listen the other way if one does not want to hear something. Sound travels through walls and around corners. Although “volume” designated originally rolled up sheets of text, it now refers to the size of something and the amount of space it contains, and it also refers to sound. Sound fills volume and it is volume. It has an encompassing character that we cannot circumvent.126

To belong, then, when understood in terms of the etymology and connotations of zuhören, is best understood as a relational-listening that involves sound, its volume, and physical spaces rather than contemplating the mind of God. This is a context for thinking about the inner word laid down by Augustine in The Confessions; a phenomenological-existential situation in which Heidegger and later Gadamer came to frame their hermeneutics. However, neither Grondin nor Arthos abide by it entirely and instead, fall into a folk-intuition or pre-modern mentality that Slingerland argues is characteristic of hermeneutics. The juxtaposition between secular humanist (Grondin) and theological (Arthos) accounts of the inner word is false.

4 James Risser

If, as Grondin believes, the inner word refers to meaning that exceeds anything said by us finite beings, and it is not the voice of disembodied reason, but rather, as Wiercinski (and Arthos) argue, lingual, then an understanding of the inner word must also be possible from the side of the language that we experience and therefore, in terms consistent with the motility of language.127 This is the step Risser intends to take. He writes in what may be an indirect criticism of Wiercinski, “It is not enough to say that for philosophical hermeneutics the experience of meaning is linguistic; one must immediately add to this the more specific claim that this experience of meaning takes shape in the language of speech, in living

126 Philippe Eberhard, The Middle Voice in Gadamer’s Hermeneutics: A Basic Interpretation with Some Theological Implications (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 94-95.

127 By stepping back into the verbal conditions from out of which to think about the inner word a point of access might well be achieved that reveals elements of the inner word passed over by Grondin and Arthos yet nevertheless presupposed and implied by their oblique references to an embodied word.
language, and as such hermeneutics is of the voice.” Risser aims for a description of the inner word that preserves its event character and movement (kinesis). In support of this position he quotes Gadamer describing philosophical hermeneutics in his essay “Practical Philosophy as a Model of the Human Sciences” (1979) as follows:

“...to let what is alienated by the character of the written word or by the character of being distantiated by cultural or historical distances speak again. This is hermeneutics: to let what seems to be far and alienated speak again. But in all the effort to bring the far near we should never forget that the ultimate justification or end is to bring it near so that it speaks in a new voice. Moreover, it should speak not only in a new voice but in a clearer voice.”

Gadamer starts to think about the purpose of hermeneutics from the problem of the alienating character of the written word. The character of the written as opposed to the spoken word has attracted the research of Eric Havelock (Preface to Plato), Walter Ong (Orality and Literacy) and Marshall McLuhan (Guttenberg Galaxy). They delve into the kind of thinking patterns and cultural characteristics of an oral in contrast to a literate civilization, and into the historical conditions that brought about the change from one culture to the other. Gadamer does not devote the same amount of attention as them to the way in which writing stabilizes sounds in vowels, habituates the mind to a linear and consequentialist mode of reasoning, and fosters independent and critical thought. They might be implied by his recognition (in the passage above) that writing alienates or creates distance from the word that the art of interpretation bridges, but his primary concern, according to Risser, is the absence of the other’s voice. Hence, hermeneutics consists of bringing what is far (the other), near in order to let it speak in a new and clearer voice. Risser re-iterates this “voiced” view of Gadamer’s hermeneutics in The Life of Understanding:

To read a text for the sense intended by language, especially in the case of a literary text, is to read beyond the literal; it is to read beyond the letter of the text. Following Gadamer, this experience of reading, as an effort of understanding, is, in effect, an effort of bringing the word to speak again—an act that privileges the voice in the experience with language.

According to Risser, reading properly entails enacting what we do when we speak to one another. Taken from this point of view, what Gadamer means by a “fusion of horizons,” for

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128 Risser, Hermeneutics and the Voice of the Other, 173.
130 Risser, The Life of Understanding, 86.
instance, would have to be re-interpreted. Is a fusion of horizons a process of having one’s prejudices put at risk by the other in order to find common ground with them in thought and about a subject-matter? This is what Slingerland has led us to believe about the fusion.

Eberhard denies it. Quoting Bjorn T. Ramberg, he explains that the fusion of horizons is not “a matter of drawing the product itself, as a manifestation of the mind of another, into active question-and-answer dialogue with one’s own understanding.”¹³¹ Contrary to what Slingerland argues, it does not involve a trans-historical merging of consciousness. But if not, then what? From the perspective of the middle voice (which is the grammatical correlate of an auditory disposition in a dialogue), in the fusion of horizons there is no standpoint outside of the fusion from which to think about it. It can only be understood from within the activity of a dialogue. Accordingly, the body-mind composite is implicitly invoked when fusing horizons and therefore might involve being keyed into something else besides what is said by another person. Risser does not explore these possibilities from the side of factual life grounded in a living conversation. Nevertheless, they are implicated in his overall shift toward a hermeneutics of the voice according to which he conceives the inner word.

In *Hermeneutics and the Voice of the Other*, Risser differentiates his position on the inner word from theologians and philosophers. He writes:

> What appeals to Gadamer in this notion of the inner word is that this word, which is not expressing the mind but the thing intended, “still has the character of an event,” and “remains related to its possible utterance [Äußerung]” (TM 422/GW1 426). This is the word of spirit that occurs in writing when the word is read. This is the word of breath that is heard by the inner ear.¹³²

In the footnote to this passage he distances himself from a theology of the inner word by pointing out that Gadamer does not speak of the inner ear in relation to the inner word (and instead in relation to the spirit of the letter).¹³³ The inner word, theologically understood is “metaphysically encased” i.e., inaudible.¹³⁴ This seems to be borne out by Augustine’s account of the *verbum* in *On the Trinity* where he retreats into a Stoic notion of the *logos*.¹³⁵ If the inner word is a word of the mind, and without sound, then it is irrelevant to the phenomenon of language. Accordingly, Risser concludes that Gadamer is not interested in

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¹³¹ Eberhard, *The Middle Voice in Gadamer’s Hermeneutics*, 78.
¹³³ Risser quotes Gadamer, “I would say that everything in writing, to be understood, requires something like a kind of heightening of the inner ear” Ibid., 250, Note 34; See TM, 547.
¹³⁴ Risser, *Hermeneutics and the Voice of the Other*, 250, Note 34.
the theological model of the inner word except “as an analogue for the hermeneutical event of language.”

He thus ignores theology and turns to poetic thinking for information. Being without any faith commitments, poets are more familiar with the phenomenon of language than the theologians Gadamer discusses in “Language and Logos.”

In the passage above, Risser says that the hermeneutical event of the inner word does not express “the mind but the thing intended.” This statement represents a shift from thinking about the inner word in relation to metaphysics (mind, God) to thinking about it within the motility of language. He goes even further toward the physicality of the inner word and says that the thing intended is related to its possible utterance and is, he says, the word of breath. For Risser, the inner word is the breath in the voice that expresses the thought intended.

Yet this cannot be the last word on the topic either because, for Risser, the context for a study of the inner word is dialogical. Risser feels justified in consulting Plato as a guide with which to refine what Gadamer means by the inner word being “breath in the voice that expresses the thought intended.” Using the *Phaedrus* in particular, he reasons that the inner word has the following features: (1) between sound and meaning (2) without edges or continuous (3) songful and (4) renewed in recollection.

According to Risser, from out of the interplay of breathed voices a space is formed within it, the voices and words lose their edges—they blend into one another to form one continuous and undifferentiated breathed voice that he likens to a song, tale or epic poetry. The unity of song that emerges within an assembly of people signals, for Risser, the inner word. He states, “When Gadamer says that the word ‘always already refers to a greater and more multiple unity’, a notion one finds in the concept of *verbus interius*, one can readily relate this to the Greek *epos*.”

Stated otherwise, Risser is parsing out the dimensions of a dialogue in which intentions, voices and thoughts (memories) converge and cohere to form a song. The inner word is, therefore, not of

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137 In “Aesthetics and Religious Experience,” Gadamer speaks of those with an ear for poetry being able to interpret correctly Hesiod’s ambiguous words about the muses (ibid., 143) and that the inner ear is always dissatisfied with what is vocalized about a text (ibid., 146).
138 In *The Life of Understanding* Risser states that the breathed voice is “caught up in a movement of coming to word” (ibid., 79). It has the character of play in that it is a self-presentation (ibid., 89). Richard Palmer explains that the event character of hermeneutics refers to the historical happening of bringing the printed word to life by speaking what it means. See Richard Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), 14-29.
140 Ibid., 177. To paraphrase Risser, as between sound and meaning, the breathed voice is “the vouloire-dire or intended meaning;” as in without edges, the breathed voice belongs to neither speaker and continues even when we desist from speaking.
141 Ibid.
any one person’s voice, but rather is more like a meeting of minds in the assembly. Taking Socrates in the market-place for the paradigmatic situation with which to model his interpretation of the inner word, Risser indicates that it is breath in the voice of many people conversing as they would have in the assembly of Athens about matters of public interest, e.g., justice.

In *The Life of Understanding*, Risser returns to the question of the inner word referring to it as “*vouloire-dire*” but does not, as he had in his earlier book translated it as “intended meaning,” but instead as “wanting to say,” which is the more accurate translation of the two. “Intending” connotes an act of the mind, “wanting to say” of the embodied mind-passions with an emphasis on lack rather than on foresight or planning. But wanting to say what precisely? What is it that is lacking? Risser has already answered—the inner word is expressed, or made public in the unity of voices or song. The “wanting to say,” is a wanting to form a community of human solidarity in language.

The problem with Risser’s thesis is that nowhere in his writing does Gadamer mention “breathed voice” in relation to either the inner word or inner ear. Since Risser had eschewed the theological version of the inner word in “Language and Logos” on the grounds that the inner ear is not mentioned, he has established the same precedent for a like criticism of his own work. But what then could justify his interpretive liberties? As mentioned, he consults Plato as an authority on the inner word. This is warranted insofar as Plato considers dialogue the medium for understanding, which is Gadamer’s position as well. But this is not, in fact, the only reason why Risser defers to the ancient Greek. Although he calls Plato a “provisional guide,”¹⁴² two of his three reasons for consulting the *Phaedrus* are indicative of a “folk intuitionist” view of the Athenian: (1) Plato has as close an affinity with Gadamer’s thought as Heidegger¹⁴³ (2) Plato awakens contemporary consciousness to an understanding of the everyday phenomenon of the voice we have forgotten and (3) Plato’s *Phaedrus* and the discussion of the invention of writing is a means with which to challenge Jacques Derrida’s criticism that Gadamer’s hermeneutics betrays the primacy of the spoken word.¹⁴⁴ Invoking the *Phaedrus* in order to refute Derrida’s criticism of Gadamer is strategically effective, and probably the best reason for turning back to Plato’s work. The other two justifications are slightly more dubious. Risser does not explain in what way Gadamer has as close an affinity

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¹⁴⁴ See Gadamer,”Text and Interpretation,” 54.
with Plato as he does with Heidegger. How could he? They speak completely different languages and are from completely different cultures. Of course, it could be that Risser presupposes that what he infers about Plato and the voice is true for Gadamer because, like Arthos on Augustine, he supposes that they share the same “mind.” Hence, his second reason stated above indicates that he thinks Plato knows something about language that we have forgotten. In a move reminiscent of Heidegger’s stepping back into Aristotle’s primordial notion of *phusis* in order to save the world from technology, Risser steps back to the pure, unadulterated origins of the voice in Plato’s thought. No less than Aristotle for Heidegger, for Risser, Plato’s language is unique because it has not been distorted by Latin Christendom (which forced a rupture between thought and language). But then, has Risser not assumed a trans-historical, essentialist understanding of the Greeks? If so, more evidence is required than an inference about his view of Gadamer’s relation to Plato being analogous to Heidegger’s to Aristotle and the pre-Socratics.

Risser reports that the word “breath” was used to mean intelligence, spirit, mind, soul and life by the ancient Greeks. There is no point in trying to distinguish these words from one another. The Greeks did not because they were pre-scientific; submerged in experience rather than separated or distanced from it like a spectator in the stands watching a game. This suggests that “breath” must have been, for the ancients, an “embodied” notion: mind-breath or soul-breath of someone’s voice. But at the same time, did not Plato transform the ordinary meaning of such notions as soul and reason? Possibly in recognition of this, Risser drops “spirit,” “mind,” and “intelligence” from his view of the inner word in *The Life of Understanding*. Therein he associates the inner word with life, movement and breath. This might be evidence of him having recognized the “metaphysical” connotations of “breath” that Plato created in re-thinking his own culture. But conjecture does not count as evidence. There are yet other indications of Risser’s folk intuition. He refers to “the word of spirit that occurs in writing when the word is read. This is the word of breath that is heard by the inner ear.” In this case, the word of breath is not literally the breathing voice, otherwise it would not require, as Risser says it does, an inner ear to hear. However, he also states:

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146 For Plato’s transforming the meaning of reason from the Homeric meaning of taking counsel and talking to oneself to insight see P. Christopher Smith, “The Uses of Aristotle in Gadamer’s Recovery of Consultative Reasoning,” in *Chicago-Kent Law Review* 76, no. 2 June (2002): 731-750.
A poem is not heard when the mere sound of the words are received by the ear, just as a text is not read when our eyes read the letters that make up the words. What is at stake is the voice, in other words, is the taking place of language as such. The *flatus vocis*, literally, the breathing voice.\textsuperscript{149}

In this case, language brings what is far so near to the reader that the breathing voice (of the other) is literally heard by them. In contrast to the former characterization of the breathed voice that required an inner ear, the event of language about which he speaks in the second passage brings the breath in the spirit of the word completely to life—the breath is right there in front of the reader (presumably they breath it too). Striking is that in this moment of breathing voice, Risser denies that any sound is heard. With that qualification, he effectively undermines the experience he is aiming to explain and pushes his view of the inner word back into a metaphysically encased idea that is inaudible to anyone’s ear. Stated otherwise, he supposes that since sound is of a physical nature it cannot at the same time be universal. Breath not making a sound, yet still being a property of voice, and therefore related to meaning in the spoken language, qualifies for universality. The light of day, it is everywhere and nowhere—a mid-way point between a physical and metaphysical standard for what counts as reality, but still a product of conceptual thinking, which is the only kind of reasoning that makes any sense of his choice: there is no such thing as a breathed voice that does not make a sound unless nothing is said (which would disengage his position from anything spoken).

In conclusion, Risser’s repositioning of the way in which to think about the inner word from theology and philosophy to phenomenology is methodologically sound. It is logically entailed by the arguments of Grondin, Arthos, and Wiercinski, who claim that the inner word is dialogical and/or lingual, yet do not take a phenomenological perspective on it.\textsuperscript{150} They do not conceive of the inner word in experiential and historical terms; terms consistent with the motility of language they presuppose. But Risser does, when he associates the inner word with the voice, breath in the voice and song. However, and in keeping with Slingerland’s view of hermeneutics, he also blunts the significance of this move by resorting to sources and hypotheses about Gadamer that are not hermeneutically sound except as a strategic move against Derrida. Being thus distracted by the Greeks, he does not reflect

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 166. For Risser, the breathed voice of the words is brought to life by the reader who converses with a subject-matter in a text.

\textsuperscript{150} Lammi summarizes the task of phenomenology “as the study of the temporal constitution of objects in the world and the life-world itself, as given to consciousness.” Walter Lammi, *Gadamer and the Question of the Divine* (London: Continuum, 2008), 3.
adequately upon the phenomenon of language itself to which he claims to be returning, and indeed, bypasses it when he consigns the sound of language to insignificance in matters of the inner word because, he thinks it is inconsistent with the universality, i.e., idea, of language.

5 Philippe Eberhard

The reasoning of the scholars studied thus far is entangled in metaphysics. Although Grondin mentions an embodied notion of the inner word while quoting Augustine, he identifies it with the infinite mind. Although Arthos brings the *verbum* into the realm of a dialogue, he justifies his argument with a theory of consciousness. Although Risser argues for the inner word being breath in the voice manifest in a medley of voices or song, he denies it any acoustic properties and is distracted from a phenomenology of the voice by what he thinks the ancient Greeks said. The movement toward and away from a phenomenological and embodied account of the inner word suggests that while they have a good sense for what the inner word is, they lack the capacity to form explanations for it in any other than metaphysical terms; they do not develop explanations for the inner word that befit its embodied nature, and instead, derail the latter by resorting to amodal concepts and abstract ideas.

Eberhard’s reasoning is not entangled in a metaphysical and phenomenological conundrum. In *The Middle Voice in Gadamer’s Hermeneutics*, he is aware of precisely what his colleagues do not reflect upon; namely, the manner of reasoning that drives them toward certain conclusions and not others. Hence, in chapter two of his book, he explains how scholars of Gadamer’s work reach the point where a central idea is about to break open, and then abort their motion or redirect it.\(^{151}\) By thus attending to how scholars think, Eberhard sets a precedent for what has been undertaken here. In so doing, he is also a source with which to understand why the thinking of the scholars studied herein derails.

The title of Eberhard’s book fits the thesis that the middle voice is the locale from which to interpret key themes in Gadamer’s work such as play, fusion of horizons, speculativity and the inner word. However, in the course of developing his argument he distinguishes the auditory middle voice from a visual standpoint toward beings that points toward two modes of reasoning about beings that other scholars have made the object of their

research. Eberhard explains, “What counts is not the origin and history of the Judeo-Christian traditions way of listening to the spoken word but Christology’s counterbalancing the visual imagery characteristic of a rationality manipulating and employing words instead of following them and listening to them.”\textsuperscript{152} This remark is not substantiated; nevertheless, it includes important characteristics of listening and seeing. He says that in contrast to seeing, which entails the rational manipulation of words, listening follows them. These characterizations are a first step toward differentiating two kinds of understanding. When knowledge is acquired by sight it is typically best to be at a distance from the object, thereby inoculating oneself from its influence and taking in the widest field of view. Sight privileges the spectator’s perspective that is indifferent to acoustics and therefore, to the appearing/happening which is refigured by sight into a concept or idea. Hence, Hans Jonas points out that in contrast to other senses sight is not time-bound. Whereas other senses are limited to succession in time (one sensation at a time), sight is capable of taking in a manifold or complete field of content co-temporaneously, or at the same time.\textsuperscript{153} It isn’t simply the feeling for the rigidity of a pen that sight detects; it takes in, for Jonas, the entire room in a glance and for this reason tends toward the comprehension of areas that transcend the temporal duration of the surfaces touched. Whereas touch might convey some semblance of a table by feeling every millimetre of it piecemeal, sight sees the entire form simultaneously. No less than touch, hearing is limited to the temporal duration of what is heard. Just as it is not a table that is felt, only a sense of resistance; it is not a dog that is heard, merely the bark. Since sight has the capacity to see the whole (form) of what can be touched Jonas believes it to be superior to the other senses.

When thus taking up a visual relation to the inner word, how does it appear to the knower? As “being-as-a-whole,” infinite mind, inexhaustible idea(s), totality of all true propositions, the mind of God meeting the mind of human beings. The visual-objective perspective is what derails the thinking of scholars about the phenomenological nature of the inner word. This perspective tends to abstract from the phenomenon by stabilizing an appearing appearance into an idea or concept. Eberhard’s observation that visual imagery is

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 180.
\textsuperscript{153} Hans Jonas intends to explain why sight has been heralded since the Greeks as the sense par excellence, why sight has a higher role in mental performance. He argues that visual thinking is prone (1) toward seeing wholes rather than contingent particulars and (2) toward the formation of objectivity. Hans Jonas, “The Nobility of Sight,” in The Phenomenon of Life: Toward a Philosophical Biology (New York: Delta Book, 1966), 135-156.
characteristic of rational manipulation of words is an inadvertent allusion to these aspects of sight.

But Eberhard also contrasts this visual way of acquiring knowledge with listening that does not manipulate words but rather, he says, follows them. In contrast to sight, hearing closes down the distance between the subject and object as much as touch does and is similarly keyed to the particular. Indeed, hearkening has primacy among the sensory modalites comparable only to touch and being touched;\textsuperscript{154} hearing is a channel to the emotions and not away from them.\textsuperscript{155} In general, in the words of Walter Ong, “vision objectifies, speech personalizes.”\textsuperscript{156} Granted, Eberhard does not say as much as this, but it is entailed by his aligning hearing with the middle voice, which in turn opens up a more concrete and existential way of thinking about the inner word than does objectifying sight.

The middle voice is distinct from the passive and active voices (receiving the action and performing the action respectively) in that the subject is neither acted upon nor the agent, but instead is both in relation to the verb.\textsuperscript{157} Eberhard explains that “the middle voice brings the subject in his or her relation to the process the verb expresses. In the middle voice, as opposed to the active, the subject is within the action which happens to him or her and of which he or she is subject.”\textsuperscript{158} As examples of middle voiced thinking he cites the following words by Gadamer: “history does not belong to us as we belong to it,” “in conversation we are more led than leading,” “language speaks us rather than we speak it.” From an objectifying-visual standpoint, these statements are, of course, incoherent. How can one belong to history? Is history a despot? Is a person a dog to conversation the leash? Gadamer must be personifying nouns. From the medial location of the middle voice, however, the statements Eberhard highlights make sense. Gadamer is urging the reader to think of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{155} The “auditory dimension from the outset begins to display itself as a pervasive characteristic of bodily experience.” Hence, we can feel notes in our stomach and feet, our bones themselves conduct sounds. Don Ihde, \textit{Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Sound} (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976), 45.
  \item \textsuperscript{156} In Walter Ong, \textit{Orality and Literacy}, cited in Ihde, \textit{Listening and Voice}, 40, Quoting Ong, Ihde writes, “Negatively, the tendency to take visual perception and visual imagination as paradigms results in an over-emphasis which may hide aspects crucial to the perceptions of other persons” (ibid., 36). For a criticism of the thesis attributed to Ong that oral and literate cultures have opposing characteristics and that he does not give due regard to the Biblical-theological origins of the spoken word see Jonathon Sterne, “A Theology of Sound: A Critique of Orality,” \textit{Canadian Journal of Communication} 36 (2011): 207-225.
  \item \textsuperscript{157} The middle voice straddles verbs that in ancient Greek, Sanskrit and Latin belong to neither the active (\textit{energeia}, performer) or passive (\textit{pathos}, experience) voice and instead, include both. Greek word for middle is \textit{mesitos} and it was translated into Latin by the term medium. \textit{Mesitos} is also etymologically related to the ancient Greek word for mean or taking of measure, \textit{metrion}.
  \item \textsuperscript{158} Eberhard, \textit{The Middle Voice in Gadamer’s Hermeneutics}, 2.
\end{itemize}
themselves as being both active and acted upon, which is what experience surely is (*pathos*).\(^{159}\) For Gadamer, it bears a striking similarity to aesthetic experience. He writes in *Truth and Method* quoted by David Vessey:

> I maintain a work of art, thanks to its formal aspect, has something to say to us either through the question it awakens, or the question it answers . . . An artwork “says something to someone.” In this assertion is contained the dismay of finding oneself directly affected by what was said by the work, and being forced to reflect again and again on what was said there, in order to make it understandable to oneself and others.\(^{160}\)

As Vessey points out, during an experience we are “‘in it’ in the existential sense, much as we are ‘in love, ‘in need,’ or ‘in a mood.’”\(^{161}\) In hindsight what emerges, he points out, is up to us, but not in the midst of a game or in an experience of truth in art. Eberhard uses the middle voice to interpret key themes in Gadamer’s work, as mentioned. But it is above all the section on the speculative element of language in *Truth and Method* that is most informative of the two modes of perception as they bear upon an interpretation of the inner word.

Eberhard argues that Gadamer makes a crucial shift in how he thinks about speculativity. Stated concisely, speculativity means “that everything that language says speaks because it is carried by that which it does not say.”\(^{162}\) Although Eberhard does not address the question of the inner word in this context, it is implicated. He reports that speculation comes to the fore as Vollzug in Gadamer’s essay, “Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Ideology.” According to Grondin, Vollzug is the unsaid in excess of anything said, i.e., inner word. The wealth of meaning in the unsaid is what one “wants to say” (*vouloire-dire*) according to Risser,\(^{163}\) or as he puts it, the breath in the voice of the intended thought. What Gadamer says about speculativity, therefore, is consistent with what Gadamer scholars have


\(^{161}\) Ibid., 210.

\(^{162}\) Eberhard, *The Middle Voice in Gadamer’s Hermeneutics*, 97. He argues that there are three points that underscore speculation as “an encompassing even that happens to us as we speak and try to find the right word: language as medium (ibid., 101), language as selfless action (ibid., 101-102) and the “Greek advantage” (ibid., 103). On *Sache* see ibid., 103-104.

determined is the nature of the inner word. But consider Gadamer’s words about making oneself understood in everyday language in which one who thus speaks:

May use only the most common and ordinary words and yet is able just through them to bring to language what is unsaid, the unsaid that needs to be said and here is said. He who speaks is proceeding speculatively in that his words are not copying anything “real” but are actually expressing a relation to the whole of being and letting it come to expression.\(^{164}\)

Speculation is to “express” a relation to the whole of being. This relation, Eberhard will maintain is auditory. Audition has a privileged access to the whole of being. He explains that Gadamer “trespasses the visual character of speculation” as a mirroring of what is not said and “describes speculation in relation to the infinity of the unsaid as a resonating, atonen.”\(^{165}\)

In the course of explaining how the term speculative is a mirror relation in that the observer is the medium that connects the image in the mirror with the actual sight of the thing, Gadamer specifies that the mirror image is “like an ‘appearance’.” He refers the reader to the *Summa Theologica* “Reply to Objection 2” where the speculative relation is conveyed with image and mirror and is beholden. But Gadamer also refers to its counterpart in Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling’s *Bruno* and quotes him in support of this interpretation of the speculative relation.\(^{166}\)

It is indeed as he says parallel to Aquinas’ interpretation. However, Gadamer frequently holds out regard for the romantics, e.g., Hegel and Schleiermacher,\(^{167}\) for being the first among the moderns to return to the pre-Socratics. Is it not likely that Gadamer would have been aware of Johann Jacob Wagner’s words, “*Bruno* is really the authentic philosophy of modern Platonism”\(^{168}\)?

The translator and editor of the said work Michael G. Vater’s first words about the novel are, “On first inspection, the most striking feature of the *Bruno* is that it appears to be a return to the substance of Plato’s thought as well as to its literary form.”\(^{169}\) If we follow this lead, then something else comes to the fore with this reference to Schelling; namely, that the Greek language is a window into the resonance with the unsaid. In this regard it is advisable to look into the relevant Greek terms. Mirror


\(^{166}\) TM 491, Note 106. Henceforth designated by TM.


\(^{169}\) Ibid.
and image (but also likeness and portrait) are in Greek eikon. According to the Liddell and Scott Greek-English Lexicon, eikon is used by Aeschylus as “an image in a mirror,” and by Plato as “image in the mind.” Given the extent to which ancient Greek consists of formulaic utterances, Plato might well have had Aeschylus in mind when he substituted mirror with mind. The other relevant term is phonetically and etymologically related to eikon, namely eikos. It means “likely,” “probably,” “reasonable,” and “like truth.” So what is imaged in a mirror reflecting nature (Aeschylus) is then like truth in the mind (Plato). This winds its way back to Eberhard’s point about resonance. According to Vater’s interpretation of Bruno, Schelling “strenuously attacks Fichte’s contention that philosophy must start from a seeing, not a being.”170 For Schelling the best model for understanding the absolute’s identity within difference is space and not empirical consciousness.171 But what kind of space is that? If the novel resembles (mirrors) the ancient dialogues of Plato in modern thought, then the space is probably acoustic. Gadamer calls attention to this as well and in particular with reference to the inner word. He writes in Truth and Method, “Hence this inner word is the mirror and the image of the divine Word.” This is also called “the word of the heart” and is related to “intelligentia.”172 Intelligentia can mean reason, but also discernment and perception. Accordingly, the heart perceives truth in resonances (or affections of the voice), i.e., it allows things to appear.173 Eberhard is right—speculation describes a relation to the infinite provided that the mind is in agreement with the heart that listens. For this reason Hegel’s dialectic, for Gadamer, remained technical or framed in terms of propositions rather than according to the motility of an actual conversation.174 The latter is not grasped from a spectator’s point of view (which would objectify it), but rather is understood from the position of the middle voice. In contrast to Hegel, Gadamer enacts a change in perception from a visual to an auditory mode of thinking. But this is not entirely the case—he points out

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170 Schelling, Bruno, or, on the Natural and the Divine Principle of Things with an Introduction, 236, Note 33.
171 Ibid.
172 TM, 438. Thanks to James DiCenso for bringing this passage to my attention.
173 I am transposing these conclusions about acoustic space into the function of the mirror as described by Gadamer, TM, 461.
174 The pedal point for his insight comes after Gadamer has criticized Hegel’s account of the “speculative element” as a mirror relation on the grounds that his dialectic is conceptual, i.e., where the meaning of everything unsaid remains a concept (TM, 461-464). See Eberhard on Hegel and Gadamer’s critique of Hegel in Middle Voice in Gadamer’s Hermeneutics, 104-105. Gadamer concludes, “Language itself, however, has something speculative about it in a quite different sense—not only in the sense Hegel intends, as an instinctive prefiguring of logical reflection—but, rather, as the realization of meaning, as the event of speech, of mediation, of coming to an understanding.” TM, 464.
that for Hegel a philosophical proposition has two peaks, a subject and a predicate whose “counterthrust” Hegel compares “to the rhythm that follows from the two elements of meter and accent, and produces the same floating harmony.”

Eberhard’s following words could then include the counterpoised position of Hegel given this resonance between him and Gadamer: “Gadamer reformulates the speculative nature of language in terms of echoing, resonating, instead of mirroring. That this is possible indicates that what really counts is the process that I termed medial and not the visual process. This shift from the visual to the auditory underlines the universality of the process.”

When asked by Grondin in what the universality of hermeneutics consists, Gadamer had replied, the inner word. Eberhard claims the same for speculativity. Richard Palmer to whom he refers in this regard writes, “speculativity, if deeply understood, is not only the key to understanding Gadamer’s hermeneutics but the true ground to his claim to universality.”

The fact that Gadamer says that reply and address are also universal does not mean that there are three competing concepts of universality in his mind, but rather that the unsaid is part and parcel of a dialogue, as Arthos reasoned and Grondin had said (without justification due to his “subjective idiom”). But that universality of the inner word heard given in speculativity we now know is discerned by hearing and not sight; hence, Gadamer’s reformulation of the speculative nature of language in terms of echoing and resonating. This is what Risser may have detected as well when he described the inner word as being without edges and continuous in the space it fills (the assembly).

So why does Eberhard say, “This shift from the visual to the auditory underlines the universality of the process?” He answers, “Hearing, however, is more universal because it means not only hearing but also hearing words. Only hearing is related to logos and language. Reading, for instance, implies that one hears what the text says to one’s inner ear.”

Eberhard might be taken to be making a distinction between hearing with the inner ear while reading a text and another kind of hearing fitted for a conversation. But this is not what he means nor is the distinction relevant insofar as the written word bears a resemblance

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175 TM, 462.
176 Eberhard, The Middle Voice in Gadamer’s Hermeneutics, 100.
177 Ibid., 98; See Palmer, Hermeneutics, 214.
to the spoken language. The point that Eberhard is making is that sight is not fit to comprehend the universality of language when language is understood as a verbal phenomenon. Consequently, whereas sight privileges the subject in that they can look away (and maintain control), hearing cannot avoid the volume of sound, as he calls it or the acoustic space that encompasses a speaker. As he states it, “Hearing underscores the medial meaning of speculation because it suggests a process that happens to us without giving us the possibility to choose ahead of time what we want to include in it and what we want to reject from it.”

Sound is effectively always everywhere. Don Ihde crafts a summative statement that refers to many of the insights gleaned about sound from Eberhard, Augustine and Gadamer:

My auditory field and my auditory focusing is not isomorphic with the visual field and focus, it is omnidirectional. In the shape of the auditory field, as a surrounding thing, the field-shape ‘exceeds’ that of the field shape of sight. Were it to be modeled spatially, the auditory field would have to be conceived of as a ‘sphere’ within which I am positioned, but whose ‘extent’ remains indefinite as it reaches outward toward a horizon. . . . If I hear Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony in an acoustically excellent auditorium, I suddenly find myself immersed in sound which surrounds me. The music is even so penetrating that my whole body reverberates, and I may find myself absorbed to such a degree that the usual distinction between the senses of inner and outer is virtually obliterated. The auditory field surrounds the listener, and surroundability is an essential feature of the field-shape of sound.

The distinction between inner and outer worlds is obliterated, he says, when he is immersed in a totalizing field of music that exceeds like meaning anything said by us or seen. When we are open and attend to the acoustic space (or volume of sound) we experience a sense of belonging [Zugehörigkeit] because we are in touch with whatever happens to be happening—a practical kind of knowledge from which sight can alienate.

Eberhard brings to the discussion a situated mode of thinking about the speculativeness of language as it bears upon the inner word. Being thus situated in the “oral” Heidegger of facticity, the “living truth” to which Grondin had called attention, the dialogue which Risser imagines transpired in the Athenian assembly, Eberhard calls attention to the role of hearing in ascertaining being-as-a-whole, which cannot in fact be “being-as-a-whole” from the middle voiced position. If he is on the right track, then it would seem that the

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179 Ibid., 100.
181 See Gadamer on hearing and sight TM, 458.
scholars being discussed cannot make sense of the inner word except in terms of concepts and ideas that abstract from its embodied existence because they have not repositioned themselves into a medial relation to the verb from which to consider the event of language. It is, therefore, not the case that they perpetuate, as Slingerland argues, a folk intuition alone (although that may also be true), but rather, for Eberhard, that the metaphysical dimensions of their thought are generated from a particular way of perceiving-thinking about human experience. Nevertheless, just what the medial middle voice standpoint involves (mood, attunement, disposition?), and what sort of auditory mode of perception is required to hear it is left undeveloped by him. Hence, the nature of the inner word is not adequately accounted for. Eberhard’s discussion of it is confined to the theology of “Logos and Language.”

6 Walter Lammi

According to Eberhard, whereas a visual perspective on beings (entities) abstracts from the motility and event character of language, an auditory-medial location of the middle voice preserves it. Thus does he provide an explanation for Risser’s insights into language according to a hermeneutics of the voice; Risser could not reason toward the fulfillment of the inner word (or concretisation of it) in a Greek epos or song in the voices conjoined in the Assembly because he does not adopt the middle voice location from which to think about a “we” that includes the “I.” In Gadamer and the Question of the Divine, Walter Lammi does not speak directly to the same modification of thinking in Gadamer’s philosophy to which Eberhard draws attention. Nevertheless, Lammi could not express such a profound view of the experience of both art and of the divine did he not, like Risser, tacitly take up a middle voice position. Nevertheless, there are critical junctures in his thinking where his insights into the embodied nature of Gadamer’s phenomenological-hermeneutics go awry.

Lammi believes that awareness about Gadamer’s notion of the divine can contribute to a dialogue between atheists and those of a religious frame of mind. His reasons for believing this is that Gadamer based this notion on a pre-Christian, Greek cult experience of being-as-a-whole that is available to everyone irrespective of their creedal commitments or beliefs. This experience of being-as-a-whole wipes away the very notion of belief and the intellectual justifications for it that Lammi believes divide peoples against one another. Being-as-a-whole, as will be discussed in the next chapter, has three tiers; the aion zoe, bios

182 Ibid., 181.
and potentiality-to-be-one-another that he argues Gadamer translates into the experience of the work of art. *Aion zoe* refers to animal and bodily existence, *bios* to differentiations within *aion zoon*, and the third tier represents the possibility of community. For Lammi, we are separated from one another at this third tier by symbolic and conceptual language. The less complex life forms, e.g., ants and bees, therefore find “community” less problematic than humans. The problem for humans is that their science and technology have muted what Lammi calls the power of mood of the divine. Hence, according to Lammi, in the interest of humanity, Gadamer, inspired by Heidegger, Hölderlin and early Greek religion, aims to revive that mood in the work of art. The crucial move in the achievement of this mood, *hexis*, intention or disposition is a transformation of the self or stated less dramatically, a decentering of the subject. The decentering is represented by *Ereignis* in Heidegger’s philosophy, by a return to the gods in Hölderlin’s poetry, by openness in Gadamer’s work. Openness to the other is an auditory disposition indicated by the language Heidegger uses to describe *Ereignis*; vibration, but more importantly is Lammi’s characterization of the early Greek cult experience of the divine that carries over into art and to a dialogue for Gadamer.183 Lammi characterizes the experience as follows:

rhythmic music, chanting, dancing and various kinds of exercise . . . One can listen to percussive instruments and chant . . . Gadamer describes the role of rhythmic sound in religious cults as a diminishing of all articulations in favour of the identification of vital harmony . . . mesmerizing, body language, gesture . . . Various other kinds of exercise disciplines are designed to still the mind and create a personal harmony and balance that readies cult members for the advent of the ‘vital harmony’ of the divine.184

The experience is total—the body and voice conjoined in bringing about an immersion in the *aion zoe* or animal consciousness from out of which to articulate harmony or tonal unity in song.

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183 In terms of a dialogue the same mood of openness is carried over through listening without which a dialogue would not be possible. “What is this great good, ‘dialogue’? If it is to mean anything more than palaver, it must involve a mutual listening and with listening, a mutual elevation. Gadamer’s famous dictum that one must ‘risk oneself’ in dialogue means that one puts one’s views into the open to be challenged, refuted or refined. Argument deepens through thoughtful disagreement” Walter Lammi, *Gadamer and the Question of the Divine* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008), vii. “At issue is not the subjective act of meaning but the right word and its effect” (ibid., 8). Unless there is mutual listening, there is no argument. Instead, just two people talking past each other to whatever idea is preoccupying their attention. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the reader to rid themselves of the barrier that separates them from others and as would transpire in an experience of art, tune into the other and let what is there come to fruition.

The well-being of humankind rests on this capacity to yield to what Lammi calls the power of mood in which the divine or being-as-a-whole announces itself. This power of mood, however, is notably congruent with Eberhard’s characterization of the middle voice. Lammi’s description of the Greek cult experience of the divine is replete with metaphors of hearing and song. Indeed, he is precise about it. His focus on transformation leads him to describe it in relatively certain terms as follows: “Gadamer’s well-known and controversial privileging of speech over the written word has much to do with the role of silence—in gesture, emphasis, and in general the rhythm that gives voice to meaning. To Gadamer, rhythm plays a special role as ‘intermediary realm between being and the soul,’ and as such it underlies all linguisticality.”

This intermediary realm of rhythm will be developed further in the next chapter. Suffice it to say that this rhythm is between not only being and soul but also between speakers and that without it language and therefore understanding between peoples would be impaired. For example, it is disclosed in a primitive state of mind or the religious experience of the divine. The condition from out of which to found common understanding among all peoples bubbles to the surface from this middle territory or ground.

Lammi’s thinking about the inner word (or inner ear for the realm of rhythm) thus leads toward a phenomenology of the voice, attunement, and change in disposition, song and harmony. But at the same time, he closes this possibility down most notably by insisting that even in the Greek experience of the divine “being-as-a-whole” speaks in silence. He states that he will not dwell on the role of language in Gadamer’s hermeneutics (which he says is well known) and continues:

Instead the heterodox topic of this study takes my concern with language in the direction of a phenomenology of religious experience, which includes a phenomenology of silence. Gadamer stresses that the dialectic of question and answer is the universal basis for hermeneutical experience, and the question is always prior to any answer. If the question of the divine is the real beginning, the question, the fundamental question of philosophical hermeneutics, it must be silently everywhere in, or behind, Gadamer’s phenomenological ontology of language. In speech then, the speechless realm of the divine, which the Greeks called the arrheton or unsayable, comes to world in the belonging of self and world.

If, as Lammi brings out via Gadamer, the intermediary realm is rhythmic, why does he claim that the religious experience includes a phenomenology of silence that must be silently everywhere as in a speechless realm of the divine, the unsayable, arrheton? Lammi is

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185 Ibid., 9. See also his allusion to this same thought, ibid., 69.
186 Ibid., 8.
undermining the phenomenon of the voice to which one’s own thinking is inclined with what he calls a phenomenology of silence. He is emphatic, “To strive for divine experience represents the consummate goal of human community. Yet its cultic achievement as a matter of group activity at its highest point issues not in language but in ‘divine silence,’ as Gadamer puts it.”

Lammi does not explain how the inner word can be both audible and silent because he has not thought clearly about the nature of sound and the senses. Both are worthy objects of scientific inquiry that might raise the nature of the inner word to the status of universality, or at least to being a general feature of spoken language. Consider what Gadamer finds interesting in Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) when he comments on him as follows: “Wherever there is language the originary verbal power of the human mind is at work, and every language is capable of attaining the general goal toward which this natural power of man is directed.”

According to Gadamer, this “power” is mental, “the interior sense of language,” that differentiates not only sounds but whole languages. Michael Losonsky explains, “Central to Humboldt’s thinking about human language is the idea that there is a mental power (Geisteskraft) that is responsible for language, and for the diversity of languages, as well as for culture and cultural diversity. . . . These internal mental states are active powers or forces that bring about the external phenomena of culture, including human language.” Is this energy of a mental state the means by which the inner word acts on sound?

Gadamer concludes of Humboldt that he “recognized the living act of speech, verbal energeia, is the essence of language, and overcame the dogmatism of the grammarians.” If the Greeks were indeed in closer proximity to the forces of nature precisely because they were unfamiliar with the scientific method that habituates us to thinking independently of these forces, then perhaps the inner word ought to similarly be studied. It might make sense of Gadamer’s belief that “in genuine dialogue, something emerges that is contained in neither of the partners by himself.”

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187 Ibid., 94.
188 TM, 437.
190 TM, 438.
191 Ibid., 440.
192 Ibid., 458 and thus “language speaks us” (ibid., 459).
Chapter Three: The Inner Voice and Being-as-a-Whole

“Music projects the logical character of the ‘organismic life’ into a non-discursive form”
Susanne Langer.193

1 Introduction

Just what the inner word is has largely been answered by the philosophers of Gadamer’s work that were discussed in chapter two. From the standpoint of a disengaged observer, the inner word appears to be an unsaid idea that exceeds anything said or as the infinite inexhaustible idea of being-as-a-whole. From the position of the middle voice in which there is a significant change in one’s mode of perception from the visual to the auditory (Eberhard), the inner voice is an event or happening heard. Assuming the medial location of the middle voice yet focusing on human existence; specifically, the de-centering of the self in a religious experience of the early Greek cults (that Gadamer carries over to the experience of art), the inner voice is a vital harmony (Lammi).194 What of the phenomenological stance? Of the non-theologically inclined philosophers studied herein, Risser devotes the most attention to the inner word. For him, the non-metaphysically encased inner word is between sound and meaning;195 between sounds “produced by the respiratory tract” or between an actual utterance and what is about to be said. In a dialogical context this is the “handing over of one’s own thinking to another.”196 It entails that the speaker retreats and lets a statement hang there; that they desist from speaking and wait for the other person to pick up what was said. There is no self-identity in the breath of voice (living voice) but there is still being, he says, still the meaning of being toward which the speakers aim (in a voice that drifts).197 Risser and Lammi have as concrete and tangible a view of the inner voice of anyone to my knowledge and this has implications for the universality of hermeneutics.

When asked by Jean Grondin, in what does the universality of hermeneutics consist? Gadamer answered, “the verbum interius.” His resorting to Latin is not evidence of a

194 For Lammi, the notion of the inner word when thought about from within language refers to a musical dimension of language. This follows from what has been gathered by a study of the scholars treated herein: Grondin, for instance, relies on Augustine as a key to unlock what Gadamer means by the inner word. While Grondin retreats into a Stoic distinction between the inner and outer worlds, Augustine the rhetorician is keyed to the embodied word he heard in Ambrose’s hymns at the Church in Milan, in the voices of his nurses while he was learning to speak, and in his overall preference for Latin over Greek (grammar).
196 Ibid., 177.
197 Ibid., 184.
theological foundation to philosophical hermeneutics. As Walter Lammi says, “the meaning and importance of the *verbum* in Gadamer’s thinking could be elucidated without the *verbum*.”\(^{198}\) Although Lammi points out that he is not concerned with the *verbum* in particular and instead, with the phenomenology of religious experience and language,\(^{199}\) his research unearths the acoustic properties of the middle medium in speech and in so doing prepares a way for this study. If the meaning of Being is announced in the event of language, or as he says on behalf of Gadamer, in a “melody of meaning,”\(^{200}\) then its ontological structure ought to similarly be audible in the living language. It is this task alluded to by Lammi, left undeveloped by Gadamer that is undertaken here with a view to explaining why “the meaning of Being” can be heard in the harmony of the dialogue form.

The primary obstacle to the argument that the ontological structure of Being-as-a-whole or the meaning of Being is audible in the dialogue form in Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics is the conviction that the *verbum* is an ineffable metaphysical idea. That Gadamer does not hold to this position follows from his criticism of Rudolph Otto. He criticizes him for distinguishing the creator from the created and on that basis positing an “other” wholly separate from human existence.\(^{201}\) Gadamer opts instead for a phenomenological approach to metaphysics in this sense: the *verbum* is not internal to the mind, and instead deeply perceptual. How and in what way? The first section, “Being-as-a-Whole is Audible,” selectively employs Lammi’s research into the Greek religious experience of the divine in order to establish that the mode of perception in question for Gadamer is auditory rather than visual. Section two, “Acoustics of Being-as-a-Whole,” excavates works by Gadamer in order to reconstruct the acoustic properties of the *verbum*. It is shown to consist of rhythmic and tonal waves, which when combined constitute harmony between voices in a dialogue (or back and forth of reply and address). This analysis of the acoustic properties of the inner word is developed in relation to the tripartite structure of Being as Lammi understands it in early Greek thought as follows: rhythm corresponds to *aion zoe*, tone to *bios* and harmony to potentiality-to-be-one-another. In the course of explaining these correlations between the meaning of Being and the living language modes of auditory perception are distinguished from one another.

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\(^{199}\) Ibid., 8.

\(^{200}\) Ibid., 4.

\(^{201}\) Ibid., 68.
2 Being-as-a-whole is Audible

Gadamer’s understanding of the Greek experience of the divine is informed by the research of Walter Friedrich Otto (1874-1958). He was one of the readers of Gadamer’s Habilitationsschrift.\(^{202}\) His influence on Gadamer is borne out to some degree in Truth and Method. Therein Gadamer singles out Walter Otto, Karl Kerényi and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling for having re-invigorated romantic ideas in the era of positivism.\(^{203}\) He holds out special regard for the introduction to Otto’s book Dionysus: Myth and Cult (1933) titled “Myth and Cultus.”\(^{204}\) Therein Otto is critical of the classical philologist Urich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1848-1931) for having applied “the biological concept of evolution in exactly the same way” as those of whom he was critical; namely, anthropologists and ethno-psychologists.\(^{205}\) Despite insisting that “one should: limit oneself to the Greeks and think ‘Greek’ about everything Greek,” Wilamowitz imposed modern assumptions about organisms evolving from the simple to the complex to his interpretation of “the religious beliefs of the Greeks” and thereby overlooked how they understood themselves and their religion, which in fact, according to Otto, Wilamowitz nevertheless presupposes.\(^{206}\) Gadamer echoes Otto’s stand on the Wilamowitz school insofar as he is critical of their insensitivity to Plato’s art and thus to the importance of the literary form of Plato’s dialogues for understanding the doctrine of ideas (which the existentialist school of the ‘20’s he says downplayed).\(^{207}\) Gadamer goes yet further. He considers Otto and Kerényi forerunners of scholarship that takes myth seriously\(^{208}\) and sides with Otto’s aim to revive in the modern age aspects of the world represented by the Greek gods despite the fact that their original religious and cult significance had disappeared.\(^{209}\) The key to this achievement is indicated by Gadamer when he acknowledges Otto’s capacity to attune himself to the Greek poetic

\(^{202}\) Ibid., 82.


\(^{205}\) Otto refers to Wilamowitz’s Der Glaube der Hellenen or The Religious Beliefs of the Greeks, (1931-1932).


\(^{208}\) TM, 510.

tradition. There is something in language and to which the inner ear is attuned that is central to understanding the meaning of Being for Gadamer. This makes Otto a viable source to consult in order to explain what Gadamer means by the *verbum* in contradistinction to a recent review of *Gadamer and the Question of the Divine*.

Barthold Lauren Swayne points out that for Lammi, “Gadamer is actually the pre-eminent twentieth century philosopher of the divine who provides a conceptual basis for dialogue among the educated of all faiths.” She then criticizes Lammi for being vague about the divine to the extent that it cannot be differentiated from the ineffable. There is no reason, she argues, to believe that the limit of reason demarcates the divine than there is to believe that it demarcates an empty abstraction. In a sense, this is true and in another sense it is false. It is true that the divine is an ineffable empty abstraction when the ontology of Being is separated from existence and is thereby construed as a concept. Lammi objects to this way of thinking about being-as-a-whole and redirects an understanding of concepts to their origins in experience. He points out that the earliest formulation of the divine is what Anaximander called the *apeiron*, unlimited or infinite. If that is all that the divine was for the Greeks, then the rupture that Gadamer believes Latin Christendom represents with ancient philosophy would be false. According to him, Christianity distorted the classical experience of the divine by consigning it to an idea of the mind accessible to an introspective turn of the eye. In contradistinction to a metaphysical concept of the *apeiron* that transgresses the borders of the finite and underlines, in fact, Jean Grondin’s Stoic inflected interpretation of the inner word; Lammi draws attention to the origins of the concept in experience. Accordingly, Anaximander’s *apeiron*, unlimited or infinite is not a reality unto itself, but rather a philosophical formulation of what he experienced in the Orphic cults that worshipped Dionysus. In the words of Walter Wili, the Ionian philosopher “plunged his

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213 Jean Grondin writes of the inner word, “that which is indicated by this sign, the intended, the thought, or ultimately the word of reason itself in its universality,” as if the inner word were of a purely Stoic variety detached from external impressions. “Gadamer and Augustine: On the Origin of the Hermeneutical Claim to Universality,” in *Hermeneutics and Truth*, ed. Brice Wachterhauser (Evanston: Northwest University Press, 1994), 244, Note 36.
thinking into the depths of Orphic irrationality."214 Anaximander’s encounter with being-as-a-whole, i.e., *apeiron*, was thus not absolute and instead finite. As Lammi says, the whole thought disclosed to participants in a religious festival is not a whole,215 but instead, an instantiation of it, i.e., the constant presence of what “is” within the flow of time. Hence, the unlimited is within the limit (*peras*) and vice versa. Neither can be defined apart from the other. The limit being within the unlimited and the reverse is the teaching Plato makes explicit in the *Philebus*. Rather than identify the one and the many with the structure of the cosmos alone, Gadamer thinks of them from out of an existential-phenomenological context. The *apeiron* thus has sensible properties that Lammi builds toward in his explication of Gadamer’s philosophy of the divine.

Lammi quotes Jean-Luc Marion on the “different manners of being” with which to distinguish between icon and idol, “But in having to do with the divine, visibility is expressed in several manners. Or rather, variations in the mode of visibility indicate variations in the mode of apprehension of the divine itself.”216 Lammi follows suit and argues that the seeing involved is not of a usual sort. There are good reasons to suppose that he has in mind hearing without quite saying it. For example, he acknowledges that a religious experience was for the early Greeks, “immanent to the world of sense perception” and asserts that for them, “we can only speak of religion loosely, as the experience or stories of the god or gods.”217 This agrees with Gadamer’s claim that poetic and religious speech had been indistinguishable in Greek antiquity. He writes, “Anyone who is familiar with Greek theology and poetry knows very well that it is quite impossible to distinguish between the language of poetry and that of the mythological tradition. For it was precisely the poets themselves who mediated that tradition.”218 How do poets mediate between their community and the gods? Lammi explains that “in cultic epiphany the world remains yet is transformed into a heightened state of being that comes to language in the form of the gods.”219 Cultic epiphany arises from a collapse between the human and the divine. The divine is not an “entity” in this case, but rather a concealed realm of existence that is opened up through a

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transformation in consciousness. The transformation does not involve so much the content as the movements of the living language that determine what is said. For the Greeks, these movements of the voice were synchronized with song and dance. Gadamer explains, “As we saw, it is an intrinsic characteristic of every festival that it enjoys a specific, rhythmical recurrence that elevates it above the flow of time. In a kind of cosmic rhythm, it assures that not all times pass by indifferently in the same homogeneous way.” The regular flow of time refers to the time that orders the world with which we are familiar. Yet the rhythm of daily life is simultaneously spliced by what Gadamer calls “cosmic rhythm.” This is surely a reference to drama of the animal, to the cycle of life and death or movement of Plato’s world soul—a self-unfolding structure or harmony. It is expressed in a myriad of ways. Plato represents the structure with the Spinal of Necessity in the Republic (10.617c); Gadamer likens the structure to a festival, an organism and a ring; with due regard to the festival, Lammi indicates that the divine is inherent to rituals, and in particular to, “Rhythmic music (chanting, dancing, and various kinds of exercises may all create group transcendence).” The individual isolated ego is transcended in the act of assimilating itself to the rhythms that unite all peoples thereby passing from a non-living (inactive) to an active living being.

Further to the point, whereas nous is typically translated to mean thought thinking itself alone, Lammi suggests that it arises in the midst of encountering the limits of reason. He writes of nous:

Gadamer traces its likely etymology back to the way that an animal in the forest, with its instincts aroused, becomes aware of a predator in its vicinity. From this perspective one could argue that to the archaic Greeks, contrary to the usual understanding, hearing and smelling would have had no less an ontological value than seeing, which provides another point of confluence with postmodern thinking. . . . Noesis is an act of awareness.  


221 Gadamer, “The Festive Character of the Theater,” 60.

222 Otto, Dionysus, 21.


224 Lammi, Gadamer and the Question of the Divine, 93.

225 Ibid., 34. He is likely thinking of Gadamer, “Parmenides and Being,” 108. Kisiel paraphrases an excerpt from Heidegger’s 1922 lecture on Aristotle that captures in more philosophical language the gist of Lammi’s interpretation of Gadamer, “And if Aristotle calls this original movement divine, he nevertheless finds rhythm in nature, in the circular movement of the heaven of fixed stars which is the self-contained telos ‘desired’ by all the other movements. The self-contained movement of theoria is therefore not dunamis but energeia, pure actualization or ‘temporalization,’ the stable self-fulfillment of noeseis which is the fulfillment of
His secondary thought concerns confluences with post-modernism. For purposes of this argument, they can be put aside. The point about which he is not explicit is that the heightened state of awareness with which he associates *noesis* is auditory. This follows from his example of an animal being stalked by a predator. In a forest the creature cannot likely see very well. This certainly would have been the case, and still is, for early humans. In thick underbrush they are effectively robbed of sight and are as a result anxious, anxious about being killed, and thus suspended in a mood between life and death. This mood coincides with an intensification of the sense of hearing which infuses one’s entire body. Every nerve is alive to the sounds and impulses transmitted to the body from the environment. Contrary to what Lammi infers from his example, seeing, hearing and smelling do not, in fact, have the same ontological value. Other senses must be channeled through hearing in order to hunt, but more likely for early humans, to avoid being stalked and killed by predators. Unless we could hear well at night we could not have lived for very long. Lammi is clearly thinking within the same range of ideas.

While re-orienting the reader’s thinking about *theoria* and *nous* from the domain of thought thinking itself alone to the senses Lammi explains that *theoria* is, for Gadamer, “the highest kind of *praxis*” because it combines *nous* with experience (*pathe*). He associates the former with active motion and the latter with passive rest and asserts that together they “determine the equilibrium proper to human living.” He does not specify that combining the active and passive belongs to the middle medial voice and that Philippe Eberhard explains is of an auditory disposition. Eberhard writes, “Gadamer reformulates the speculative nature of language in terms of echoing, resonating, instead of mirroring. That this is possible indicates that what really counts is the process that I termed medial and not the visual process. This shift from the visual to the auditory underlines the universality of the process.” Speculativity means that language is carried along or moves by that which lies all the other modes of getting around that led to it.” Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 243.

Paul Levinson, *Digital McLuhan: A Guide to the Information Millennium* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 47. Richard Dawkins, “In the time when the dinosaurs dominated the daytime economy, our mammalian ancestors probably only managed to survive at all because they found ways of scraping a living at night. Only after the mysterious mass extinction of the dinosaurs about 65 million years ago were our ancestors able to emerge into the daylight in any substantial degree” *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe Without Design* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company Limited, 1996), 30-31.


beyond it, i.e., *Vollzug*, the whole, universal, infinite, *apeiron*, unsaid, *arrheton* (unsayable). Gadamer does not grasp the whole of being in a flash of intuition, but rather in terms of the living language sound when he references resonance, responding and summoning.\(^{229}\) James Risser pointed this out roughly twenty years ago. Gadamer’s hermeneutics is a hermeneutics of the living voice.\(^{230}\) Lammi crosses into the same territory without making it a theme. He considers the leitmotif of Gadamer’s philosophy to be, “[W]hen modern philosophy begins to entrust itself to the ancient path of thought, perhaps thinkers will learn once again to discern the ancient content of the concept of God.”\(^{231}\) The path to which we are entrusted through ancient thought is a capacity, as he says, for mutual listening for, and mutual elevation in the “vital harmony” of a dialogue.\(^{232}\) Vitality is not incidental to a dialogue. In contrast to work that divides and separates people from one another a dialogue is relational. In contrast to the time of boredom or bustle in the time of a dialogue the speakers de-center themselves by following the movement that the conversation sets.\(^{233}\) Contrary to what Swayne argues, there is nothing ephemeral or abstract about the divine in *Gadamer and the Question of the Divine*.

Gadamer explains that in the spoken word there is a “pattern of mutual self-expression [that] constitutes a specific possible way of being with one another.”\(^{234}\) He specifies that this possibility includes the speaker’s intonation and gesture, “his mood and his inner state at the time.” It is then the meeting of these inner states or dispositions that forms a vibration between speakers and that Lammi grasps on behalf of Gadamer in terms of play when he writes:

> In every language, we who are moved back and forth in the play of language are taken beyond our subjectivity with every act of understanding. As in play, the being of the ‘game’ is to be found in no particular player but has taken them all in its own kind of gathering. In the same way that rhythm connects being and the soul, language connects soul and world.\(^{235}\)

\(^{229}\) TM, 454.  
\(^{230}\) Risser argues that the inner word is breath in the thought intended and bases his argument in part on discussions in the Athenian Assembly. *Hermeneutics and the Voice of the Other*, 184.  
\(^{232}\) Lammi, *Gadamer and the Question of the Divine*, vii; 93.  
\(^{235}\) Lammi, *Gadamer and the Question of the Divine*, 69 and see also page 9.
Dialogue takes the speaker beyond their subjectivity into the movement of a conversation that Gadamer likens to play. While being caught up in the game of conversation a realization might occur. But the realization is not wholly cognitive. It cannot be, if the mind is embodied and the context for the event is the spoken language. The realization or aha moment has a rhythm and for that reason the structure of being is audible to us.

3 Acoustics of Being-as-a-whole

How do we know that being-as-a-whole is heard by the inner ear? On the basis of Walter Lammi’s astute observations, Gadamer’s account of the event of language is mediated by his understanding of the early Greek experience of the divine and Heidegger’s notion of Ereignis. The sensorial or aesthetic experience of the inner voice during a dialogue involves pulse, vibration and rhythm. This conclusion can be ratcheted up a couple of notches by proving that Gadamer is as committed to the possibility of perceiving the inner word as Heidegger (the call of Being) and the Greek cults. In this section, works by Gadamer are consulted that bear testimony to the same insight—“Philosophy and Literature,” “The Nature of Things and the Language of Things” and Truth and Method, III.236

Gadamer’s thought cannot be reduced to discrete statements he makes. No sooner has he made an assertion than he throws it into different relief with a disjunctive assertion. This is the case when he refers to the inner ear and the ideal meaning in language. In “Philosophy and Literature” he writes:

The inner ear apprehends the ideal meaning in language, something nobody ever can hear. The ideal form of language, then, demands something unattainable from the human voice, and that is exactly the mode of being of a literary text. This ideality also asserts itself when one attempts to read or speak aloud to oneself. Being successful with regard to our own voice, modulation and intonation is equally precarious.237

Gadamer says that the inner ear apprehends an ideal no one can ever hear. One might stop there and take those words to be a fait accompli. Except that Gadamer says immediately afterwards that “the ideal form of language, then, demands . . . exactly the mode of being of a literary text.” This ideality asserts itself when one attempts to read or speak aloud to oneself. The latter, he also says, is unattainable for the human voice. He seems confused—or perhaps

236 Both “The Nature of Things and the Language of Things” and Truth and Method were not only published the same year (1960), but the passages being considered from them bear a striking similarity to one another; both concern Hölderlin, poetic thinking, the falling away of the ordinary world and prosodic elements of language.
he is leaving something unsaid that might make sense of the alleged confusion. Perhaps Gadamer presupposes a distinction between two kinds of hearing—the merely acoustic and the kind that he says requires a heightening of the inner ear. The latter pertains to the identity of the written language where he says consciousness is completely sovereign.\(^{238}\) This does not mean that the inner ear hears one’s own voice as in a subjective intentional verbalization of a thought. Gadamer specifies that the ideality apprehended by the inner ear asserts itself “when one attempts to read or speak aloud to oneself.” This suggests that the inner ear hears an inner word in the middle voice. While reading or speaking to oneself one is being acted upon by the verb. In this regard, it is not actual words and images that come to mind for him, but modulations and intonations of the voice. The ideality of language is, therefore, not an idea. It is heard between the words and constitutes their flow and coherence (into which they disappear and resurface).

This interpretation of the inner word as the inner voice is substantiated by the essay to which Lammi refers the reader while speaking of the realm of rhythm in the passage quoted earlier by him—“The Nature of Things and the Language of Things.” In that essay Gadamer takes a position on language that deals first and foremost with what is held here to be the function and features of the inner word in the spoken language. He explains that the agreement about things that takes place in language means “the correspondence that finds its concretion in linguistic experience of the world is as such what is absolutely prior.”\(^{239}\) He continues, writing:

This fact can be illustrated beautifully by a phenomenon that itself constitutes a structural aspect of everything linguistic; namely, the phenomenon of rhythm. The essence of rhythm lies in a peculiar intermediary realm between being and the soul, as Richard Höningswald has already emphasized in his analysis from the point of view of the psychology of thought.\(^{240}\)

By “being” Gadamer means world and by “soul,” the subject on the grounds that, as Eberhard states it on Gadamer’s behalf, “language is where the understanding subject meets the world.”\(^{241}\) But Gadamer is more specific in the passage quoted above. The meeting ground between the world and the subject, the intermediary realm, is rhythm. He

\(^{238}\) TM, 392.
\(^{240}\) Ibid., 79.
designates this realm the “absolutely prior.” Not prior in the sense of an entity, concept or idea being before another in a sequence, or the premise of an argument, nor in an ontological-existential sense of priority. Gadamer’s “absolutely prior” does not fit into any of these categories because he is thinking about the phenomenon of language. From that angle, before anything is said between two people, they are already related to each other through what Gadamer calls an “intermediary realm of rhythm.”

Following an indirect criticism of Höningswald’s psychological method (to whom Gadamer refers in the passage quoted above), Gadamer turns to how those who think solely within the world of language describe this intermediary realm of rhythm. He cites Hölderlin and writes:

When they differentiate the original poetic experience from the pregiven character of language as well as from the pregiven character of the world (i.e., the order of things) and describe the poetic conception as the harmony of the world and soul in the linguistic concretization that becomes poetry, it is a rhythmic experience they are describing. The structure of the poem, which thus becomes language, guarantees the process of soul and world addressing each other as something finite. It is there that the being of language shows its central position.

The poetic experience of the rhythm of language that Gadamer says is unique relative to the pre-given character of language is what relates us to one another (as established previously). This suggests that the usual pre-given way of relating is non-relational (e.g., idle chatter, ordinary discourse that follows ontic surfaces). Is the dissolution of all customary words commensurate with a change (transformation, says Lammi) in mood from being lost-in-the-they-self to dread, as Heidegger says? Lammi, who sees a parallel between Heidegger and Gadamer on Ereignis and the dyad (and therefore, a dialogue) would answer in the affirmative. What Heidegger unpacks about dread (slipping away of beings), Lammi says is for Gadamer the experience of finitude. But at the same time, Lammi relates that the event, for Heidegger, includes vibration and that for Gadamer a turn in perception is toward an “absolutely prior” rhythm. The fall into a state of dread during the slipping away of meaning is simultaneously an upswing includes a ringing true

242 Lammi writes of the point of intersection between Heidegger, Gadamer and Derrida, “To sum up: All three, Ereignis, khora and ahoristos dyas, resist definition and description. They all represent a ‘beyond’ from Being, not in the traditionalist sense of religious transcendence, but of a step behind all appearances, a kind of reverse transcendence, that nonetheless makes the being of mundane beings possible.” Gadamer and the Question of the Divine, 42.
244 Lammi, Gadamer and the Question of the Divine, 52; 53.
of something that was not heard before; “truth of being in the logoi—i.e., the ideality of language.”

In *Truth and Method*, III, “Language as the Medium of Hermeneutical Experience” after citing Hölderlin yet again, Gadamer describes the original poetic experience as “the total dissolution of all customary words and modes of expression in that the poet feels himself seized in his whole inner and outer life by the pure tone of his original sensation.” In his account of poetic thinking in *Truth and Method*, Gadamer thus broadens the intermediary realm of rhythm (mentioned in “The Nature of Things and the Language of Things”) to include “a pure tone of the original sensation.” The “original experience” is, therefore, both a rhythm and a tone. They are not unrelated, are most often heard together yet are also distinct. But Gadamer does not pause to think about this, nor about how hearing is prone to remove the distance between the inner and outer self established by other sense perceptions, especially sight. Instead, for him, rhythm and tone are interchangeable (or at least mutually entailed) and this is likely why he thinks of the more inclusive phenomenon of harmony next in the passage quoted above.

In “The Nature of Things and the Language of Things” he says that when the poet breaks out of the ordinary world and has a rhythmic experience, they describe it as “the harmony of the world and the soul.” The intermediary realm of rhythm is experienced by the poet as being both rhythmic and tonal. They are the fundamentals of harmony save one consideration. Harmony consists of fitting opposites together. Musically speaking, it consists of two voices playing off of one another or singing in parallel. When there is a tonal affinity between the voices, they are harmonious; when the tones repel one another, the voices are disharmonious and there is then misunderstanding, or no relation between the relata. Yet for that very reason of being a non-relation, there is anticipation and thus an existential notion of time.

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245 TM, 113-114.
246 Ibid., 465.
247 Sight fosters the belief that humans are at the center of a field of vision cordoned off from being effected by the external world. From that position, the mind is a chamber of consciousness separated from the body reconfigured as a mindless machine that belongs to the external world.
248 Although Gadamer is thinking about poetic thinking, and indeed Hölderlin, in “The Nature of Things and the Language of Things,” and *Truth and Method* Part III, what he says about the experience of the work of art, as Lammi supposes, is transferrable to the dialogue form. If everything that can be understood is in language, as Gadamer says, then the experience of a work of art is also lingual.
It is difficult to avoid mentioning Augustine at this point. Rather than thinking about time from an objective standpoint, he took up the middle voice position of an active participant to a recitation and reasoned that his soul was separated from his future by the past. The tension between the two was felt and known to him in the present. This pattern was discovered by him while reciting a poem. If a poem is a variation on talking, like talking to oneself, then he is really just discovering the logic of the dialogue form about which Plato philosophized (according to Gadamer). The elements of that form heard in the harmony of voices are rhythm and tone. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that the structure of the dialogue is, in the words of music theorist Jeremy Begbie, music’s time. According to him, music’s time is a dynamic interplay between tension and resolution in a present in which the not yet and the no more are given together. For speakers in a conversation, interplay of tension and resolution is heard in the rhythm and tones of their voices; the present is filled with an unfolding harmony being anticipated. Hence, when Gadamer states that “the structure of a poem guarantees the process of soul and world addressing each other,” he is making an oblique reference to the said structure of music, which is the structure of a dialogue. Insofar as the aim is being-as-a-whole or harmony of cadence and modulation (and not agreement or consensus), two speakers are addressing one another. The being of language that shows itself from within an actual conversation is harmony or the acoustic mirroring of the potentiality-to-be-one-another.

To recapitulate, Gadamer believes that what is “absolutely prior” in the sense that it makes possible understanding between two speakers is rhythm, tone, harmony or a harmonic structure. This is a position he re-iterates over twenty years later in “Text and Interpretation” (1984). Therein he points out that the understanding of a text depends on communicative


250 The dynamic notion of time or tension in existence surfaces in the hermeneutic circle whereby a prior understanding is called into question by a fore-conception. But when situated in a dialogue it appears in terms of music’s time.


252 Or as Gadamer says in “On the Problem of Self-Understanding,” “living speaking and the life of the language have their play in a back and forth movement” that he had likens to phonetic constancy (Lautbestand) and phonetic form (Lautgestalt) that are fixed in writing in “On the Problem of Self-Understanding” in David E. Linge (trans.), Philosophical Hermeneutics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 56.
conditions “that reach beyond the merely codified meaning-content of what is said”;\(^{253}\) that there is something else in the experience of the other than their mere presence, “a potentiality for being other (\textit{andersseins}) that lies beyond every coming to agreement about what is common”;\(^{254}\) and finally, that the precondition of comprehending what is said is that “an experience be acoustically intelligible.”\(^{255}\) The notion of the acoustically intelligible directs his thinking to irony, a joke, counter texts and pretexts\(^{256}\) – all of which change the meaning of what is said in breathed voices even if their content and details are exactly the same.\(^{257}\) But irony, a joke and so on are literary devices for a writer and/or modes of communication that are derived from the elementary materials of sounds. They are a specific arrangement of rhythms and tones and, therefore, cannot be that to which the inner ear hearkens.\(^{258}\) This applies to Heidegger as well. S. J. McGrath argues that to see through the eyes of another and enact meaning in a certain way, for Heidegger, comparable to Kierkegaardian irony.\(^{259}\) But irony is not philosophical because it mirrors a subjectively mediated determination of a sense of meaning that has been dislodged from the synchronicity of rhythms between speakers that generates harmony, which is not incidental to the truth of what is being said but rather constitutes of it. Rodolphe Gasché thus points out of Heidegger’s concept of truth that \textit{Stimmung} as that which accords, the accordant (\textit{was stimmt}) has political connotations “of


\(^{254}\) Ibid., 26.

\(^{255}\) Ibid., 31.

\(^{256}\) Ibid., 38-39.

\(^{257}\) Friedrich Schleiermacher explains: “Here there is now a point which is often very easy, often very difficult to find, but which is always important, namely the tone, the mood of the writer. Recognizing this is essential to understanding a sequence of thoughts as a fact in their mind. Two writers can have the same didactic tendency, the object in question can be the same, the manner of conceiving it, the attitude, the manner of writing can be the same, but one writes in a calm, the other a more agitated tone. In consequence the details appear different, have a different meaning. That difference reveals itself the most in the treatment of language. But determinate rules cannot be established concerning this, precisely because it is so much a question of feeling.” In Friedrich Schleiermacher, \textit{Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings}, ed. Andrew Bowie, (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press: 1998), 146-147. When all else is the same between two works (the same didactic tendency, object, way of conceiving it, attitude and way of writing and the details) the two works might still have a different meaning that is decided, he says, by a question of feeling. Feeling, however, is not capricious fancy. It refers, for Schleiermacher, to the tone and mood of the writer, the so-called “musical dimension of language” (ibid., 147). It is these that decide the meaning of the parts when all the parts are the same.

\(^{258}\) This recollection of a pre-given harmony from out of rhythm and tone is what I understand to be the Being of historical life, the “substantiality” of historical life from the ontological turn in a dialogical comportment from in and out of which is a “doing of the thing itself.” I am tinkering with Günter Figal’s argument in “The Doing of the Thing Itself,” 103-109. What I mean is said aptly by Heraclitos in Fragment 50, translated by Heidegger, “We do not hear because we have ears. We have ears because we can hear.”

being in accord” and “is based on a unanimous casting of votes, on all voices ringing in unison” that celebrate consonance. He later re-iterates that for Heidegger in “On the Essence of Truth” Stimmung and Gestimmtheit mean “being-attuned, or mood, but also echo ‘accord.’” Gasché continues, “With the fundamental being-attuned of all comportment to being as a whole, with this disclosedness, which is openness as such, upon which something as narrow as the accordance of proposition and matter rests—with all this, a background melody, or rather a rhythm, comes into sight that is indistinguishable from the openness of Being as a whole.” Unless one is similarly positioned to join in the rhythm, the conversation stumbles. There is no better example of this than saying precisely the opposite of what one means—it betrays the good grounds out of which philosophical thinking grows. When in “Text and Interpretation” Gadamer thinks about the inner ear in terms of the interpreter disappearing, as he puts it, “into the achievement of full harmony in understanding (Verst命ndung),” he is, therefore, likely thinking about disappearing into what he had called in “The Nature of Things and the Language of Things” “the phenomenon of rhythm.” Of course, the credibility of this interpretation depends upon the extent to which correlations between three texts; “Text and Interpretation,” “The Nature of Things and the Language of Things” and Truth and Method III, count as evidence for an explanation of what the inner word is and how it functions in language.

### 3.1 Acoustics of the Inner Voice

In this section, I argue that the dimensions of the voiced word that Gadamer leaves undeveloped when understood through the lens of music theorists is coordinate with three tiers of the divine as Walter Lammi conveys it on behalf of Gadamer. Since he believes that Gadamer is inspired by the Greeks he uses their language to analyze Being into three levels that I will map onto the acoustics of the breathed voice; the aion zoe (everlasting life) corresponds to rhythm; bios (individuated life) to tone and “being-in-one-another” to harmony. Harmony manifests a structure inherent to rhythm and tones at a higher level of sonic complexity. In the course of explaining the correspondences I will distinguish modes of

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261 Ibid., 44.
264 According to Lammi, the focal point of Gadamer’s thought is “being-as-a-whole” i.e., harmony.
hearing that enable Gadamer’s phenomenology of the voice (or living language) to reveal the meaning of Being.

3.2 Rhythm and Hearing

The aion zoë is a Dionysian undifferentiated extreme of “everlasting life in limitless presence.” Everlasting life is not eternity. It refers to the cycle of life and death that applies to all organismic beings. Aion zoë thus unites all species with one another. How is it transmitted to us, or rather how might we access it? In What is Metaphysics? Heidegger describes “an uncanny kind of peace within the suspension, along with an ‘internal pulsation’ that belongs to the universal undifferentiated movement of life.” Lammi, from whose book I am quoting, then highlights the following passage from “The Principle of Identity” in which Heidegger is describing the relation of human life to the whole as Ereignis: “The event of appropriation is that realm, vibrating within itself, through which man and Being reach each other in their nature, achieve their active nature by losing those qualities with which metaphysics has endowed them.” A realm vibrating within itself through which humans and Being reach each other resonates with Gadamer specifying in “The Nature of Things and the Language of Things” an intermediary realm of rhythm in which the soul and world address each other for poets when, as Heidegger also argues, the customary way of viewing things falls away. By referring to this aion zoë as a vision of the whole and associating it with an idea we lose sight of human embodiment. Neither “vision of the whole” nor an


266 Lammi, Gadamer and the Question of the Divine, 54.


268 And what is revealed to us when the customary world falls away? Ferrara writes, “The dynamic organism is united by life processes in rhythm” (Ferrara, Referential Meaning in Music, 43). Begbie re-iterates this and states that stability and instability is a dynamic universal “shared by all human beings but also in extra-human phenomenon such as . . . the patterned movements and configurations of the natural world.” Jeremy Begbie, Theology, Music and Time (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 52. Rhythms of nature display a tendency toward either balance or imbalance.
“idea” is recommended here. The rhythm of voice we hear is an elemental dimension of sound embedded in bio-physiological processes that Lammi taps into when he mentions a transformation via a religious experience into animal consciousness.  

But if rhythm is characteristic of all living things, could it not, as was just suggested, be the aion zoe we hear in the voice of the other? If so, it cannot be heard in the same way that we listen to what someone literally says. Whereas we tap out a rhythm with our feet, we sing a melody. This indicates that rhythm has a different quality than tone of voice—a more primordial and tactile character that moves our bodies through entrainment or sympathetic resonance, which is central to Steven Mithen’s account of music.  

The kind of hearing involved with the body’s rhythms is indicated by H. Miles Groth. He specifies that rhythm heard is a more tactile and primitive human perception than sight. This has a basis in human biology and development. He writes, “We may thus readily agree that the auditory sphere is the most susceptible to stimulation. Foetal research adds the finding that the auditory sphere is the earliest to develop, along with the kinaesthetic sense of being moved.” If ontogeny is phylogeny he and Mithen have something to say to one another. Groth explains that whereas listening is for what someone says, hearing reaches for another aspect of sound. He explains that “one may merely hear, by ignoring what one has been listening to, and in that state of effortful non-listening, recede past and behind listening to a flattened awareness of the acoustic world.” Could this flattened acoustic world, as he calls it, be audible in the rhythm of life? If so, it might not be as flat as Groth believes. Nature’s rhythms are not as mechanical as the tick tock of a metronome. They are not orchestrated by technology, but instead by the dynamic relations they have with one another that constitutes their movement reconfigured by us into waves we call meters. Meters are heard indirectly through the rhythm. For example, a ballroom dancer dances to the meter and not the rhythm. It is, therefore, not precisely the bare beat heard in the voice of the other (beat as in a synchronized march) but
rather the metrical waves we might detect in the cadence of a person’s movement (or walk to which Mithen directs us). Contrary to what Groth says, there is nothing dull about the acoustic world or the rhythmic meter of another’s voice.

### 3.3 Tone and Hearkening/Attunement

The second tier of the divine is an instantiation of everlasting life at the level of the differentiated Apollonian bios. Lammi explains: “The living soul in the sensory realm is always bodily individuated. In order for life to be actualized, the undifferentiated soul of zoe requires the particular ensouled life of bios.” Human life is therefore not opposed to the perpetual cyclical time of natural processes and instead, that cycle of life requires for its actualization “the particular ensouled life of bios,” i.e., human being (Dasein). Stated otherwise, the undifferentiated rhythm of animal life (as Lammi calls it) is articulated in human existence, or as Begbie puts it while speaking of music, “rhythm is always articulated in tones.” Tone is from a physicist point of view a pitch or frequency, which is represented by a note. Notes obviously do not have to follow the rhythm. This is illustrated by their being splashed across a page in playful designs as if irrespective of the time signature. Daniel Levitin refers to “Mary has a Little Lamb” in order to convey that while the rhythm stays the same, the tone can vary and change the melody. Tones are thus less anchored in elemental organic life than rhythms. If the dynamic relation between tones varies, then the key changes from C major to B minor, for instance. Sometimes different keys are said to convey different moods. D major is bright and happy. Change the tonal relations, change the key and the emotion or mood. As mentioned, it is a change in mood that comes over the poet when they “hear” “the pure tone of the original sensation.” But this merely begs the question—what kind of hearing?

According to Groth, hearkening rather than hearing or listening is best suited for discerning tones. He states that “one hearkens to the interlocutor’s tone, his manner of speaking, the choice of language he has made (German, French, English, etc.), his accent or

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275 Ibid., 54.
276 Ibid., 32.
dialect, before one listens to the sentences he has uttered.”

Groth claims to be taking his cue from Heidegger, but they are not thinking within the same register. That hearkening is a listening in advance of someone’s utterance resonates with Heidegger in *Being and Time*, but cannot be, as Groth says, for an accent. One does not hearken for the mere tone of an English or French accent. Given that there are twelve tones capable of an infinite number of combinations we would be baffled to understand anyone’s mood were it of the same quantitative order as a tone. Rather than individual tones, hearkening is likely keyed to tonal waves. Just as rhythms are organized sounds (called meters) is it not likely that tones heard are similarly registered by us in units (keys)? Just as waves or meters are heard indirectly in rhythms by ballroom dancers, is it not likely that the waves in a voice rather than individual tones are capable of being hearkened? Granted, it does not seem that Schleiermacher distinguishes between a tone and tonal waves or units, and hence, identified state of mind with merely tone of voice.

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281 After reporting that definitions of language are variable and even if combined would merely lead to another inadequate definition Heidegger proposes “to work out in advance the ontologico-existential whole of the structure of discourse on the basis of the analytic of *Dasein*.” In *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962), 206. He writes: “We can make clear the connection of discourse with understanding and intelligibility by considering an existential possibility which belongs to talking itself—hearing. If we have not heard ‘aright’, it is not by accident that we say we have not ‘understood.’ Hearing is constitutive for discourse. And just as linguistic utterance is based on discourse, so is acoustic perception on hearing. Listening to . . . is *Dasein’s* existential way of Being-open as Being-with for Others. Indeed, hearing constitutes the primary and authentic way in which *Dasein* is open for its ownmost potentiality-for-Being—as in hearing the voice of a friend whom every *Dasein* carries with it” (ibid., 163). An inquiry into the essence of language has led Heidegger to relate discourse, understanding and intelligibility to hearing. Hearing belongs to all three. Unless we hear aright we have not understood, falter in our discursive relations with one another, and are out of tune with our ownmost potentiality-for-Being. In discourse, as he had said earlier, the intelligibility of being-in-the-world is articulated (according to significations). However, intelligibility he specifies “goes with a state of mind.” Insofar as state of mind is a mood (i.e., that discloses our way of being-in-the-world) and mood is discerned by attunement, the very articulation of our being-in-the-world (state of mind) depends upon our capacity for hearing. “What is expressed is precisely this Being-outside—that is to say, the way in which one currently has a state-of-mind (mood), which we have shown to pertain to the full disclosedness of Being-in. Being-in and its state-of-mind are made known in discourse and indicated in language by intonation, modulation, the tempo of talk, ‘the way of speaking.’ In ‘poetical’ discourse, the communication of the existential possibilities of one’s state of mind can become an aim in itself, and this amounts to a disclosing of existence” (ibid., 162).

282 Hence, whether a work is written from out of the author’s own “state” (as Schleiermacher calls it) or form out of an image they have of someone else’s state, is decided by “the more or less emphatic tone” (Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism*, 123). However, while this pertains to the ontological structure of existence, or a person’s disposition, he also confounds it with the merely quantitative aspect of speech. For example, after stating that every person has their place in the totality of Being and their thinking represents being he writes, “From this the following cannon results: The identity of thought expresses the attunement of the person to being in the place where they are located; the difference of thought expresses the separation of their thought from being in the place” (ibid., 277). According to Schleiermacher, thinking represents being, where “being” is to exist in a place that is expressed by us. From this he reasons that variations in languages are
utterance varies according to grammar and diction, for instance, a question or a joke. But the tone of a mood consists of a fundamental re-arrangement of relations between all tones in a voice that alters the entire meaning of anything said in particular, e.g., when feeling uncanny, anxious or bored. In his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger tries to convey the kind of hearing being discussed here. He says that “true hearing” means “To follow the logos and what it is, namely the collectedness of beings themselves. We can hear truly only if we are followers. This has nothing to do with the lobes of our ears.”

As Levitin states summatively, “Rhythm stirs our bodies. Tonality and melody stirs our brains.”

### 3.4 Harmony and Attentive Listening

#### 3.4.1 Harmony

The third and final tier of “being-as-a-whole” is “the potentiality-to-be-one-another.” Thought in terms of acoustics, the potential to be one another is the potential for harmony. It has already been defined as the voice of two or more speakers addressing each other. As Günter Figal concisely states of a “dialogical comportment,” although without explaining what he means from the side of a phenomenology of the senses, “we may consider the structure of conversation in general as the structure of linguistic human existence.” This is what Risser had landed upon while thinking of the assembly in ancient Athens; namely, the capacity to detect a “ringing true” (tone) in the breathed voice and by responding to it (in the same key or mood) join in the expression of the inner word in a Greek *epos* or song. Vital harmony is also what Lammi imagined came to the surface during a religious experience determined by (*Bestimmung*) “the attunement of the person to being in the place.” But this is not the same as thinking that when we are attuned to being in a place we can relate to one another and achieve understanding; when we are out of tune with the totality of existence in every place, we fail to understand one another. Schleiermacher confuses, as Heidegger might put it, the ontic with the ontological.

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283 Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 129. Also in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, he writes, “Mere hearing scatters and diffuses itself in what is commonly believed and said, in hearsay, in *doxa*, appearance. True hearing has nothing to do with the ear and mouth, . . . Those who merely hear by listening around and assembling rumors are and remain the *axynetoi*, the uncomprehending” (ibid., 129-130).

284 Levitin, *This is Your Brain on Music*, 263.

285 Harmony is cognate verb of *harmochthé* (was fitted together). *Harmonia* also refers to a perfect octave and means the binding together of opposites.


287 Risser, *Hermeneutics and the Voice of the Other*, 177. A drifting voice implies song according to the etymology of “voice.” Groth points out that the term voice “derives from the Indo-European root *wekšu-*, to speak, and in its suffixed form, *wek-os*, is the source of the Greek word *epos.*” “On the Fundamental Experience of Voice in Language with some Notes on Heidegger,” 144.
(song, music and dance). In a hermeneutics of the voice, it is not at all mysterious. Levitin states that when men and women speak to one another they vary their voices to differ by an octave. Their souls are trying to harmonize with one another. This does not necessarily happen since speaking to another person is often mixed with speaking at them when one or another clings to either an active or passive voice rather than middle voice that would require attunement (hearkening). Assuming this is not the case, a song (harmony) climbs to the surface. It climbs to the surface insofar as the voices are in sync, but that pertains to structure (discussed in the next section).

The kind of auditory perception involved is entailed by what has already been established. If hearing discovers rhythm and hearkening (attunement) tonal affinity, and harmony is an ordered arrangement of rhythm and tones, then both modes of audition must be conjoined in attentive listening (of the inner ear) in order for harmony to become audible. Mithen speaks to this. After pointing out that he relied upon John Blacking’s research on listening he writes, “To feel with the body is as close as anyone can ever get to resonating with another person.” More precisely, to feel with the body is to feel rhythm and to resonate with another person is to hearken (tune into) tonal units of the voice. As Aristophanes’ circle men (reported by Plato in the *Symposium*) discovered to their dismay, bodies cannot merge without mutually assured destruction (or starvation by prolonged clinging). Bodies are personal and separate us from one another. Language mediates between them or rather, voices do.

### 3.4.2 Harmonic Structure

With respect to the structure of harmony, that being music’s time of tension and resolution, Risser strikes a fitting chord. During a discussion about imaging the truth he draws on Aristotle’s notion of *phronesis* and compares hitting the mark with “finding the proper measure.” He concludes, “In this thickness of words, this infinity of meaning held in everything said, there arises the right word, the word heard by the inner ear, fits or rings true. The fitting thus pertains to the action of a text, or a dialogical partner, upon the hearer.” Risser is interpreting Gadamer from the perspective of the middle voice. It leads him to reason that in the entanglements of a conversation, the inner ear hears the arising right word that fits or rings true. His reasoning accords with that of Gasché who had argued that for

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Heidegger the agreement of proposition and matter has a juridical and political connotation (by reason of resting on “all voices ringing in unison.” 290 There is something about the inner logic of language (and not what is literally said) that prompts a speaker to respond one way or another.

The inner logic of language is not unlike the virtue of phronesis that Risser foregrounds. 291 Unless there is a sense of balance there is no hitting the mark in a ringing true. But the Greek virtues were dispositions formed by music (musike, dance, poetry and song) and thus the inquiry is directed toward its nature and not that of speech that individuates the speaker in an idealised Athenian polis. 292 What is required in this musical context is an account of the structure of harmony that is audible when the voice hits the mark. The obvious place to look for that structure is the hermeneutic circle. The circle is not, as Heidegger says, vicious when understood in terms of interplay (rather than identity) between the whole of meaning and the parts of it grasped by us. 293 But this way of conceptualizing the structure of harmony in a living conversation is false. We are not keyed into the whole of meaning (or totality of true possible propositions) because we do not have a “god’s eye view.” Instead, we are keyed into the rhythms and tones of voices we create and that act upon us (middle voice); that is, the rhythms and tones and harmony about to happen and not actual content. Begbie explains how the structure unfolds:

The first beat—the downbeat—is always strongest, the other two weak. This creates a wave of equilibrium-tension-resolution in which each beat is dynamically related to the others. In a three-beat bar, the weak second beat ‘moves away’ from the first, and the weak third moves away from the second and ‘towards’ the end of the wave, which becomes the strong first beat (downbeat) of the next bar, the equilibrium of the next sequence of tension and resolution in the next bar, and so on. 294

The game of tension and resolution in tonal music is triggered by the first beat. Levitin says as much when he states concisely, “Rhythm is a game of expectation. When we tap our feet we are predicting what is going to happen in the music next.” 295 As Begbie says, there is a “peculiar directedness through rhythm.” 296 Mithen reports that Peter Auer’s analysis of “the rhythmic interaction of speakers within a conversation” concluded “that the initial speaker

291 See also Risser’s discussion of health in The Life of Understanding, 13-14.
293 Heidegger, BT, 152; SZ, 194.
294 Begbie, Theology, Music and Time, 40.
295 Levitin, This is Your Brain on Music, 72.
296 Begbie, Theology, Music and Time, 41.
establishes a clear rhythmic pattern, and then ‘unproblematic turn taking . . . is not simply a matter of absence of overlapped (simultaneous talk) talk and/or ‘gaps’ but, rather, depends on a sense of rhythmicality that makes it possible to predict when the first stressed syllable of the next speaker’s turn is due.’\textsuperscript{297} From a reflective philosophical point of view (hindsight), expectation is explained by our having an intuitive knowledge of the end or wholeness and completion. But that is not what Bebgie, Levitin or Mithen are getting at. Rhythms create a momentum toward the future or an expectation insofar as a metrical wave has already unfolded. Rhythms call up what will happen from what has happened and we call it an expectation. Our expectations are often right. But this is understandable if organic life is imbued with rhythm and the mind is embodied in-an-environment. However, this future directedness is not only determined by rhythmic meters (rather than sight, \textit{sicht}, or a projection toward my own-most possibility for death if thought of existentially for an individual). Music’s time is harmony and therefore must include tones whose temporal structure is the same as that of rhythm. The tonic, like the first beat, points away from itself toward every other tone, and they point back to it.\textsuperscript{298} Tonal waves create tension in relation to the tonic. But while voices vary in modularity (changing keys, varying mood, adjusting tonal patterns or keys) they are never out of sync in a dialogue for Gadamer. Mithen lands upon the same conclusion. He relates that John Sloboda “argues that when we experience music we gain an impression of tension and resolution, of anticipation, growth and decay.”\textsuperscript{299} But whereas Sloboda thinks of this movement as being analogous to a living organism, Mithen says that the most obvious example of it is “as if a human conversation is taking place” (which he notes much music was composed to imitate). For Gadamer they are not unrelated to one another. He treats language as an organism precisely because of its musical structure, which is not based on analogy and instead, on the verbal nature of language, which is not a matter of culture, but that which he like Heidegger believes defines us as human beings. In contrast to animals that live in an environment we have a lingual world, but it is not unrelated to natural processes. After pointing out that in language we distinguish ourselves from animals-in-an-environment and enter into a world, Gadamer writes of humans, “That does not mean that he leaves his habitat but that he has another posture toward it—a free,

\textsuperscript{297} Mithen, \textit{The Singing Neanderthals}, 17.
\textsuperscript{298} Begbie explains that the first tone has a pointing beyond quality that is picked up by other tones that refer back to the centre as well in \textit{Theology, Music and Time}, 45 & 95.
\textsuperscript{299} Mithen, \textit{The Singing Neanderthals}, 24.
distanced orientation that is always realized in language.\textsuperscript{300} Formation of a world of understanding in language does not sever us from our habitat. That seems obvious, but is also not quite accurate either. For Gadamer, language defines our nature and for that reason shares in the essence of natural processes; namely a “telos” unfolding from the process itself. After explaining that coming to an understanding in language is the true being of language, he explains: “It is a life process in which a community of life is lived out. To that extent coming to an understanding through human conversation is not different from the understanding that occurs between animals.”\textsuperscript{301} The structure of the lingual process is defined by the relation of sounds and rhythms to one another. Through their moving structure the presence of being is heard, i.e., \textit{Sachlichkeit} or thing-in-itself is announced.\textsuperscript{302} The physical properties of sound thus account for the hermeneutic circle (thought in terms of a hermeneutics of the voice). This follows from placing the circle of understanding within the dynamics of a living conversation, the implication being of course, that dialogue is songful for Gadamer, which is what he means by the “being of language.” Or as Mithen says of synchronicity of voices: “This is a fundamental feature of our language use, and has an evident link with communal music making.”\textsuperscript{303}

\textsuperscript{300} TM, 442.
\textsuperscript{301} Ibid., 443.
\textsuperscript{302} Ibid., 450 and 453.
\textsuperscript{303} Mithen, \textit{The Singing Neanderthals}, 12. Pared down somewhat, harmony is manifest when two voices address each other from the same mood (or state of mind). Hence, Steven Mithen points out that we synchronize our utterances when having a conversation (ibid.). This transpires through rhythms and tempos he says, but surely includes tonal affinity as well or modulations of the voice (tonal waves).
Chapter Four: Harmony of the Dialogue Form

1 Introduction

Chapter two, “Folk Intuitions about the Embodied Word,” argued that scholarship about the inner word in Gadamer’s philosophical-hermeneutics moves toward and then recoils from a phenomenological account. Traces of that phenomenological account were collated to support the position that the inner word is an inner voice beneath the surface of language and is composed of three aspects; rhythm, tone and harmony. Chapter three, “The Inner Voice and Being-as-a-Whole” argued that these three dimensions of the inner voice express the meaning of Being. With a view to explaining how the inner voice is a phenomenological manifestation of Being, I argued that its three aspects correspond to a tripartite ontology of existence put forward by the scholar of Gadamer’s work, Walter Lammi; zoe is audible in rhythm, bios in rhythm-tone and miteinander (with-one-another) is the rhythmic and tonal affinities between speakers heard in a harmony of voices. However, Lammi’s analysis of Gadamer’s tripartite ontology is, for the most part, based on the Greek cult experience of the divine that he gleans from Gadamer’s essays, “Life and Soul,” “Towards a Phenomenology of Ritual and Language,” and “Being, Spirit, God.”

This Chapter, “Harmony of the Dialogue Form” shifts the basis for analysis of the inner voice from these essays about the early Greeks to Heidegger and his views on the structure of human existence (moods and dispositions) and the senses (harkening). This does not invalidate Lammi’s findings, but rather refocuses his insights into Gadamer’s ontology from religion to philosophy.

Section one, “Prefigurations,” consists of an overview of research to date about the music of language as it pertains to Gadamer. The research merely “pertains” to him because with the exception of James Risser, John Arthos, and Claudia Risch, philosophers have focused on the music of Heidegger’s language. This justifies undertaking a similar exercise with respect to Gadamer’s work without losing sight of the fact that it is prefigured by others whose research my analysis employs selectively. Section two, “Existential Analysis

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of Human Nature,” analyzes harmony of the dialogue form from the perspective of a phenomenological-ontology. Since Gadamer does not develop a rigorous analysis of either human existence or a phenomenology of the senses, I turn to Heidegger’s work, principally *Being and Time* and *What is Called Thinking*? in order to explicate what Gadamer means by “the power of mood,” listening and their relation to rhythm and tone of voice.

2 Pre-figurations

When Don Ihde and and Thomas Slaughter (1970) investigated the phenomenon of listening in music they addressed the sonorous quality of Heidegger’s writing. In contrast to Husserl’s visually derived metaphors, e.g., “ray of attention” and “focusing” that they argue are indicative of positive attention to phenomena, Heidegger’s auditory metaphors are a “negative means of attaining what is sought for by a process of gradually excluding irrelevant factors.”

For example, the call of Being, they point out, is heard against a background of silence created by an intensification of listening (that excludes other sounds). But what they discern in Heidegger’s work could surely be applicable to Gadamer. Does not discerning the event of language similarly require a different mode of perception than mere hearing? What Ihde and Slaughter conclude about Heidegger is furthermore applicable to Gadamer in the sense that, while they recognize that Heidegger uses spatial metaphors to describe what is heard, e.g., temporal movement of *aletheia* (concealment-unconcealment), it never occurs to them to think of the ontology of language in the appearance of the Beautiful in *Truth and Method*, Part III in the same vein—as Gadamer describing what is heard as if it were seen. This is evident in Gadamer’s discussion of illumination (*Erleuchtung*) in which there resounds for him the pietistic tone (*Klang*) of the *illuminatio* (*Einleuchten*) heard in the *sensus communis* of Oetinger. Miles Groth (1980) investigates ways of hearing (harkening and listening) and what they disclose. But like Ihde and Slaughter, he does not consider Gadamer’s work. It is Heidegger that concerns him, but if as Gadamer claims, understanding

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307 Ibid., 238.
is verbal in that it includes rhythm and tempo, then surely he too must have had a
discriminating sense of hearing.

Bernard Dauenhauer’s research (1981) contains many insights into the musical
dimension of Heidegger’s writing, and which call for a similar examination of Gadamer’s. In
“An Approach to Heidegger’s Way of Philosophizing” he states, “I should like to propose
first, that a fruitful approach to Heidegger’s way of philosophizing; his way of expressing his
thought, is to regard his works as thematic compositions, comparable in non-trivial respects
to musical compositions.” The non-trivial aspects include the following: (1) Heidegger
repeats the issue at hand in different formulas or thematic repetitions whose meanings are
open or inexhaustible (i.e., no rectilinearity) (2) the logic of Heidegger’s thought is internal
to the assertions which develop from out of one another in a logic of question and answer
(i.e., there is no paradigm, no claim of exhaustiveness) (3) assertions for Heidegger hang
together on the basis of their tone or sound. In short, Heidegger’s philosophy resembles the
flow (as Dauenhauer puts it) of a musical composition, but so does Gadamer’s. He too refers
to the rhythmic flow of poetic language, and repeats Heidegger’s concluding words in
“Phenomenology and Theology” stating of Hölderlin, “song is existence,” for instance.

But more importantly, what Dauenhauer argues is implicit to Heidegger’s form of writing is
thematized by Gadamer. He is explicit that the question has priority over the answer that
conversation is the interplay of reply and address, and that poetry is paradigmatic for all of
the arts because its sense is bound up with sound. Dauenhauer’s work on Heidegger thus
resonates with Gadamer, in particular his words about Heidegger “the musician of Being.”

After having itemized the ways in which Heidegger’s thought moves through themes like a
musical composition, Dauenhauer writes, “Since Heidegger clearly holds that there is no
thought without language, then it follows that in thoughtful expression the singing will be
found. Singing will be found in thoughtfulness not as an accretion, but as that which renders
thought somehow possible.” He does not believe that it is music itself that accounts for the

312 See Gadamer, “Composition and Interpretation,” 69.
313 Gadamer, “Philosophy and Poetry” in Relevance of the Beautiful, 134.
singing in Heidegger’s thought, but nor does he trace the singing of thoughtfulness to the spoken language despite having mentioned that for Heidegger there is no thought without language. Another instance of the same tendency is represented in Dauenhauer’s quoting Heidegger:

‘Way’ here means melody, the ring and tone, which is not just a matter of how the saying sounds. The way or how of the saying is the tone from which and to which what is said is attuned. We suggest, then, that the two questions—concerning the ‘tone’ of our assertion and concerning its nature as a statement—hang together. Dauenhauer is suggesting that the question about the nature of a statement and its tone belong together. This ought to lead to him think about the phenomenon of language, but instead, like Heidegger quoted above, he focuses on the attunement concerning its nature as statement; on words and concepts as tones. He compares words and concepts to “the notes and chords of a musical theme,” but disengages them from musi-language and associates them with thoughtful speech, i.e., thought itself. In this regard, he is inclined to repeat the gist of his indirect criticism of Heidegger. He points out that Heidegger’s thought moves in words and concepts, that it “is the modulation of unity,” but this unity he adds tellingly, is of a monologue. Heidegger might sing of Being, but it is a soliloquy. This is as good a reason as any to consider Gadamer a worthy candidate for research into the non-trivial dimensions of music in thought. In contrast to Heidegger, he thinks about the music of language in a concrete situation. Nevertheless, as mentioned, Dauenhauer’s work is well in sync with what is being developed here. It is difficult to overlook that what he says about Heidegger has overtones with Gadamer’s belief that the intermediary realm of rhythm in language renders understanding between speakers possible. Other scholars are a bridge into the topic.

In “Mousike Techne: The Philosophical Practice of Music in Plato, Nietzsche and Heidegger” Babette Babich argues that the thought of the philosophers identified in the title of her essay is revolutionary because they retrieve the ancient unity between music and

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315 Ibid., 265.
316 Ibid., 269.
317 Ibid., 270.
318 Ibid., 271.
319 Ibid., 272.
language that modern Western verse has abandoned. In this regard, she explains how the edifying rhythm of the Greek language has been muted by the invention of writing, and argues “that today we need to restore the music of thought by a deliberate attunement” that “admits recollection.” She recalls Socrates’ ambiguous relation to music from which he was estranged by philosophy, and for the same reason argues that he thinks music is a popular practice of learning how to play the lyre. She explains how to interpret Nietzsche’s aphorisms with an ear for their music, which she argues is exemplified by Heidegger’s thought moving between provocation, intensification and return. These three movements he apparently uses to evoke thinking suppressed by “one-track minds.” Like Dauenhauer, she does not ground thinking in the spoken language and how it is best poised to subvert an irrational rage of method against nature. In another work, “The Ethical Alpha and Heidegger’s Linguistic Omega,” she argues for concinnity (reading with the ear) or rhythmically attuned diction in Nietzsche and Heidegger and maps a musical cadence in Heidegger’s style of writing – proposition, intensification, recuperation/retrieve. But like the other philosophers discussed herein, Babich is not interested in the relevance of cadence and intonational phrases to the event of language in the dialogue form.

John Lysaker (2000) asks, “How does Martin Heidegger read? In what way are this stirrup, anvil, and hammer aligned such that textual vibrations strike him quite differently than they do the ears of other readers?” He answers, “Heidegger . . . wishes to allow the language of the poem to articulate its own being, and thus his interpretations refuse to assume a poetics, hoping to dissolve into the poems that they would read. But how?” In reply, Lysaker investigates the myriad of ways in which poetry is a Maß, a measure in such notions as site, dwelling and building in Heidegger’s musically connoted thought. For Gadamer,

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322 Ibid., 173.
323 Ibid.
324 Ibid., 175.
325 Ibid., 179.
327 John Lysaker, “Heidegger’s Absolute Music, or What Are Poets for When the End of Metaphysics is At Hand?” in Research in Phenomenology 30, no. 1 (September 2000): 183.
328 Ibid., 184.
329 A mere sampling of some of Lysaker’s insights include the following: In Der Satz vom Grund, he refers to the Tonart, the ‘tonality’ of the principle of sufficient reason, and views his accentuation of moments therein, e.g., the copula, as Betonungen, “intonations” (SVG, 91-91 and 86; PR, 50 and 46). Likewise, in a late
Maβ is what distinguishes the beautiful from the ugly; the harmonious inner relation between tones, i.e., tonal affinities, between speakers form asymmetrical (and atonal) communication. But this does not interest Lysaker. Heidegger’s poetry does. Positioning Heidegger at the end of metaphysics, he explains how poetry, for instance of Hölderlin, can act as a measure of our time insofar as it articulates or brings to presence the subject-matter itself. This is accomplished in absolute music whose unit of tone and sense he compares to the Ur-poem. But like his colleagues discussed herein, he does not consider that the unity of sound and sense is, in fact, of the spoken language and therefore, that it ought to be the object of investigation rather than a work of art.

In 1967 F. Joseph Smith argued that Heidegger broke with the visual metaphors of phenomenology in the work of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty by developing an ontology that included darkness, silence and the call of conscience, existential hearing and a recall of the Greek logos (logos mousikos). However, like those who have echoed his findings for the last thirty years, Smith does not bring Gadamer into the equation. How the philosopher of the dialogue form might be endeavoring to “articulate the practice of philosophy” as the music of antiquity (Babich’s aim); specifically, the Pythagorean ethos of harmony, by foregrounding the music of language never occurs to these scholars. Consequently, they do not infer from Heidegger’s language that his and Gadamer’s manner of thinking is poetic because it is verbal.

A notable exception in the tendency to bypass music in Gadamer’s thought is in scholarship by Claudia Risch, John Arthos and James Risser. In “Time and Music” (1984), Risch argues that neither Gadamer nor Ingarden could come to an adequate understanding of the essence of musical works of art because of their attitude toward time. While Gadamer has

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330 WM, 453. See ibid., 454 and 456-457 for his use of Maβhaftigkeit, Maβauherhalnisse and Tonharmonien.

331 Lysaker, “Heidegger’s Absolute Music, or What are Poets for When the End of Metaphysics is At Hand?” 202-204.

a positive attitude toward the changeability of all that is, she also observes that he does not give an account of the form-creating validity of Bach’s architectural form, i.e., a mathematical and tonal order. Risch suggests that this is because Gadamer was led astray by the musical developments of the 19th century on account of which he narrows his remarks about music, in contrast to those about art and literature, to the occasionality of the art event. However, she does not consider how his thought about the event of language is infused with a notion of Pythagorean mathematical tonal order, nor about how it resembles the architecture of mathematical tones in Bach. Risch reflects on the musical arts, but not on the music of language. In Gadamer’s Poetics (2013), Arthos studies the “most difficult feature of hermeneutic experience;” the notion of Gebilde. He characterizes it as “the diffusion of being in the performance and reception of art beyond its embodiment in the work.” He creates a bridge between the arts and poetics by illustrating the interpretive principles inherent to Gebilde (reciprocity of self, world, soul, being and history). In so doing he lands repeatedly on the importance of resonance to reciprocity. He writes:

To explain this it will be necessary to say something about Gadamer’s style of thinking, speaking and writing, which is sometimes more like a musician improvising on a theme than a philosopher following a line of argument. Gadamer seems to hold a complex understanding about something in his head with all of its many layers and dimensions of meaning, and he often brings this understanding out in an extended rumination where he is comfortable taking leisurely detours and asides that he knows in their unfolding ultimately will give significance to his exposition . . . what Gadamer sometimes appears to do, much like a musician, is to modulate from one theme to a related theme, and to explore this new theme in a leisurely way as a kind of addition or enrichment . . . it is through a kind of modulation, like the common chord that allows a musician to move from one key to another.

Arthos merges thinking, speaking and writing as if they were one and the same thing. This is evident in how he describes Gadamer’s thought and writing. He says that it modulates from one theme to a related theme like a common chord a musician uses to move from one key to another. But this is not the movement of either thought or writing, at least not initially, but the movement of the spoken language. Similarly, when he refers to Gadamer holding a complex understanding about something in his head and whose many layers he unwraps by increments, Arthos’ description befits the motility of a conversation. A conversation either with oneself or another has an architecture that revolves around a singular theme or idea.

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334 Arthos, Gadamer’s Poetics, ix.
335 Ibid., 2.
Detours lead back to it like a bridge in a song. But there is no song without singers.

Arthos’ research stops at the question of the structure of human existence and the mathematical order of the dialogue form that Gadamer finds in Plato’s philosophy. He treats Gadamer independently of his historical influences and thereby overlooks the principles that define his poetics, such mathematics, its relation to nature and art.

These philosophers of music in the phenomenological-hermeneutical tradition cannot be faulted for not addressing the question being raised here—that would be absurd. In fact, their analyses cross paths with this endeavor to develop a phenomenology of the inner word and its ontological structure in more ways than can be reasonably detailed. The argument put forward, therefore, might be considered an extension of their achievements; as will become evident in the next chapter, the work of James Risser has been especially helpful. In *Hermeneutics and the Voice of the Other* (1997), he argues that Gadamer’s hermeneutics aims to revive a dialogical understanding in living language. With that claim alone territory is created for a phenomenology of the inner word that he points out is not theological, which is metaphysically encased, but rather of the living language. He characterizes the inner word as a breath in the voice of the thought intended and suggests that when conjoined with that of others is comparable to an aura in the Athenian assembly or song.  

By this he means that the inner word is formed by many voices engaged in a discussion for instance about justice although it remains inaudible for Risser as well. Nevertheless, this is a way of thinking about the inner word is consistent with the motility of the living language and which he re-interprets in his 2013 *The Life of Understanding* to include the limit of non-being, concretization in *phronesis*, and generative power of the beautiful for instance. However, he does not make explicit the shifts in stance toward beings that his interpretations presuppose.

3 Existential Analysis of Human Nature

3.1 Introduction

This section argues that the basis on which entities are understood is the harmony of the dialogue form. Since, as Heidegger says, “every seeking is guided beforehand by what is

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sought,” it is imperative not to subordinate thinking to the whatness of that which is sought. The best way in which to avoid this is to take into account a time when the object of inquiry does not conform to our prejudices (fore-understandings) or unreflective way of dealing with it. Heidegger and Gadamer agree that the salient features of a thing are revealed during a disruption in the regular course of using it. We do not think about a hammer until it malfunctions, we do not think about communication until it fails. On the basis of that principle of interpretation I begin the argument that the Being of human existence is audible in the harmony of the dialogue form with Hegel. His “universal determinations of all thought” are said to originate in Plato’s dialogue. However, for Gadamer, he thinks about Being independently of a human existential situation and thus apart from the toil and travail of existence (as Heidegger might put it) or the inter-subjective and therefore, public context that concerns Gadamer. As a result of trying to think about Being independently of a concrete situation, Hegel cannot but confuse Being with an entity be it a thing or an idea, and thereby render the endeavor to define it increasingly complex, incomprehensible and irrelevant to life. After having established how not to think about the question of Being, I paraphrase Gadamer’s argument that Hegel’s dialectic presupposes the phenomenon of language where Gadamer believes the question of the meaning of Being is applicable. But this raises its own difficulties. Gadamer leaves key concepts of his own explication of how Being comes to language undeveloped, such as the power of mood (Stimmungskraft), and harkening (hören). The former indicates a structure of human existence that is alongside understanding and language; the latter points to a mode of perception according to which understanding articulates beings. Given the evidence for an incomplete phenomenological-ontology in Gadamer’s work, an invitation is being extended by him to Heidegger’s expertise in these areas. His analyses are used to establish (1) that the power of mood is not a feeling or emotion, but rather a human disposition open to what Heidegger and Gadamer call miteinandersein (being-with-one-another) (an ontological analysis of human existence) (2) that in order to be shared mood (disposition) must be harkened in the rhythm of the voice (a phenomenology of the senses) and (3) that when tone of voice is tuned into from the rhythm

339 BT, 102-107; SZ, 72-76.
340 TM, 386.
341 BT, 22-23; SZ, 3-5.
of disposition Being-as-a-whole comes to be in a harmony of voices (phenomenological-ontology).

3.2 Repositioning the Question of Being

Heidegger considers himself to have been the first to have raised the question of the meaning of being since Plato and Aristotle. Both, however, in his estimation, confuse Being with either an entity or its properties. Their thinking about the phenomenon (Heidegger specifies) was “fragmentary and incipient.” In contrast to them, he proposes to differentiate the meaning of Being from beings/entities and their properties. “In the question which we are to work out, what is asked about is Being—that which determines entities as entities, that on the basis of which [woraufhin] entities are already understood, however we may discuss them in detail. The Being of entities ‘is’ not itself an entity.” Prior to any talk about something, we have an understanding of what it is that must be distinguished from the object of inquiry in order to bring the thing itself into focus. Heidegger, therefore, undertakes to work out the question of the meaning of Being concretely, which is to say, in terms of human existence (in time). As mentioned in the previous chapter, there is no general theory about the meaning of Being. A general theory abstracts from the concrete particular. The meaning of Being cannot but be thought about in relation to an event or happening. This is why the meaning of Being is accessible to phenomenology. It concerns itself with the present in the sense of an appearing appearance, i.e., how something comes to be what it is for us. However, since what something is depends upon our understanding, and understanding is a way of existing (or relating to ourselves and others), how a being appears to be what it is depends on our relation (practical comportment) to it. This being said, Gadamer is considered to have continued the later Heidegger’s turn toward language as the area in which the meaning of Being is disclosed. This claim must be weighed against Gadamer’s concern for the dialectical structure of the meaning of Being. It brings him into contact with Hegel rather than Descartes (Heidegger’s main target in Being and Time). And Hegel’s dialectic leads Gadamer to Plato rather than to Aristotle as a guide with which to renew the question of the meaning of Being in our times. This section takes up the question whose forgetting Gadamer believes

342 Ibid., 21; 2.
343 Ibid., 25-26; 6.
344 Ibid., 20; 1.
culminates in Hegel’s logic in order from there to trace out the lineaments for raising the question again in the context of everyday language.

In “Philosophy and Poetry,” Gadamer explains, citing Republic 511c and Plato’s Parmenides, that for Hegel “philosophy moves exclusively in the realm of the concept.”

The realm of the concept is based in “thinking in contradictions” says Gadamer of Hegel; the skill of thinking in opposites, differentiating concepts and relating them to one another. This process is called by Plato dialectic and is characterized by him in the Seventh Letter (344), Statesman (285) and Sophist (253d). It surfaces in Hegel’s thought in a non-dialogical and instead cognitive process in which the relation of concepts to one another is not external to the mind (as if ideas were artifacts), but rather speculatively and “as the mirror-play of the categories through which the matter of thought is immanently and dynamically articulated.” No thinking, as Rodney Coleman says, “reflexive or otherwise, can ever be said to occur ‘externally’, that is to say outside of the movement of thought.”

What makes the movement of thought immanent to the mind is that it tends toward the concept “as a concrete totality.” In this way, thought is determined in its coming to be by the single Idea itself; a pure idea that limits thought. Thus does Gadamer judge Hegel’s notion of concept formation to be guided by a Cartesian unfolding monologue. This in turn makes sense of why Gadamer refers to the above mentioned dialogues. Republic 511 is about the philosopher’s return to the city after bathing in the light of the Good. The Parmenides, according to Gadamer, demonstrates the impossibility of defining the one independently of the many. The attempt to do so leads to higher degrees of incomprehensible complexity.

With these issues of the said dialogues on the table, Gadamer is indicating that Hegel’s dialectic is burdened by the same dilemma. Despite writing a phenomenology of spirit, and explaining philosophically how the Kingdom of God is realized, he subsumed the human intellect to the “cunning of reason” and was thus driven to think about Being independently...

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348 These are Gadamer’s references from “Plato’s Unwritten Dialectic,” in Dialogue and Dialectic, 130.
349 Gadmaer, “Philosophy and Poetry,” 137.
352 Ibid., 110.
of time, i.e., as an idea without extension. When he returned to the city no one could understand what he was talking about.

But as is always the case with Gadamer, no judgment of a philosopher is without a redeeming side to it. He is a master of soliciting possibilities from out of a criticism (Heidegger’s destructuon). While Hegel goes awry by equating everything that can be thought with a concept, he cannot but do so within language and thereby moves within the orbit of where Gadamer believes Being should be thought about. As post-Enlightenment children of the West (as Lammi puts it) we “are compelled to speak the language of concepts.”

Yes, as Hegel argues, philosophy follows the path of concepts (Begriff) that Lammi specifies are “grasping, putting together, apprehending, comprehending, appropriating, expropriating.” But what does it mean to speak the language of concepts? If they are spoken and grasped, then they cannot be embedded in a Cartesian prejudice, but rather in the language and tradition that has come down to us. While Hegel, to borrow from Theodore Kisiel, developed his sense of dialectic from the Greek language, in which he was fluent, and possessed “a special gift in bringing into play all the speculative suppleness and suggestive allusiveness of his mother tongue,” he was not aware of the extent to which his mother tongue held sway over his thought. This is precisely Gadamer’s point; natural language prefigures the conceptuality of logic. This Gadamer tells us he learned from Socrates.

Socrates’ turn from the ideas toward the logoi in the Phaedo is coordinate with Gadamer’s turn away from Hegel’s concept of dialectic to dialogue. Socrates had sought knowledge of ideas directly with the mind’s eye, but his humanity (or finitude) was an obstacle to the task. He was bedazzled and blinded by the light of the transcendent forms.

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355 Ibid.
358 See also Rodney Coleman who disputes Gadamer’s one-sided reading of Hegel. On the one hand, for Hegel, thinking cannot occur outside of language; on the other, Hegel holds that language is still a means of thought. “Gadamer, Hegel and the Middle of Language,” 152-153.
359 See Phaedo 73 on the basis of which Gadamer argues that Plato sought the truth of being in the logoi through recollection and 99d for Socrates’ decision to turn to language. See also “Philosophy and Poetry”, 137. The primary source for this turn to language is the Timaeus 48b where Plato brings the two-world doctrine to language, says Gadamer. He calls it Plato’s “second beginning.” “Hermeneutic Tracking and the Trace (On Derrida)” in The Gadamer Reader, 401.
From there he sought indirect knowledge of them based on how they are spoken about. Gadamer explains:

In Socrates’ eyes, the linguistic universe possesses more reality than immediate experience. So, just as the sun—according to the famous metaphor—cannot be observed directly but only on the basis of its reflection in water, whoever wants to get information about the true nature of things will achieve clarity sooner in the logoi than through deceptive sensory experience.360

Sensory experience is not just deceptive, but as an experience is not adequate to knowledge of the whole. There is no data or datum that can add up to the whole. The whole is not an experiential concept in that sense and can only be understood for Socrates and Gadamer through language (and a unique relation to the senses). In his lecture on Hegel’s Logic, Gadamer makes the contrast with Plato clear. Whereas Hegel had held that Plato’s dialogues were deficient because they do not reach scientific insight Gadamer counters, “As a matter of fact, Plato’s dialectic is, properly speaking, not a method at all and least of all the transcendental method of Fichte or Hegel. It has no absolute beginning. Nor is it founded on an idea of absolute knowledge . . .”361 Hegel’s assessment of Plato’s dialogues is a function of Hegel’s belief in the complete resolution of all differences and oppositions in absolute knowledge. Upon what then is Plato’s dialectic founded if not upon a concept of absolute knowledge? Surely we require a determinate being or end by which to direct thought. By denying it has Gadamer not left us groping in the dark and always, as Stanley Rosen says of Heidegger, on the way toward an understanding of the meaning of Being that cannot but be realized in thinking about nothing, since any other alternative transgresses its indeterminacy?362 Gadamer’s reply is that Plato’s dialectic (and his own) is founded on the unsaid, called by Gadamer the inner word, as that toward which we strive in everyday speech. The meaning of Being (der Sinn von Sein as Gadamer says, was Plato’s concern),363 appears to Socrates’ interlocutors in an inter-subjective linguistic public context. Consider Gadamer’s words about making oneself understood in everyday language in which one who thus speaks:

Wer in dieser Weise spricht, mag nur die gewöhnlichsten und gewöhntesten Worte gebrauchen und vermag doch eben dadurch zur Sprache zu bringen, was ungesagt ist und zu sagen ist. Insofern verhält sich, wer spricht, spekulativ, als seine Worte nicht Seiendes abbilden, sondern ein Verhältnis zum Ganzen des Seins aus sprechen und zur Sprache kommen lassen.364

What was mentioned earlier by Rodney Coltman about copying ideas external to the self applies here. Plato criticizes visual artists in the Republic for just this reason. By copying that about which they know nothing they create false images thrice removed from the ideal and mistake it for reality.365 A painter tries to sleep in the painting of a bed. It is absurd, but that is the critical turning point with which to argue for an alternative notion of copying, or better yet, mimesis. Gadamer emphasizes Plato’s criticism of Homer in this regard. “Homer’s poetic play turns out to be the mere pretense of having knowledge . . .”366 The youth copied his images much as a painter does the “ideal bed” and became increasingly alienated from a state of self-understanding. The more they imitated Homer’s heroes, the more they created a schism between their ideals and the contingencies of their own situation, and knowledge about it. The resolution to the dilemma is not to intensify a rote memorization of Homer’s poetry, but rather to reflect upon the language in which the images are being spoken about. This is the change in orientation taken by Socrates. By inquiring into the nature of Being as a linguistic phenomenon, i.e., through recollection of what one already knows stimulated by conversation with others, he learned to think about it for himself, and therefore in relation to his own soul and situation. Through a life of understanding (or recollecting what one has learned) the whole of being comes to expression, but never completely, which is why it remains unsaid (as Gadamer says above).

Walter Lammi explains in more philosophical terms and detail how the nature of Being, or what he calls “the whole of conceptuality” is held present to language (clarified below). Yet in so doing he detracts somewhat from thinking about the phenomenon he has in view.

364 WM, 444-445. Translated by Richard Pulmer who alerted me to the passage, as follows: “He who speaks in this manner may use only the most common and ordinary words and yet is able just through them to bring to language what is unsaid, the unsaid that needs to be said and here is said. He who speaks is proceeding speculatively in that his words are not copying anything ‘real’ but are actually expressing a relation to the whole of being and letting it come to expression.” Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), 210.

365 This being Plato’s criticism of the painters in the Republic X. 595a-602b. See Gadamer, “Plato and the Poets,” 64.

366 Ibid., 60.
The Socratic turn is from the inaccessible whole of the cosmos to the marginally accessible whole of our talking about the cosmos. Concepts cannot be singly defined and conceptual consciousness arises, says Gadamer, ‘like a language-whole from the whole of our linguistic world-orientation’ so that every use of concepts ‘remains a word use’. To Gadamer the ‘lustrous’ (‘schillerndes’) connection of conceptuality and living language must always be contradictory, inexact, ‘wavering’ in the same linguistic need as the conceptuality of negative theology and mysticism. In any textual interpretation we must enter into a ‘whole of conceptuality’, which among the Greeks, as opposed to later thinkers, is ‘constantly held present through language’. Greek philosophy never lost its connection to everyday speaking. Lammi is bringing the Hegelian speculativity into the range of “our linguistic-world orientation.” The “whole of conceptuality” is “held present through language.” This is consistent with the Socratic turn toward the logoi (or for Gadamer, the linguisticality of understanding). After pointing out that by historically effected consciousness he was emphasizing the temporality of Being, Gadamer writes, “What I mean is far clearer when I talk about Sprachlichkeit [linguisticality], a term in which the Christian tradition of the verbum interius [inner word] shines through.” He is quick to distance himself from the doctrine of the Incarnation. He suggests that the inner word is the difference (between beings and the meaning of Being) realized in a conversation. What could this mean? According to Lammi quoted above, Being is held present by us in a state of non-presence. The meaning of Being includes non-Being, which is itself a catalyst for striving to say more (vouloire-dire, says Risser). Hence, he states that the connection between the conceptual whole and language is contradictory; the whole (meaning of Being) is contradicted by linguistic determinations. However, does this way of framing speculativity not also avoid coming to terms with the voice? When Lammi reasons in terms of the “whole of conceptuality,” “conceptual consciousness” and “connection of conceptuality” is his thinking about language not overly determined by a technical dialectic? Granted, he also refers to mysticism and wavering. They are experiences commensurate with the motility of living language. Yet he does not distinguish them from the contradictory relation he says holds between “the whole of being” and language, as if a classificatory schema were the phenomenon itself. That the

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369 Gadamer prefers the French to the German Die Sprache spricht because it “expresses merely approaching and simply coming close to the meaning [Sinn], the sense—and indeed, what does Sinn mean if not that it points in a direction and in that way determines meaning?” In “Hermeneutics Tracking,” 381. Risser interprets this to be an intention to meaning that includes the incapacity to speak. The Life of Understanding, 80. I will dispute this interpretation in the next chapter where I argue that the sense intended here is anticipatory listening for the unfolding harmony that transcends the subject in the middle voice.
concept is the vehicle for his thinking about the problem is evident in what he omits. He
concludes in the passage above that “Greek never lost its connection to everyday language.”
He does not explain what that connection was other than to specify in the passage quoted
above that it includes a negation. 370

So what is this “connection” between everyday speaking and the whole-of-being that
includes a negation? What does it mean to express a relation to the whole-of-Being and let it
come to expression in everyday language? Heidegger has a reply that dovetails with Lammi’s
notions of negation, negative theology and mysticism. For Heidegger, the said connection
that expresses a relation to the whole-of-Being consists of the ontological difference.

Thought in terms of temporality of human existence, it consists of projecting oneself toward
one’s own-most-possibility for death. Although Heidegger seems to believe that das Man
Selbst is a deficient or fallen mode of Mitsein, which is constitutive of Dasein’s being-in-the-
world, and on this basis authenticity is not “in opposition” to social being, there is also a
sense in which he has not developed the philosophical dimensions of his own thinking
enough to support that belief. 371 As a result, the pursuit of authenticity depends on being
opposed to Dasein’s social-being and other people. On this basis, letting Being come to
expression by answering the call of conscience is authenticated by a rejection of everyone.

Gadamer is notably different from Heidegger in this regard, but not entirely. Although
celebrated for having made conversation with others in everyday language the locus for the
event of Being that lets the subject-matter speak for itself, in “The Nature of Things and the
Language of Things,” he refers to the falling away of the pre-given world. 372 This is iterated
in his discussion of Hölderlin in Truth and Method, 373 in “The Festive Character of the
Theatre,” 374 and in his account of play, modeled on the Greek religious experience. 375

Somehow, Gadamer’s notion of the connection includes a difference that does not amount to
a rupture with others (or social-being), but rather a distinction within a shared world.

The standard Gadamerian explanation for the connection that lets Being come to
expression is that one’s prejudices are called into question. Prejudices are not assumptions in

370 In fact Lammi is quite informed about the question especially as regards what he calls the “power of
mood.”
371 Heidegger conflates the ontological category of being-with and ontic category of other human
beings, which explains his emotionally charged invectives against Das Man.
373 WM, 445–446; TM, 465.
375 For example, see Gadamer, WM, 100; TM, 104-105.
an argument. If they were, conversations would degenerate into a contest between adversaries and become sophistry. Hermeneutics avoids this tendency by stipulating that prejudices, fore-conceptions or fore-understandings shape how one relates to and interprets beings (entities). Socrates the gadfly did not just confute people’s opinions. He placed their self-concept into question in front of others upon whose approbation that self-concept was dependent. It was not without difficulty that he managed to convince Protagoras and Callicles to speak truthfully. They had no experience of being sincere. They were habituated to putting on airs in order to look favourable in the eyes of the *hoi poloi*. When their self-concept was shown to be by their own admission ill-informed, their entire way of making sense of life became a shambles. Having one’s prejudices called into question is tantamount to having one’s life put on trial. But Gadamer does not treat this experience of modifying one’s prejudices in as overtly radical a fashion as either Socrates or Heidegger. His criticisms tend to be more nuanced than theirs.

I mentioned quoting Gadamer that the inner word shines through in linguisticality. In his later years (1994), Gadamer explains that he had been carrying forward Heidegger’s task to recover from the end of metaphysics (the question of Being) in a “phenomenological style” that would, he indicates, preserve the dialectic of question and answer. Gadamer is trying to think about the question of the meaning of Being within the phenomena of language (construed as a conversation). This cannot but involve at least two people, and therefore matters of human existence. They are discussed in the next section. With respect to relating the said question to the phenomena of language he states, “So I think a good deal here points to the phenomenon of Sprachlichkeit [linguisticality]. The way the voice is articulated as a speaking voice—perhaps even when one reads without making any sound—articulation with a high level of complexity.”

Reading fuses the word read with the word heard in a heightened level of complexity (and simplicity of sounds relative to those available in an actual conversation). Understanding is verbal, as Gadamer says, but if verbal, then musical. Whether conversing with oneself or another, that which lets entities as entities come to be in

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376 Although Lammi states that “The will to true dialectic is a *hexis* or matter of disposition” (Lammi, *Gadamer and the Question of the Divine*, 105), he describes Gadamer’s dictum “that one must ‘risk oneself’ in dialogue” as meaning “that one puts one’s views into the open to be challenged, refuted or refined” (ibid., vii). He does not relate disposition, which is an ontological category, to putting oneself at risk in a dialogue. The latter remains ontic for him and uninformed by disposition insofar as it pertains to opinions without qualification.

377 One of the best examples of sophistry is on display in Plato’s *Euthydemus*.

themselves is “the way the voice is articulated as a speaking voice.” When asked by Grondin, “Is there such a thing as non-linguistic understanding?” Gadamer replied, “Doubtless there is.” And in reply to Grondin’s next question, “And would you still call this language [Sprachlichkeit, linguisticality]?” he answered, “Why yes! Language in words is only a special concretion of linguisticality. And the same thing applies also to gestures for example.”

The linguisticality of understanding is non-linguistic, yet lingual because it pertains to the universality of hermeneutics (and interpretation). When we recall that in reply to Grondin’s next question, in what does the universality of hermeneutics consist, Gadamer had answered, “the inner word,” we have confirmation that the said word is prosody; the sound beneath the surface of words. It cannot be reduced to a dialect. Gadamer is explicit about this not only by insisting that the inner word constitutes the universality of hermeneutics, but in addition by explaining the conditions for transcending any particular dialect. He specifies that where there is “good will,” one is more easily understood in a foreign language through which one stutters than in one’s native tongue. Why is that? There may be a capacity common to all human beings that enable us to understand one another even when we do not speak the same language. In fact, that capacity is most evident when peoples of different cultures meet and successfully communicate.

3.3 Moods and the Structure of Human Existence: Ontology

Heidegger thought that Gadamer’s resorting to the movements of consciousness (e.g., open to closed) was too much in conformity with the tradition of philosophy. The concept of consciousness and states thereof suggests that the meaning of Being is an idea of the mind. Heidegger believed himself to have focused on the existential conditions of understanding in a concrete situation, e.g., that of Augustine. But his divergence from Gadamer on this matter cannot be taken at face value. Gadamer acknowledges Heidegger’s critique, stating that “historically influenced consciousness” was an emergency expression and that he was trying “to emphasize the [historical] temporality of being.” By explaining that the very terminology Heidegger thought was insufficiently subversive of Western metaphysical thinking was, in fact, intended to emphasize Heidegger’s project; namely, that Being is time (and not an idea), Gadamer is not only deflating the thrust of Heidegger’s criticism, he is also

380 Ibid., 418.
creating grounds for using Heidegger to clarify his own thought. This is an approach to interpretation to which they both resort. Heidegger claimed that Aristotle made “radical” what he saw in Plato (that words are put together with a view to a particular entity, *logos tinos*) when he argues that *logos* is both *synagoguel/sunthesis* and *dihairesis*; Gadamer that Aristotle’s physics was derived from Plato’s dialogue form and that Plato made a distinction in the theory of numbers presupposed by the Pythagoreans. Using Heidegger’s existential analysis of *Dasein* to explain what Gadamer really meant conforms to their approach to interpretation. It befits the affinity their philosophies have with one another in general. Not unlike Plato and Aristotle, to read either one independently of the other cannot but yield less conclusive conclusions than if they are read together. Gadamer recommends this. He refers to notions that are important for understanding the connection between Being and language that are notably Heideggerian because they concern the temporality of Being. Yet he also leaves them undeveloped in a way that invites clarifications by Heidegger even while correcting some of his excesses.

One such Gadamerian notion is the “power of mood” (*Stimmungskraft*). Drawing from disparate sources, Lammi associates it with the Greek experience of the divine that he says permeates everything. He continues, “The divine ‘clearly indicates something that in a humanly fundamental experience is tied in an indefinable way to the presence of something which through its power overcomes the surroundings of our daily experience.’ This experience, like health, is ‘perhaps more a way of being than of being believed’.” The divine is not a good or thing to be believed in. On the contrary, since it is revealed to human beings, Lammi reasons that it is of human beings, of their way of existing whose “overwhelming power” he specifies, is connected with the Greek words *apeiron*, unlimited and *arrheton*, unsayable. The unlimited is what the divine is and the unsayable is how it is.

This suggests that the unlimited is revealed to us during a modification in our way of existing, a modification presupposed by Gadamer’s talk of the pre-given world falling away

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382 BT, 201; SZ, 159.
384 On their relation to one another see Risser, *The Life of Understanding*, 2.
386 Ibid., 87.
387 Ibid.
in *Truth and Method*, the experience of play, art and the festive of the festival. For example, in “The Festive Character of the Theater,” he explains that the power of the Greek theater to overwhelm people and effect a unification, “a kind of universal communion” that “still has the power to overwhelm us today.” By stipulating of the Greek theater that the unification it can effect endures to this day, Gadamer indicates that power of mood is as ineradicable a feature of human nature as language and understanding (since, as he says everything that can be understood is in language). However, he is not analytical about these three features of human existence defined and distinguished from one another by Heidegger. In order, therefore, to clarify what Gadamer means by the power of mood and its relation to language (especially rhythm) and understanding, it makes sense to consult Heidegger the existential phenomenologist of human existence.

What is the difference between this power of mood and just any old feeling? Could being lifted out of everyday life and elevated to a “universal communion” be an undisclosed structure of human existence for Gadamer? For a reply to these questions it is apt to consult Heidegger. He explains that mood is a disposition (*Befindlichkeit*) that discloses our way of being-in-the-world. Moods are how we find ourselves thrown into the world and disposed towards ourselves and others. We might be bored, anxious, sad or exalted, but these are not emotions. They are prior to emotions because they do not have an object. The emotion of fear ceases when the object of fear disappears, but the same cannot be said of a disposition. We abide in moods of boredom irrespective of the circumstances and things around us. Moods are not emotions. In fact, they are constitutive of human existence alongside language and understanding. These three structures (mood, language and understanding) are said by Heidegger to be equiprimordial. They are implicated in one another. However, in contrast to either understanding or language, moods overtake us as if from without and alter how we understand and interpret the world. Through the mood of anxiety, meaning slips away in the sense that beings lose the significance they had for us. In this condition of meaninglessness, he argues that we wait in anticipation for the call of Being.
and by responding to it, renew our lives. Since the call is heard when both understanding and language are suspended in a mood of anxiety in which nothing makes any sense, mood must be a more definitive or primordial structure of human existence than either language or understanding.

Can the same be said of the power of mood in Gadamer’s thought? Does the power of mood that overtakes participants in a festival consist of meaning slipping away so as to hear the call of conscience and become who one is? Heidegger is reluctant to respond in the affirmative. In *Being and Time*, Division II, he counterpoises the immersion into “the they” with the pursuit of authenticity. In *What is Called Thinking?* he associates an immersion in the commonplace with “habitual words usurped by common terms,” and explains himself in terms that indicate precisely wherein his departure from Gadamer lies. Heidegger writes:

Memory initially signifies man’s inner disposition, and devotion. . . . ‘Disposition,’ man’s heart, has a larger meaning than that given to it in modern speech, it means not merely the sensitive and emotive side of human consciousness, but the essential being of human nature. In Latin it is called *animus*, as distinct from *anima*.

Not unlike mood in *Being and Time*, memory is a disposition (and means of recall or recollection). He states that it constitutes human *animus* in contrast to *anima*. Whereas *anima* “means the fundamental determinant of every living being” and refers to human beings as the organism, *animus* “means that inner striving of human nature which always is determined by, attuned to, what is.” It is a principle of life and is often translated as “soul.” On the basis of Latin terminology Heidegger justifies a human orientation away from mere biological and organic existence toward what Lammi calls on Gadamer’s behalf, although resorting to ancient Greek, individuating *bios*. Gadamer associates *bios* with biography and contrasts both with *zoe*. The latter refers to undifferentiated animal existence. Heidegger and Gadamer clearly have different ways of characterizing the essence of human beings. By associating the ancient Greek sense of *bios* with biography, Gadamer is indicating that the life he says interprets itself and can be understood by others, incorporates organic life or what Heidegger terms *anima*. There is a sense in which we become more human for Gadamer not

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394 Ibid., 148.
395 Ibid.
396 Ibid., 149.
by striving toward what is, but by recalling “the time of all life” or aion zoe.\textsuperscript{398} This is more in keeping with the inner disposition of the soul being memory as Heidegger says above in \textit{What is Called Thinking}? Recalling undifferentiated life is intrinsic to the pursuit of knowledge for philosophers. They die to themselves and awaken to a non-egoistic self that is analogous to what Gadamer believes happened during a Greek religious festival. Through synchronizing their movements participants did not lose themselves in \textit{Das Man}, they were elevated to a higher state of consciousness. Heidegger seems not to have seen this, perhaps on account of bypassing the role of music in the education of the soul for the ancient Greeks. In any event, we will have to re-consider the accuracy of Risser’s comment, “Dialogue or conversation is the form of recovery, not from the one-sidedness of dialectical thinking, but in the Socratic fashion, from the soul fallen into finitude of bodily existence. As such, it is recovery from the condition that ‘all things escape us’, from an essential forgetting that, following Heidegger, is tantamount to concealment.”\textsuperscript{399} As we have seen, the fall into bodily existence for Gadamer is an encounter with the principle of life, a metaphysical principle concealed in language and thus available to us provided we are properly attuned. In chapter six, I will explain why Heidegger initiated and then abandoned the attempt to develop a bridge between \textit{Dasein} and biology or life; a task that Gadamer evidently renews by way of music whose role in the education of the senses and understanding Heidegger overlooks.

A brief explanation on the role of music in education is in order. In Plato’s \textit{Republic}, the guardians are distinguished from the many enslaved to desire. In contrast to them guardians are spiritedness (\textit{thumos} of the midriff). It is inculcated through an education in music (or \textit{mousike} meaning education). Gadamer devotes an essay to it—“Plato and the Poets,” in which the bestial nature of the guardians is harmonized (woven together) with the peaceful side of their nature.\textsuperscript{400} Different modes of music cultivate different virtues (comportments, habit and character);\textsuperscript{401} Dorian, moderation and Phrygian, courage. These

\textsuperscript{398} Ibid., 14, 52-54, 97. He argues that the term biology is what is meant by either \textit{zoe} or zoology for Gadamer, Note 57, 137.


\textsuperscript{400} Gadamer, “Plato and the Poets,” 54-58.

\textsuperscript{401} For Gadamer’s view of virtue character in Aristotle see “Hermeneutic Access to the Beginning” in \textit{The Beginning of Philosophy}, 27. Rosen explains that Damon, a theoretical musician, “developed a theory about the influence of different modes and rhythms of music on the emotions, hence of its importance in the education of character” (Rosen, \textit{Plato’s Republic}, 110). Eberhard notes that the three voices in Greek grammar are dispositions of the soul based on music theory (Eberhard, \textit{The Middle Voice in Gadamer’s Hermeneutics}, 9). Of course, Plato knew of the power of music to form character that is picked up by Gadamer’s concern for the harmony of the soul with itself and the state in his lectures on Plato from the 1930’s and 1940’s.
varying rhythms and intervals penetrate directly from the body into language and thus, into dance and poetry. As Seth Benardete writes, “Harmony and rhythm are the two elements of music that are pre-rational and penetrate the deepest into the inside of the soul (Republic, 401d5-402a6).”

Rhythm, in particular, penetrates into the soul because rhythm resembles its movements. S. H. Butcher reports that rhythm was the dominant element in Greek music. Moving and singing in time would have purged eros of acquisitiveness. This is what love of beauty does and to which Plato relates in terms of images of virtue provided we keep in mind that they were transmitted in song. In the Republic the city of excess that arises from the surplus created by the city of pigs is thus disciplined by the spirited guardians whose erotically charged nature has been educated to abide in beauty and resist the temptation to be swayed by flattery. What Gadamer calls zoe, Heidegger anima, is accordingly formed by the education (or redirection) of malleable eros toward a pre-discursive love of the Good.

Individuation of human life as biography is thus not opposed to biology. The being of human beings (as Heidegger might put it) strives forward by thinking backward to the apeiron, the arrheton, unlimited and unsayable, the meaning that exceeds anything said by us finite beings. That seems to be a valid inference, provided that it is couched in terms of the past that comes toward us from out of the future. In support of this claim, Heidegger specifies that animus, which strives toward what is also refers to human disposition as memory, or better yet, recollection (discussed further in the next chapter). It seems odd, but human beings are more than mere animals on account of a striving toward a prior condition of their own nature, what Heidegger calls anima. What lies ahead is what has been. This suggests that bios cannot but point back to (or recall) zoe, anima, zoology, biology, and the perfectly just city to the city of sows. However, whereas in the latter each does that for which they are fit out of necessity/need, in the perfectly just state each does that for which they are fit out of necessity/need that is indistinguishable from fulfillment. Hence, in the Republic, the dispositions of those enslaved to acquisitiveness (epithumia) are distinguished from those disposed toward beauty by an education in music. Indeed, Mnemusyne is the mother of the muses evoked by music, dance and poetry. Through these arts the guardians are awoken to a

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404 Benardete, Socrates’ Second Sailing, 72.
405 Heidegger, What is Called Thinking?, 148-149.
universal communion latent within the true and healthy city of sows (Republic 373) that is always already there (aion zoon) in the course of building the city to geometrical perfection in speech. The process of making it culminates in Book VI yet the ideal state including the idea of the Good point back to what we see in the animal kingdom. John Arthos’ explanation of the potency of everlasting earth is apt to quote.

... “an inexhaustible abundance of rudimentary ways and forms.” In Heidegger’s words, there already “lies tucked into nature a design, a measure and boundary through which a creative outline is brought into the open.” In contrast to the formlessness of Dionysian frenzy (“the rapture of the Dionysian state with its annihilation of the ordinary bounds and limits of existence”), Heidegger’s earth always has already a “sketch of forms.” Something like the rhetorical topoi (but anterior to any historical production), it consists of “embryonic but not predetermined” Gestalten—figures, forms, patterns, rhythms. There is thus, unlike Nietzsche, not “primacy of creative forces over forms.”

Who can see the potency of forms (or possibility of an essence) in nature? Anyone whose senses have been education in a love of beauty/order is predisposed to become a philosopher and define the forms given to them “anterior to any historical production.” Animus thus strives to remember and thereby return to this source of potential form in the ground. But is not Plato the father of forgetfulness of Being because he conflates the latter with an ideal realm of perfection that is antithetical to the world of “becoming”? This is the view of Plato the ontological dualist that Gadamer repudiates. He is explicit, “The Academy knew many theories about the intimate relationship between general and particular” and that there was no concept of their separation. The separation thesis belongs to the Pythagoreans who distinguished mathematics from physics. According to Gadamer, Plato breaks the opposition between them, between Being and becoming (although that is a later formulation) down with a theory of recollection in which we realize that our ethos is implicated in the

406 Arthos, Gadamer’s Poetics, 78.
408 When Plato brought about the revolution in Pythagorean thought (and thus for Gadamer, the thinking of the Greek world), to think opposites together while distinguishing them at the same time, the ancient (Pythagorean) opposition between mathematics (of the spheres) and phusis (as hule or inert matter) disappeared and natural science (or explanation for change) from then on in antiquity was mathematics (Gadamer, “Plato’s Unwritten Dialectic,” 138). From then on, change in nature was understood to be not simply between order and disorder, Being and non-Being (aletheia), but rather an unfolding structure of a living organism; internal relations that cohere with one another—a paradigm for understanding that in the Phaedo Gadamer contrasts with scientific knowledge of testing hypotheses against experience. In contrast to the mathematical explanations for change (i.e., growth) empirical sciences, dedicated as they were to finding general laws are not fit to grasp the unity of meaning (or cyclical change) of nature. For this reason, Gadamer says that science is not a language. It is not a language because it is not oriented by unities, but rather by a correspondence theory of truth.
process of reaching knowledge about something. *Mnemusyne* refers to a recollection of the pre-given structure of the world, recognizable, for instance, in the order of the heavens. Gadamer states conclusively that Plato’s precise theory of participation at *Phaedo* (100d) denies ontological separation by asserting that “the *eidos* seems to be somehow in things.”

The *eidos* is “in things” in the same way one is in many numbers. But this is straying into Pythagoreanism. Suffice it to say that the two-worlds of *anima* and *animus* are conjoined in *anamnesis*. Gadamer relates to this as follows: “Plato [relates the growing experience of love] to the spiritual perception of the beautiful and the true orders of the world. It is by virtue of the beautiful that we are able to acquire a lasting remembrance of the true world.”

The beautiful whether in nature or art (where the beautiful is proportion, symmetry) recalls a primitive conditions of human existence. The arts function to remind us of it. Heidegger writes, “Memory, Mother of the Muses—the thinking back to what is to be thought is the source and ground of poesy.”

Poesy, therefore, does not copy ideals external to self-understanding (which is an aspect of Plato’s criticism of Homer), but rather articulates at a higher level of perfection of which only human *techne* is possible the underlying order of things. *Mythos* is *logos*.

The myth of metals wherein human beings are born of the same earth, and Plato’s new religion (one good god) is, in fact, not a noble lie, but rather a medicinal lie for the good of the soul, which is why it is greater than truth. Noble lies cure guardians of their erotically charged possessive natures by reminding them that the meaning of their life is tied up with the good of the city. This is why the noble lies are medicinal. They cure those with a highly erotic nature of the desire for possessions by reminding them of the kinship of all living things to which they are also disposed by reason of their philosophical nature.

Risser had thus said earlier that “Dialogue or conversation is the form of recovery . . . from an essential forgetting.” Without forgetting there is no memory. He explains, “endeavours of understanding all take place for Gadamer in relation to an anterior life from which we are removed by virtue of distance and forgetting such that everywhere

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411 Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking*? 11.
412 I learned from a teacher of Strauss that the myths were for people who had not the force of mind to understand rational argument. Gadamer argues that they are not mere stories, but “extensions of the dialectical argument—an extension that is inaccessible to concepts and logical substantiation.” This is because they concern human action. “Life and Soul: The *Phaedo*” in *The Beginning of Philosophy*, 47.
philosophizing is attempted a recollection of being takes place.” An essential forgetting consists of an immersion in divertissements of the city of luxury (a kind of death and levelling down into undifferentiated impotent anonymity) to be contrasted with the recovery of the life-giving earth in the original state of nature (anima-feminine-generative). But why life-giving? In the Myth of Er, which Risser refers to for purposes of characterizing hermeneutics as convalescence or a restoration to health, the river of Ameleta, the river of neglect and carelessness is nourishing. By drinking from it the soul becomes open, attentive to its own history, i.e., when it hears aright, the soul harkens to the rhythmic flow of language and is thereby renewed; the rheo of language that Gadamer analyzes in Plato’s Theaetetus. Lammi affirms this in writing: “The together-with or mitsamt form of animal collectivity only truly gives way to human with-one-another or miteinander with the advent of language.” Or, as Heidegger says of the Greek zoonlogon exon, “Man shows himself as the entity which talks.” We are speaking animals and therefore by nature desire to create beyond ourselves, given the right weave of our dispositions. Hence, when Gadamer thinks about the inner disposition Heidegger has dubbed animus, he specifies that it is not an inward realm, but rather expresses itself in action.

The inwardness of justice is most certainly not an inwardness of disposition nor that good will ‘which alone of all things in the world may be called good’ (Kant). . . . It is no sanctified realm of the heart known only to God, but rather an order of governance and a constitution of the soul’s being which maintains and fulfills itself in every action. We can see the unity of speech and deed in the actions of Socrates, and in the Republic. Gadamer says that it is a natural expression of the inner order of the soul, the order of nature in which we partake writ large, the projection of logos into mythos. This is a typically romantic view of nature and poetry that both Gadamer and Heidegger believe is expressed in

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413 Risser, The Life of Understanding, 10.
414 Ibid., 10.
415 Ibid., 23.
416 Lammi, Gadamer and the Question of the Divine, 94.
417 BT, 208; SZ, 165.
418 Hexis is discussed by Aristotle in The Nicomachean Ethics Book II.1105. According to Lammi, intention is a disposition that distinguishes the sophist from that of the philosopher where he quotes Gadamer writing, “The difference does not lie in argumentation, but in the intention of such arguers. Therein alone lays the difference between philosophers and sophists.” (Lammi, Gadamer and the Question of the Divine, 162, Note 52).
419 Gadamer, “Plato’s Educational State” in Dialogue and Dialectic, 86.
420 Gadamer is emphatic about this in “Plato and the Poets,” 68.
ancient Greek culture. But the point is still valid—that the uniquely human disposition articulates through language the state of nature.

This explication of *anima* and *animus*, the two dispositions of human beings, educated in self-formation (*Bildung*) that recovers the potency of the earth (biology) to create works of art (i.e., a life) would seem to have left behind the question about the power of mood that initiated this discussion. But detours are often re-interpreted to be the next best path when we reach the destination. Both Heidegger and Gadamer hold out regard for the primitive condition in which the sign coincides with what is indicated. Heidegger writes, “Not only can the sign represent this in the sense of serving as a substitute for what it indicates, but it can do so in such a way that the sign itself always is what it indicates.” The sign, he goes on to say, is not yet “free from that of which it is a sign.” 421 Gadamer reiterates, “In the earliest times the intimate unity of word and things was so obvious that the true name was considered to be part of the bearer of the name, if not indeed to substitute for him.” 422 *Was heisst denken?* is a summons to this primitive community of language, 423 a call to the *animus* by the *anima* (masculine form by feminine potency). The reply is a creative generative activity that Gadamer likens to play—jocular play and irony as Gadamer is fond of characterizing Plato’s creative act of transforming the earth’s hidden outline into a visible structure. 424 In support of asserting this ancient truth against modern scientific methodology, Gadamer parses out the etymology of the concepts he has been using. He explains that *Einleuchtens* belongs to the tradition of rhetoric and that *Einleuchtende* belongs in a series and continues; “die dem Wahren und Gewissen des Bewiesenen und Gewußten gegenüber ihre eigene Berechtigung verteidigt. Ich erinnere daran, daß wir dem sensus communis eine besondere Bedeutung zuerkannt haben.” 425 Self-presentation (*Berechtigung*) and rightness are placed side by side and are said to defend themselves against what is proven and known. There is a moral imperative to self-presentation (or everything meaningful, he also specifies!). But he is not called to a Heideggerian ethos of authentic

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421 BT, 113; SZ, 82.
422 TM, 406.
424 See “Plato and the Poets” 42, 43, 50, 58, 67, 70, 71 and “Dialectic and Sophism in Plato’s Seventh Letter”, 94. The intertwining (or weaving) of *anima* and *animus* is playful, erotic and dangerous. That play is the creative transformative moment is evident in Gadamer’s frequent reference to it in “Plato and the Poets” while characterizing Plato’s writing (or creation of the *Republic* in words). Play could also be considered the comedic side of the tragic moment with which Heidegger identifies. Tragedy is from a heightened standpoint laughable. This is why we are for the Greeks playthings of the gods. Plato knew this. His greatest achievement, the *Republic*, crumbles when it reaches perfection in the three waves, all of which are said by him to be jokes.
425 TM, 479; WM, 460.
individualism, and instead to a Hegelian one. He thinks next about the *sensus communis*—a pietism he finds in Oetinger and Kant.\(^{426}\) By mentioning it in a chapter on the ontology of language (“Language as Horizon of Hermeneutic Ontology”), he intends to weave (harmonize) it together with what he had said about the *sensus communis* in Part One of *Truth and Method* (“The Question of Truth as it Emerges in the Experience of Art”).\(^{427}\) Part III and Part I; language as ontology and the 18\(^{th}\) century “mode of knowing that is very much in accord with the experience of understanding that his philosophical-hermeneutics attempts to articulate” (as Risser says),\(^ {428}\) ought to be read together and interpreted one in terms of the other. This is commensurate with disposition being memory for both Gadamer and Heidegger. When Gadamer, therefore, speaks about the *sensus communis* on the basis of *prudentia*, the common sense of “talking well” or eloquence in Part I, he is foreshadowing the passage quoted above about *Recht-Gewissen* and the *sensus communis* in Part III. Talking well is musical (in the sense being defended here) and when enacted recovers like music, dance and poetry, the original togetherness of heaven and earth (Hesiod’s chaos) and all things undifferentiated.\(^ {429}\) We have a good conscience for fellowship in human solidarity when thinking is called back to an original potentiality-to-be-one-another (*miteinandersein*), or as Gadamer refers to it at times, “going along with it [*mitgehen*],” “the being-together-of-people with each other” [*im Miteinander*],\(^ {430}\) and “playing along with.”\(^ {431}\) Stated otherwise, the power of mood that overtakes a pre-given way of conceiving the world originates in an aspect of human existence that is, as Risser says, concealed and forgotten—our social being. For Gadamer, it calls to us from out of the midst of a dialogue and elevates us above the mass accumulation of means to survival (i.e., a bloated city of pigs) to a “kind of universal communion” that is, as Risser says, “inseparable from the historical life of human experience,”\(^ {432}\) but in fact grounded in the nature of our pre-given biological existence (*zoe*,

\(^{426}\) Gadamer, “Relevance of the Beautiful,” 19.

\(^{427}\) On pages 18 to 19 of TM he speaks of the *sensus communis* in the same terms as on page 479, writing that it “is not nourished on the true, but on the probable, the verisimilar” and also reasserts that it belongs with renaissance classical philosophy and rhetoric. The leitmotif of the arts discussed in Part I and ontology in Part III is harmony, the refrain throughout both discussions by Gadamer.


\(^{429}\) I am consulting Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* 11.


\(^{432}\) Risser, *The Life of Understanding*, 56.
It is the disposedness of a one-celled organism that calls us to dialogue with the tradition of Western philosophy and to transmit its meaning into our own language.  

### 3.4 Understanding and Modes of Perception: Phenomenology

In order to clarify in what the connection between Being and everyday language consists, we would do well to step beyond the ontological analysis that has established the power of mood to be a summons to social-being (mitsein) and its implications for understanding in terms of both seeing and hearing. For both Heidegger and Gadamer, understanding is embodied and therefore determined by the senses. In this section, I argue that the sense of hearing called harkening or attunement, in contrast to acoustic hearing and sight, is relational and essential to being open to social-beingness, which is the basis for shared moods.

Gadamer writes, “Even perception conceived as an adequate response to a stimulus would never be a mere mirroring of what is there. For it would always remain an understanding of something as something. All understanding-as is an articulation of what is there, in that it looks-away-from, looks-at, sees-together-as. . . . Seeing means articulating.”  

Granted, Gadamer exercises a notion of pure perception, but it pertains to a merging of the sense of sight and hearing in aesthetics of non-differentiation, a topic to

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433 Ibid., 20-21.
434 TM, 79. See also Patrick A. Heelan who writes, “I conclude that visual perception – and by analogy all perception – is hermeneutic as well as causal: it responds to structures in the flow of optical energy, but the character of its response is also hermeneutical, that is, it has the capacity to ‘read’ the appropriate structures in the World, and to form perceptual judgments of the world about which these ‘speak.’” Patrick Heelan, “Perception as a Hermeneutical Act,” in Hugh Silverman and Don Ihde eds., Hermeneutic and Deconstruction (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 43.
435 Hence, although Gadamer states, “It is invariably true that when we see something, we must think something in order to see anything,” i.e., perception articulates understanding, there is also a free play of perception that is “not directed toward a concept” (Gadamer, “The Relevance of the Beautiful,” 29) that only makes sense if it is interpreted in terms of sounds blending into one another. This is evident in his criticism of Kant. Gadamer’s notion of aesthetic non-differentiation is in debt to Kant’s judgment of taste (ibid). The latter consists of a disinterested non-conceptual delight in the cooperative play of imagination and understanding (ibid., 19 and “Art and Imitation,” 96; see Kant, Critique of Judgment, section 9). He calls this the free play of perception and the “autonomous significance of perception,” (“The Relevance of the Beautiful,” 30). So there is, after all, pure perception. Not at all—Gadamer is referring to seeing with the ears discussed earlier. This is because the “deep structure of perception” to which he refers requires the capacity to reposition oneself in relation to the object such that its inner order of numbers animates whatever is created out of them (in nature). Hence, although Kant may have created a dichotomy between art and nature, Gadamer is convinced that it must be false. Not only did Kant repeatedly refer to nature as a model for making (ibid., 18), but in addition the very order of nature permeates his notion of the genius. Gadamer relates that for Kant, the “natural power” (ibid., 13) of a genius “like nature, creates something that seems as though it were made in accordance with rules, although without conscious attention to them” (ibid., 21). Rules are internalized such that the order of nature comes to expression in his or her work (logos-physis). Gadamer therefore comments that had Kant an ear for the classical music of his times, this alone would have saved him from a “false dichotomy” between artistic and natural beauty (“Intuition and Vividness” in Relevance of the Beautiful, 164-165). Concepts of the understanding are not in fact independent of the music of language. Instead, by keying into the tonal affinities and rhythms, poetry
which I will return in due course. In the passage above, he is referring to the fact that the opposition entertained between our senses and minds is false. This is because there is no thinking that is not informed by the senses, and hence, that knowledge about something presupposes it has already been articulated by understanding-perception. The object is a door to me, a battering ram to another before I either open it or she uses it to break a window. Heidegger states it somewhat more succinctly. In sections 31 and 32 of *Being and Time*, he explains that sight projects an idea of what something is in advance of the appearing appearance in what he calls a fore-conception or fore-understanding. This is what Gadamer calls a prejudice or pre-judgment. In keeping with the latter, as Gadamer says, sight inclines us to, “disregard much of what is there, so that for sight, it is simply not there at all.”

His example is an expectation. He also explains that vision has a tendency toward invariance, or to see things in the same way. Understanding led by sight makes assertions about things that are true in general. It is on account of these features that I consider sight to be epistemic (or about ideas)—it directs understanding away from the self (and self-understanding) toward objects from which the knower distances him or herself in order to think clearly and in general, i.e., categorically and universally. One method for all objects of knowledge (epistemology) is based on the assumption that knowledge is acquired by sight because reality is thought to be extended matter.

In contrast to epistemic seeing is *logos* (reason, ratio) to which hearing and keeping silent belong. Hearing is prone toward the particular temporally contingent event. Heidegger writes, “As Plato knew well,” words hang together (or are united) in the fact that *logos* is always a *logos tinos*, i.e., about this thing here, which is what Heidegger says the question of Being is about. That is to say, there is no general reply to a question about the meaning of Being that cannot succumb to an empty abstraction, e.g., the universal, the...

makes the universal visible in the particular (“The Play of Art” in *Relevance of the Beautiful*, 129); the potential-to-be-one-another audible in harmony of voices for the sensitive ear. Consider his comments about Kant: “it is only in the presence of the particular individual work that concepts ‘come to reverberate,’’ as Kant says. This fine phrase originated in the musical language of the eighteenth century, with particular reference to the favorite instrument of the time, the clavichord, which created a special effect of suspended reverberation as the note continued to vibrate long after being struck” (“The Relevance of the Beautiful,” 21; see *Critique of Judgment*, section 48). The power or *dunamis* that translates sounds into images is of the same order for Gadamer; the generative one between the spaces of speaker’s voices that are uttered from the place of being at home in the world. For his statement on the aesthetics of non-differentiation see TM, 105.

436 Heelan, “Perception as a Hermeneutical Act,” 43.
437 BT, 70 and 79; SZ, 45 and 54 on the categorical meaning of an object that is sighted “whose kind of Being is not of the character of Dasein.”
438 See also “The Concept of Phenomenon” and “The Concept of Logos” in BT, 51-58; SZ, 28-35.
439 BT, 201.
indefinable or the self-evident. To think of Being in those terms does not befit the fact that Being always appears together with a particular being. Hence, phenomenology has an aversion to distracting detractions from appearing appearances and focuses instead on the present. The senses of sight and hearing, therefore, articulate an object of knowledge in radically different ways. Sight is prone to abstraction, generalization and projection toward the future; hearing is keyed to the particular in the warp and woof of the present. They correct each other’s excesses; Apollonian rationalism and Dionysian stream of consciousness, and enable one to know the universal in the particular; what something is according to that it is (or how it comes to be what it is). Without a dialectical weave between the two modes of understanding-perception, judgment can go awry—oscillating between submission to authority and over-hasty impulsiveness. I turn next to distinguishing hearing from harkening in order to establish that the latter is the basis for shared disposition.

Lawrence Hatab argues that human relationality is fostered through anxiety for Heidegger. In the midst of being overwhelmed by anxiety in the face of death, we identify with and feel for others and their circumstances. From this Hatab reasons that compassion, “is a basic ethical disposition (Befindlichkeit) or mood (Stimmung) that attunes us to the moral life in a way that mere knowledge, theories, or rules cannot.” He concludes, “compassion then, may be the deepest indication of mitsein.” But if so, then it presupposes awareness of one’s own social-being since without being aware of how we are in the world, we can hardly be considered open to the other. I have to recognize that I am anxious before being capable of compassion for the suffering of others. This recognition is achieved by listening. Heidegger writes, “Listening to . . . is Dasein’s existential way of Being-open as Being-with for Others. Indeed, hearing constitutes the primary and authentic way in which Dasein is open for its ownmost potentiality-for-Being—as in hearing the voice of a friend whom every Dasein carries with it.” When Heidegger thus reasons about human existence in terms of auditory perception, he blunts the future-oriented visual bias that determines the

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442 Ibid.
443 Ibid., 414.
444 BT, 206; SZ, 163. I understand “Listening to . . .” to be what Gadamer has in mind when he mentions “Je ne sais quoi” except that Heidegger answers Gadamer’s “I know not what” with “Being-open as Being-with.”
projection toward individuating authenticity. Shifting toward listening has brought him to think about relati

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nality instead, even friendship, or what he calls “Being-open as Being-with for Others.”\textsuperscript{445} Since Being-with is an existential structure of \textit{Dasein}, being open to it (listening) is tantamount to Being-with others. The kind of listening required is well defined by Heidegger as \textit{hören}. In contrast to acoustic hearing that does not distinguish the sound of traffic from that of a human being, \textit{hören} entails \textit{gehören} (belonging with) and is translated as harkening or be-hearing. It is prior to talk. He writes, “In the disposition being-here is always already brought before itself, it has always found itself already, not in the sense of happening to find itself to be perceiving, but in the sense of finding itself attuned.”\textsuperscript{446} We are brought to recognize our disposition (or way of being-here) through attunement. After specifying that “situatedness” does not refer to a psychological state of well-being \textit{[Wohlbefinden]} “or of feeling ill \textit{[Schlechtbefinden]}” and instead, Heidegger suggests, to disposition he indicates that disposition (\textit{Stimmung}) is relational and that relationality is lingual.\textsuperscript{447} Graeme Nicholson will thus have to be faulted for arguing that “it is by projection that we reveal, and by invention that we let things be.”\textsuperscript{448} By equating revelation with perceptual illumination he overlooks the change in stance required to distinguish the illumination from the light of a light bulb; \textit{techne} of \textit{episteme} from \textit{poeisis} (the latter, letting beings be). Being open to our social-being creates a sense of presence that enables us to listen to the other as other. It is achieved not by the sense of sight, but by the sense of attunement. This is suggested by the etymologies, “our mood, our Being-attuned; . . . \textit{die Stimmung, das Gestimmte}.”\textsuperscript{449}

However, Heidegger is not always consistent with what he says about mood and the attunement of harkening. The resemblance of mood to being-attuned in German implies that mood is discerned in tone of voice. Heidegger asserts this, “Being-in and its state-of-mind [mood] are made known in discourse and indicated in language by intonation, modulation,


\textsuperscript{446} Quoted from Dahlstrom, \textit{Heidegger’s Concept of Truth}, 297. Consider also Heidegger writing, “The attunedness of the disposition existentially constitutes the openness of being-here to the world” in \textit{SZ}, 88. I have quoted in from Dahlstrom, \textit{Heidegger’s Concept of Truth}, 299.

\textsuperscript{447} Martin Heidegger, \textit{The Event}, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 188. He explains that disposition is a replying to the claim of “beyng” and that its pain is the absence of intimacy.


\textsuperscript{449} Translator’s Note 3 in BT, 172.
the tempo of talk, ‘the way of speaking’.

This sounds like Friedrich Schleiermacher. He argues that the intention of the author and indeed unity of what is said can be discerned in the quantitative aspect of language, i.e., tone of voice. He was on this basis criticized by Gadamer for having confused hermeneutics with psychology. Heidegger is explicit about this as well when he writes of “our mood, our Being-attuned”: “Prior to all psychology of moods, a field which in any case still lies fallow, it is necessary to see this phenomenon as a fundamental existentiale, and to outline its structure.” Hence, he specifies that harkening is a potential for following, going-along with (Aufeinander-hören) and is “phenomenally still more primordial than what is defined ‘in the first instance’ as ‘hearing’ in psychology—the sensing of tones and the perception of sounds. Harkening too has the kind of Being of hearing which understands.” Accordingly, attunement cannot be to the quantitative aspect of language simpliciter without confusing Being-in (ontology) with the ontic-surface of sound (or something merely acoustic in which wavelengths strike the tympanum of the ear). And yet, Heidegger had said as quoted above that “Being-in and its state of mind [mood] are . . . indicated in language by intonation.” Gadamer stumbles into the same territory in “Text and Interpretation,” (discussed in the previous chapter) and with the notion of empathy in Truth and Method. He explains that it consists of seeing an idea from another’s point of view, i.e., transposing “oneself into the other person in order to understand his point of view.”

For all intents and purposes this sounds like psychology except that he specifies, “not the particular individual, but what he says.”

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450 Ibid., 205; SZ, 162.
451 Schleiermacher points out the “entry of another unity into the main development is what one calls a digression” and that unless the reader has “precise knowledge of the sphere of life of the writer . . . it is after only the more or less emphatic tone which decides” (Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings, trans. Andrew Bowie. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 123). What is the tone of the spoken word is true of the written. He states, “Here there is now a point which is often very easy, often very difficult to find, but which is always important, namely the tone, the mood of the writer. Recognising this is essential to understanding a sequence of thoughts as a fact in their mind. Two writers can have the same didactic tendency, the object in question can be the same, the manner of conceiving it, the attitude, the manner of writing can be the same, but one writes in a calm, the other a more agitated tone. In consequence the details appear different, have a different meaning. That difference reveals itself the most in the treatment of language. But determinate rules cannot be established concerning this, precisely because it is so much a question of feeling” (ibid., 146-147). For Schleiermacher, tone is significant for establishing unity (ibid., 141; 131; 147) and hence, tact, which consists of discerning the internal relation between parts from the author’s point of view depends on one’s capacity to listen well.
452 BT, 172-173; SZ, 134.
453 Ibid., 206-207; 163.
454 TM, 388.
455 Ibid., 387.
So how can we get inside another’s point of view about a subject-matter without confusing it with the intonation in another’s voice, without confusing their mood or disposition with their intentions and motivations? Gadamer’s and Heidegger’s statements are at times unclear, but their philosophy is rich enough to clear the muddied waters as well. It all depends on a sense of presence (or being of substance). Prior to heeding tone of voice, or a particular point of view, we must take up a non-psychological stance toward ourselves. This is achieved by transcending our subjectivity and being open to social-being. Jean-Paul Sartre exemplifies a psychological derailment of this possibility. He reasons that the shame he felt about spying on his paramour through a keyhole was due to others always watching him even when no one was around.\footnote{Jean-Paul Sartre, \textit{Being and Nothingness}, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1984), 350.} This is a deeply negative attitude toward social-being that is a function of his desire for “freedom.” By counterpositioning himself against others he is closing down a structure of human existence as understood by Heidegger and Gadamer. Contra Sartre, being open to being-with consists of being receptive through harkening (and not acoustic hearing) to the call of Being and by responding bring it to expression in everyday language with others. As indicated during the discussion of Hatab, being open to the Other depends on self-understanding and ultimately attunement to one’s own Being-with. When one harkens to the voice within, the other’s state-of-mind or mood is discerned independently of whatever psychological pretense or decoy is being deployed by them. Heidegger is, therefore, not wrong to distinguish disposition from intonation; nor Gadamer of what the person says from their point of view insofar as we attend to both intonation and what the person says from Being-with (or our relationality of being-open). In short, if the aim is to let something come to be in language with what Gadamer calls the right word, then one is required to tune into tone of voice from what is harkened in the disposition.

But what could a disposition of all things say to us? Heidegger has a reply: “The person who ‘cannot hear’ and ‘must feel’ may perhaps be one who is able to hearken very well, and precisely because of this.”\footnote{BT, 207; SZ, 164.} Harkening is a feeling, which being keyed to moods, feels for the rhythm of language that Lammi finds Heidegger stating, “The belonging of man and Being as \textit{Ereignis} is the occurrence of the place where language vibrates . . . \textit{Ereignis}, as Gadamer puts it, is actually the happening of language.”\footnote{Lammi, \textit{Gadamer and the Question of the Divine}, 36-37.} The happening of language is not
silent. Gadamer’s and Heidegger’s inferences that the meaning of Being is an event to which we belong by reason of vibration or rhythmic-attunement demands a closer examination of the phenomenology of language in relation to human disposedness. On the one hand, in the words of Eric Havelock, “Acoustic rhythm is a component of the reflexes of the central nervous system, a biological force of prime importance to orality.” If rhythm is a component of the central nervous system, then it is tied to bio-physiological processes such as breathing and circulation of the blood, not to mention walking. They demand coordinated movements or simply synchronicity. Havelock continues to explain of acoustic rhythm, “Very early, it induced a secondary effect, by encouraging a supplement habit of semantic rhythm, or balancing of ideas . . . One perceives it in the construction of certain maxims through balance of oppositions.” Speaking of which, (and he mentions this as an example of balance), on the other hand, are the transmission of nature’s rhythms (mathematical regularity if you like) in which we partake in the spoken language. Havelock’s research is corroborated by Amittai Aviram. He explains that according to Emile Benveniste “the Greek word rhuthmos” is “akin to the verb rheo, to flow” and that “in its pre-Platonic sense denotes the shape (schema) of a moving object such the water of a stream or the body of a dancer.” What is seen in the movements of water is recognized in the movement of a dancer, the rheo of rhuthmos. He explains that “In poetry, music and dance, the physical sensation of rhythm is an insistent manifestation of the physical world.” In this regard, Aviram echoes Thrasybulos Georgiades who in Greek Music, Verse and Dance, explains that the three concepts in the title be looked upon as a unit (“as did the ancients”) on account of rhythm that he argues is inherent to the Greek language. For example, Hesiod’s Theogony is said to have “the feeling for spoken language as a stream flowing . . .” The metaphors used to describe ancient Greek include gushes, flows, steady-stream, (i.e., geyser and spirit of the word).
The research of these scholars converges on disposition as defined by Heidegger and Gadamer. Rhythm appeals to the body to which we are disposed by reason of zoë or anima. We exist in nature’s rhythms or bio-physiological processes first (as organisms), but at the same time, on account of our education (Bildung) we are unique in our ability to live in harmony with the healthy and true order of nature (since as Plato says, the city of sows is healthy and true). And this is (like the intertwining of anima and animus in anamnesis) productive or generative. It yields an original repetition, i.e., to appropriate the past in a new way. When Gadamer points out that, “we can only hear the rhythm that is immanent within a given form if we ourselves introduce the rhythm into it” the “source” of rhythm might be “the body of the performer and listener” (as Arthos points out) provided that it is the rhythm of nature to which the bodies move. Novelty for the sake of novelty is out. And so too is Arthos’ criticism that Gadamer’s poetics is “tied too closely to a Platonic/Kantian conception of order and beauty, and does not take sufficient account of the artistic engagement with degeneration, disease, and disorder, leaving undeveloped the nihilistic dimensions of art that are present even within its own Heideggerian foundation.”

To do so would succumb to the spirit of the times. Is Gadamer interested in conformity to the status quo? Not at all. He repeatedly reserves his highest praise for the 18th century German classicism because it is the culmination of classical mimesis, whose sense of participation has been eclipsed by the spectator standpoint toward art that renders it entertainment. Gadamer counters this with a poetics deeply in debt to his reading of ancient Greek thought reflected in both his and Heidegger’s esteem for Hölderlin. The rhythm of the Greek language is preserved in the meter of Hölderlin’s poems. In contrast to Nietzsche’s sense of rhythm being a struggle between opposing Dionysian and Apollonian forces and thus the continual assertion of a break or pause in the text, Hölderlin’s poetry resembles that of a Greek tragedian in that it preserves the normality of the subject. It is no wonder that Nietzsche’s The Birth of Tragedy was incomprehensible to philologists. His sense of rhythm was modern. That is not to say that ancient poetry is without a pause, caesura or tragedy—the Greeks invented it. But

467 Plato, Republic, 372e.
468 Arthos, Gadamer’s Poetics, 94.
469 Ibid., xi.
471 Aviram contrasts the pre-Platonic notion of rhythm with that of Nietzsche, whom he says resorts to modern rhythm. The Pre-Platonic rhythm of the subject’s thought (and written text) is continuous and constant. The “revelatory moment” is a caesura (or pause) in this normal rhythm represented by the tragic moment. This he says is characteristic of Hölderlin’s poetry. But Nietzsche’s rhythm represents “a break—a caesura—of thought in its individual subjectivity.” “The Meaning of Rhythm,” 162-163.
the caesura is a pause within the continuity and constancy of rhythm that Aviram reasons has an effect that “goes beyond signs, beyond meaning in a semiotic sense.” Hölderlin’s Greek informed as it was by the ancient metron of nature’s unending cycles inspired both Heidegger’s and Gadamer’s endeavor to preserve that cycle in a philosophy of human existence whose linguisticality harkened to the human disposition.

To recapitulate, in order for hermeneutics to avoid becoming psychology while nevertheless turning into tone of voice and another’s point of view, the tones must be harkened from the rhythm, disposition or normality of the subject (for Hölderlin). Just as opening to the other as other, i.e., Being-with, is impossible without recognizing one’s own social-being, so too it is not possible to hear the rhythm of another’s voice and therefore character unless one is attentive to one’s own. Stated otherwise, if closed to our mood, we hear acoustically yet if we recognize our mood (and are not numb to it) we are present to ourselves and hear differently, i.e., we will hearken, to what?—to the rhythm of social-being (miteinandersein or mitsein) beneath the distortions and distractions of the city of luxury.

This is why Heidegger stipulates that “when we are explicitly hearing the discourse of another, we proximally understand what is said, or—to put it more exactly—we are already with him, in advance, alongside the entity which the discourse is about.” We are alongside what is said when we hear what someone says, not when they say it, but in advance of that. This is Heidegger’s way of specifying an opening to the vibration of biological life. Lammi thus relates of Heidegger’s Ereignis, “Heidegger describes an uncanny kind of peace within the suspension, along with an internal ‘pulsation’ that belongs to the universal undifferentiated movement of life,” i.e., it belongs to the anima, primitive state of nature heard amidst the din of psychological distractions. When tone of voice is, therefore, interpreted from the rhythm of the mood in the voice, i.e., ontologically, rather than purged through methodical doubt of one’s own senses, then attunement to tone becomes a channel to shared understanding; a kind of universal communion, sensus communis, “(Hegel: das

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472 Aviram, Telling Rhythm, 21.
473 Aviram, “The Meaning of Rhythm,” 163. For Hesiod, the memory language of the Muses was uttered in epic hexameter verse, points out Havelock, The Muse Learn to Write, 81.
474 Heidegger argues that mood is an ontological structure that makes empathy possible. BT, 207; SZ, 164. When Gadamer urges getting inside another point of view in order to better understand what they are saying, he similarly insists that this not include anything psychological. With this stipulation, he is re-iterating Heidegger’s point—that disposition be distinguished from intonation of the voice. TM, 385 and 387.
475 Lammi, Gadamer and the Question of the Divine, 56.
476 SZ, 125; BT, 125-126.
Allgemeine), the koine sumpheron” of which Gadamer speaks in “Plato’s Educational State.”

That any of this should be relevant to Gadamer is indicated above all by his talk about openness, regard for the dialogue form and the linguisticity of understanding. But there is extant and not just indirect evidence of him presupposing what Heidegger clarifies.

Gadamer’s opening words to “Zum Geleit” to Thrasybulos Georgiades’ Nennen und Erklingen point to the distinction between tone and rhythm (of a life) being made here. He writes:

Whoever has read only a few sentences from the work left behind by Thrasybulos Georgiades will become conscious of encountering something entirely unusual here. This is the voice of a man, who has been gone already for eight years, it is hard to believe—so embodied, thus so present is the personality, which stands behind each line in this study.

Gadamer’s opening words are a eulogy to this man’s character. He says he is embodied and present in a way that stands behind each line. I take this to be a reference to the rhythmic normality of the subject. Georgiades was Greek, but fluent in German. For Gadamer the classicist, whom Arthos reports inhabited through recitation German poetry and the Greek tragedies, Georgiades embodied the convergence of culture (modern and ancient); an assimilation about which Heidegger tragically dreamed as well. The rhythm of the Greek language (and Georgiades was a master of ancient Greek poetry), percolates to the surface in the sound of his words. They are held together by the rhythm of which Gadamer writes, “. . . it has the basic impulse (Grundimpulse) that gave soul to Martin Heidegger’s persistent quest of Being, the mystery of ‘it is’.”

But enough of these conjectures. If Gadamer is tapping into the pulse of natural processes in this the introduction to Nennen und Erklingen, a biographical sketch of the author, then he ought to make philosophical statements to the same effect. In “Hermeneutics Tracking,” he states: “Tone and emphasis arise from an ungraspable

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479 Arthos reports this from Paul Ricoeur, Gadamer’s Poetics, viii.
movement, a movement back and forth between each other in a being with each other.” Forming a common understanding with another is thus not a matter of seeing their point of view, or even tuning into their voice except insofar as tuning into the tone arises from the movement between each other “in a being with each other.” Being with others, miteinanderseins, cannot consist of projecting one’s understanding toward the other, which is a function of sight, but rather of listening to (or being open to) one’s own disposition—mood and thereby making it available in the act of communicating. After citing the example of irony, Gadamer explains that “the unity of meaning in a text or a conversation rests upon the being-together of people with each other [in Miteinander].” Assuming the unity of meaning is audible it cannot be of either one or another’s voice but rather is of both conjoined precisely because of the interlocutor’s being-together with each other in the sense previously defined (Being-open as Being-with). Just what that unity of meaning recovered in the order of things sounds like, however, is the next question.

3.5 Event of Being Audible in Harmony: Phenomenological-Ontology
The connection that lets Being come to expression in Gadamer’s philosophy has been explicated by way of Heidegger’s analysis of the structure of human existence and a phenomenology of the senses. The explanation of the said connection has raised another question—the unity of meaning in language. This unity does not descend from the sky, but is, as was concluded earlier, anticipated. On the one hand, human beings are a natural organism with a vibration or rheo; on the other hand, bios with a distinct character and rhythm. Aviram thus says that for Henri Meschonnic, rhythm of either poetry or prose “is an unquestionable marker of the distinctiveness of each writer and even each work. Every writer has a personal rhythm.” Both anima and animus are dispositions, both are ways of being-in-the-world that are hidden insofar as we do not shift toward an auditory mode of perception (harkening). When the shift is, in fact, made, then our language, (or creations in general), transforms the undifferentiated zoe, animus, state of nature into a meaningful structure in which beings might come to be in themselves. In Truth and Method, Gadamer calls the act of bringing about this transformation the structural transformation of play (erotic, dangerous, laughable).

482 Ibid. See also his discussion of mitgehen Ibid., 394 and 404-405 and his discussion of substance in “Image and Gesture” where he writes, “we are always other and much more than we know ourselves to be, and what exceeds our knowledge is precisely our real being” in Relevance of the Beautiful, 78.
One need only think of Socrates’s recantation speech in praise of a beautiful soul, or the description of writing on analogy to a living organism in Plato’s *Phaedrus*. They unfold from the order of existence and thus are not artifacts whose beauty is determined by our love for them. We love them because they are beautiful (*Euthyphro*). Play is a model for understanding how the outline of nature in the earth’s potency is realized in the harmony of the dialogue form. The steps toward establishing this position are (a) explain that the medial location is of an auditory mode of perception in order to (b) discern the intermediary realm of rhythm-shared dispositions and from there explicate what comes into view next (c) the pure tone of Being in the harmony of the dialogue form.

### 3.5.1 Middle Voice

A shift to the middle voice in which to hear the unsaid is indicated by Gadamer’s not knowing, which for now can be understood to be “mysterious” to him. John Arthos quotes Gadamer, “Hermeneutics encourages not objectification but listening to one another—for example, the listening and belonging with (*Zuhören*) someone who knows how to tell a story. Here we begin to glimpse the *je ne sais quoi* that we mean when we refer to people’s understanding one another.”

484 Listening includes for Gadamer a belonging with someone. What kind of belonging is that? Surely it is keyed to shared mood or disposition. Not just acoustic hearing, but attunement to the rhythm of the voice, i.e., character, *hexis*, ethos that makes it possible for speakers to understand one another.485 But he is not very precise about it either. In the passage quoted by Arthos, listening (*zuhören*) is a belonging (*gehören*) that Gadamer says provides a glimpse into something *mysterious*. He only knows that it pertains to knowing how to tell a story, and that that refers to people understanding one another. Perhaps knowing how to tell a story means to intonate the author’s tone of voice. But of course, the “I know not what” cannot refer to the author’s voice any more than it could be their intention otherwise Gadamer would be the object of his own criticism of Schleiermacher; that he can transcend history and merge with the mind of another (telepathy). In any event, he says that the “I know not what” is glimpse. This implies that it is fleeting and outside of our control. Taken this way, what was concluded earlier about a

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change in mood from a closed (visual) to an open (auditory) disposition to social-being (my own and others) applies.

The said shift from future-projection of understanding to the receptivity of harkening is not from the active to the passive voice. Either of these depends upon the security of the subjectivity of the subject or the spectator’s standpoint. From that standpoint of disengagement, being acted upon is thought to be manipulation, and action is of course equated with manipulating someone else. Gadamer believes that this is a diminution of what both action and receptivity mean. After all, being either passive or active in this sense presupposes that I am not together-with-the-other. If one is incapable of not being a means to an end, then Gadamer recommends talking to a computer or a parrot since they can answer more quickly than a fool that bothers to try. The “whole-of-Being,” which pertains to human beings and not things, cannot be heard in that sort of context. It requires that the subjectivity of the subject be transcended, which is what Gadamer believes is accomplished by, for instance, play, the experience of the work of art and dialogue. Of these three, play is the most significant for Gadamer. Dominic Kaegi (1994) thus contends that “the exemplary hermeneutic model is not the inner word, but the Gadamerian game (Spiel) in which the players are simply absorbed in the to and fro of the game itself.” Indeed, play must be considered just that, an exemplary model for interpretation, but for other reasons than that it exemplifies the motility of language in which an interpretation happens. Insofar as play enacts the memory of what always already is, i.e., the unity of beings, it entangles bios, animus in its biology, anima and therefore is erotic and creative. Plato’s creativity was born out of this interplay which might explain why he begins his discussion of what justice is with the healthy and true city of sows. Be that as it may, play includes the loss of one’s identity and the formation of another. Formation of the self consists of being shaped by the activity (or what one does that inflicts a genuine experience) be it in art or language. Gadamer writes of the phenomenon of language:

Communication takes place when the other person takes part in what is imparted to him—and in such a way that he does not, as it were, only receive in part what is communicated, but shares in this knowledge of the whole matter that is fully

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487 TM, 552.
possessed by both of them. This is obviously what distinguishes genuine communication from simulated participation.\(^{489}\)

The pre-given world falls away when the speaker is taken in and carried away by the communication.\(^{490}\) Genuine communication consists of contributing to the conversation about something that is acting upon one. It presupposes a transformation in one’s mode of perception-understanding. Although Philippe Eberhard does not distinguish between different modes of auditory perception, he reasons his way toward the notion of harkening as an open disposition in precisely the terms that befit the phenomenon of language: “Hearing underscores the medial meaning of speculation because it suggests a process that happens to us without giving us the possibility to choose ahead of time what we want to include in it and what we want to reject from it.”\(^{491}\) Hearing is fitted to the middle voice in which one acts and is subject to the action of the verb. The action, in this case, is the spoken language. Hence, logos as Heidegger says, is phone. Beings are manifest as phenomenon in the vocal proclamation of words.\(^{492}\) But what is phenomenon? He explains that “phanesthai itself is a middle-voiced form which comes from phaino—to bring to the light of day, to put in the light. Phaino comes from pha—, like phos, the light that which is bright—in other words, that wherein something can become manifest, visible in itself.”\(^{493}\) Not words, but their vocal proclamation is that wherein phenomenon comes to light, i.e., in discourse, logos, delon (“to make manifest what one is talking about”) in the middle voice.\(^{494}\) Language speaks us when we, as Heidegger might put it, stand in the said light by hearing aright. Hence, Heidegger’s relating that the call of conscience “comes from me yet from beyond and over me.”\(^{495}\) It is heard within, yet simultaneously comes from without (which is an illumination). The same could be said of the power of mood, “an elevation beyond mere mood and transcends personal identity,”\(^{496}\) and the festive of the festival, an elevation into another experience of

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\(^{489}\) Gadamer, “The Play of Art” in *Relevance of the Beautiful*, 128. Or consider the following: “Wir waren gerade dadurch in die Nahe der antiken Dialektik getreten, weil auch in ihr keine methodische Aktivität des Subjekts, sondern ein Tun der Sache selbst vorlag, das das Denken ‘erleidet’” WM, 450. See also TM, 385.

\(^{490}\) See, for example, Gadamer, “The Festive Character of the Theatre,” 63.

\(^{491}\) Philippe Eberhard, *The Middle Voice in Gadamer's Hermeneutics: a Basic Interpretation with Some Theological Implications* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 100.

\(^{492}\) BT, 56; SZ, 33.

\(^{493}\) Ibid., 51; 28.

\(^{494}\) Ibid., 56; 32.

\(^{495}\) SZ, 275; BT, 320. As distinct from moods, which he specifies “come neither from without nor from within, but emerge from being-in-the-world.” SZ, 136; BT, 175, i.e., it is both within and without, which is how he describes the call of conscience.

time. In all of these instances, as Eberhard says of the middle voice above, there is no time to exercise the will and control what to include or reject. Instead, one is simply commanded to obey. “To hear” and “to obey” have the same root, explains Julian Jaynes. He continues to describe it in a way that is remarkable congruent with Gadamer’s own sense of the voice, “Sound is the least controllable of all sense modulations” When we are thus subject to the acoustic echo of a conversation, we follow it because we are in fact also being commanded by it; the command, the following and the action to obey are inseparable, he adds.

3.5.2 Intermediary Realm of Rhythm

It is in the middle voice that the zone between speakers appears, and in which the call of Being (conscience) is heard. Why?—because the harmony of voices is a direct unfolding of the original state of nature. The call is thus not anything psychological because it arises in a heightened moment detached from everything psychological (including especially our intentions) and instead in nature-art (poesy) as the articulation of the natural order of things.

Gadamer’s understanding of this intermediary realm is contrasted by Rodney Coltman with Hegel’s. He explains that whereas for Hegel the middle is a logical middle between two polar extremes, for Gadamer it refers to the medial ground of thinking in a common language. To quote Gadamer from Coltman, “Every conversation presupposes a common language, or better, it develops a common language from within. This is because something is laid down in the middle [in die Mitte niedergelegt], as the Greeks say, in which both conversation partners participate and about which they exchange with one another (GW1 384).” For Gadamer, the middle voice is the location in which the event of understanding comes to pass. But this is not quite specific enough since it suggests spatial relations (a middle between two other sides). Gadamer is more precise in “The Nature of Things and the Language of Things.” In that essay, he refers to the intermediary realm of rhythm between the world and the soul.

499 Jaynes, The Origins of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind, 99. Eberhard’s description of the middle voice is on par with Jaynes’ description of the bicameral mind of the ancients, e.g., Achilles, where what we call subjective consciousness is experienced as if from without.
This fact can be illustrated beautifully by a phenomenon that itself constitutes a structural aspect of everything linguistic; namely, the phenomenon of rhythm. The essence of rhythm lies in a peculiar intermediary realm between being and the soul, as Richard Högniwald has already emphasized in his analysis from the point of view of the psychology of thought.501

Gadamer was brought to this insight through the cross-pollination of a number of philosophers—Plato, Heidegger and Hegel, but in particular by the psychologist Högniwald of whom he is critical for having imputed rhythm and even a succession of rhythms to our hearing (as a psychologist would).502 This suggests that aesthetics can teach us as much about the nature of things as a method crafted to purge thinking of aesthetics. When the sense of hearing is attuned to the intermediary realm between shared dispositions it discerns the pure tone of the original sensation that sustains or binds together voices in understanding. The task in the midst of a conversation is to hold onto, or keep oneself in a proper relation to, the middle ground and thereby respond in a way that will let the subject matter (die Sache) announce itself. Heidegger delves as deep as possible into this middle territory between sense and sound (also thematized by Gadamer):503

The supposedly purely sensual aspect of the word-sound, conceived as mere resonance, is an abstraction. The mere vibration is always picked out only by an intermediate step—by that almost unnatural disregard. Even when we hear speech in a language totally unknown to us, we never hear mere sounds as a noise present only to our senses—we hear unintelligible words. But between the unintelligible word, and the mere sound grasped in acoustic abstraction, lies an abyss of difference in essence.504

The “mere abstraction,” the “unnatural disregard,” “unintelligible words” and the “abyss of difference in essence” is simply his description of the verb acting on his senses. Like Lammi’s description of the experience of the divine (chanting, dancing, music) the intermediary realm is unmistakably rhythmic and points back to musi-language being the locus for the event of Being. Although he distinguishes the musician from music theorist in Plato’s Dialectical Ethics in order to align the theorist with insight into the structure of all things, Gadamer remarks in “Art and Imitation” how even the least musical person can appreciate a “magical power” he describes as follows: “It really seems as if the pure

502 Ibid. See also “The Relevance of the Beautiful,” 44-45 where Gadamer discusses his research on the senses and understanding.
503 See “Philosophy and Poetry,” 134.
504 Heidegger, What is Called Thinking? 130.
relationships among the intervals arranged themselves of their own accord, as if in tuning
the instruments the tones were striving to attain the full and perfect reality produced when the
pure interval is sounded."505 The pure relationships are resonances, tonal affinities and
rhythmic waves that arrange themselves as if by themselves. Or that is how it appears to us.
What is true of music in this case is true of voices. John Macquarrie reports that “Stimmung
originally means the tuning of a musical instrument."506 Accordingly, attunement is to
rhythm resonating in the voices. This must be the case because in contrast to ideas that cover
over the movement of life, sound cannot be stabilized in print. By nature, sounds fade in and
out.507 This agrees with Heidegger’s Heraclitean view of aletheia being a revealing-
concealing, but it must be disengaged from the spatiality of revealing-concealing and re-
interpreted according to the mathematical order of music’s tones to which Heidegger is
aligned by the conviction that logos is ratio (reason).

3.5.3 Time

In order for Being to come to expression in everyday language, the transcendence of the
subjectivity of the subject into the medial location in which one is attuned to shared
disposition is required. From that medial location we can hear in ways we did not before;
namely, to the rhythm of the zoe (body language) and voice (intonation of individuating
bios). But it is important to keep in mind that the rhythms to which one responds in the
middle voice and thereby articulates in language are neither mine nor the others, but rather
are formed conjointly into one harmonious whole. Being of the intermediary realm and
sounded, voices blend into one another. Jeremy Begbie’s description of musical time
captures what Heidegger and Gadamer also relate to in their respective ways.508

The present of ‘one’ is charged with its future. In a melodic succession of tones there
is a ‘carrying from’ and a ‘reaching beyond’ sensed through each present: ‘past and

505 Gadamer, “Art and Imitation,” 101. See also Gadamer, Plato’s Dialectical Ethics, trans. Robert M.
506 In BT, 172, Note 3.
507 For a concise contrast between the oral-auditory phenomenon and the extension of sight in print (as
McLuhan puts it) see P. Christopher Smith, “Orality and Writing: Plato’s Phaedrus and the Pharmakon
Revisited” in Between Philosophy and Poetry, 81-82.
508 “By linking our experience of the threefold present to that of psychic distention, has he not
[Augustine], in Book XI, sketched out the basics of a phenomenological psychology, prefiguring the Husserlian
analysis of retention/pretension and the Heideggerian description of retrieval (Wiederholung) and
foreunderstanding (Vor-Verstandnis)? Is this not ‘the stroke of genius of Book XI of Augustine’s Confessions,’
asks Ricoeur, ‘in whose wake will follow Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty?’” Richard Kearney, “Time,
Evil and Narrative.” In Augustine and Modernism: Confessions and Circumfessions, ed. John Caputo and M.
future are given with an in the present and are experienced with and in the present; hearing a melody is hearing, having heard, and being about to hear, all at once’ . . . The present is no longer the ‘saddle between the two abysses of the past and future, but rather that ‘in which’ now’, and ‘not yet’, and ‘no more’ are given together, in the most intimate interpenetration.\(^{509}\)

In contrast to images that cancel one another out (sight is the basis for the principle of contradiction), sounds blend into one another to form an indivisible whole. The tonic is audible and anticipated in every moment. This is likely why Gadamer preferred music to the visual arts,\(^{510}\) and refers often to the exemplary status of absolute music. In the latter, all of the parts point back to the centre and are indistinguishable from one another in a chord. The retort to this is that music is meaningless because it does not refer to anything and thus, cannot be considered a language. But language is self-evidently musical (prosody) and moreover, like the primitive languages that Gadamer and Heidegger esteemed, in music signifier and signified are the same.\(^{511}\) This explains Gadamer’s enthusiastic endorsement of Thrasybulos Georgiades’ *Nennen und Erklingen*:

No, it is a phenomenological book in the widest and deepest sense of this word: look closely, hear closely and then to name, to call up, show the event—that is all. It is in that sense a truly phenomenological book, that it shows phenomenology in action. . . . The book thinks about the phenomena, about the tone and word, about time and number . . . It is wonderful how Georgiades knows how to call things by their name, so that they are a tangible form, like one who is called and comes and what comes there is itself the naming above all the true nature of tones . . . the wonder of the word and the wonder of the tone in its unity.\(^{512}\)

See, hear and then, name and show. Seeing names and hearing shows. Gadamer is merging senses and thus ways of understanding. This is how beings are understood from the medial location in which the summons might be heard. Seeing led by hearing is a seeing with the ears (as Heidegger says in the *Principle of Reason*). To recall what was said earlier about Gadamer’s “Zum Geleit” to Georgiades’ book, he has an ear for the rhythm of words to such


\(^{510}\) Gadamer, “Relevance of the Beautiful,” 4 and 79.

\(^{511}\) Although there are clearly exceptions to this e.g., cannons firing during the 1812 Overture and Mahler’s Symphony No. 3, both of which indicate why Gadamer preferred “absolute music”—a direct expression of the soul.

a degree that they are tangible. Of course, sounds are tangible (although invisible)—they can shatter glass. But Gadamer refers to tangible form, which he had said earlier are present to Georgiades all at once before he even wrote. This is not unlike what Heidegger noticed in a letter by Mozart and quoted at length highlighting “‘looking over’ the whole ‘with a glance,’ and ‘listening to everything at once’ are one and the same.”

But Gadamer gives the tangible form a different spin as well. For him, it is exemplified in absolute music for which he knew Georgiades had a refined ear.

Absolute music refers to the late 18th century German Romantic music that evoked the divine, e.g., Beethoven’s early 19th century Symphony No. 5 in C minor. It communicates clearly without any words, without any reference and thus, is a form of non-objective art. That is to say, there is no meaning independent of the deed, or in this case, sound. This is why Gadamer prizes poetry. He says that it preserves “the unity of sound-quality and meaning,” and on that basis is distinct from any other art. What makes poetry, poetry is the music of the word (unity of sound and sense). But this is what absolute music does. So poetry is prized by Gadamer because it preserves absolute music in language. But there is a structural corollary to this as well. Gadamer refers to absolute music having a structure of “undecipherable meaning.” This is the sublime effusiveness (Überschwenglichkeit) of an ethical harmony of life we have forgotten—moral sublimity that emerges from the internal relation of the parts to one another. Clearly, this is analogous to the structure of an organism that Gadamer believes was standardized by Greek art and that he traces to Plato’s Pythagorean philosophy. At the close of Truth and Method Gadamer explains that the metaphysics of the beautiful is based on an analogy of measure and a teleological order of being. Referring to the ascent passage in Plato’s Symposium, the ladder of love, he argues that for Plato the teleological order of being is also an order of beauty that arises from the many sensible things to the intelligible unity. This unity or principle of order for all beings to which his own ontological turn in hermeneutical inquiry has led him, and is, as he says, a

514 Gadamer, “The Relevance of the Beautiful,” 38. He cites a Beethoven quartet as an example of absolute music.
515 Ibid., 75.
516 TM, 475.
517 Ibid., 435.
principle of harmony.\textsuperscript{518} A teleological principle orders beings in relation to one another
for one another because all are one, but not the One of Plotinus from which everything else
emanates; rather the one is a centre that runs through all things. Gadamer names it “The
sensitive mean,” which he explains is “the exactness of the harmonious relationships [that]
are part of the oldest essence of the beautiful.”\textsuperscript{519} To clarify what he means by the “sensitive
mean” that runs through and orders all beings in relation to one another, he asks us to “think
of the sensitivity of the harmonies of sound from which music is constructed.”\textsuperscript{520} Like the
notes in fifths, thirds and octaves, beings in proper relation to one another form an “organic
whole” or song (“Song is existence”) that Gadamer suggests is the radiance of the
beautiful.\textsuperscript{521}

The beautiful is, therefore, the intermediary realm, what Gadamer calls “the
absolutely prior,” which when tuned into renders what is said by speakers in a conversation
true, i.e., the condition for the possibility of correspondence is attuned mood (and not the
same mood or agreement). Gadamer finds he has it with Georgiades, otherwise he would not
find in his words a tangible form. Like a current moving down a river, the order of nature is
being transmitted to us in the music of language to the extent that we are tuned into the
midway point of shared disposition whose rhythm runs through and sustains the harmony of
anything said. From there we are in a position to respond to what is harkened in a rhythm
dictated by the movement of conversation, “the wonder of the tone in its unity.” Heidegger
relates to that middle voice as a ring without sound,\textsuperscript{522} something felt but not necessarily
heard. Gadamer describes the event of Being as the pure tone of the original sensation
(Hölderlin), spiritual energy,\textsuperscript{523} ringing true,\textsuperscript{524} “sensuously present,”\textsuperscript{525} and “the feeling of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{518} He writes, “The basis of the close connection between the idea of the beautiful and that of the
teleological order of being is the Pythagorean and Platonic concept of measure” TM, 474.
\item \textsuperscript{519} Ibid., 476-477.
\item \textsuperscript{520} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{521} “Much, from the morning onwards, Since we have been a discourse and have heard from one
another. Has human kind learnt; but soon we shall be song.” Hölderlin, quoted from Kathleen Wright,
“Gadamer and the Speculative Structure of Language,” in Brice R. Wachterhauser ed., \textit{Hermeneutics and
Modern Philosophy} (Albany: State University of New York, 1986), 197. See also Martin Heidegger “Song is
existence” (\textit{Gesang ist Dasein}) in “Phenomenology and Theology,” William McNeil ed., \textit{Pathmarks}
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 61. Heidegger is referring to Orpheus (at times identified with
Pythagoras) singing while being carried away by the current or flow of a river (of memory?).
\item \textsuperscript{522} Heidegger, \textit{What is Called Thinking}? 130.
\item \textsuperscript{523} Gadamer, “Art and Imitation,” 103.
\item \textsuperscript{524} Gadamer, “Philosophy and Poetry,” 139. For the implications of this argument for reading, see
Risser, \textit{The Life of Understanding}, 94.
\item \textsuperscript{525} Gadamer, “Composition and Interpretation,” 70.
\end{itemize}
being on the right path.” After describing God as an absolute presence in which the past and present coincide and unite, he explains of the festive: “As we saw, it is an intrinsic characteristic of every festival that it enjoys a specific, rhythmic recurrence that elevates it above the flow of time”—what he calls a heightened moment.

But the moment is not a flash. In “Philosophy and Poetry” he writes, “The structuring of sound, rhyme, rhythm intonation, assonance and so on, furnishes the stabilizing factors that haul back and bring to a standstill the fleeting word that points beyond itself.” Musical language is structured internally by the interplay of reply and address and points beyond itself, but also brings that to which it points to a standstill. What does this language point toward and stabilize? Gadamer states shortly after “that the unity of creation is constituted in this way. But it is creation that at the same time possesses the unity of everyday speech.”

The unity of creation might be that to which verbal understanding points. But if so, then it is a unity that is also heard in everyday speech. The order of the cosmos and the order of everyday speech hang together in the same way. But it is not clear in what way. In “Art and Imitation” he explains that that order is pure number. This is an allusion to the Pythagorean theory of numbers that Gadamer believes Plato explicates as the kalon, the beautiful and harmonious. The said harmony is heard in the conjoining of different voices in a dialogue and its origins are ultimately mythological.

What Lawrence Ferrara says of music is, therefore, applicable to what is being said here about language: “musical meaning arises when expectant habitual responses are delayed and blocked.” Even when the beat is lost, the possibility of reaching “the infinite realm of possible expression” comes to the fore, e.g., in the song Risser describes. Gadamer relates to it as follows: “And yet it is precisely the force of the semantic field, the tension between the tonal and the significant forces of language as they encounter and change place

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526 Gadamer, “Hermeneutics Tracking,” 392 and as “right words” on page 393.
527 Gadamer, “The Festive Character of the Theater,” 60.
528 Gadamer, “Composition and Interpretation,” 134.
529 Gadamer, “Composition and Interpretation,” 134.
530 Ibid., 135.
531 Harmonia, he points out was the daughter of Aphrodite (and Ares whom he does not mention) and wife to Cadmus the founder of Thebes. Cadmus was a Phoenician who is alleged to have introduced their alphabet to the Greeks and thus, from Gadamer’s and Plato’s perspective, brought order to the strife between love and war, the beautiful and ugly. Cadmus is said to mean “east” and “shine,” which I interpret to mean that harmony is an emergent reality (within the light of the Good).
533 See also H. Miles Groth, “On the Fundamental Experience of Voice,” 144.
with one another that constitutes the whole." The whole is not a category or concept. It refers to the force or tension in a semantic field between tone and image, sound and sense. This force or tension we have concluded is the intermediary realm of rhythm formed by shared mood or disposition. Hence, even when we stutter, or when as Gadamer says notes, sounds, or rhythms repeated in a series are missing, “It is as true to say that we project the rhythm into the series as it is to say that we perceive it there.” We think we are the source of the rhythm, but at the same time know that we are not. What seems like a contradiction is not a contradiction. When viewed from the medial location the absolute is present in an anticipatory waiting in a tension-filled moment. However, this waiting presupposes equilibrium (or normal rhythms). “To speak of tension clearly presupposes an equilibrium subsequent to which a tension is situated and sensed as such, even if the equilibrium is not actually sounded.”

The only sure way to test a hypothesis or theory is by the extent to which it makes sense of the evidence. In Part III of *Truth and Method*, Risser reports that Gadamer “tells us that in living language every word ‘carries with it the unsaid to which it is related by responding and summoning.’” The unsaid is the rhythm and tonal affinity of shared dispositions between the words-images spoken and beneath the surface of language audible to ears that hearken (inaudible and unsaid to acoustic hearing). Continuing, a few pages later Gadamer writes, “To say what one means . . . means to hold what is said together with an infinity of what is not said in one unified meaning and to ensure that it is understood in this way.” To say what one means is not to say what one means, but to hold what is said together with the infinity of what is not said. The infinity of the unsaid that holds together what is said is the meaning of language. Meaning, therefore, does not reside in the statement, but is as Risser says, held (I would say heard) within the motility of language (living language) as that which makes words intelligible, i.e., harmony of the dialogue form. Understood as such, verbal understanding is keyed to the unfolding unity-harmony of a conversation that is detached from anyone’s particular tone or tempo of voice. Only on this condition does verbal understanding achieve the ideality of writing, i.e., objectivity, and let the subject-

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535 Ibid., 134.
537 Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time*, 82-83.
538 Ibid., 38-39.
539 James Risser, *The Life of Understanding*, 73.
540 I.e., detached from anything psychological. TM, 394.
matter come to be of its own accord, which Gadamer says is “the true meaning of what is being said,”541 that is to say, “this convincing illumination of truth and harmony, which compels the admission: ‘this is true.’”542

This means that the limit of language is not a limit of either incapacity or intended meaning (as Risser argues) except insofar as both are thought to be relative to the harmony that defines or measures an incapacity or intention. In fact, there is no room for a personal intention in the unfolding of the harmony of a dialogue. The latter exceeds anything said by us finite beings. If that were not the case, then hermeneutics would be psychology. Hence, the limit of language, the third limit, “which is a limit in relation to the ‘unsaid and the inexpressible’,”543 is a recognition of my limit relative to a conversation whose meaning transcends me (in the medial location) and has a life of its own. It is a tone that rings through every intonation above all when there is a pause, break or dissonance in the midst of consonance and constancy of rhythm. Being is present in its absence. Schleiermacher’s focus on the quantitative aspect of language is not unimportant, but it must be understood as being a privative with respect to the event of language. When we are empathetic and listen to the other’s tone of voice (in order to determine their feelings or intentions), then the “true meaning” of the conversation is interrupted. Gadamer refers to this tendency as being the rhetoric of everyday life, the poetry that sounds like other poetry and does not have its “own” tone.544 However, if in the midst of this atonal-tone we grope for the “true meaning” of the subject-matter in the harmony of voices, then the privative focus on the quantitative aspect of language becomes a positive. Gadamer affirms this positive aspect of conversational breakdown with the notion of stammering or stuttering (stameln) and being stuck dumb or speechless (verstummt).545 They signal that we are trying to catch the beat, the rhythmically attuned diction (as Babich says) of the conversation that has been lost. Losing one’s way might result in a stutter, but insofar as the dissonance is recognized it intensifies the possibility of achieving consonance (assuming “unity is retained whenever speech exists”).546

541 TM, 395.
542 Gadamer, “The Relevance of the Beautiful”, 15. See also discussion of “true show” of the artist in which it depends on the middle voice location in “The Play of Art,” 128.
Consequently, by intensifying the sense of hearing by removing all distractions and creating a negative space of silence, the possibility of discerning the shared rhythm increases.
Chapter Five: Gadamer and Helmholtz

1 Introduction

In contrast to Heidegger’s visually oriented account of understanding, Gadamer foregrounds a turn of the inner ear toward a prior sense of unity that is ontologically distinct from mere sense perception and images of them in the memory. From the perspective of a fundamental ontology, the prior sense of unity refers to the potential of being-with-one-another (i.e., Heidegger’s underdeveloped notion of *mitdasein*) in which the subjectivity of the subject is forgotten. According to a phenomenology of the senses, the unity is heard in the harmony of the dialogue form that is irreducible to any one person’s voice because it is constituted by many. In order, therefore, for a truth claim to be true the speakers must be keyed into the rhythm of the conversation that is leading them. This is not easily achieved. In contrast to the ancients for whom fresh statements were expressed “so as to fit acoustically into the [rhythmic] pattern,” and speech was more like song where “pitch is discrete and discontinuous . . . Song steps from note to note on strict and delimited feet over a more extended range,” modern Western verse separates tones of voice from their rhythmic structure. In contemporary times we constantly change pitch even when pronouncing a syllable. From Gadamer and Heidegger’s point of view, we have little to no sense of attunement to the voice of the Other within (or *mitsein*), i.e., we stand in what Heidegger calls untruth. As a result, the subject-matter of a conversation is rarely thought about. Against this tendency to sophistry Gadamer sought to re-assert the rhythm of the middle voice in the medium of language. In so doing, that which makes a truth claim true he hoped would become audible to us.

The relation between this philosophical characterization of the inner word and a scientific account of what it is and how it functions in language is the topic of this final chapter of Part One. It comes by way of Hermann von Helmholtz’s (1821 to 1894) studies of sensation, physiology and physics. Gadamer marks his importance to hermeneutics by launching *Truth and Method* with a criticism of his view of tact. On the one hand, he is critical of him for having interpreted tact according to the standards of the scientific method and reduced it to a psychological instinct; on the other, he aligns Helmholtz with the 19th century.
century humanistic tradition whose ideal of Bildung imparts life.\textsuperscript{549} If, as Gadamer says, Helmholtz’s view of tact being instinct presupposes Bildung,\textsuperscript{550} then it also retains the possibility of life or “renewal.” How and in what way? Gadamer points to a reply. He argues that Helmholtz understands memory to be psychological, a talent or capacity.\textsuperscript{551} Thus understood memory is a forgetting that nevertheless (for Gadamer) holds within it the possibility of recollecting (anamnesis) the mode of being or existence proper to tact.\textsuperscript{552} Gadamer is not, however, clear about what he means by Helmholtz presupposing Bildung, at least not in terms comprehensible to Helmholtz. In contradistinction to Gadamer’s interpretation, Helmholtz explains how artistic induction is grounded in the objectivity of the nervous apparatus, its relation to energy, and the sense of hearing. This sort of explanation follows from the overall 19\textsuperscript{th} century belief that Bildung is reducible to a physiological disposition.\textsuperscript{553} By formulating a Helmholtzian natural scientific explanation of tact not only is Gadamer’s criticism of him having reduced it to something psychological undermined, but moreover, Gadamer’s claim that tact is a mode of being is clarified in a way that dovetails with his linguistic turn and the prioritization of hearing in the discernment of unities. Helmholtz provides the rudiments of a scientific foundation for the “method” that Gadamer claims accounts for the universality of hermeneutics.

This chapter aims to develop a scientific explanation of the inner word from the side of Helmholtz’s study of sensation, physiology and energy and thereby forms a bridge to Part Two where theories of cognitive science and the evolution of language are examined. An analysis of what Helmholtz means by tact and therefore Bildung links Gadamer’s philosophy of the inner word to modern science. However, before that can be undertaken an objection must be answered: Helmholtz the scientist and Gadamer the scholar of the humanities have nothing in common. This is questioned by way of mutual criticism and clarification divided into three steps in part one titled “Gadamer and Helmholtz.” (a) “Criticism of Helmholtz” argues that Gadamer’s criticism of Helmholtz’s interpretation of tact is one-sided because Gadamer does not take into account the second stage in Helmholtz’s intellectual development.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{550} Ibid., 14.
\item \textsuperscript{551} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{552} Ibid., 15.
\end{itemize}
in which he moved away from abiding by principles of 18th century science and towards electro-dynamics and non-Euclidean geometry. This rebuttal of Gadamer’s interpretation of Helmholtz, however, introduces a problem the solution to which moves Helmholtz into the orbit of Gadamer’s phenomenology. The problem is that there appears to be a contradiction in Helmholtz’s intellectual development that coincides with classical and modern science. Helmholtz is said to have abandoned the former for the latter. And yet, there is evidence of continuity in his thinking as well; namely, an abiding interest in force as an ontologically distinct category from mechanical or physical causes. The implication of continuity amidst the change in orientation is that the alleged contradiction in his thinking is, in fact, evidence of him assuming two distinct standpoints toward one and the same phenomena. The explanation of how the contradiction is removed on the basis of dialectic of standpoints is undertaken in (b) “Mediation.” However, this movement between two stances is not possible unless the mind or intellect is presumed to be embodied and epistemic claims are thereby understood to be mediated by perception. Helmholtz’s tacit understanding of this principle, presupposed by him otherwise, as mentioned, the dialectic of standpoints that removes that “contradiction” in his intellectual development would not make any sense, is explained in (c) “Positional Epistemology.” Having closed the divide between Helmholtz and Gadamer, natural science and the humanities, in three steps the final section of the first part (d) “Spiritual-Material Ear” explains how Helmholtz circumvents the psychological realm to which Gadamer argues his notion of tact belongs by rethinking it in relation to the auditory mode of perception which in turn is commensurate with Gadamer’s philosophical turn toward the living language. Helmholtz thereby provides the scientific foundation for the humanities that Gadamer’s hermeneutics presupposes.

The second part, “Ramifications” aims to explore the ramifications of cross-fertilization of ideas between Helmholtz and Gadamer for language and the concept of life. It begins with explaining their mutual regard for the Greeks whose thought shaped their understanding of language and life. This is undertaken in (e) “Romantics in the Modern Age.” (f) “Gadamer and Cognitive Science” situates Gadamer’s linguistic turn in relation to “Heideggerian” cognitive science and in particular the “frame problem.” The section argues that the hermeneutics of the voice solves the problem posed by representational theories of the mind about how to relate the mind to the “external” world and nature. (g) “Life in Mind” is directed toward the concept of life tabled by Evan Thompson. The section argues that his organic systems approach to life emphasizes the self-generating capacity of an organism to
the detriment of the intermediary realm of rhythm between an organism and its environment that humans are inclined to forget. The work of Gadamer and Heidegger on “life” is used to clarify and correct Thompson’s views.

2 Gadamer and Helmholtz

2.1 Criticism of Helmholtz

Gadamer begins *Truth and Method* by criticising Helmholtz’s reply to John Stuart Mill’s argument in the *Logic* (1843). At the outset of “On the Logic of the Moral Sciences: A System of Logic” and in Book VI, chapter I, section 1 and chapter 10, section 7, Mill argues that the moral sciences should copy the methods of the natural sciences. In the words of Benjamin Steege he “sought to show how the human sciences might maintain confidence in the predictability of human behaviour.” The work by Mill was translated into German in 1849. According to Gadamer, although Helmholtz intends to challenge Mill by separating the realms of science and the humanities from one another, he in fact defines the humanities in terms of the scientific method and thereby conforms to Mill’s logic, which for Gadamer follows from Helmholtz falling within a Kantian position in which aesthetic intuition is held to be subjective because it does not meet standards of scientific credibility. He states that Helmholtz’s statements are “simple” and that he does not believe in sudden flashes of intuition or inspiration.

The source Gadamer consults that is in concert with this phase of Helmholtz’s career, but which Gadamer assumes is representative of his thought in general, is the 1862 Rector’s address at Heidelberg University titled “On the Relation of Natural Science to General Science” (“*Ueber das Verhältniss der Naturwissenschaft zur Gesammttheit der Wissenschaften*”). Helmholtz writes, “It is an essential part of an artist’s talent to reproduce by words, by form, by colour, or by music, the external indications of a character or a state of mind, and by a kind of instinctive intuition, uncontrolled by any definable rule, to seize the necessary steps by which we pass from one mood to another.” Shortly afterwards he explains that whereas the sciences reduce their inductions to “sharply defined general rules and principles,” the humanities are “uncontrolled by any definable rule”

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(as mentioned above) and “arrive at the conclusions by psychological instinct” (Psychologisches Tactgefühl). These may well have been the passages in his 1862 Rector’s address to the faculty at Heidelberg University that motivated Gadamer’s criticism of Helmholtz’s view of aesthetic intuition in Truth and Method.

There is indeed evidence to support Gadamer’s criticism in the first phase of Helmholtz’s intellectual development. In “On the Scientific Researches of Goethe” (1852/1853), Helmholtz is critical of both Johannes Wolfgang von Goethe’s (1749-1832) method and conclusions because they do not meet standards of scientific credibility. According to Helmholtz, Goethe was determined to define common forms in nature or archetypes (Urtypus) from which other species are derived. He mentions the common type in the animal kingdom and botany (Urpflanze). While Helmholtz respects Goethe’s aspiration to understand the whole, common purpose or principle of harmony for all things, he does not believe that his method for achieving those ends is reasonable. According to Helmholtz, Goethe’s findings are “not the result of a long intellectual process” and are instead, “inspired by a direct intuition of the inner sense, or by an outburst of excited feeling,” as if nature were a work of art. In contrast to the scientist who is trained to doubt the authority of the senses and actively peel away appearances, the artist’s naïve trust of the senses leads them to believe that they can unite with nature and know its archetypes. Dani Hallet refers to this mode of inquiry being passive artistic intuition. From the perspective of 18th century science, Goethe’s passive intuition is precisely the opposite of what is required in order to be rational, i.e., precise mathematical measurements, and hence, his theory of colour was flawed. That is not to say that Helmholtz does not value Goethe, but when he does express approval it is for his having met standards of a descriptive and experimental science.

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557 Ibid.
558 TM 88, Note 3.
559 There are two stages in his development. One from 1850 to 1870 and the other post 1870. During the first stage Helmholtz abides by the principles of Euclidean geometry and classical mechanics. In the later stage he shifts to non-Euclidean geometry and action at a distance through electro-chemical dynamics.
561 Ibid.
the 18th century temperament. He looks askance at Goethe for exercising “a passive observational approach, which simply assumed nature there as given,” and argues that such an approach to knowledge generates “an elitist je ne sais quoi of artistic insight” into the Urtypus of the Urpflanze or ideal form of plants.

Gadamer’s criticism of Helmholtz is therefore vindicated. By construing aesthetic intuition as being purely subjective Helmholtz perpetuates an 18th century paradigm of science according to which the arts are gauged by theoretical objectivity. For Gadamer, this has social and political importance because it is commensurate with the trivialization of the historical sciences, and beyond that the domination of nature by science that Helmholtz endorsed in both his public speeches, highlighted by Gadamer, and research. In The Conservation of Force: A Physical Memoir (1847) he proves that atomistically structured matter can be explained mechanistically. If so, then it is possible for human beings to appropriate or harness that energy for purposes of work and industry. His theory about this force “in the whole of Nature” being constant and unchanging yet available to us through work justifies the technological mastery of nature that concerned Gadamer and moveover, potentially undermined the way of thinking in the humanities that might well question it. Babinbach emphasizes this side of Helmholtz’s work. In The Human Motor he argues that Helmholtz does not distinguish and instead equates the power of nature with power produced by the human labour and industry. He uses this to support the position that Helmholtz was a strident proponent of the project to master nature for the benefit of humanity (or the bourgeoisie) alone.

However, this interpretation of Helmholtz’s view of science is also misleading for two reasons. Gadamer does not take into account either (1) the audience to whom Helmholtz is speaking as Rector of Heidelberg University, or (2) later developments in both the speech and research. With respect to the first, is it any wonder that Helmholtz would at the outset of his speech to the faculty at Heidelberg characterise the humanities and sciences in terms with which they were familiar in 1862? By specifying that the mode of cognition in the humanities is without rules and on that basis unlike science, he is playing the role of Rector

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566 Ibid., 183.
567 Schiemann, Hermann von Helmholtz’s Mechanism, 13; 60.
and identifying with an audience of largely scientists whose hold upon the curriculum at
the university was in general on the ascendency.\textsuperscript{570} This is not necessarily his position. While
serving the rectorate he would have been obliged to uphold the goals of Heidelberg
University such as attracting interest in and finances for the sciences.\textsuperscript{571} Until the mid-
century the German universities had been dominated by the humanist tradition of Bildung.\textsuperscript{572}
Helmholtz thought that was why his country was lagging behind the technological
sophistication and industrialization of England. Given this context, it is advisable to
exaggerate the value of the sciences relative to the arts. Hence, Helmholtz may well have
been at one with his peers, as Hallet argues, in being “inspired by a social agenda to replace
grammar and the classics with mathematics and science as the foundation of German
education . . .”\textsuperscript{573} This temperament however later subsided when the gains made by the
sciences in the university curriculum had become considerable. This suggests that his being
an advocate for the rationalization of society was an instance of his prudence or interest in
balance and proportion among contesting parties. There are thus good reasons to argue that
Helmholtz was motivated by the Baconian program that science “teaches individuals what
the world consists of, peacefully brings together people who learn and research and provides
humanity with control over nature and thus with better material living conditions,” which
Schiemann argues.\textsuperscript{574} However, if this were the primary motive for his research, then he
might better have resigned his rectorate and become an innovator and entrepreneur, but he
didn’t. Helmholtz, in contrast to “the historical situation of German natural science” even
while working for the Reichsanstalt “was sceptical of orienting research toward the needs of
application and refused to do so.”\textsuperscript{575} This statement signals that Schiemann is ambivalent
about his own conclusion, quoted earlier, that Helmholtz was an unabashed “Baconian.” In

\begin{itemize}
\item The scientific community had to battle vigorously against the legacy of Idealism, theology and
religion in the form of Naturphilosophie at the universities until about the middle of the 19\textsuperscript{th}
century. According to Helmholtz, the point of contention in Naturphilosophie was the idea that the mind is able to identify with the
world or correspond to it on the basis of a “pre-established harmony.” Hallet, “On the Subject of Goethe,” 187.
\item Despite making these valuable distinctions between his public talks and research, and cautioning
that Helmholtz’s criticism of the romantics in his public speeches is overblown or inflated for purposes of
making a favourable impression, Schiemann does not hesitate to assume that Helmholtz’s degradation of
philosophy in a public speech might be similarly qualified. See Schiemann, Hermann von Helmholtz’s
Mechanism, 66-67 and 69.
\item Babinbach, The Human Motor, 56.
\item Schiemann, Hermann von Helmholtz’s Mechanism, 67. See also, ibid., 72 where he reasons that
although Helmholtz’s intentions in lectures were propagandistic and included ideological factors about the
growing social influence of science that the latter do not lead “to a distorted image of his mechanism when
compared with that of his professional writing.”
\item Ibid., 63
\end{itemize}
acknowledgement of the ambiguous nature of Helmholtz’s research and motivations that straddle different domains of inquiry, Schiemann, asserts, perhaps most accurately that Helmholtz was not a scientific technocrat, and instead both a citizen and Bildungsbürger. Unless this distinction between his public role as a citizen and his pursuit of knowledge for its own sake are made, the wrong conclusions will be reached about his motives and purposes.

576 In the case of Gadamer in particular, by focusing on a popular speech at a midpoint in Helmholtz’s career, he was misled into thinking that it was representative of Helmholtz’s overall standpoint on the humanities even though the speech itself provides evidence to the contrary.

With respect to further developments in his research that Gadamer does not mention, there is evidence of Helmholtz having changed his attitude toward science and nature, the arts and humanities. Gary Hatfield reports of Helmholtz:

After about 1870, he downplayed the importance of deduction in natural science, confining it to the presentation of results already obtained. Correspondingly, he emphasized the importance of inductive intuitions in the work of active natural scientists. . . . For the mature Helmholtz, the intellectual processes involved in both science and art are one with the intellectual processes that underlie perception. 577

A source with which to support Hatfield’s assessment is Helmholtz’s essay, “On Goethe’s Anticipation of Subsequent Scientific Researches” (1892). However, because it is a late essay and representative of an overt change in his orientation it also overstates the obvious relative to Gadamer’s interpretation. Reverting to Helmholtz’s post-1870’s work in which he was undergoing a reorientation from classical mechanics to electro-dynamics does not pack the same punch as basing an argument against Gadamer on works crafted in the alleged first stage of Helmholtz’s intellectual development. For example, in a speech Hallet consults in support of Helmholtz never having wavered from confidence in Newtonian mechanics, “On the Scientific Researches of Goethe” (1853), Helmholtz applauds Goethe’s “far-seeing eye” for exhibiting “a far more comprehensive view than had hitherto been taken.” 578

He acknowledges that Goethe has an artistic talent for looking over the full range of data and connecting it with the whole. These commendations are not intended by Helmholtz to be a formality satisfying protocols of a public speech, as if he were creating a tactful smokescreen

576 Ibid., 68. As Schiemann says, “In contrast to his work in physics, physiology of the senses and geometry, Helmholtz explicitly expresses his thoughts on the theory of science and on scientific policy, almost without exception only in public talks” (Ibid., 66).
577 Hatfield, The Natural and the Normative, 230.
to buffer a forthcoming criticism. No, he has genuine respect for aesthetic intuition. It resurfaces a decade later in a speech delivered in the same year as “On the Relation of Natural Science to General Science” (1862) to which Gadamer refers the reader in order to argue against what is being proven here.

In “On the Conservative of Force” (1862-1863) Helmholtz acknowledges the limits of natural scientific knowledge, praises the artistic mode of cognition typical of Goethe, and suggests that it has enabled him to broaden his own theory to encompass what he calls with a discrete nod of approval to the romantics, the cosmos.579 More specifically, he states that natural science cannot give us intellectual satisfaction that comes from knowledge of the whole.580 As Friedrick Paulsen (1846-1908) points out, science cannot provide a world view that satisfies the imagination and mind, “it finds only a thousand fragmentary bits of knowledge” and cannot explain the desire for knowledge.581 Helmholtz’s recognizes in Goethe’s mode of reasoning something the scientific frame of mind lacks. However, had he not criticized the romantic poet for attempting to give an account of the whole? No, he was critical of Goethe’s method for being subjective and arbitrary because it did not follow an experimental and empirical procedure of analysis. And yet, as Paulsen says the experimental method produces fragmented data rather than understanding. Helmholtz is not contradicting himself. He prizes both the artistic and scientific modes of cognition because they produce a “tension-filled relationship” of synthesis and analysis, expansion and contraction in which an understanding of the object of knowledge discloses itself. Hence, after years of disciplining his mind in the methods of natural science, he is unrestrained in vocalizing his praise for the importance of Witz to understanding the whole in science.582 Since this praise is expressed relatively late in his career using it as a means by which to challenge Gadamer’s one-sided reading of Helmholtz is not fair,583 but as is the norm for Helmholtz’s mental life, the end can be discerned in the beginning. In “On the Conservation of Force,” he contrasts what he calls “mental life” with “laws of nature.” Whereas the latter are regular and the mind that imitates them is as systematic, slow, cautious and calculating, he says of “mental life,” “the influences

580 Ibid., 319.
581 Schiemann, Hermann von Helmholtz’s Mechanism, 54.
582 Wit means insight, ingenuity and in general tact or the fitting together of information into a coherent whole. See Ibid., 179-180.
583 An exception is as follows: “Although Hermann Helmholtz’s important and just comparison in his famous speech of 1862 between the natural and the human sciences laid great emphasis on the superior and humane significance of the human sciences, he still have them a negative logical description based on the methodological ideal of the human sciences.” TM, 5.
are so interwoven, that any definite sequence can but seldom be demonstrated.” Mental life does not follow laws, but nor are the insights it yields subjective and arbitrary. The faculty that constrains insight produces it. The disciplining of the mind by the rigors of method is a catalyst for insight. Helmholtz thus claimed to have discovered the nature of the cosmos or “orderly arrangement of harmonious elements.” This discovery cannot have been the product of the scientific method alone, but rather of artistic insight or wit as well. Helmholtz is to Goethe as Plato is to Homer. He is trying to beat him at his own game. Whereas Goethe reads the whole off of appearances without attending to experimental science and mathematics, Helmholtz’s insight is constrained by the latter two.

Given the complexity of Helmholtz’s manner of thinking that he has already indicated is without rules, it is not surprising to find evidence of a trans-disciplinary approach in the speech “On the Relation of Natural Science to General Science” Gadamer uses to argue for Helmholtz reducing tact to psychological instinct. After having consigned philology to the humanities and physiology to the sciences, Helmholtz refers to the cross-fertilisation between them. “Of late years, physiologists, especially Brucke, have actually undertaken to draw up a complete system of all the vocables that can be produced by the organs of speech, and to base upon it propositions for a universal alphabet, adapted to all human languages. Thus physiology has entered the service of comparative philology . . .” Physiology does not make comparative philology superfluous as Gadamer might expect. For Helmholtz, they conjointly lead toward the universality of understanding. Shortly afterwards he notes how both sculptor and archaeologist have benefited from the study of anatomy. Then he mentions that the spheres of aesthetics and music have been explained (by him in fact in 1863) with the science of acoustics and theory of sensation. He does not in the least feel troubled by the prospect of science reducing human life, philosophy, art and history to the laws of prediction. Subsuming the humanities to the sciences never occurs to him and instead, he celebrates the sciences entering into the service of the humanities. David Cahan concludes his study of “Science as the Foundation of Aesthetic Culture” in Helmholtz’s thought as follows: “For painting and music, two preeminent manifestations of civilized life, Helmholtz indicated how an understanding of the scientific foundations of art enhanced both

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585 Ibid., 319.
587 Ibid., 27.
the creative powers of the artist and the ability of the viewer or listener to deepen his or her experience and understanding of art. Helmholtz may well have anticipated that his 1870 argument that science relies on intuition or artistic induction and not deduction alone, would inspire artists to study science.

Far from being a one-dimensional proponent of classical mechanics as Gadamer’s criticism suggests, Helmholtz was a distinguished trans-disciplinary thinker who was renowned for combining theory and practice/experiment as well as for the application of findings in one field to another. The pre-requisite for making those sorts of combinations and cross-fertilizations is to think of the humanities and sciences on their own terms and hence, without reducing either one to the other. As Schiemann says, Helmholtz was a proponent for an education in the humanities and arts “and not only does he not deny their own right, but explicitly and repeatedly defends it.” For example, in the introduction to “On the Conservation of Force,” he argues that by studying other peoples, cultures and remote times points of contact are created that enable comparisons with contemporary concepts. He asserts of studying these topics, “we get to know the hidden capacities and desires of the mind which in the ordinary peaceful course of civilized life remain unawakened.” Helmholtz could not thus argue for studying the humanities in their own right and value them for awakening us to an extra-ordinary capacity and desire if he had been motivated by standards of scientific credibility alone. His broadening of the scientific mode of thinking beyond deduction to include “unruly” aesthetic intuition is evidence of him negotiating the alleged divide between the humanities and sciences that prefigures a significant change in the orientation of his research that Gadamer does not acknowledge.

2.2 Mediation
The two orientations in Helmholtz’s intellectual development seem to be mutually exclusive. From 1850 to 1870 he is held, as Gadamer seems to have understood him, to have abided by Euclidean geometry of absolute space and its corresponding classical mechanics. After 1870 and on account of both his move from the pastoral and conservative Heidelberg to the

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589 Hatfield, “Helmholtz and Classicism,” 546.
590 Schiemann, Hermann von Helmholtz’s Mechanism, 63.
591 Ibid., 58.
592 Ibid., 68.
cosmopolitan Berlin,\textsuperscript{594} studies of both sensation and of James Clerk Maxwell’s electrodynamics (1865),\textsuperscript{595} and recognition of “a crass and overly pragmatic ‘Americanization’ of academia,”\textsuperscript{596} he became convinced of action at a distance and non-Euclidean geometry.\textsuperscript{597} Schiemann describes his change as being from physiology to physics.\textsuperscript{598} He also believes that this change was unmistakable and amounted to an “almost sudden erosion of classical mechanistic positions.”\textsuperscript{599} There is thus a tendency to argue that there are two stages in Helmholtz’s career and that they are as mutually exclusive of one another as mechanical and non-mechanical notions of causality. And yet, there is evidence of his later orientation in his earlier one—an abiding interest in energy. This accounts for the continuity in the alleged contradiction between classical and modern physics, between the early and later stages of his intellectual development. After having explained this in more detail, its ramifications for the relation of the mind to the senses will be addressed.

The aforementioned partition between Helmholtz’s classical and post-classical orientations is questionable. In \textit{The Conservation of Force: A Physical Memoir} (1847), he sought to “exclude the effects of vitalistic life forces,”\textsuperscript{600} but at the same time, “Helmholtz’s mechanism, which (most of the time) limits itself to explaining material and energy aspects of natural phenomena, does itself involve one immaterial principle, namely that of mechanical force.”\textsuperscript{601} Michael Heidelberger concludes from the introduction to Helmholtz’s first work on physics that:

natural phenomena are the result of the activity of hidden causes. Helmholtz identified these causes as the attractive and repulsive forces emanating from matter. He sought to prove that these forces are central forces depending only on the distance

\textsuperscript{594} Ibid., 10. This is an argument Schiemann later questions pointing out while commenting on Helmholtz’s move to Königsberg in 1849 that “Not only his theoretical but also his experimental work remains largely independent of local circumstances,” ibid., 61.

\textsuperscript{595} Ibid., 232-233.

\textsuperscript{596} Hallet, “On the Subject of Goethe,” 185, Note 9.

\textsuperscript{597} In light of research by Eugenio Beltrami (1835-1900) and Georg Friedrich Bernhard Riemann (1826-1866), Helmholtz was convinced that the axioms of geometry are not a priori and do not apply to space by necessity and instead, have an empirically contingent status that describes physical space. I am consulting Hatfield, \textit{The Natural and the Normative}, 219.

\textsuperscript{598} Schiemann, \textit{Hermann von Helmholtz’s Mechanism}, 234.

\textsuperscript{599} Ibid., 74.

\textsuperscript{600} “Vitalism” has gone through a number of permeautations of meaning. Hans Meyerhoff characterizes it as an impulse, \textit{conatus} in Spinoza’s language, a blind will in Schopenhauer’s language, \textit{élan vital} in Bergson’s, and libido in Freud’s. From his “Introduction” to Max Scheler, \textit{Man’s Place in Nature}, trans. Hans Meyerhoff (New York: The Noonday Press, 1961), xxvii.

\textsuperscript{601} Schiemann, \textit{Hermann von Helmholtz’s Mechanism}, 70.
of the material objects involved, not on their motion. According to this schema, nature is a material system whose changes are due to inner, conservative forces. Helmholtz believes in forces effecting change at a distance. And yet, mechanical force is physical, is it not? How can objects move except by contact with another physical object? Does Helmholtz mean to suggest there is a metaphysical principle operative in mechanical forces? Matter and force were supposed by him to have been irreducible to one another. And yet, he also denied metaphysical in the sense of spiritual causes. His dual concept of nature that Schiemann says he retained from 1847-1869 is, in fact, a vestige of the romantic notion of vital force (Lebenskraft) configured by Helmholtz above to be “inner, conservative forces.”

The idea of vitalism was passed to Helmholtz by Johannes Peter Müller when he was studying with him at the Friedrik-Wilhelm-Institut in Berlin (1830-1838). For the romantic naturphilosophen, and Müller had counted himself among their number for a time, this force referred to a metaphysical or spiritual purpose inherent to the cosmos that was irreducible to matter in motion. For this reason, the scientific community of Helmholtz’s era was critical of vitalism for not having any objective validity, but this is precisely what Helmholtz gave it in his theory for the conservation of energy (Ueber die Erhaltung der Kraft, 1847). Although he aimed to outline a mechanistic explanation of nature, his outline included traces of the said force. According to Anson Babinbach, he used mathematics rather than metaphysics to argue in more philosophically coherent terms than any other protagonist “that emerged from Müller’s laboratory” that motion and the effects of matter we experience presupposes ontologically distinct energy or a primordial cause (Ursache). The effects of this cause vary, but the cause is itself invariable and constant, i.e., this force or power is not subject to the changes it causes. It might, therefore best to think of it as a condition—a law that acts like a cause because it explains the structure of reality whose effects we experience. This is conveyed in “Treatise on Physiological Optics.” Therein specifies that causes are “laws only if they capture the structure of reality that exists independently of being known and ‘being

603 Schiemann, Hermann von Helmholtz’s Mechanism, 146.
604 Although a famous physiologist and anatomist who was an active proponent of physical-chemical methods in physiology, Müller still held to the vitalistic position “that immaterial life forces are at work in organic matter.” Ibid., 59.
605 Rabinbach, The Human Motor, 53.
noumenal’—causally evoke the world of appearances.” His claim in 1862-63 to have discovered the “orderly arrangement of harmonious elements” presupposes that there is a condition for validity in science that is beyond the scientific method and its concept of mechanical causation. Helmholtz is referring to a cause that acts as a law or explanation of phenomenon. If indeed this cause of all causes, force or energy of immaterial life forces is distinct from, and presupposed by mechanical causation, and can moreover be inferred from the effects we experience on our nervous apparatus, then it is accessible to us through experience or as it were through an education of the sensations of an embodied mind that Goethe calls insight (explained below). Even Helmholtz’s experiments in physiology, and contrary to his own opinion Schiemann adds, “served purposes of the theoretical analysis of the concept of vital force.” If both Helmholtz’s theory for the conservation of force or Energie (Kraft) and studies in physiology during the first stage of his intellectual development include references to vitalistic forces that prefigure his re-orientation in 1870 toward hypotheses about non-mechanical causation, then the line between the early and late Helmholtz is difficult to uphold. Contrary to what Frederick Beiser asserts, it is not clear that he ever abandoned the romantic idea of vitalism introduced to him, as mentioned by Müller and echoed in Ernest Haeckel’s, who had also studied with Müller, “monistic metaphysics.” As Schiemann says of Helmholtz, “Although he believed research could generally do without life forces, he did not definitely say so.”

The extent to which Helmholtz’s thought can be parcelled out into stages is therefore dubious. This is because “mental life,” as he says, or the life of understanding, does not conform to steps in a career staircase or fall within the purview of a given subject-matter. Helmholtz was a military surgeon and physiologist when he made his first important contribution to physics in 1847 (his theorem for the conservation of force). This is consistent

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606 Schiemann, Hermann von Helmholtz's Mechanism, 128. The notion of a cause being a law that captures the structure of reality independently of being known is said by Schiemann to have been stated by Helmholtz for the first time in the 1867, “Treatise on Physiological Optics” (ibid). If so, then the statement to that effect in the 1853 speech wherein he applauds Goethe’s “far-seeing eye” is a premonition of it.


608 Schiemann, Hermann von Helmholtz’s Mechanism, 63.

609 Beiser states that Helmholtz’s principle of the conservation of energy “replaced the concept of a vital power or Lebenskraft in explaining organic growth and development.” Frederick C. Beiser, After Hegel: German Philosophy 1840-1900 (New Jersey: Princeton University, 2014), 55.

610 Robert Richards states that he doctrine of “monistic metaphysics” “mirrored the deep convictions” of Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Baldwin and Helmholtz. The doctrine holds that mind and matter are properties of a more fundamental substrate. Richards, The Tragic Sense of Life: Ernst Haeckel and the Struggle over Evolutionary Thought (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 125, 128-129.

611 Schiemann, Hermann von Helmholtz’s Mechanism, 143.
with this his manner of proceeding. Helmholtz’s thought is not “a well-ordered whole at all.” However, he applied findings from one field to another, not in order to be “interdisciplinary” (as if it were in vogue), but in order to discover and explain a unifying element in all things. Hence, although he does not “expound a coherent, all encompassing interpretation of nature,” Helmholtz strove for just that goal. As Gadamer says of the romantics and Greek philosophy, his thinking has the sweep of an organic process. This means that Helmholtz’s re-orientation toward non-mechanical causes was a sign of his thinking having matured on the basis of ideas incipient to the earliest stage of his life of inquiry. Vitalism or the idea of force being independent of matter runs throughout his research from beginning to end and hence, when considered alongside his commitment to Newtonian mechanics, from which he never wavered, constitutes his dual concept of nature as Schiemann says, and meets the basic requirements of being a double-account. Hence, while he aimed to explain non-physical life processes with classical mechanics in The Conservation of Force, after 1870 this very thesis was treated by him as a “boundary condition” for physical-chemical processes. A “boundary condition” suggests that he believes natural processes are subject to two distinct explanatory models or that both mechanical and non-mechanical, i.e., physical-chemical forces apply to an object of knowledge rather than being mutually exclusive of one another. Schiemman states that in 1870 Helmholtz did not abandon his former convictions about mechanics and instead states that the change in his position “implies changed conditions of validity for each of the philosophy of nature’s orientations to science.” He re-iterates this judgement when he writes of Helmholtz, “The deviation from his conception of science throughout the 1850-1860s thus appears to be less an alteration of the methodical definition of science’s objective than much more the overall abandonment of the absolute claim to validity previously bound to that task.” Abandonment of absolute validity does not however entail the abandonment of the objective validity of science, but rather an acknowledgement of its limits relative to another perspective on an object of knowledge that takes into account energy or “life force.” The contradiction between the early and the late Helmholtz is thus removed on the basis of

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612 Ibid., 57.
613 Ibid., 142.
614 Ibid., 232.
615 Ibid., 74.
616 Ibid., 160.
his interest in force discernable at the outset of his intellectual development. This, however, raises another question. How can he hold to both mechanical and non-mechanical causation?

2.3 Positional Epistemology

If there are two philosophies of nature discernible in Helmholtz’s science that do not cancel one another out and instead, represent two sides on one and the same object of knowledge, then he must have effected a change in stance or presupposed that human relationality plays a role in determining knowledge of what something is that dovetails with Gadamer’s dialectic of stance. Like his ambivalent relation to the humanities where he both devalues them in relation to the sciences and holds them in esteem in their own right, Helmholtz is demonstrating the capacity to think opposites together while holding them apart. He sees how the two concepts of nature are opposed to one another yet he understands that they are not really opposed and instead correlate. If so, then he may have inverted the transcendental turn toward the mind as the locus for knowing initiated by Descartes, carried forward by Kant, by grounding understanding in the body and perception. This stems from the romantic criticism of the Enlightenment rationalism yet harkens to early Greek aesthetics, or knowing as aisthesis. But is there any evidence for this in Helmholtz’s work? Is there any evidence of him having adopted a relation toward his senses that changes how he thinks humans understand something? Yes, in his re-evaluation of Goethe and theory of sensation. These two factors are treated in turn and serve to justify the argument that his thinking moves between at least two modes of perception.

The first indication of Helmholtz having undergone a transformation/conversion in how he thinks about phenomena is in his re-visiting his earlier assessment of Goethe. In the 1853 essay “On the Scientific Researches of Goethe,” as explained earlier he argues that Goethe’s insights into an archetype from which creatures are derived is subjective and arbitrary. Helmholtz arrives at this judgment because of how he thinks about the senses. As a classical mechanist that distrusts the senses and thus separates reason from them, he is prone to suppose that the senses, in contrast to the mind, are subjective. However, Helmholtz re-evaluated this assessment of Goethe. In a paper titled “On Goethe’s Anticipation of

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617 By “dialectic of stance” I am referring to knowledge and understanding being a function of different comportments towards phenomenon; the visual and auditory respectively. These two ways of relating to phenomenon underlie and make possible the double account, i.e., explanation and meaning of “this thing here.”
Subsequent Scientific Researches” (1892) he argues, in the words of Hallet, that “Goethe anticipated certain contemporary scientific theories and he [Helmholtz] cited the poet’s work as less precise anticipations of his own theory of sensation and law of conservation of force.” Rabinbach is less reserved about the essay of 1892. He reports that the notion of Urkraft that contributed to Helmholtz’s own theory about the conservation of energy is acknowledged by him to have been familiar to Goethe. Ernst Cassirer explains while quoting Goethe:

“Physics,” he wrote, “must describe itself as something distinct from mathematics. It must live in perfect independence and, with all its capacities for sympathy, respect, and devotion try to penetrate into nature and her hallowed life, quite unconcerned about what mathematics produces and does.” The life of nature can be envisaged and interpreted only from the standpoint of human life, but such an interpretation itself can succeed only to the extent that we preserve the existence of man, like that of nature, in all of its purity and completeness and resist all attempts to dissect and dismember it.

Helmholtz departed from Goethe on his assessment of mathematics. Nevertheless, if indeed it was not an experimental method, analysis, the telescope, microscope or laboratory that enabled Goethe to arrive at a concept of energy in nature comparable to what Helmholtz, following Müller discovered, then perhaps sense perception was worthy of investigation. The fact that Helmholtz recognizes this sense successfully operating in Goethe’s way of thinking suggests that he re-evaluated his earlier 1853 criticism of aesthetic intuition. No longer does he believe that artistic insight is irrelevant to science, but at the same time, if insight is not the result of an experimental method, how can he account for its objectivity and indeed, justify his claim in “On the Conservation of Force,” to have seen far into the structure of the cosmos? Perhaps he has employed the senses in a way that retains objectivity typified according to Gadamer by the arts and humanities, i.e., from within and out of the position of being a participant in the sense of enacting an auditory comportment-relation toward beings. Helmholtz does not literally say this and for that reason has been misunderstood.

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619 Babinbach, The Human Motor, 54. The Urkraft or vis viva of Schelling’s, Hegel’s and Goethe’s naturphilosopie is one of three explanations for Helmholtz’s discoveries about energy the other two being the steam engine and French engineering says Babinbach citing Thomas Kuhn.
For example, Hallet argues that the regard Helmholtz expressed for Goethe represents a change in tone and not content. Hatfield quotes Helmholtz’s description of the experience of artistic beauty and begins his commentary on it by stating, “Disregarding the emotional enthusiasm Helmholtz often exhibited at the end of public lectures . . .” Neither Hallet’s or Hatfield’s interpretation can be accepted at face value. In fact, Hallet is giving away his bias. He believes that the truth of a theory depends on a seamless logic. This is what drives his uni-dimensional argument about Helmholtz never having wavered from his commitment to classical mechanics. However, a cursory study of how his attitude toward Goethe changed confutes it. Helmholtz was and was not committed to classical mechanics. Changes in tone of voice in this case indicate a change in orientation. In this regard, Friedrich Schleiermacher is unequivocal: A psychological interpretation that attends to tone of voice yields an understanding of the meaning of a text upon which a technical interpretation depends. He writes, “The qualitative always develops out of the quantitative, which is usually given less attention.” Schleiermacher’s prioritization of tone for the purpose of understanding is a reversal of that which Hallet and Hatfield prioritize; namely, technical standards of interpretation. These are standards to which Helmholtz’s thought cannot be contained. His esteem for Goethe’s capacity for insight is genuine and in agreement with his own re-evaluation of the role of the senses in the process of acquiring knowledge.

The second factor that represents a change in how Helmholtz believes humans understand something, that being a change from the primacy of reason’s autonomy to mind-in-the-body, is his study of sensation and perception. In the 1850’s these studies by Helmholtz were stimulated by Müller. Against nativism or the idea that perception is structured by the mind, Müller and later Helmholtz aligned himself with empiricists that sensory experience is affected and transformed by experience. Roughly a decade later and in order to explain aesthetic intuition he developed a doctrine of unconscious inference.

623 Schleiermacher, Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings, 22. See also ibid., 146-147.
625 Ibid.
(unbewusster Schluss). In the words of Hatfield, the doctrine “states that sense experience is ordered according to a prior learning of rules for relating senses to one another.”

Over the course of time (and J.S. Mill on associative memory is the intellectual backdrop) we encode patterns in our minds that are employed to interpret and understand new experiences on the basis of their affinity or force of attraction for what we have already learned. Thus do we assemble a coherent and unified understanding of the world, which I will argue below is not private and instead, “universal” to the extent that induction is guided by objective stimuli affecting the nervous apparatus.

Helmholz acknowledging the significance of aesthetic intuition to science and his theory of sensation are evidence of him having changed his attitude toward the senses. This in turn compelled him to re-evaluate his earlier confidence in the absolute validity of classical physics. He may well have experienced a “loss of certainty,” but more importantly for establishing a relation to Gadamer, he recognized that pure perception is impossible and hence, generalization in the sciences is a function of a particular way of existing. As mentioned earlier, his study of artistic induction led him to reason that it is common to the intellectual activity of both artist and scientist. The capacity to discern a form from out of many particulars, which is what Helmholtz recognized in Goethe’s morphology of plants, is honed through experience and is “uncontrolled by any definable rule.” Artistic induction is an “instinctive intuition” that is cultivated in the arts and thus involves not simply feelings, but as Helmholtz says, “moods,” state of mind or attunement.

He writes in “Facts in Perception” (1878), “Each of our voluntary motions by which we modify the manner of appearance of objects is to be considered as an experiment by which we test whether we have correctly conceived the lawful behaviour of the phenomenon in question, that is, its presumed existence in a definite spatial order.” Grasping the law-like in phenomenon varies according to our voluntary motions. This voluntary motion refers

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626 In contrast to Gary Hatfield, Stanley Finger and Nicholas J. Wade argue unbewusster Schluss ought to be translated as unconscious reasoning or unconscious conclusions. Stanley, “The Neuroscience of Helmholtz and the Theories of Johannes Müller,” 249.
627 Hatfield, “Helmholtz and Classicism,” 549.
628 The universality of the form discerned from out of many impressions retained in the memory depends on a person’s character. Helmholtz writes, “It is an important part of artistic talent to be able to reproduce—by words, forms, colors, or musical tones—the characteristic external indications of a person’s character, and to grasp by a kind of instinctive intuition, uncontrolled by and definable rule, the steps by which we pass from one mood to another.” Quoted from Hatfield, The Natural and the Normative, 230.
629 Schiemann, Hermann von Helmholtz’s Mechanism, 192.
not to “thought processes underlying perception,” as Hatfield argues, but to the process of translating sensations into the perception of an object. Namely, the process of flexibly adjusting the body and its nerve impulses to objective stimuli (discussed further below). As argued, the ramification of his theory of sensation when understood alongside his physiology is that knowledge for him is dispositional. Self-formation is, therefore, not a leisurely way to pass the time and instead, is crucial to developing a universality of understanding (in the sense of breadth of understanding). Schiemann writes of Helmholtz:

Similar to experimental procedure in science, perceptive individuals navigate their way through the world—a world for which they only have signs to go on by inductively evaluating tentative actions. They adjust their bodies in various spatial positions in order to obtain various views of an object, which they then generalize to become an idea.

Schiemann continues from the above quotation and adds that the truth, for Helmholtz, can only be decided pragmatically. He over generalizes the significance of Helmholtz’s findings to the detriment of other dimensions of his thought. For Helmholtz, generalizations are not formed from the similarities and patterns in a given database alone. On the contrary, generalizations or ideas we have of objects take into account the temporal process in which an object comes to be. This is managed by a mind whose thoughts are informed by biochemical processes of human physiology. Hence, by adjusting the spatial location of the body in relation to an object of knowledge the pre-given sensory content of the mind is questioned and corrected. Helmholtz’s embodied approach to understanding checks the subjective prejudices of the mind buried in the imagination and makes knowledge of the thing-itself rather than custom (as in Hume) the criterion for truth. In other words, as Hatfield points out, physiology is the objective structure of Helmholtz’s theory of sensation. Physiology and in particular the nerve impulses of the body represent a way of repositioning the knower in relation to an object of knowledge. Rather than take its bearings for knowledge from private sensations of the memory, and instigating a rift between the internal and external worlds, Helmholtz collapses the distinction between them when he grounds knowledge in the relation of the body to objective stimuli. He thus inverts the primacy of the subject in relation to an object of knowledge and this has implications for tact. Rather than restrict the latter to a psychological process, tact demands that the knower

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Hatfield, “Helmholtz and Classicism,” 549.
Schiemann, *Hermann von Helmholtz’s Mechanism*, 150.
Hatfield, “Helmholtz and Classicism,” 282.
re-orient the mind from reflecting on private images to being conscious of its relation to a field of energy through the bio-chemical processes of the body and from that position grasp what something is in the sense of the grounds for its self-generation. The subjectivity of the subject is transcended when things are understood from the side of the things themselves, which is the side of the non-mechanistic causes or forces that account for its unfolding unity.

A retort to this interpretation of Helmholtz is that it subsumes him to the romantic ideal of harmonizing the mind with nature; an ideal, in fact, that resurfaces in works by Hans Jonas and Thompson. But can there be any doubt that this is what Helmholtz brings about without resorting to the free play of feeling and fancy, and instead by wrestling with the ontological status of causality? In “Facts of Perception” (1855) he was, as Hatfield says, a causal realist. He argued that causality is a law of thought given prior to the experience of objects in “the external world.” However, how could he hold to the objective reality of a world in which objects “are arranged in space and causally interact with other objects,” if the law that explains their interaction is an a priori law of thought? Helmholtz revised his position in his “Treatise on Physiological Optics” (1867). Therein he concluded that the law of causality is a law of sufficient reason. Hatfield explains, rather than consider causality a law of nature, Helmholtz came to think of it as “a subjective condition on our apprehension of nature.” Hatfield adds that this way of thinking about the law was not subjective because it was held to express the lawfulness of nature. But how can that be? He refers to an 1878 essay by Helmholtz for an answer and concludes that it must be accepted on trust and faith. “The law of cause is an unprovable presupposition that must be accepted on faith, a regulative principle that drives our thought, and an a priori given.” Helmholtz’s reverting to faith suggests that the solution to the problem of relating the lawfulness of the external world or nature itself to internal a priori conditions was not clear to him. Nevertheless, there is evidence in both his studies of physics and physiology for a tentative explanation that is

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633 After quoting Jonas in *The Phenomenon of Life* in support of what Thompson calls the “deep continuity of life and mind” he writes, “According to this thesis, life and mind share a set of basic organizational properties, and the organizational properties distinctive of mind are an enriched version of those fundamental to life.” *Mind in Life*, 128. His concise formulation of mind in life is in “Autopoiesis and Cognition,” ibid., 122-127. My retort is that his system approach is one-sided and overlooks the role of mind and body duality and classical mechanics plays in the self-propagating life.

634 Hatfield, *The Natural and the Normative*, 213.

635 Ibid., 212.

636 Ibid., 213.

637 Ibid., 214.
“Helmholtzian” in temper. Does Helmholtz not explain how an embodied mind participates in the power of nature and similarly imparts unity to an understanding of beings? This is what I take the theory of the conservation of energy to have accomplished. Forces are not in matter and are not transmitted between entities upon impact. Rather, they are causes hidden/unobservable between points of mass and vary according to distance.\textsuperscript{638} Affinity, accord, consonance is not a metaphysical abstraction but rather in the words of David Cahan who is describing Helmholtz’s view of nature, “the manifestation of lawful relations between phenomena.”\textsuperscript{639} Since it is a force that emanates from matter according to its spatial relations or distance that is hidden within the mechanical laws of causation (like waves alongside Euclidean space) an explanation that has recourse to this energy from the side of a “participant” does not reduce the object of inquiry into another entity or cause.

2.4 **Spiritual-Material Ear**

Helmholtz bridges the divide between the subjective senses and objective physics of energy with the physiological processes of the body’s nerve impulses. The latter is not simply a third cause because the body is held to interact with an environment in advance of the formation of concepts by the mind that would justify the physiological processes being a “third man.” This section, “Spiritual-Material Ear” explains how Helmholtz’s studies in physiology and the sense of hearing ground tact in the body rather than in unconscious psychological processes. As mentioned, Gadamer argues that Helmholtz reduces tact to a psychological process and thereby displaces it from its home in a living dialogue. Granted, Helmholtz does not argue for the inner ear hearing the harmony of the dialogue form that would place the process of relating ideas to one another in a dialogical context that transcends the subjectivity of the speakers. However, he comes close to doing so. The key physiological assumption for unconsciously combining sensations, as Hatfield explains, is based on the perception of music.\textsuperscript{640} In what does the perception of music consist that could play a role in Helmholtz’s account of tact? Hatfield argues that it consists of unconsciously putting together discrete sensations into “a representation of an external object.”\textsuperscript{641} This is a viable explanation, but by


\textsuperscript{639} Ibid., 463.

\textsuperscript{640} Hatfield, “Helmholtz and Classicism,” 547.

\textsuperscript{641} Ibid.
explaining it on the basis of vision, he does not give due regard to Helmholtz’s prioritization of hearing over sight. Helmholtz writes:

But the eye is unable to decompose compound colours from one another. It experiences from them a single, unanalysable simple sensation, that of a mixed colour. It is indifferent to the eye whether this mixed colour results from a union of fundamental colours with simple or with non-simple ratios of periodic times. The eye has no sense of harmony in the same meaning as the ear. There is no music to the eye.

The eye cannot distinguish light waves in a compound frequency of the waves. Harmony and disharmony are beyond the sense of sight, but not beyond the sense of hearing. Hence, hearing is the sense perception fitted to the art of tact or combining opposities into one harmonious whole. For Helmholtz, the process of combining tonal affinities including overtones within tones follows rules of association already acquired (and likely forgotten) by sensory memory. However, this rule has as much to do with combining tones that are attracted to one another as it does with timing. There is no tone without a beat and that alone displaces aesthetic intuition from being a subjective to being an objective process that is mediated by language, or rather music-language (prosody). In his lecture on harmony Helmholtz explains how:

We must distinguish two different points—the audible sensation [Empfindung] as it is developed without any intellectual interference, and the conception [Vorstellung], which we form in consequence of that sensation. We have, as it were, to distinguish between the material ear of the body [das leibliche Ohr des Körpers] and the spiritual ear of the mind [das geistige Ohr des Vorstellungsvermögens]. The material ear does precisely what the mathematician effects by means of Fourier’s theorem, and what the pianoforte accomplishes when a confused mass of tones is presented to it. It analyzes those wave-forms, which were not originally due to simple undulations such as those furnished by tuning-forks, into a sum of simple tones; and it feels the tone due to each separate simple wave separately whether the compound wave originally proceeded from a source capable of generating it, or became compounded on the way.

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642 See ibid., 548.
644 “Vibration of the whole of a vibrating body gives the fundamental pitch of a note, but is practically always accompanied by fractional vibrations which produce ancillary tones called partials, overtones, or harmonics . . . A softly-struck tuning-fork probably gives the nearest approach to a note that has no partials.” Charles T. Smith, Music and Reason (New York: Social Sciences Publishers, 1948), 14. Helmholtz’s terms for overtone include Oberton, harmonischer Oberton and Partialton according the Hatfield, “Helmholtz and Classicism,” 526, Note 6.
Hiebert interprets this passage to mean that the “spiritual ear of the mind” is subjective and interprets the objectivity of sensation thereby rendering sensations, perceptions of an object in the external world. This is a plausible explanation of how this inner ear relates a subjective sensation to an objective state of affairs. However, something is also missing. In the context of aesthetic intuition and the “doctrine of unconscious conclusions,” the missing element is tact. The German word for tact is Tactgefühl. It is translated by Benjamin Steege as “groping effect” which confirms the implicit reference to touch. The sense of touch is more immediate than hearing, which includes the distance of sight. However, Helmholtz does not see it that way. His understanding of force challenges this phenomenological description of the two senses. He argues that “in the case of sensation of tone, the length of the sound wave that determines whether it was a sound or a tactile sensation of vibrations.”

Accordingly, the “spiritual ear” does not distinguish between the ears and the surface of the skin. It reads both the sensations of touch and hearing in terms of length of a sound wave. Tact or the process of fitting sensations together applies as much to what is said as it does to what is seen (or has extension). This might be the science that underlines his argument that there is no difference between the intellectual activity of an artist and a scientist who is more than a technician or inventory clerk of other people’s ideas and instead aims for knowledge of the whole within the constraints of a question and empirical evidence. At the end of an 1857 lecture on the physiology of harmony Helmholtz writes:

Whereas in the sea, blind physical forces alone are at work and the final impression on the spectator’s mind is nothing but solitude, in a musical work of art the movement follows the outflow of the artist’s own emotion. Now gently gliding, now gracefully leaping, now violently stirred, penetrated by or laboriously contending with the natural expression of passion, the stream of sound, in primitive vivacity, bears over into the hearer’s soul unimagined moods which the artist has overheard from his own, and finally raises him to that repose of everlasting beauty of which God has allowed but few of his elect favorites to be the heralds.

In a musical work about which Helmholtz thinks from the side of the performer and not the spectator, the knower is immersed in the creative process and through artistic induction expresses what is lawful in nature. Helmholtz does not distinguish the waves from the stream of sound. In 1857, when he penned these words, he thought that he was delineating the boundaries of natural science from those of the arts, but the evidence from the 1860’s indicates that this way of thinking is undertaken by scientists alike. Aesthetic intuition is

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647 Quoted from Hatfield, The Natural and the Normative, 227.
involved in both—this seems clear, but now we know that it is grounded in the eyes that can hear, or rather an auditory disposition.

Assuming Gadamer is right and Helmholtz’s notion of memory is psychological, where is the point of contact with Bildung that he overlooked and that Gadamer says he presupposed? Perhaps the answer lies in the limits of Helmholtz’s work on sensation and tone, *Tonempfindungen* (1863). He did not therein develop a theory of rhythm. His excruciating analysis of music and the listener thus remained “psychological” because he left out of account the element of acoustic space that constitutes the middle for Gadamer between self and world. The previous section argued that this intermediary realm is formed by the bio-chemical activity of nerve impulses yet did not question into the nature of the pulses (frequency, duration, intensity). In a letter to William Thomson in 1857 Helmholtz comments on the mathematical rigor of physiological acoustics; by which he means that the harmony and disharmony of chords is derived from “the investigation of beats of upper partials and of combination of tones.” Stephen Vogel comments, “In this short but historically important statement Helmholtz revealed the essence of his entire research program in physiological acoustics: consonance and dissonance will be explained on the basis of beats.” Gadamer was not likely aware of the letter. But his intuitions were correct when the research of Höningswald, also an advocate of the new non-Euclidean geometry is consulted. He foregrounds rhythm as the space between self and other from the side of the humanities and thereby links into what Helmholtz was tracking in terms of the anatomy of the ear, physiology, psychology and acoustics in 1862. In short, rhythm between bodies in which they are “rhythmatised” is what shakes and disrupts the self-encased subject and makes it

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648 TM, 14. Although, Hatfield points out that Helmholtz explicitly invoked the concept of Bildung. “Helmholtz and Classicism,” 546 Note 61.
649 Gadamer explains that the agreement about things that takes place in language means “the correspondence that finds its concretion in linguistic experience of the world is as such what is absolutely prior.” He continues writing, “This fact can be illustrated beautifully by a phenomenon that itself constitutes a structural aspect of everything linguistic; namely, the phenomenon of rhythm. The essence of rhythm lies in a peculiar intermediary realm between being and the soul, as Richard Höningswald has already emphasized in his analysis from the point of view of the psychology of thought.” Gadamer, “The Nature of Things and the Language of Things” in *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. David E. Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 78-79.
651 Ibid., 268.
available for human relationality (or being-with-one-another). This follows for Helmholtz if indeed the 19th century notion of Bildung was, as mentioned, reducible to a physiological disposition. The emphasis here is not only that the rhythm of nerve impulses act on us, but moreover, that education consists of training the mind to be responsive or “adjust flexibly” to them, i.e., to the time in which an event happens.

This foray into the rudiments of Helmholtz’s research has brought Gadamer’s hermeneutics into the realm of science. A scientific explanation of tact does not undermine the humanistic one. It enriches it in terms that are consistent with a phenomenology of the embodied mind in which thinking is mediated by perception. Yet it is above all hearing and music that figure most distinctly in Helmholtz’s explanation for aesthetic intuition because it has a closer affinity for the force field of energy than does the sense of sight. Since the primary vehicle for understanding among humans is language, Helmholtz comes very close to having provided a physiological-sensorial account of what Gadamer means by tact.

Helmholtz states in his Rector’s address, “The two classical languages, Latin and Greek, have, besides their exquisite logical subtlety and aesthetic beauty, an additional advantage, which they seem to possess in common with most ancient and original languages—they indicate accurately the relations of words and sentences to each other by numerous and distinct inflexions.” He then comments that modern languages have been cut down to a minimum for the sake of brevity. According to Helmholtz, English more than any other language is for that reason “less fitted than the ancient for instruments of education.” Learning the ancient language he suggests heightens the capacity to hear equal temperament.

With regard to the refinement of sensory observation in artistic matters, we moderns must look upon the Greeks in general as unsurpassed examples... From youth upwards we are accustomed to accommodate our ears to the inaccuracies of equal temperament.

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653 I am consulting, Schiemann, *Hermann von Helmholtz’s Mechanism*, 150.
655 Ibid., 17.
656 Equal temperament is a tuning invented by the Pythagoreans around 500 B.C., displaced temporarily by Roman tunings until the latter were condemned by the Church for being pagan. Pythagorean equal temperament tuning was revived by Boethius (475-527 AD) and was used in Germany for the first time by J.S. Bach in the 17th century and was standardized until the end of the 18th century. My hunch is that his music is for that reason paradigmatic for Gadamer. Equal temperament tuning on an instrument “gave an equal tempered scale of twelve semitones, and made all scales—that is, the scale on every keynote—conveniently identical.” Smith, *Music and Reason*, 63.
temperament... No wonder, then, that their ear became much more finely
cultivated for differences of this kind than it is possible for ours to be.657

Gadamer can be heard echoing him. On the one hand, he states that in contrast to the visual
arts that “know nothing of the death of language... and... must remain in the field of the
visible, must remain visible themselves in a world that by the instruments of modern labour
is becoming increasingly faceless through abstraction, construction, reduction, and
conformity,”658 poetry (music) is not dependent on material and is without the dense
intractability of matter “to be subdued by form.”659 The plastic arts are inferior to the musical
ones because matter is recalcitrant and therefore, corruptible. Hence, as Gadamer says, music
is “perhaps the most sublime of all the arts.”660 Music is sublime because it reminds us of our
common destiny, which for Gadamer who believes that the end being in the beginning is a
principle of life and thought, is in our origins. Self-understanding needless to say requires an
inner ear for what is preserved in the ancient languages (Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Semitic,
Gothic and German); a force or rhythm that is largely suppressed, but still within reach.
Perhaps in an endeavor to facilitate its diffusion in the public sphere Wagner built the “social
laboratory” (as Steege refers to it) Bayreuth for a new religious experience and Gadamer
argued for cosmic/mathematical harmony being the structure of the dialogue form. He
certainly attributes the latter to Plato who sought to make the mathematical relationships that
exist in appearances a basis for determining truth in language.661 Helmholtz did not enact a
linguistic turn, but his assessment of the ancient in contrast to modern languages echoes
Gadamer’s revival of the Socratic turn toward the logoi at Phaedo 99d. Through that new
orientation toward an object of knowledge he sought to revive a non-mechanical notion of
causation through sound and rhythm. They are the elements of music, or the music of
language whose truth-value Helmholtz tacitly incorporates into his doctrine of unconscious
inference. Thought is a language that is self-generating and in which the end is inherent to
the process. For Gadamer, this does not erode the validity of the correspondence theory of
truth or of mechanistic explanations and instead, as Socrates suggests in the Phaedo, the
weaving of opposites together to form a general point of view runs alongside the other

657 Steege, Helmholtz and the Modern Listener, 246-247.
661 See Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Amicus Plato Magis Amica Veritas” in Gadamer, Dialogue and
Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato, trans. P. Christopher Smith (New Haven: Yale University
Press, 1980), 204.
account. The point of contact between them in any field of inquiry depends on the capacity for tact/aesthetic intuition, or as Gadamer refers to it, the inner ear.

3 Ramifications

The dialectic of standpoints that removes the contradiction between the two stages in Helmholtz’s intellectual development entails that there is no such thing as pure perception or a mind independent of its senses. We think through them. This is not a perspective on the mind that Helmholtz explicitly adopted. However, he could not have embraced non-Euclidean geometry and the idea of mathematics being an empirical science rather than a priori had he not abandoned the assumption that the Archimedean point is absolute. This is the crucial idea behind Albert Einstein’s “General Theory of Relativity.” Of course, it assumes that the knower is a participant to the process of acquiring knowledge. Helmholtz pre-dates Einstein (1879-1955), but anticipates his principles sufficiently to warrant a transvaluation of classical mechanics and by implication the neutral spectator standpoint of Euclidean geometry, which he does whenever he takes Goethe seriously. The very notion of aesthetic intuition that Helmholtz had denigrated in Goethe’s work in 1853 suddenly has validity for his science in the 1890’s. It also presents problems for Helmholtz. Although his account of tact presupposes that the Archimedean neutral-observer standpoint on an object of knowledge is not absolute it is still valid. Hence, even after the seeds of his early thinking about a principle of energy germinate in the 1870’s when he is convinced of action at a distance in theories of electro-dynamics he retained the habits of mind in which he had been trained. He continued to maintain a dichotomy between subjectivity and objectivity and for this reason could not quite reach the synthesis or unity of understanding he sought even though that very distinction is a catalyst for thinking opposites together and transforming a contradiction into the reciprocity of a correlation. The middle medium between his theory of sensation (subjective because sensation depends on human organs and not an object) and objectively valid mathematical theory about invisible mechanical causes in and among effects is the bio-chemical processes of nerve impulses. Situated in relation to Gadamer, it means that the inner word refers to “specific nerve energy” or impulse that the German romantics identified with “vital force.”

662 “Vitalism” has gone through a number of permutations of meaning. Hans Meyerhoff characterizes it as an impulse, conatus in Spinoza’s language, a blind will in Schopenhauer’s language, élan vital in Bergson’s, and libido in Freud’s. From “Introduction” to Max Scheler, Man’s Place in Nature, trans.
3.1 Romantic in the Modern Age

The cross-over between Gadamer and Helmholtz on the inner word is not surprising. Helmholtz’s milieu was riveted by concerted efforts to separate the natural sciences from other domains of knowledge. Aesthetics was deemed to be beyond explanation. This could not but have been disconcerting to him and the source of much consternation which is reflected in his own ambivalence toward separating the disciplines. He was an accomplished physiologist, chemist, epistemologist, geometer, classicist and musician who taught anatomy to musicians and whose scientific prose is at times indistinguishable from poetry.663 He was not forgetful of either the meaning of Wissenschaft or its ethic. This alone brings him into proximity with Gadamer’s endeavour to rescue the humanities from defining themselves according to the sciences. For the 19th century German academics Wissenschaft meant:

in the first instance, the systematic pursuit of knowledge in all possible fields, including not only the totality of natural and social sciences—as the English speaking world understood (and understands) the term “science”—but the humanities as well. Second, Wissenschaft was, at least in theory, less a set of results than a means to a higher, an ethical realm, that of Bildung or the cultivation of the individual personality.664

David Cahan adds that the individual who became gebildet in both “a cognitive and cultural dimension became a Kulturträger.” This was without a doubt Helmholtz, the most celebrated German intellectual next to Alexander von Humboldt. In On the Sensation of Tone as a Physiological Basis for the Theory of Music (Die Lehre von den Tonempfindungen als physiologische Grundlage für die Theorie der Musik, 1863) he attempted to connect “physical and physiological acoustics with musical science and aesthetics.”665 The attempt had its limits. He did not develop a theory of rhythm and was ambivalent about the extent to which aesthetics, as followers of his work such as Zimmermann claimed, could be made into an exact science.666 Nevertheless, the trajectory was in place for him to define the common ground between the humanities and sciences in the very terms that Gadamer would have hoped for.

663 See for example Helmholtz’s comparing “the rhythmic crashing of ocean waves with the flow of a musical composition,” Hatfield, “Helmholtz and Classicism,” 541.
665 Hatfield, “Helmholtz and Classicism,” 522.
666 Ibid., 540.
Imre Toth reports that around 1900 there were approximately a dozen mathematicians and philosophers who accepted non-Euclidean geometry, two of whom were Hermann von Helmholtz and Richard Höningwald. Toth explains:

Il faut aussi mentionner que les philosophes néokantiens de l’École de Marbourg étaient les premiers et les seuls à prendre au sérieux et à s’intéresser de la géométrie non euclidienne. Dans une étude publiée en 1871, Otto Liebmann, fondateur de l’École néokantien de Marbourg et collègue de Frege a l’université de Iéna, utilisait pour la première foie le terme de révolution scientifique pur en désigner la géométrie non euclidienne.

The non-Euclidean geometry referred to earlier holds that alongside Cartesian-Euclidean space is curved space of waves. Having been educated at Marburg University and given the esteem in which he held the work of Helmholtz and Höningwald, it is conceivable that Gadamer was an advocate of the defining scientific principle of neo-Kantianism—Paul Natorp and Nicolai Hartmann who mentored him must have at least been aware of new geometry, thought by Liebmann the founder of the neo-Kantian school to be revolutionising science. Although their intellectual endeavours are separated from one another by a century, Helmholtz, Höningwald and Gadamer were thinking within the same intellectual milieu. It is not by coincidence that Gadamer was acquainted with their research and was critical of them for the same reason. He accuses Helmholtz of reducing tact to a psychological process in the memory, and Höningwald of the same with respect to rhythm. The works in which the

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669 Whereas Euclidean space separates geometry from physics, non-Euclidean merges them by making the perception of space dependent upon the position of the observer (thus removing the absolute observer of Euclidean space). Objects in Euclidean space are thus not self-identical and vary in appearance according to our perspective. I am consulting Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception*, trans. Oliver Davis (New York: Routledge Classics, 2008), 38. This is supported by the non-conceptual and non-egoistic experience of our bodies in space. From that position and in contrast to the spectator standpoint, we learn about the spatial relations between objects in the course of coping with our environment through perception rather than in abstraction with mathematics. Robert Hannan, *Kant and the Foundations of Analytic Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 119-120.


criticisms appear, *Truth and Method* and “The Nature of Things and the Language of Things,” were published in the same year (1960). This might justify treating them as companion pieces and the two scholars in question alongside one another. According to Gadamer, neither Hönigswald nor Helmholtz thinks of tact as being rhythm in between self and the world, which would break down the false dichotomy between the subjective and objective sides of inquiry by relating them to one another and in so doing establish relations of reciprocity between them. Or as Gadamer states, restore the “balance sustaining rhythm of the natural order”; “a self-sustaining and self-restoring totality” of proper balance and proportion.672

The belief that thinking is similar to natural processes stems from Helmholtz never having relinquished the romantic idea of “a purposeful force peculiar to life” in contrast to the mechanical motion of dead matter.673 He did not believe that life originated from matter and hence, “mental life” as he calls it in contrast to a habit of mind that follows the causal laws of nature, appropriates this storehouse of force in nature for itself in the course of explaining what something is.674 That is not to say that Helmholtz approved of romantic and idealistic explanations of nature. Quite to the contrary, he sought to reduce “life” to matter in motion. However, this life-long task taught him, as it did Socrates according to the biography in the *Phaedo*, the limits of science. Consequently, he did not abandon the concept of life and instead attempted to explain it in terms of dynamic laws of causation in biology, chemistry and sense perception. Through these sciences thinking is related back to the principle of life or eternal heat (ether) in nature as “Seen through the spectacles of energetic and thermodynamics,”675 although not through the latter alone. Helmholtz writes in “On the Physiological Causes of Harmony” (1863):

Mathematics and music! The most glaring possible opposites of human thought! And yet connected, mutually sustained! It is as if they would demonstrate the hidden consensus of all actions of our mind . . . it is an acknowledged fact that the numbers of the vibrations of concordant tones bear to each other ratios expressible by small whole numbers. But why? What have the ratios of small whole numbers to do with concord? This is an old riddle [*eine alte Räthselfrage*], propounded by Pythagoras,

673 Schiemann, *Hermann von Helmholtz’s Mechanism*, 143.
674 For a list of duality of principles in Helmholtz’s philosophy of nature see ibid., 152-153.
675 Ibid., 155.
and hitherto unsolved. Let us see whether the means at the command of modern science will furnish the answer.676

Helmholtz retained the ancient belief in an ordered cosmos whose heat as in self-movement could be explained mechanistically. He thus affirms continuity of thought about the principle of life from ancient times to the present. He argued that fire, earth, air and water were a non-experimental insight by the Greeks that was confirmed by findings in chemistry about indestructible and inalterable elements.677 These discrepancies in his orientation suggest that while in his public speeches he thus promotes progress in science and technology, and hoped that the energy of nature could be harnessed for industrial purposes, his aesthetic tastes were like those of Gadamer romantic. Helmholtz preferred the music of Beethoven and Mozart to the romantic music of his own time. His tastes in architecture were neo-classical, e.g., reflected in his home in Charlottenburg, the construction of the Berlin Physikalisches Institut and the Physikalisches-Technische Reishsanstalt.678 As for Gadamer, he loved the romantics because they were first modern readers of the pre-Socratics,679 and treated Plato as a poet among others in antiquity.680 Both Helmholtz and Gadamer were educated in the romantic Geisteswissenschaft tradition and expressed esteem for order, harmony, simplicity, and regularity.681 What Gadamer, therefore, saw in the thought and life of classical literature, he may have recognised in Helmholtz’s physics, and the reverse: Helmholtz may have recognized in classical thought principles he was investigating in the physiology of hearing and harmony.

3.2 Gadamer and Cognitive Science

Theoretical linguistics is about how language is represented in the mind. This is the assumption that has driven research in Heideggerian cognitive science and also hampered it in a way that Gadamer’s linguistic turn ameliorates. To back up slightly, GOFAI (Good Old Fashioned Artificial Intelligence) modeled cognition on the Cartesian subject-object


678 Hatfield, “Helmholtz and Classicism,” 554.


681 I am consulting Hatfield’s description of Helmholtz’s taste in science and art in “Helmholtz and Classicism,” 556.
dichotomy. This led to the development of an inner representational system for the external world in the mind that could not cope with the variable contexts in that world. Julian Kiverstein summarizes Dreyfus’ response to the dilemma:

Dreyfus argued that no computer that works in this way is likely to be capable of flexible and adaptive responses to the open-ended variety of situations we deal with as humans. The computer must work out which of the many rules and facts it knows are of relevance to its current situation. The problem is multiplied once we build in the fact that the world is constantly changing in all sorts of unexpected ways.

Building in more rules to match with representations of the external world proved to be futile (this being the “frame problem”) because it could not address the issues pointed out by Dreyfus; skills are practical, not propositional, and “involvement networks” are holistic-context dependent and neither discrete nor context independent. The idea of the mind being disembodied was not functional because it took no account of the way in which we are already, and prior to applying rules, involved in the equipment of the world for one end or another. An alternative model of the mind came to the fore, as Kiverstein points out, by way of Michael Wheeler. As reported by Kiverstein, Wheeler explains that the mind-in-the-world is non-representational on the basis of “situated special purpose adaptive couplings.” They are formed in the course of being practically engaged with things and are subsequently triggered by the environment. The brain is thereby implicated in the activities of the body. However, Dreyfus rightly counters that Wheeler’s “skillful coping” or “problem solving” although context specific, presupposes being-in-the-world and hence, represents a level of analysis that never penetrates beyond beings as they are given to us. Stated otherwise, adaptive couplings are “of the world itself,” and thus derived from a specific way of existing that Wheeler does not access or explain. Dreyfus concludes, “Heidegger, indeed, claims that that skillful coping is basic, but he is also clear that, all coping takes place on the background coping he calls being-in-the-world that doesn’t involve any form of representation at all.” Coping, problem-solving is derived from a prior way of being-in-the-world that Wheeler’s “adaptive couplings” are not fit to explain.

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684 Ibid., 18.
686 Ibid., 74.
In order to allow for adaptations without pre-programming a new set of rules for every possible scenario, Dreyfus argues that prior to an inner representational system there must be a prior network or map on the basis of which to develop the couplings argued for by Wheeler. This is a Heideggerian insight into the nature of human existence that Dreyfus believes mirror neurons explain. Since neurons that fire together wire together (Hebb’s rule) they explain how we respond to new situations. He extended the same principle to explain how it is that when we are immersed in a situation or coping it has a “way of directly drawing from one a response that is neither caused like a reflex, nor done for a reason,” i.e., what Heidegger calls a “solicitation to act.”\(^\text{687}\) We react based on an acquired response-mechanism. In this case, Heidegger brings to the attention of cognitive scientists the importance of taking into account a prior understanding in the mind when explaining how we respond to novel and unforeseen events. Mirror neurons fit the bill because they are non-representational and thereby circumvent the problem of disconnecting the mind from the world created by representations (of the world in the mind).

However, the neurodynamic model is also questioned by Dreyfus. It falls short by not taking into account “a model of our particular way of being embedded and embodied such that what we experience is significant for us in the particular way that it is. That is, we would have to include in our program a model of a body very much like ours with our needs, desires, pleasures, pains, ways of moving, cultural background, etc.”\(^\text{688}\) The mirror neuron hypothesis does not explain the particular meaning of experiences for individuals. He suggests that they are determined by feelings and history. However, are not feelings or rather state of mind (mood) and concepts, including their history, precisely the twin bio-physiological and cultural characteristics of language? If so, then it is not language itself and in particular the living language within an intersubjective context, as argued for by Gadamer, that overcomes the problem of relating the mind to both the world (formed in language) and nature (to which we are connected through the nervous apparatus)? If language is ultimately conversation that anticipates conversation with others,\(^\text{689}\) then linguistics ought to include a study of the living voice since that is what is “represented” in the mind.

\(^{687}\) Ibid., 71.
\(^{688}\) Ibid., 96-97.
\(^{689}\) “To what extent does language perfect thought?” Gadamer answers, “Plato was, I believe, quite correct to call the essence of thought the interior dialogue of the soul with itself . . ., which is always simultaneously the anticipation of conversation with others and the introduction of others into conversation with ourselves—that the world begins to open up and achieve order in all the domains of experience.” TM, 547.
Shoji Nagataki anticipates this move. He holds that mirror neurons have an ambiguous relation to the body and the body-in-the-world. In keeping with the demands of a body and not solely understanding being-in-the-world, he proposes that the body “gives sense to the world.” The sense to which he is referring is the recognition of other bodies (“joint attention” or awareness that other bodies have the same structure and intention as mine). According to him, this realization can be extended into language. Language is potentially an extension of the body’s intentionality in the sense of providing the mind with non-representational messages for higher order representational functions. With this argument Nagataki takes a significant step toward an embodied cognitive science in which Gadamer builds on Heidegger’s notion of mitsein. The inter-relationality provided by “joint attention” is effectively the social intelligence of “being-with-one-another.” However, Nagataki’s idea is also undeveloped. He does not take into account sound, tone or the embodied sense perception that relates bodies to one another. Hence, Gadamer’s words and the insights of philosophers into his way of thinking are recounted here in order to support what has been concluded about tact or aesthetic intuition via Helmholtz.

Given Gadamer’s esteem for the rhythm of the Greek language and related conviction that sound and sense are intimately related, it is not surprising to find him drawing conclusions about what an author means on the basis of tonal affinities and parallel structures. He points out that Baumgarten “once defined aesthetics as the ars pulchre cogitandi or the ‘art of thinking beautifully.’” He reasons that the expression ars pulchre cogitandi has been formed on analogy to the ars bene dicendi. We can understand what thinking is on the basis of speaking. The conclusion that thinking is the “art of speaking well” is reached by him on account of having a “sensitive ear” for the sensitive mean.” The “sensitive mean” is “the exactness of the harmonious relationships [that] are part of the oldest essence of the beautiful.” To clarify what he means by the “sensitive mean,” he asks us to

691 Ibid., 231.
695 TM, 476.
“think of the sensitivity of the harmonies of sound from which music is constructed,” and describes his own thinking in just those terms. Risser cites the following passage from a 1986 interview with Gadamer; “And so I developed a style of my own by speaking freely (not reading to an audience) and teaching this way. I learned to develop the melody of my own thoughts and although I do not think I am a bad writer, there always is the living voice behind the writing.” Risser draws one conclusion from these words: hermeneutics is a “hermeneutics of the voice.” He thus passes over aspects of the passage that resonate with his own insights about the inner word being expressed in song in *Hermeneutics and the Voice of the Other*. Gadamer says that by speaking freely, his thoughts became melodious. Melodious thoughts have, like Helmholtz’s notion of sensory memory, an affinity for one another—concepts generate other concepts when thinking is rhythmically attuned to the moving intervallic structure of musi-language. Gadamer may, therefore, have heard or believed he heard that force in the rhythm of the Greek language. Jacob Klein points out that in Plato’s *Meno*, that consonance means true and that dissonance means false (*Meno* 100a3-7). Kennith Dorter reminds the reader that consonance is used in the *Phaedo* to describe the relation of a hypothesis with its results (*Phaedo* 92c3.5 and 100a5; 101d5). The same term was used to describe the inner relations of an explanation (or the whole of meaning) as was used to describe the steps in a deductive argument. Gasché detected this in Heidegger’s notion of accord (*Stimmung*) and it applies to Gadamer no less although with the added impetus of a physical cause. P. Christopher Smith explains on behalf of Gadamer, “In “Amicus Plato Magis Amica Veritas” Gadamer points out that Plato translates the concept of numerical harmony, consonance and dissonance, into the theory of the *koinia* or blending of the ideas, i.e., of their compatibility with each other or incompatibility, respectively.” By bringing numerical harmony back into the equation on behalf of Gadamer, Smith is inadvertently correcting our tendency to assume that the said consonance is flowery speech imbued with emotion and feeling. Prior to tonality is timing without which there is no tonal affinity. Rhythm or counting is that which enables ideas to generate one another, or at least that is what Gadamer’s writing suggests.

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696 Ibid.
698 Ibid., 172.
700 See for example his discussion pages 99-100, 118-120 in Kenneth Dorter, *Plato’s Phaedo: An Interpretation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).
John Arthos says of *Truth and Method* Part III, “Whatever direction Gadamer goes in, it is always tracking with a sympathetic resonance that picks up the harmonics of the tradition, in the same way that the notes of a stringed instrument in its lowest registers contain all of the overtones.”

Eberhard describes speculation in the same way: “It is like the sympathetic sounds that fill a string instrument when the playing of one string causes all the others to vibrate along.” Perhaps this is what Gadamer recognized in Hegel’s speculative thought—the inner logic of his own thinking. He writes, “Hegel compares it [the counterthrust of the subject upon the predicate] to the rhythm that follows from the two elements of meter and accent, and produces the same floating harmony.”

The speculative element of thought when thought grammatically by Hegel does not forget the pre-linguistic dimensions of the living voice—the conditions that make relating concepts to one another possible for Hegel are still of the spoken language for Gadamer; meter and then accent. He conveys this by way of Plato, writing, “He said that dialectic must always become dialogue again, and thinking must be preserved in the way we are ‘with each other’ in conversation.” How are we “with each other” in conversation? That would be the way he finds confirmed by Plato in what Gadamer claims is the single most important passage in the *Statesman* 286: “where we have such solidarity with one another that our concern is solely with ‘the thing itself’, i.e., with that which is really good.” And what is really good? The power that unites knower with known, makes it possible to know, brings life and nourishes everything as does the sun for a garden, i.e., the idea of the good for a people whose language has not been made impure by the economy of style typical of the English who in contrast to the Germans have little to no reverence for the Greeks. Referring to the song of Plato’s *Republic* Gadamer writes, “In essence, then, the song of praise in the form of poetic play is shared language, the language of our common concern.” For Gadamer, song is not a separate order of the soul, and it is certainly not an expression of the emotions. Instead, it

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704 TM, 462.
706 Ibid., 115.
707 Gadamer, “Plato and the Poets,” 66. Quoting from Risser’s essay “In the Shadow of Hegel”, Gadamer states, “every word breaks forth as if from a center and . . . causes the whole of language to which it belongs to resonate . . . Thus every word, as the event of a moment, carries with it the unsaid to which it is related by responding and summoning.” Every word breaks forth (as an event of the moment) when it resonates with the whole of language in a dialogue (i.e., the inner relations between tones heard all at once). Risser, “In the Shadow of Hegel”, 93. See also Ihde, “Studies in Phenomenology of Sound,” 237.
flows out of that which binds (he says) people to one another and thus is song (praise) of all that makes everyone’s obligation to one another clear.

For Gadamer, the Good seen is as inextricable from the Beautiful (heard) as is an object of value that emanates from the elements whose relation to one another is proportionate. Consider how he uses the term *gehören* to establish layers of “shining in” in relation to *eikos*, the tradition of rhetoric, pietistic *illuminatio* and illumination: “Es ist rhetorische Tradition, der der Begriff des Einleuchtens angehört. Das *eikos*, das verisimile, das Wahr-Scheinliche, das Einleuchtende gehören in enie Reihe, die dem Wahren und Gewissen des Bewiesenen und Gewußten gegenüber ihre eigene Berechtigung verteidigt.”

To the rhetorical tradition (of the spoken language) and thus of cadence and intonational phrases belongs clarity. That is to say, the sound of harmony belongs to the light of the Good insofar as the underlying mathematical order or unity of words is harkened, i.e., the intelligible in the sensible. Then, what is said stands for itself, self-presentation (*Berechtigung*)—a turn of phrase Gadamer uses for the event of Being. He continues and states emphatically, “Ich erinnere daran, daß wir dem sensus communis eine besondere Bedeutungen zuerkannt haben. Dadeben mage in mystich-pietistischer Klang von illuminatio, Erleuchtung her auf das Einleuchten herüberwirken (ein Klang) der ja auch im sensus communis, z.B. bei Oetinger, zu hören war.”

What is heard belongs to what is manifest to sight. The sound of illumination (*Erleuchtung*) sensed in the *sensus communis* is a pure tone (*Klang*). Now it is possible to stand back and acknowledge the mechanical forces at play that deflate the experience into a series of events about which we are conscious and can control, but by inverting the standard relation of vision to hearing Gadamer has made touch the criterion of truth. The “*Sinn der Sein*”, which in English is translated as the elusive meaning of Being must be understood to be sensed (*Sinn*) not as in touched, but rather felt by the sensitive ear in a dialogue, or as he says “*der empfindlichkeit der Tonharmonien*.”

Tonal affinity of the song sung touches everyone, erases identity and is for that reason beautiful. Could it also be required to make truth claims true?

Consider Risser’s quoting Gadamer and commenting: “When the text speaks what comes forth is the word in its ‘radiant actuality as harmonious sound (*erscheinenden Klangwirklichkeit*)’. The appearing word is thus a sonorous word (*Wortes in seine

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708 WM, 460; TM, 479.
709 Ibid.
710 Ibid., 457; TM, 476.
Klanglichkeit), which amounts to the shining forth of the beautiful in language.\(^7\)\(^1\) With these sorts of resonances among the words,\(^7\)\(^2\) Gadamer is doing his utmost to leap beyond the letter of the word and address the reader (at least the reader who belongs to his language). He speaks of the beautiful as Maßhaftigkeit and Tonharmonien, i.e., mathematical, architectural, geometric figurative measure seen and internally related tones heard. Further to the point, he uses zugehörigen to establish that the light of the Good seen belongs to the harmoniousness of beings heard when he writes, “Wir haben gesehen, daß die Ungreifbarkeit des Guten im Schönen, d.h. in der Maßhaftigkeit des Seienden und der ihr zugehörrigen Offenbarkeit (aletheia) insofern eine Entsprechung findet, als auch ihm enie letzte Überschwenglichkeit zukommt.”\(^7\)\(^3\) Although the Good is beyond beings (Republic 509b9) it belongs to (i.e., its pure numerical relations are heard within) the working harmony of beings and hence, they shine for us. The Good seen and the beautiful heard are verisimilar, eikos, resemble one another’s structure. It is thus not enough to say that what makes the music of language tick is tonal resonance; the latter must be understood in terms of a mathematical relation of symmetry, balance and proportion discernable to the eyes that use the ears to see.\(^7\)\(^4\) This is a capacity Gadamer thought was unique to the written-audible words of Friedrich Hölderlin. In “On the Process of the Poetic Mind” to which Gadamer refers the reader,\(^7\)\(^5\) Hölderlin begins by stating that the poet who has mastered the mind has “assimilated the common soul that is shared by all and is individual to everyone . . . .” and writes of its movement being a “harmonic interchange and advance in which the mind is inclined to reproduce itself in itself and in others.”\(^7\)\(^6\) A refrain throughout his description of the movements of the mind is “harmonic interchange”, “interchanging parts”,\(^7\)\(^7\) and

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\(^7\)\(^1\) Risser, The Life of Understanding, 105.

\(^7\)\(^2\) This is comparable to Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) whose Course in General Linguistics considers language to be “a thoroughly interdependent matrix, a webwork wherein each term has meaning only by virtue of its relation to other terms within the sound system.” The meaning of “red” is determined by its relation to other like-sounding terms in a linguistic situation. From David Abram, The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 82-83.

\(^7\)\(^3\) WM, 455-456; TM, 475.

\(^7\)\(^4\) The “ideal type” is not an idea or concept, but rather a schema or proportional relation between elements. The latter was synonymous for the ancient Greeks with eidos. Robert S. Brumbaugh, The Philosophers of Greece (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 31.


\(^7\)\(^7\) Ibid., 219.
“harmonic opposite.” The romantic belief that poetry was universal because it could unite all other arts may have been based on the idea that poetry had privileged access to nature’s dynamic order or the self-moving soul as Gadamer’s Plato might put it.

Gadamer’s explication of insight in Plato’s 7th Letter mirrors the same mathematical structure as he finds in Hölderlin’s poems. He points out that there are four ways in which a thing being discussed “may be said to be present” for Plato; namely, explanation, illustration and knowledge. Together they produce the 4th in the series, insight itself, which is identical to the 3rd way (knowledge). The 3rd is a 4th but they are bound by the tonic (name or first element) and together with the partial tones (explanation and insight) form an octave. The intervallic relations of ideas for Gadamer constitute an insight.

Closest to the thing itself is obviously the moment of insight in which suddenly everything which contributes to the intelligibility of the internal relationship of the thing to itself is present to me all at once: the steps of the proof, the auxiliary construct, which was so hard to find, and its function in the proof, and so forth. More than anything else, this evidentness, which makes one what to say “I’ve got it!,” contains the intrinsic relationship of the mathematical structure as such.

There is an internal relationship between how we come to know something and what it is that Gadamer likens to a mathematical structure that he frequently says is exemplified by a melody or music; for instance, when he cites Wilhem Dilthey and explains that Gebilde (shape, form, structure) is for him without a theory of representation and instead, consists “of a concentration into a middle point” from which structure arises (from within the work). Citing Dilthey and melody on another occasion he then explains:

Like an organism, the artwork forms a well-structured matrix of effects, and thus, as long as we remain in the realm of the aesthetic, there can obviously be no question of the artwork having a causal explanation; rather, its explanation must be based on such concepts as harmony and interaction, thus it must be based on structure.

Gadamer is tapping into the resonant interval that binds elements together and that parallels mechanical notions of causation. He is seeing the relations as affinities that are evoked by the

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718 Ibid., 222-223, 224.
elements in a work of art. Heidegger reasons in the same way. He enumerates four ways of analyzing the question “What is called thinking?” that he specifies are coordinate with “the four means of communicating the thing.” Assuming Heidegger, like Gadamer is thinking of Plato’s Excursus to the 7th Letter, he might well be identifying the four ways of defining, or questioning with the four-fold intervallic structure of music that Helmholtz thought was universal. Heidegger writes, “Simplicity introduces measure and structure and also initial power and endurance, into the four modes in which the question may be asked.”722 The simplicity to which he is referring that introduces measure (or internal relations) into the four modes he says is the summons that stems from “oneness and simplicity,”723 i.e., the call of the inner word.

The upshot is that voices that follow the universal structure of language and music buried in Pythagorean ratios, exposed in 17th century harmonies galvanise into a single body of the word (or the word made flesh). In “The Universal Aspect of Hermeneutics” Gadamer explains that language is the middle (Mitte) between I and the world.724 In other words, my understanding of the world is mediated by language and hence, knowledge of beings in the world involves interpretation; however, assuming my capacity for tact improves over the course of time, then an understanding of the decisive middle ground that mediates between a given interpretation and the object itself is sharpened and my ability to utter the sounds that makes a truth claim true improves or becomes pure. Stated otherwise, the world to which we belong is a summons heard in the between zone: heard without mediation and therefore, immediately. Mitte is heard in the immediacy of unmittelbarkeit, and Mitteilung, as Risser explains means, “to share and take part in the sense that what is shared does not become less but perhaps more.”725 A communication says more because it means more than what can be said. But there is another angle on this. In his analysis of Mitteilung (communication), Heidegger writes, “That which is ‘shared’ is our Being towards what has been pointed out—a

722 Heidegger, What is Called Thinking? 132. The four ways of analyzing the question “What is Called Thinking?” that he specifies are coordinate with “the four means of communicating the thing” (as Gadamer states it) in the excursus to Plato’s Seventh Letter. Compare What is Called Thinking? (113-122) with Gadamer’s “Dialectic and Sophism in Plato’s Seventh Letter,” (100). The fourth step is the most important for both of them. For Heidegger it is the summons that stems from “oneness and simplicity” and for Gadamer, insight, the meaning of Being for Plato (der Sinn von Sein) that leads Plato to the One and the Two.
723 Heidegger, What is Called Thinking? 122.
724 “Daß die Sprache ein Mitte in der sich Ich und Welt zusammenschließen, oder besser: in ihren ursprünglichen Zusammengehörigkeit darstellen.” WM, 449; TM, 469.
725 Risser, Life of Understanding, 53-54. He is referring to Gadamer in “Culture and Word.”
Being in which we see it in common.”

I understand the Being we have in common to be *miteinander* or being-with (*mitsein*). What is shared belongs to everyone when I belong to it. The middle of language is a medium for understanding that expands and grows to the extent that more people are alert and attentive to it.

### 3.3 Life in Mind

In *Mind in Life* Thompson argues that the “core set of formal or organizational properties” of the mind are “an enriched version of those fundamental to life.” The unit of life he argues is fundamental and (both logically and empirically) prior to two other versions of life is autopoeisis. The first version he says is the genetic-reproductive approach to life. According to it, life is said to consist of the reproduction of an organism over the course of time during which “novel variations within a population as a result of various evolutionary factors” arise. The other approach to characterizing life includes the former however, within a more ecological framework. According to this perspective, which he associates with “niche-construction,” life involves “integration” between an organism and its environment.

Thompson’s objection to both is that they take for granted or else presuppose “the individual characterization of life” and in what way life is a living as opposed to a non-living system. He argues that the living system that individuates organisms is a self-organizing system. He proposes to explain the system as it appears in the organization and properties of a cell because it is held to be the most basic “autopoietic” organization/form of life, and argues that that organization is characteristic of the human mind. This is why he believes that the mind is in “life.”

Overall, there are two problems with Thompson’s approach to life. One, he argues that life is known primarily in the first-person perspective. Two, he argues for continuity between simple organisms and human cognition. The first problem leads him into the conundrum of solipsism, which he unsuccessfully tries to solve in the last chapter of *Mind in Life*. That final chapter is critically examined in chapter six. The other problem is discussed here. On account of stressing continuity between human cognition and biological structures he overlooks the source of discontinuity between humans and animal; namely, language and therefore misses the intermediary zone between them from out of which to impart life, as in

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726 BT, 197; SZ, 155.
728 Ibid., 95-96.
729 Ibid., 99.
meaning/order/unity to things. It is a space open uniquely to humans since, as Heidegger says, human are the only beings that create meaning yet it is, as indicated, granted to them to the degree to which they are able to access animal consciousness. Stated otherwise, from Gadamer and Heidegger’s perspective the realm of rhythmic vibratory resonance between *aion zoon* (that Heidegger calls “poverty of the animal world”) and *bios* (that Heidegger calls human “world-formation” in language) consists not of boredom, as Giorgio Agamben argues is the case for Heidegger, and instead, of play. The potential for being-with-one-another opened up for Gadamer by language brings life in the sense of renewed meaning to what is always already there in the world when humans become akin to animals, i.e., when “being-with-one-another” and thus “being-as-a-whole” are revealed to them, as Lammi argues by analogy, in a Greek cult experience of the divine. The consequence of not acknowledging this distinction between symbolic representational systems and non-symbolic pre-discursive proto-musi-language associated with our species-being is that the space between them, and the medium within that space that imparts life to thought is overlooked. In its stead stands a theory for ontological continuity between the human mind and biological structures argued for by Thompson.

Having indicated in nuce where Thompson’s theory about life falters, I backtrack and explain how Gadamer and Heidegger redirect phenomenology toward the path of recollecting the distinctly different ontological dimension overlooked by Thompson. In the course of doing so and despite not taking as intense an interest in natural science as Heidegger, Gadamer’s capacity to build upon while also correcting his position is explicated.

Gadamer’s explication of *Bildung* is inspired by a view of nature that he attributes to the Greeks and is strikingly similar to the idea of autopoeisis Thompson uses to bring the mind to life (or that he believes is characteristic of every organism). Gadamer alerts the reader to a passage in the *Charmides* where Plato’s Socrates specifies that temperance is the science of self-movement (*dunamis*). *Dunamis* or potential is a term for biological processes that for Plato, as Gadamer sees it, accounts for the tuning of the soul with itself, and resurfaces in Gadamer’s concept of *Bildung* (thus forging a link between the Greeks and the 18th century). He says that *Bildung* is “the properly human way of

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732 On the soul as a composite of attunements see Plato, *Phaedo*, 93a-94c.
developing one’s natural talents and capacities;” and resembles *physis* because it has no goals outside itself. In general, he re-attaches the term *Bildung* to the “idea of ‘natural form’—which refers to external appearance (the shape of the limbs, the well-formed figure) and in general to the shapes created by nature (e.g., a mountain formation—*Gebirgsbildung*).” This is evidence of him interpreting human *Dasein* as he calls it from the side of nature, or for Thompson, from the side of the living body and interfaces with the conclusions reached earlier about Helmholtz’s approach to sense perception (it is corrected by attunement to nerve energies of physiological processes). A well-formed person is analogous to a well-formed organism and both depend on the realization of “capacities.” Heidegger is more explicit about the latter in a natural environment than Gadamer who transposes his ideas into a theory about the formation of the self and understanding.

In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1929-1930) Heidegger explains how capacity (*Fähigkeiten*) functions in a living organism as follows:

The organism does not have capacities, i.e., it is not an organism which is then additionally supplied with organs. Rather, to say that ‘the animal is organized’ means that the animal is *rendered capable* [*befähigt*]. Being organized means *being capable*. And that implies that the animal’s being is potentiality, namely, the potentiality to articulate itself into capacities, i.e., into those instinctual and subservient ways of remaining proper to itself. These capacities in turn possess the ability of allowing certain organs to arise from them. *This capability articulating itself into capacities creating organs characterizes the organism as such.*

Heidegger eschews defining an organism in terms of pre-given attributes and thinks of it instead in terms of its unfolding temporal constitution. As Miguel de Beistegui points out, an organism is best described on the basis of an open capacity for change, which is to say, an

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733 TM, xii.
734 Ibid., 10.
735 Ibid., 9.
738 In contrast to the Darwininan (and Heidegger mentions Herbert Spencer as well) position that selection and adaptation are “the essential traits of evolution,” Heidegger argues that these concepts are derivative from an “organism-in-an-environment.” The said traits only apply when the behavior of a creature is interpreted independently of the world that captivates it. When thus understood in its context, traits such as adaptation, reproduction and selection are ways of interacting and ultimately promoting the life of the organism within the limits of its capacities for transformation. I am paraphrasing Beistegui, *Thinking with Heidegger*, 115-116.
ability to adapt, mutate and evolve. However, the capacity does not belong to the organism until there is an environmental trigger, e.g., a challenge. When the capacity is thereby activated in the interplay between the organism and the environment, then it becomes a capability characteristic of the organism, or simply an organ. Just as *dunamis* of the soul binds its tones into one harmonious attunement (explicated above by Gadamer, but already espoused by Plato’s Socrates), so too do capacities that have become capabilities account for the integrity or internal unity of an organism-in-its-environment. The strength of the analogy between virtue and a thriving organism depends on the power to bind being common to both human and non-human organisms yet they are also very different.

Animals are not alienated from their environment because they do not have a capacity for symbolic language (which originates in the temporal displacement of thought from a situation). However, humans have that very capacity and are, therefore, estranged from the world they make in language. This estrangement is nevertheless positive insofar as it invites humans to transpose themselves into that which they lack and about which they are reminded by animals—but which is impossible to achieve and hence, the fecundity of the resonant interval between them. Brett Buchannan’s findings in the work of Jacob von Uexküll anticipate what is being argued for here about the music of language. This pertains to why

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739 Ibid.
740 This distinction by Heidegger is comparable to Thompson’s distinguishing atemporal properties (or for Heidegger capability) from emergent autopoeitic processes that realise, instantiate or exemplify properties (what Heidegger calls capacity). *Mind in Life*, 418.
741 Which we find in Plato’s *Phaedo* where Socrates proposes that the attunement of the soul existed before the elements of which it is composed (92 b-94c). It is this attunement of the soul that is recollected.
743 Buchanan poses a question by Uexküll and resorts to Merleau-Ponty for a reply that points back to Uexküll. Buchanan asks, “How then does Uexküll understand this production of *Umwelt*?” He says that the answer “directs us toward the relational, dynamic, and the adhesion of the multiple, within and between animals and their environment.” The production of a work for animals and for us insofar as we “participate” in nature depends on entering into their relational dynamic in the “between” that combines or unites an organism with its environment. Buchanan quotes Merleau-Ponty and says that it is the “unfurling of an *Umwelt* as a melody that sings itself.” Brett Buchanan, *Onto-Ethologies: The Animal Environments of Uexküll, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 136. The melody is in the middle voice. It “sings us as much as we sing it.” The boundary between self and world is erased through what Gadamer would recognize as play, Walter Lammi on his behalf a Greek cult experience of the divine, or experience of “being-as-a-whole,” that hearkens back to Uexküll. Buchanan explains that Uexküll incorporates two analogies in order to represent the life of an organism. The first is a bubble, which “captures an organism’s *Umwelt* by circling it within a defined parameter,” and the other has an analogy to music. It “extends outward by demonstrating how each organism enters into relationship with particular aspects of its surroundings” (ibid., 25). Thompson’s definition of autopoeisis being the interplay of boundary and interdependency echoes Uexküll, but there is an important difference. Whereas Thompson emphasizes intentional drive and the emotions in his interpretation of capacity that refer back to the self opening itself to new possibilities, Uexküll thinks of the organism in a mathematical-musical schema. The two ways of existing mentioned earlier, according to
the doctrine of recollection that Gadamer draws from in the Pythagorean-Plato is crucial to understanding one another in language. We must transpose ourselves into and belong to the cosmos or universe in order to build a world in language, which he argues for in Über das Hören (1998):

Aristoteles hat den Vorrang des Sehens darin gesehen, daß es die meisten Unberschiede sichtbar macht, nämlich das Ganze der sichtbaren Welt. Aber Aristoteles hat an anderer Stelle hervorgehoben, wer höre, höre damit noch etwas mehr, nämlich auch das Unsichtbare und alles, was man denken kann—weil es die Spricht gibt. Das ist nicht nur die Welt, was man sehen kann, es ist das Universum, was man zu verstehen such, und auf dem Hintergrund dieses Gegensatzes beginne ich meine Darlegungen, indem ich das Gegenüber von Okularität und Stime herauszuarbeiten suche. . .

Gadamer affirms a contrast between the visibly distinct worlds and non-visible, i.e., auditory universe. He is more explicit about the distinction in Truth and Method. He explains there that whereas seeing articulates something as something, namely a representation within a defined sphere that is rendered objectively present, hearing enters into “a kind of auditory mathematics where there is no content with an objective meaning that we can discern; understanding it nevertheless involves entering into a realm with what is meaningful.” Stated otherwise, the world is spatial, and the universe is acoustic; the world is subject to

Buchanan, interface with one another and therein lies the harmony of nature “composed of different melodic and symphonic parts” expressed by Uexküll in a “theory of the music of life” that Buchanan analyses into five interconnected segments (Chime and/or rhythm of cells, melody of organs, symphony of the organism, harmony of organisms, and composition of nature, ibid., 26-27. Buchanan reports that the laws of mechanics are closer to the laws of musical harmonies, which I reckon might be in debt to Hermann von Helmholtz whom Uexküll read). The fact that the concept of life has a musical structure suggests that there are non-mechanical biochemical causes at play between an organism and its surroundings that account for the “self-regenerating processes” and “self-producing” boundaries Thompson identifies with autopoeisis. However, in contrast to him, the source of self-movement is not in the emotions or intentionality, but within the decentered space formed by the interaction of an organism with its environment.

My translation, “Aristotle took the precedence of seeing as a way of making visible all differences; namely, the entirety of the visible world. But Aristotle had proposed a different position for those who hear something more, namely the non-visible and everything that one can imagine because we have language. Here we refer not only to the visible world but to the universal we seek in understanding and it is in the context of this opposition that I begin my explication which seeks to surpass the domains of mere sight and voice.” Gadamer, “Über das Hören,” Hermeneutische Entwurfe. Vortrage und Aufsätze (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 48.

TM, 79. Gadamer’s example of articulating something as something is a “trick picture” in which we have to readjust our seeing to find the pattern, but this is distinct from his example of articulating meaning through hearing. He uses the example of “absolute music” where discerning the “pure” and “mathematical” movement depends on non-representational hearing within a space of time and not a defined horizon or bounded sphere. See also TM, 16.

Being bound up with the world (facticity), concern and the ready-to-hand for Heidegger is explained on the basis of manipulation and production of things and the break with this, or what he calls the present-at-hand, on the basis of theoretical seeing. Being-in-the-world is an essential structure of Dasein and Dasein’s “existential spatiality” is primary to its “Being-in.” I am consulting Being and Time, trans. John
laws of cause and effect, and the universe includes an emergent structure that “strives for balance,” i.e., forces of attraction we might enter into as we enter into the movements of absolute music whose intelligibility depends on the discernment of structures or patterns and not representations or content. As beings that similarly stand in both the world and the cosmos we exist in truth. World formation in the sense of self-organization of spatial relations between things is the unhidden dimension of *aletheia* and the non-visible universe concealed to sight because it is heard in the hidden dimension of *aletheia*.

It is within this tension laden relationship between contraries that unity is generated to form through language a structure similar to the one Thompson attributes to life. As long as we keep in mind that the principle responsible for the structure does not belong to the organism and must be harnessed instead from the intermediary realm of rhythm, then the charge of having attributed teleology or vitalism to an organism or animal is circumvented. Heidegger was not far from recognizing this.

If we hearken to nature’s rhythm and thereby think of ourselves as belonging to it, then the concept of life is brought back to science when we are brought back to life. This is not a step Heidegger takes. From Gadamer’s perspective, he could not relate life or self-movement in nature to human existence because he was pre-occupied with intentionality and worlding. This is part and parcel of Heidegger’s over-reliance on Aristotle and the projection of sight in his interpretation of human existence. The very trajectory established by a visual bias detracts from introspection which for Gadamer is always a matter of dispositional memory or recollection. Recollection does not apply to sensory memory or the past simpliciter. Instead, it refers to having a disposition toward not-having life, *phusis*, or “how-

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Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962), 82-84; and in the German *Sein und Zeit*, 56-57. Henceforth “BT” and “SZ.”

747 And since writing this it has come to my attention that Agamben bridges into the same conclusion by adhering though to the implication for truth (as disconcealment) of humans being captivated by the hidden non-truth (*lethe*) of animal environment. Agamben, *The Open*, 69. Despite centering his analysis on *Stimmung*, he does not reconfigure the relation of humans to animals in terms of language and instead remains within a Heideggerian frame of reference, e.g., “the clearing” (*Lichtung*).

748 Thompson taps into this idea when he concludes, “To make the link from matter to life and mind, from physics to biology and psychology, we need concepts such as organism and autopoiesis, but these concepts are available only to a bodily subject with firsthand experience of its own bodily life” (ibid., 164). My contention is that this merely entrenches the subject within its own experiences and overlooks that the basis for transcending human selfhood into animal and organismic existence to which we belong is a question of time.

being” that belongs to animals without effort. By failing to recognize that forgetting and therefore recollection is the way in which to access life and be “with” animals and their self-movement or autonomy, Heidegger never quite figures out how to relate human being-in-the-world to animal-being-in-an-environment in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. Therein he states, “transposing oneself into an animal is in principle a possibility for man.”\(^{750}\)

He puzzled over what that could mean when he reflects on how we “live” with a dog. He writes, “It eats with us—and yet; it does not really ‘eat.’ Nevertheless, it is with us! A going along with . . . a transposedness and yet not.”\(^{751}\) When he ponders how we exist alongside and with animals he thinks of a dog in relation to a table, chair and food, but not in relation to us or our voices.\(^{752}\) Transposing ourselves into “animals” is a question of being open to sounds although in a way that retains, unlike animals, the metric resonances between voices that turns them into something like songs. Far from being a mere private discourse, language is an avenue by which to enter into the world of animals.

### 4 Conclusion

Gadamer’s view of the inner word and how it functions in language is clarified by Helmholtz. Like him, Gadamer did not recognise an unbridgeable divide between the sciences and humanities. The dialectic of stance he finds operating in Plato’s philosophy in a double-account of an object of knowledge collapses oppositions and hence, deferring to the sciences to explain what he means by the inner word is perfectly acceptable to Gadamer. He makes forays into the sciences that bear upon the topic in any event. He refers to the world opened up by language as “a pre-linguistic experience of the world, as Habermas’ reference to Piaget’s research, reminds us. The language of gesture, facial expression, and movement binds us to each other.”\(^{753}\) Jean Piaget argued for a pre-linguistic world being a stage in our cognitive maturation. Gadamer was not likely terribly interested in cognitive science. In 1960 it was in its infancy, but he was nevertheless locating in psychology some of its central claims developed decades later in a theory about the mind’s evolution; namely, the idea of the mind retaining lowly origins from its past prefigured in research by Haeckel and the

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\(^{751}\) Ibid., 210.

\(^{752}\) Ibid.

\(^{753}\) Ibid., 551.
linguist August Schleicher. Gadamer’s example of a pre-linguistic world parallels what Merlin Donald in *The Origins of the Modern Mind* calls a mimetic memory in the modern mind. Helmhuth Plessner, whom Gadamer mentions, takes us out of the realm of psychology and into the interactivity of being-in-the-environment.

From Husserl and Scheler, Plessner adapted the idea of the intentionality of consciousness away from the need for a transcendental ego or apperception and instead grounds it in the behaviour (in the broadest sense of the term) of environmentally interactive organisms as a realizing of borders that represents the point where the impulses or growth of organisms meet with their environments, are realized in the act of self positioning.

Plessner was part of Gadamer’s intellectual repertoire. Intentionality is interactive in the sense of arising at the borders or points of impulse between organisms and their environment. Gadamer is cross-referencing what he finds in Plessner, Helmholtz and Höningswald—the realm of rhythm in the middle between self and world. This is surely the realm Heidegger overlooked in his unsuccessful endeavor to explain how we access nature or the poverty (our life) of the animal world in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. Heidegger had not the capacity for transposedness (*Versetstheit*) into the Other and hence, never lands upon what Gadamer found in the middle between extremes of human beings and nature. What is unconscious to most others we can learn by making a concerted effort to attend to the point at which the impulse of an organism (us) meets its environment, or the force field between them. Gadamer’s regard for Piaget and Plessner resonates with Helmholtz’s stand against Kant’s notion of a priori categories of space and time.

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754 They agreed that modern languages modified and retained elements of ancient languages and supported their thesis with ancient extant writings. Richards, *The Tragic Sense of Life*, 125; 255-261.
Part Two: Hermeneutics and Science: Dialogical Integration

Introduction

After having distinguished the metaphysical from the phenomenological manner of thinking in Gadamer scholarship over the last decade it was concluded in Part One, chapters three and four that the inner word has a phenomenological-ontological structure of “being-as-a-whole.” Walter Lammi distinguishes within the latter three strata to which the three aspects of a phenomenology of the inner voice were aligned; rhythm (cadence) to the body (*aion zoe*), tone (modulation) to mood (*bios*), harmony to a potentiality-to-be-one-another (or simply being-as-a-whole). The interpretive position from which to acquire knowledge about these features is medial. In contrast to the spectator’s perspective on the phenomenon of language, the action of the verb is known from the auditory position of the middle voice in a dialogical situation. This made it necessary to distinguish three sorts of auditory perception keyed to the three structures of existence; harkening to rhythm, hearing to tone and attentive listening to a rhythmic-tone composite or harmony. Chapter five explained how the dialectic of stance and inner word re-surface in Helmholtz’s thought, and explains why classical and modern physics do not contradict one another and are instead correlative.

In order for a truth claim to be true, authentic and genuine, speakers must be attuned to the rhythm in the voice of the conversation. According to Gadamer’s Pythagorean Plato, this synchronicity of rhythm is discerned by an act of recollection and refers to a prior sense of unity that the Pythagoreans called the kinship of all living things. This prior sense of unity of life and understanding is endangered by the tendency to separate thought from language. But it is not science simpliciter that alienates the subject from experience. On the contrary, science envelops alternative forms of perception. In the 19th century there emerged in Germany a criticism of Immanuel Kant’s belief that experience is structured by non-empirical a priori concepts. The impetus for the criticism was a nuanced understanding of perception urged by the Romantics. They challenged the horizontal-epistemic form of perception characteristic of the European Enlightenment. It conceives of the world in terms of Euclidean space and mechanical laws of causation. On account of the Romantics emphasizing the importance of thinking about experience from within experience, the auditory sort of perception was taken into account and non-Euclidean space, curved space, and theories about the conservation of energy (waves) that prefigure 20th century quantum mechanics began to surface. From the position of 19th century theories about the conservation
of energy the inner word represents a force of attraction that binds elements together and restores them to proportionate relations with one another. From Gadamer’s perspective, the physics of the *naturphilosophen* revives the classical idea of everything striving toward balance to which we are disposed by nature (*aion zoon*) and can hearken-recall in any number of experiences. But it is above all the sundering of thought from language that concerns Gadamer because it endangers the unity of understanding and life, i.e., the meaning of existence; a problem he recognized playing out in the questions and concerns of Simmias and Cebes in Plato’s *Phaedo*. Their questions and Socrates’s replies about the nature of the soul never abandon the cyclical movement of natural processes of the pre-Socratics that the early Heidegger discerned in Aristotle’s view of motion and *phusis*. Heidegger eventually abandoned the project to integrate the latter into his understanding of human existence in *Being and Time*. Gadamer did not and instead, made self-regulating motion central to understanding existence. For him, an ontology of life is prior to an ontology of *Dasein*, although not separate from it either.

The goal of Part Two is to account for the inner word with cognitive science and a theory about the evolution of language provided that both forms of perception, the horizontal-epistemic and hyperbolic-auditory-middle voice are taken into account. In so doing an explanation of the inner word will be consistent with what has been concluded about the dialectical conditions for truth. There are therefore two aspects to one and the same goal. The first is to prove that the inner word is a vestige of a pre-modern mimetic cognitive architecture in the modern mind that functions to sustain harmony of understanding. Our attunement to the inner word is a way of vicariously participating in, i.e., recollecting what we normally forget, a stage in our evolution when we were undifferentiated by “identities” and communicated with “musi-language.” The second aspect is a methodological constraint introduced by epistemology. Steven Mithen’s theory of the precursor to language is at times skewed by a spectator’s analysis of music (or just sound in general) that inclines him to reason that prosody is manipulative. Manipulation plays no role in Gadamer’s notion of the inner word. More importantly, it is out of sync with both Mithen’s own reasoning about the proto-language, e.g., mood and communal bonding, and the evolutionary psychology of Merlin Donald, which in fact, is consistent with a middle-voiced perspective on the phenomenon of language. In order to support this interpretation of the inner word it is necessary to outline the ambivalence in Mithen’s reasoning and thereby justify on
philosophical grounds, i.e., self-understanding, the middle-voiced account of the phenomenon in question.

Chapter six, “The Problem Renewed” re-asserts the challenge to hermeneutics in light of what has been concluded about the inner word being discernable in the middle voice and replies by arguing that unless a change in stance is specified the humanities and sciences cannot be in a balanced relation to one another. This point is made by critically examining the efforts of a range of scholarship; specifically, works by E.O. Wilson, E. Slingerland, O. Flanagan, C. Taylor, B. Bergen and E. Thompson, that proves to be inadequate relative to its own intentions. Chapter seven, “Gadamer, Mithen and Donald” deals with the obstacles to bringing Gadamer into dialogue with the evolution of language on the inner word; notably the opinion that proto-language is infantile and bears no relevance to understanding one another in language today. This position is refuted by distinguishing subject feelings from moods, or states of mind that do not vary when novel things appear and by examining how cognitive scientists think about the nature of language, often in the middle voice which refers to the pre-modern experience allegedly destroyed by modern science and that harkens to an early hominid mode of cognition. Chapter eight, “The Inner voice and Non-Manipulative Hmmmm” explains what the inner word is and how it functions in language on the basis of contemporary science that is coordinate with the phenomenological account in Part One.
Chapter Six: The Problem Renewed

1 Introduction
The Section “Middle Voice Mysticism” renews the critique presented in Part One, chapter one that hermeneutics is irrelevant to epistemology yet at a higher level of reflection in light of what has been concluded thus far about achieving knowledge of the inner voice in the middle voice. The reply in “Questioning Consilience” consists of examining the extent to which the sciences can successfully bridge into the humanities. This is not a separate question from what the inner word is since it is precisely the inner word that mediates between the two departments of learning represented in a phenomenology of the senses by an auditory (experiential) and visual (spectator) stance toward beings. An examination of the attempts by E. O. Wilson and E. Slingerland (primarily) proves that the sciences cannot be a bridge unless they acknowledge the mode of cognition characteristic of the humanities. The upshot is that neither the humanities nor the sciences alone and independently of one another are capable of being a basis for integration. Gadamer’s position on the dialectical nature of thinking is vindicated. This was argued for in Part One, but his receptivity to scientific explanations on other than dialectical terms has not. “Gadamer and Science” therefore enumerates the reasons why Gadamer is amenable to a scientific explanation of experience, i.e., Mill’s Logic—a position I defend against detractors in both the humanities and the sciences. Having established that Gadamer’s hermeneutics wants to become scientific (in the same way that Gadamer says musicians want their art to be understood rationally) the last section, “Phenomenology and Cognitive Science” traces out the ways in which phenomenology and hermeneutics have already and might further contribute to cognitive science, e.g., the embodied mind, mind-in-the-environment and voice simulation hypotheses. This justifies undertaking a scientific explanation of the inner word in the next chapter that is informed by the middle voice humanities perspective.

2 Middle Voice Mysticism
The problem with a middle-voiced location from which to glean information about the event (or happening) of the embodied and phenomenological inner word, is that it would seem to entail inexorable slippage into the realm of the subject’s subjectivity where virtually anything can qualify as being true because it cannot be inter-subjectively tested or verified. This is certainly what Slingerland claims. He quotes Gadamer:
We never find ourselves as consciousness over against the world and, as it were, grasp after a tool of understanding in a wordless 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.\textsuperscript{758}

If thinking is not housed in consciousness independently of whatever happens to be happening, and is instead always encompassed by language, then there is no way out of the linguistic box except through religious ecstasy, which is what Slingerland says occurs in both “Gadamerian play (Spiel) and in the answer to the Heideggerian ‘call’ (Ruf) of Being.”\textsuperscript{759}

Slingerland’s argument is logical. If we cannot think independently of language and instead only with our own language, then the only way out of a private language toward a common understanding is mysticism (or telepathy). But it is not clear that Slingerland’s interpretation of Gadamer’s words is correct. In the passage above Gadamer is not making statements about the idea of language. He is not making a deductive argument whose premises are implicated in the conclusion. On the contrary, he is describing the phenomenon of language and what happens when knowledge is sought through it. This is why Gadamer opens the passage above with the statement, “We never find ourselves as consciousness over against the world and, as it were, grasp after a tool of understanding in a wordless condition.” Gadamer is pointing out that we cannot objectify language anymore than we can objectify ourselves because we think with language. Slingerland’s claim that Gadamer must resort to mysticism in order to transcend language entails the belief from Gadamer’s point of view that the mind is independent of the body. But the mind being independent of the body is a folk-intuition that Slingerland does not believe is consistent with science. His argument therefore depends upon accepting premises about the nature of cognition that both he and Gadamer reject. The passage he quotes stands as a refutation of what he says about it.

Nevertheless, even if we grant that Gadamer is describing an “event” rather than making deductions from premisses, difficulties remain—he has not punched his way out of the subjectivist paper-bag of being encompassed by language. Richard Palmer explains how that may yet be possible:

In the development of a questioning position designed to move beyond the confines of the subject-object schema, Gadamer’s hermeneutics suggests a new kind of objectivity (\textit{Sachlichkeit}) grounded in the fact that what is disclosed constitutes not a


\textsuperscript{759} Ibid.
projection of subjectivity but something which acts on our understanding in presenting itself.\textsuperscript{760}

Hermeneutics aims to transcend the subjectivity of the subject. The act of transcendence does not consist of an intensification of light in which to expose and examine the microscopic inner workings of an organism. It does not consists of the related distancing of the subject from the object of knowledge through either Cartesian doubt or a bracketing of contingency and instead, a change of stance that both Gadamer and Heidegger call an open comportment (where one’s prejudices are put at risk). This auditory mode of perception, although involving participation, does not import into epistemology symbols and concepts of the emotions typical of a pre-scientific mentality.\textsuperscript{761} As argued for in Part One, the Romantic return to the integrity of experience as the locus from which to interpret truth claims does not acquiesce to sentimentalism or erratic passions, at least not for Gadamer. According to him, the Romantics (Hegel, Schleiermacher, Schlegel for instance) were the first moderns to take the pre-Socratics seriously and by implication the Pythagorean world-view. For Gadamer and the Romantics, Plato is a poet because he argues for thinking having a self-unfolding structure comparable to a living organism. The life of that organism is however activated by Plato’s understanding of what the Pythagoreans saw but did could not explain; namely, how the One participates in the many. Mathematical proportions and ratios are not purely contemplated and instead, define the value of art for Gadamer. This is why he argues that Pythagorean mimesis culminates in 17\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} century classicism. The Pythagorean quantitative laws of nature link the Romantic esteem for the Greeks with the Age of Reason. “Participation” therefore, does not entail a “loss of control” and immersion into flights of fancy, but just the opposite; conforming to the architecture of existence, otherwise knowledge of the thing-in-itself would not be possible. Philippe Eberhard thus describes \textit{Sache} in hermeneutics as follows:

The \textit{Sache} is not object in the world, a \textit{Gegenstand}, an object that stands vis-à-vis the subject who then takes a word like a tool to render it. The \textit{Sache} is more \textit{Unter-stand} than \textit{Gegen-stand}, more “shelter” than “object”: one stands under it when one gets


\textsuperscript{761} By a pre-scientific mentality I have in mind Donald Wiebe’s characterization of primitive thought being prelogical, “in that it takes little or no account of the law of contradiction characteristic of modern thought; that it is governed by the law of participation. Primitive thought, therefore, although it makes use of abstractions and concepts, is little given to critical reflection and analysis.” \textit{The Irony of Theology and the Nature of Religious Thought} (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991), 61.
involved in a dialogue about it. This ideal, or better medial, rather than empirical, meaning of *Sache* is the basis of hermeneutic objectivity.

The problem with modern science, for Gadamer, is that it directs attention of the knower to acting on things, irrespective of how they are given to us in a prior understanding of what they are. Consequently, unless it becomes philosophical and self-refective, science does not distinguish a pre-given arbitrary pre-understanding from the thing itself. In fact, it unreflectively conflates prejudices or institutional norms of what counts as true with truth. Gadamer aims to call into question the way in which something is given to us in language in order for the subject-matter itself to appear to us, yes through language but with a different understanding of it. This different understanding is described above all by Eberhard to consist of “getting under” the object (*Sache*). This is implied by the term “under-standing,” but he adds that this ideal rather than empirical meaning of *Sache* is medial. Fred Dallmayr’s explanation of the term *Sache* clarifies what Eberhard means by medial: “Originally, the German term ‘*Sache*’ designated a disputed ‘matter’ under consideration, an issue placed in the middle between contending parties so as to protect it ‘against the domineering grasp of one party or the other.’” According to Dallmayr, the middle emerges between contesting parties and is that which binds them together despite their perceived differences. For hermeneuts, the objectivity in which things are known includes a spirit of contestation and not consensus. Not surprisingly, that which drove Descartes in the *Discourse on Method* away from the liberal arts is precisely what is required in order for the humanities to achieve a degree of universality.

From the position of a listener attentive to the event of language, there is no concept of language with which to base the belief (for instance, that of Slingerland and Ernst Gellner) that because knowledge is mediated by language, knowledge is interpretation “all the way down.” These sorts of judgments are derived from the logic of propositions and not from the “new kind of objectivity” about the *Sache* in a dialogical and public context that is achieved according to Palmer, Eberhard and Gadamer in the middle-voice. For this reason, Heidegger had explained in *Being and Time* that in phenomenology

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762 Philippe Eberhard, *The Middle Voice in Gadamer’s Hermeneutics: A Basic Interpretation with some Theological Implications* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 103.


765 Universality in the sense of expanding horizons of understanding and not perspectivalism, the latter of which is a conclusion reached about the humanities by horizontal and epistemic thinking.
beings “announce themselves.” Of course, taken literally the statement is ridiculous. But even Richard Dawkins resorts to a helpful personification: “the selfish gene.” He reminds the reader that does not mean to say that genes have personalities. He cites Hamilton and argues that the metaphor helps to solve problems.\textsuperscript{766} The problem is how to situate biology in a macro-scale evolutionary context. The “personification” of the gene for instance, as a rower in a boat (one of Dawkin’s examples) helps us to understand its behaviour and effects in biogenetics. Heidegger resorts to imagery for the same reason as Dawkins. By stipulating that beings “announce themselves” Heidegger exhorts the reader to loosen their commitment to the logic of propositions according to which the assertion makes no sense. This is achieved by adjusting our thinking to a concrete situation. As he puts it at the outset of \textit{Being and Time}, “Our aim in the following treatise is to work out the question of the meaning of Being and to do so concretely.”\textsuperscript{767} Heidegger directs us toward actual situations in order to understand the phenomenon of meaning. But no sooner has the fact that “beings announce themselves” been clarified (since they are heard in language) then he confounds the reader. He points out that phenomenology is also a seeing (\textit{phaenesthai}, \textit{phos}) of beings.\textsuperscript{768} Surely, he cannot be referring to circumspection where everything seen is subordinated to standards of use alone (or equipmentality). Of course, if beings speak to us, as Heidegger says, then they are being disclosed discursively or show themselves to us during a conversation in which the pre-given world, as Gadamer calls it in “The Nature of Things and the Language of Things” has fallen away (for Heidegger in a mood of anxiety). But if beings seen also speak when the world has been divested of the meaning we had previously found in it, then surely a “peculiar” way of perceiving is afoot. This unusual form of perception is of the inner ear (attentive listening that includes hearkening and hearing). Only from this position is the action of the verb upon the knower knowable. To argue that all understanding is language, language is mine and therefore, all knowledge is private presupposes that thinking does not have to deal with how thought is shaped by both perceptual stance (implied by an embodied mind) toward objects of knowledge and our shared linguistic world.

\textsuperscript{767} BT, 19; SZ, 1.
\textsuperscript{768} Ibid., 51-55; 29-32.
3 Questioning Consilience

Insofar as everyone has ears to hear, the unsaid in anything said is audible and the subject appears to us in and for itself. This is why Eberhard had reasoned (as stated earlier), that “hearing, however, is more universal [than vision] because it means not only hearing but hearing words. Only hearing is related to logos and language.” Unless one listens not for the tone of voice in a mere grunt, spontaneous utterance, irony or innuendo, but for the generative grounds of existence (in nature) the famed fusion of horizons will never yield a universality of understanding. However “inter-subjective” is the experience of meaning, it is still the privilege of a few artists. Hölderlin, Socrates and the accomplished painters Heidegger and Gadamer put forward as having closed the distance between the subject and experience (Paul Cézanne, Vincent van Gogh) were not immersed, as Heidegger might say, in the ready-to-hand work-a-day-world of circumspection. Changing one’s dominant stance toward objects of knowledge and seeing with the ears (metaphorically speaking) might not be within the scope of many people. Experimenting with one’s mode of perception (and disposition since the mind that perceives is embodied) takes too much effort and time. It is less costly to intensify one’s dominant mode of reasoning and discount others as untenable (or illogical). For an untrained eye (mind), Gadamer’s hermeneutics amounts to nothing more than another metaphysical sojourn into mysticism. Consequently, the account of the inner word put forward in Part Two in terms of the middle voice cannot be considered authentically universal to epistemologists nor can the claim to a new kind of objectivity highlighted by Palmer be taken seriously by them either.

In order for the notion of the inner word to be scientifically credible, it must be inter-subjectively verifiable in a forum that is wider than a community of artists or philosophers of a kindred spirit (i.e., insiders with privileged access). What has been concluded about the inner word from the medial location must, therefore, be accounted for from the visual, spectator position, which is indifferent to quality of character and aesthetics. Indeed, this is a position that not even Eberhard could avoid (and neither does Gadamer). Despite his lauding the middle voice, Eberhard says that which language does not speak is the infinity of the unsaid, “which yields volume to the words one seeks in order to say what one means.”

\[769\] Eberhard, *The Middle Voice in Gadamer’s Hermeneutics*, 100.

\[770\] Heidegger seems to capture something of this kind of seeing in the *Principle of Reason*, trans. R. Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 46.
one means, he specifies, is “the whole-of-being.”\textsuperscript{771} He points out that “speculation is at the core of the notion of linguisticality: the mirror of language reflects everything that one can understand.”\textsuperscript{772} But the “infinity of the unsaid,” “the whole of being,” “everything one can understand” do not refer to anything. From an empiricist’s point of view, e.g., that of Hobbes or Hume, they are empty abstractions or mere names. From an artist’s point of view, they are also empty abstractions. And yet, Eberhard slips effortlessly into these generalizations (or hypotheses). Perhaps Slingerland is correct, and we have evolved to be mind-body dualists. Or perhaps how we arrive at generalizations is more important than a general statement itself. This is a basic principle of phenomenology and science, which is nothing without method. It is also the point of entry into the discussion for those who purport to have developed a bridge between the humanities and sciences; Edward O. Wilson and Edward Slingerland from the side of the sciences; Charles Taylor and Owen Flanagan from the side of the humanities.

3.1 Wilson and Consilience

Edward O. Wilson explains the background and purpose of the consilience movement as follows:

For centuries consilience has been the mother’s milk of the natural sciences. Now it is wholly accepted by the brain sciences and evolutionary biology, the disciplines best poised to serve in turn as bridges to the social sciences and humanities. There is abundant evidence to support and none absolutely to refute the proposition that consilient explanations are congenial to the entirety of the great branches of learning.\textsuperscript{773}

For centuries, theories and explanations in the natural sciences have been taking into account evidence from many sources. While this may have been greeted with apprehension in the past by natural scientists, advances in the brain sciences (cognitive science) and evolutionary biology have begun to close the divide between the sciences and above all between them and the humanities. For this reason, he believes that the contemporary age is unique. As he says, “There has never been a better time for collaboration between scientists and philosophers, especially where they meet in the borderlands between biology, the social sciences, and the humanities.”\textsuperscript{774} Collaboration between the two departments of learning is an exciting

\textsuperscript{771} Eberhard, The Middle Voice in Gadamer’s Hermeneutics, 97.
\textsuperscript{772} Ibid., 98.
\textsuperscript{774} Ibid., 11.
prospect for Wilson and he expresses his optimism about it as follows: “The greatest enterprise of the mind has always been and always will be the attempted linkage of the sciences and humanities.” Making such linkages cannot but bode well for the human sciences and liberal arts. Rather than drift into areas of inquiry that have little to no bearing upon other people’s lives and interests, as a result of consilience they are directed toward standards of truth that are inter-subjectively verifiable. This in turn he expects will be a source of inspiration and renewal for them when he says, “If the natural sciences can be successfully united with the social sciences and humanities, the liberal arts in higher education will be revitalized.” Revitalization does not imply measuring the liberal arts by standards that are external to their own and instead, a recovery of their original sources and sense of purpose.

Despite these goals and objectives of consilience, there is evidence of Wilson privileging the scientific method and causal explanations. He recalls being given Ernst Mayr’s *Systematics and the Origin of Species* (1942) by Ralph Chermock at the University of Alabama. It marked a turning point from his immersion in Linnaean taxonomy to what he calls, after Gerald Holton, the “Ionian Enchantment.” By the latter he means the realization that there is a material basis for the unity of nature. He writes of Thales’ inspired enchantment, “It means a belief in the unity of the sciences—a conviction, far deeper than a mere working proposition, that the world is orderly and can be explained by a small number of natural laws.” Mayr’s book convinced Wilson that the “small number of natural laws” fall within the purview of evolutionary genetics. He never strayed from this conviction.

Decades later in 1996 he published *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*. Modeled on the work of Francis Bacon and Condorcet (and the French Philosophes in general) to provide unity for all forms of knowing, it denotes a school of thought he describes as follows:

The central idea of the consilience world view is that all tangible phenomenon from the birth of stars to the workings of social institutions, are based on material processes that are ultimately reducible, however long and torturous the consequences, to the laws of physics. In support of this idea is the conclusion of biologists that humanity is akin to all other life forms by common descent.
All tangible phenomena being reducible to laws of physics (and chemistry) follows from life having originated in a concoction of carbon, methane, nitrogen, ammonia, water and electricity. Although this argument conforms to the logic of analysis, complex to simple components, it also represents a challenge to his claims about the role of the brain sciences and evolutionary genetics playing a mediating role between the humanities and natural sciences. Perhaps the possibility of explaining life in terms of chemistry and physics belongs to the future and cognitive science and evolutionary biology are a step toward that end. For now, science has advanced to the stage of meeting the humanities half-way, or has it?

Wilson’s non-consilatory approach toward the humanities is evident in both his explanation of culture and assessment of the epistemic value of the humanities. With respect to the first, he innovates on Richard Dawkins’ notion of the selfish-meme in order to navigate the borderlands between natural science and the humanities. Dawkins had proposed that memes are to the brain what genes are to the body (footnote). They use our brain in order to replicate themselves in culture. The problem is that there is no entity with which to either verify or falsify Dawkins’ theory. It is at best a likely story. Wilson compensates for this deficiency in Dawkins’ explanation for culture by arguing that there is a neuro-scientific correlate to the meme that he calls a “node.” Nodes are reference points in semantic memory (which builds meaning by recalling and connecting episodes formed by perception) that he argues correspond to neural activity. Wilson thereby fills a gap in Dawkins’ bio-evolutionary account of culture, but there are reasons to doubt it as well. How is Wilson’s explanation for culture congenial to “the great branches of learning”? It is not clear that it is. The problem with his understanding of culture and history is not that free will is determined by material processes, but that he has not acknowledged the grounds upon which the humanities justify themselves. Rather than think of them on their own terms as an alternative mode of cognition with an alternative methodology to that of the sciences, he defines the humanities from the side of science alone and thereby falls short of measuring up to his own mission, objectives and goals. The results are as Gadamer predicts—a trivialization of art,

According to Dawkins, culture evolves on analogy with biological evolution. He argues that the unit of evolution is neither the organism nor the species, but rather the gene; that human beings are hosts or vehicles used by genes to replicate themselves. We exist for their purposes. At times, it might seem that we are cooperating with one another toward a common end. But Dawkins points out that this is coincidental to the ends of individual genes. Like rowers of a boat, they unite solely in order to advance their interests by moving the boat, i.e., us, forward in a race against other boats. Dawkins put forward a parallel theory for the evolution of culture on the basis of memes, which are a mental analogue to genes. Memes are to the mind what genes are to the body. They use the mind to replicate themselves at the level of culture.

Wilson, Consilience, 134-135.
history and philosophy. Wilson explains that whereas science explains why perceptions vary, “Art in contrast transmits feelings among persons of the same capacity.” For Wilson, art is a means or vehicle for transmitting feeling. He lumps philosophy into the same category and says that it is a shrinking domain that “contemplates the unknown.” Philosophy and art are shrinking into oblivion for Wilson insofar as they conflate thought with feelings and reject what we know intuitively by the weight of cumulative responses, detailed verbal descriptions of the emotions and by critical analyses of data.

Wilson’s valorization of the publicly verifiable explanatory power of the natural sciences relative to the humanistic retreat into private discourses leads to the epistemic insignificance of the humanities. And yet, this conclusion is confuted by a cursory study of his inspiration for seeking unity of knowledge that vindicates the claim that ethos is prior to epistemology. His prologue to The Future of Life (2002) is a tribute to Henry Thoreau and concludes with a “tribute to protest groups” whose wisdom, he says, “is deeper than that of many of the power brokers they oppose.” In The Social Conquest of Earth (2012) he sees in Paul Gauguin what he saw in Thoreau—a retreat from the cacophony of urban life into the wilderness (Walden Pond) and primitive tribal world (of Tahiti) in order to perceive there the essential facts that could unite life. In his earlier work The Future of Life, Wilson recognizes that Gauguin was perplexed by the same question as Thoreau. During the later years of their lives, both had been moving toward a science of natural history, symbolized by Gauguin’s “D’ou Verrons Nous/ Que Sommes Nous/Ou Allons Nous.” Wilson answers the questions that perplexed the artist as follows: “In our own time, by bringing rational analysis and art together and joining science and humanities in partnership, we have drawn closer to the answers you sought.” Putting aside how Wilson believes he navigates the divide, he is evidently being inspired to seek unity from the experience of a work of art that reminds him of the beauty of nature, to which he refers the reader in Thoreau’s work. His proposal for consilience between the humanities and sciences thus grows out of a prior sense of unity that belongs to the humanities and that he equates with a “religious hunger.” He writes of the Ionian Enchantment: “Preferring a search for objective reality over revelation is another way of satisfying religious hunger . . . When we have unified enough certain knowledge, we will

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781 Ibid., 117.
782 Ibid., 12.
783 Ibid., 117.
understand who we are and why we are here.”\textsuperscript{786} Wilson sees science as being capable of answering, as Dawkins had expected, the deep questions about the meaning of human experience. Science has conquered philosophy, or has it? Wilson says above that “objective reality” is another way, not the only way; that religion is another way as well and that both are united by a desire to know who we are and why we are here. In \textit{The Future of Life}, after having explained that the crises facing the globe is population growth and devastation of the planet by techno-scientific forces, he writes of the earth, “Surely our stewardship is its only hope. We will be wise to listen carefully to the heart then act with rational intention and all the facts we can gather and bring to bear.”\textsuperscript{787} Listen to the heart? What could the internal subjective voice of the heart say that would not contradict the objectivity of a scientific enterprise? For Wilson, it communicates a command to care for the earth. In \textit{The Creation} he writes an open letter to priests, which is reflected in the Mission Statement from the institute for “Biodiversity” founded by Wilson.\textsuperscript{788} It states, “Our programs drive toward a culture of stewardship in which people are inspired to conserve and protect.”\textsuperscript{789} He uses science to further the Christian doctrine of stewardship not because he was a Mennonite, but because that is what he believes the pursuit of scientific knowledge inspires—a revival of a desire for unity of knowledge that is prior to and beyond the limits of the scientific method. He thereby inadvertently sides with the position that the sciences and humanities represent varying dispositions toward the world.

Wilson’s version of consilience is a smoke screen for reducing the humanities to standards of scientific credibility, which in turn is contradicted by disclosures about why he seeks a unity of knowledge. Despite his reducing the humanities to matters of personal feeling, and possibly on account of being insufficiently critical of his own prejudices, he vindicates their import to the goal of uniting the great branches of learning when he admits that the experience of nature, art and of the voice of the heart to which he suggests the wisdom of protests groups is attuned bear upon the goals of consilience. By thus straddling the realms of both the sciences and humanities he inadvertently vindicates Gadamer’s dialectic of stance as a means of disclosing the divide between those two departments of learning.

\textsuperscript{786} Wilson, \textit{Consilience}, 6-7.
\textsuperscript{787} Wilson, \textit{The Future of Life}, xxiii.
3.2 Slingerland, Vertical Integration and some Humanists

Edward Slingerland thinks of the humanities and sciences along the lines of a mind-body schism and develops a theory called "vertical integration" with which to unite them. Toward that end, he sides with Paul Bloom’s thesis in *Descartes’ Baby* that we have evolved to be Cartesian dualists. By this he does not mean that we are a composite of immaterial mind and extended matter/body and instead, that we have evolved to believe it and that this belief now shapes our experience of the world. We are hard-wired for both. Hence, he admits that although he knows that the solar system is geocentric, he continues to experience it as if it were Ptolemaic; although he knows his daughter is a bundle of D.N.A., he continues to experience her as his daughter “Anne.” In a sense, as he says, we do not experience ourselves as robots and thus evolved to reject the theory of evolution, but at the same time, it fits with common sense and thus, we consent to its plausibility. This bivalent view of the mind and evolution is supported by what he calls “vertical integration” (examined below). He argues that it “involves a balancing act that serves as a testament to our human ability to hold multiple, mutually contradictory perspectives in our minds at once.”

On first reading Slingerland’s thesis bodes well for integrating the two departments of learning. On the one hand, self—augmentation among discourses in the humanities is checked by criteria of validity and probability. On the other hand, as a result of the influence of the humanities, scientists cannot take the objectivity of their method for granted and instead, reflect on the role of fore-understanding, prejudices and tacit knowledge in the process of acquiring knowledge. This is expressed in works by T. Kuhn (paradigms) and M. Polanyi (tacit knowledge). There is, therefore, a sense in which both hermeneutics and scientists might well have achieved the very synthesis that Slingerland calls for. However,

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790 The habit of sorting information from the world in to mutually exclusive categories that pertain to either the mind or the body is for Bloom the product of evolutionary forces. We are all accordingly “natural Cartesians.” See Paul Bloom. *Descartes’ Baby: How the Science of Child Development Explains what makes us Human.* New York: Basic Books, 2004.


792 Ibid., 26.

793 Ibid., 293.

794 Indeed, Paul Ricoeur came to this realization. He is explicit about incorporating standards of validity and probability as well as the disputation of claims in a public forum of discussion (inter-subjectively verifiable) into his account of the art of interpretation. Paul Ricoeur, From Text to Action, II, *Essays in Hermeneutics*, trans. K. Blamey and J. B. Thompson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 18-19.

like Wilson, he undermines this possibility by (1) defining the humanities according to epistemic standards of the scientific method and (2) treating the humanities as the handmaids of science. With respect to the first, Slingerland specifies that the humanities are concerned with “Verstehen . . . the mysterious process by which one human mind grasps the product of another human mind.” He grants that this definition is crude because it does not describe how the humanities “as an academic discipline now operate.” According to him, they have in recent years incorporated “evidential scholarship.” He cites his own experience of having his interpretation of a classical Chinese concept corrected by an archaeological discovery as an example. This view of the humanities is, however, relatively narrow. Contrary to what he claims, they are moral sciences concerned with how formation of the self influences what counts as knowledge. In the history of Western thought this task was initially undertaken by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle—they examined how people speak about ideas and in reference to things as a way of clarifying the speaker’s operating assumptions. This does not prove that philosophers have always been scientists, but rather that modern science draws upon a history of thought and practice that is by Slingerland’s standards pre-scientific. The clarification of ancient Chinese concepts that he uses to exemplify the influence of an “evidence-based method” in the humanities is consistent with what philosophers have always done. Even Gadamer and Heidegger whom he associates with the “mystical meeting of minds” in the humanities disputed the etymological origins of concepts based upon the extant evidence.

Why then does Slingerland put forward a view of the humanities that denies they include evidential scholarship? The belief that the only way out of the linguistic paper bag in hermeneutics is a “mysterious meeting of minds” is a function of his epistemic perspective. In other words, he sets up a dichotomy between the humanities and sciences according to the binary logic that a propositional attitude to truth recommends with the result that the humanities are held to be non-scientific yet nevertheless valuable. Slingerland grants them a role in the progress of science. This is apparent in his version of pragmatic realism. According to him, pragmatic realism “represents precisely the alternative story that we in the humanities have been looking for, and one that takes seriously the suite of intuitions that

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796 Slingerland, What Science offers the Humanities, 226.
797 Ibid.
798 This is how Socrates’ frames his turn to studying forms through the *loge* at *Phaedo* 99d after which Gadamer modeled his turn to language.
make up human common sense." The suite of intuitions he has in mind refers to unfounded beliefs about the world. To make this clear, he reflects upon his own indecision about whether his favorite drinking glass had a hair on it or was cracked. His entertaining two beliefs are tantamount to a pre-understanding or prejudgment about a state of affairs that he tests by inspecting the glass with his finger. Some of his prior understandings refuted, others confirmed when he figures out that the glass is cracked. He throws it away because it is useless to him. In the same way, the humanities provide the sciences with hypotheses about a state of affairs to be either empirically falsified or verified. Stated otherwise, he positions common sense pragmatic realism in relation to the evolution of the species and argues that the humanities have in the past put forward vague placeholder explanations for events in the world that are effectively hypotheses for common sense pragmatism to purge. Given enough time, the sciences ought to correct false beliefs about the world generated by “verstehen” and in so doing select for individuals to survive who do not mistake private mental experiences for reality and instead, make their beliefs correspond to the facts.

Slingerland’s deflationary view of the humanities (defined according to scientific standards of credibility) is a sign of his concern for the external world of facts although very possibly at the expense of critical examination of the prejudices inherent to his argument that vindicates the importance of Gadamer’s dialectic of dispositions to achieving the goal Slingerland sets for himself. On the one hand, Slingerland holds that belief in the independence of the mind from the body that modern science and its notion of the embodied mind have rendered a “folk intuition” is fit to be purged. For this reason, he cannot abide by the school of objective realism according to which objects have properties that stand in relationships independently of human beliefs and understanding. He disavows the scientific credibility of a “god’s eye point of view.” On the other hand, he still requires that the scientific method yield objectivity. How can this be achieved without acquiescing to the “god’s eye point of view”? He sides with Nancy Cartwright and argues for “the objectivity of local knowledge.” By this he means that such “objectivity” can be proven (or inferred) from experimenting with and learning from experience over the course of time.

799 Ibid., 147.
800 Ibid., 232.
802 Slingerland, What Science offers the Humanities, 16.
e.g., balls fall down when dropped. Experience thus convinces the mind that facts can exist without as he says, “committing us to a God’s ideal of objective knowledge.” But to what extent does his a posteriori argument for “local objectivity” presuppose the a priori argument he rejects? The experiments with experience that he believes yield “local objectivity” or an encounter with brutish Searlean facts, as he puts it, presuppose the knower is not a participant to the construction of knowledge, and instead stands over and against phenomena from a distance at which it can be objectified. Consider his words, “cognitive science has created an intellectual environment where bracketing our human predisposition toward dualism may finally be a real, rather than merely notional, possibility for us.”

While his embodied view of the mind implies that knowledge is mediated not only by perception (which he accepts without distinguishing sight from hearing), but in addition culture and language, he does not espouse the hermeneutic circle of Heidegger and Gadamer. Instead, he adopts E. Husserl’s negation of the natural attitude, indicated in the quotation above, even though this requires an isolated transcendental ego in order to objectify the “human disposition toward dualism.” However, as mentioned, which Slingerland also considers the latter to be untenable for an embodied mind. Hence, he requires a “god’s eye point of view” in order to explain “folk intuitions” perpetuated by the humanities, yet also denies that point of view because it contradicts his concept of the mind. He therefore wants to have it both ways, but cannot figure out how without contradicting himself, which in turn points justifies Gadamer’s making his bivalent position intelligible when the alleged contradiction is removed by tracing the propositions to an ethos.

Attempts to integrate the two departments of learning from the side of the humanities rather than science have not fared any better. They tend to be just as exclusionary of the sciences as are the sciences of the humanities. For example, in *The Really Hard Problem* (2007), Owen Flanagan addresses the problem of how mind and meaning are possible in a material world. According to him, meaning is created on the basis of how we choose to

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805 Had he admitted that language and culture influence understanding, which is implicated in his concept of the embodied mind, e would create a problem that leads back to Gadamer. As soon as Slingerland admits that there is a multiplicity of possible ways of defining common sense, or that what he presupposes is common about the use-value of the drinking glass is not common, then he is on the verge to incorporating prior understandings into his version of pragmatic realism.
combine the six spaces; art, science, technology, ethics, politics and spirituality.\textsuperscript{807} We combine them in different ways in concrete situations to form a meaningful and happy life. Material science is one of the spaces we are free to combine with others to “self-conceive happiness.”\textsuperscript{808} While Flanagan’s position is likely acceptable to a pluralist, it is not to a scientist. Donald Wiebe’s review of Flanagan’s book is apt to recall in this regard. He argues that there is no fundamental difference between Flanagan’s notion of meaning and that which has been tabled by the “fantastical stories he criticizes in chapter 6.” Wiebe counters that the very problem Flanagan proposes, namely “making sense of one’s life in a material world,”\textsuperscript{809} indicates a contrast between the material and meaningful worlds where the latter is an existential, subjective and non-scientific question, with which biology and the mind sciences cannot deal. Flanagan’s proposal is acceptable to the humanities, but not to the sciences.

Perhaps the theory that comes closest to what is being tabled here comes from Charles Taylor. In Sources of the Self (1989), he argues that moral responses to life, dignity, integrity, well-being and even flourishing are evidence of an ontology beyond the ontology of involuntary instincts and gut reactions;\textsuperscript{810} that the moral sphere allows for an ontology that the non-moral sphere does not and that to assimilate moral valuations to physical ones would mean moral responses are illusory.\textsuperscript{811} Taylor is on the verge of distinguishing the two modes of perception and disposition that underlines the dialectic of stances. His distinction between a moral and physical space; the former being “a phenomenological observation”\textsuperscript{812} corresponds to two modes of human disposedness toward beings. However, he does not think of the problem in those Heideggerian terms and thereby begs the question about how to relate the two modes of learning and inquiry to one another while holding them apart. What is required for integration, if there is to be any, is that they be distinguished by different stances or attitudes toward the same phenomenon. This makes those philosophers who have already inquired into the dialectical unity of all disciplines such as F. Schleiermacher and Gadamer

\textsuperscript{807} Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{808} Ibid., 22-23.
\textsuperscript{811} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{812} Ibid., 290.
better guides to consilience than Wilson and Slingerland on the one hand; Flanagan and Taylor on the other.\textsuperscript{813}

4\hspace{1em}Gadamer and Science
That Gadamer could be receptive to a natural scientific explanation about how human beings understand one another in language is considered impossible on the grounds that such explanations are invariably reductionist in the sense of narrowing experience to a variable beyond experience. Such a science purports to explain experience, but by virtue of being reductionist, does away with experience so it is claimed. Human life is thus treated by natural science as being on par with natural processes. Human beings are machines without minds. But this is precisely what the phenomenological tradition repudiates. Whereas for Gadamer and Heidegger, the locus for understanding and knowledge is the “life-world,” the sciences concern themselves with causes that are beyond that domain and thereby narrow experience to the point of insignificance. In the words of Slingerland, “The natural world is subject to \textit{Eklären}, or ‘explanation’, which is necessarily reductive, explaining complex physical phenomena in terms of simpler ones.”\textsuperscript{814} Such explanations are not of humans, for humans and by humans, but rather, of a laboratory.

Gadamer would seem to agree with this characterization of scientific explanations. He begins \textit{Truth and Method} by criticizing science for over-extending (and the humanities for accepting) their method—an attitude toward science from which he never wavered. It is echoed in his later book \textit{The Enigma of Health} (1993). Fred Dallmayr summarizes Gadamer, “modern science functions as a ‘tribunal of verification’ before which nature’s laws can be confirmed or refuted. Predicated on this methodology, modern science no longer blends with nature, but rather makes possible a ‘knowledge directed to the power of making, a knowing mastery of nature’—which is the essence of technology.”\textsuperscript{815} From the beginning to the final years of his life Gadamer repeated the gist of Heidegger’s criticism of science in “The Question Concerning Technology.”\textsuperscript{816} He surely would not be receptive to a scientific

\textsuperscript{813} I am thinking of Schleiermacher’s psychological and grammatical or technical approaches to interpretation. See Friedrich Schleiermacher. \textit{Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings}. Translated by Andrew Bowie. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

\textsuperscript{814} Slingerland, \textit{What Science Offers the Humanities}, 3.

\textsuperscript{815} Dallmayr, “The Enigma of Health,” 329.

\textsuperscript{816} There are at least two intellectual influences that might account for Gadamer having a skewed view of science. In \textit{Crisis in the European Sciences} Sciences Husserl is critical of objectivism for “its idealization and abstraction of nature into mathematics and geometry” from Lawrence Ferrara, \textit{Philosophy and the Analysis of Music: Bridges to Musical Sound, Form and Reference} (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 80. This view of
explanation of the inner word; the quintessential means by which hermeneutics he says becomes universal.

However, Gadamer is not criticizing the idea of science. In the first quarter of the 20th century he witnessed the rise of logical positivism at the German universities (which is why Heidegger was such a breath of fresh air for him). The initiative for reform had originated with the bureaucracy. Gadamer’s criticism of scientific practices must, therefore, be understood as a response to a political ideology piggybacking on a legitimate scientific method. Had he lived elsewhere and at another time, neither he nor Heidegger would have been as hostile to science, which they tended to identify with an extreme form of logical positivism. The same principle applies to Gadamer’s view of the health profession. Gadamer cannot be understood to have been opposed to the idea of modern health sciences, but rather as responding to a particular situation in order to create the latitude within it for a deeper understanding of what is actually happening. Since Gadamer’s criticism of science is not unqualifiable and thus is not absolute, there are good reasons for him to be receptive to a scientific explanation of that which makes a truth claim true indicated already by his regard for Höningwald, Helmholtz, Plessner, Piaget and Humboldt.

1. He believes that an answer presupposes a question, “we understand only when we understand the question to which something is the answer.” To what question is his hermeneutics an answer? To the question, how is understanding in language possible? But this is a question the natural sciences are as qualified to answer as phenomenology. Hence, if phenomenological hermeneutics is held to be the sole source of knowledge about an issue, the principle of a question being prior to an answer is being contradicted.

2. a) Gadamer does not put forward a method that advocates the subordination of knowledge to either subjectivism or perspectivalism. On the contrary, he believes that hermeneutics has a better chance of producing knowledge about the way the world actually is by acknowledging that human prejudices (informed by language and culture) play a mediating role in the acquisition of knowledge than by denying them through either

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science as the mathemization of nature in physics resurfaces in Heidegger’s thinking of science in terms of Descartes’ *Meditations in Being and Time*, Plato’s metaphysics in “The Question Concerning Technology” and carries over to Gadamer.

Husserl’s epoché or Descartes’ methodological doubt.\textsuperscript{818} In his reply to Emilio Betti (1890-1968) who, according to Gadamer “was fearful for the scientific nature of interpretation” and saw nothing in Gadamer’s work “but equivocations and conceptual confusion,”\textsuperscript{819} Gadamer explains that he is not proposing a method, but engaging the problem of what is the case in the sciences. The problem is that even a “master of the historical method is not able to keep himself entirely free from the prejudices of his time, his social environment and his natural situation.”\textsuperscript{820} In the interest, therefore, of achieving historical knowledge (in this case) it is productive to ask why it is not often achieved. By accusing Gadamer of having put forward a method about what ought to be or could be, critics overlook that for him, what matters is the possibility of the human sciences or how they can fulfill the task they set for themselves to acquire knowledge about the way the world actually is.\textsuperscript{821} He is not developing a method about how to read a book or interpret an experience, but rather addressing what happens when we actually read and interpret a book. In the words of Kenneth Baynes, “Gadamer’s concern is not to call into question the validity of the empirical sciences, . . . he is concerned rather with ‘self-understanding’ of science—that is, not with ‘what we do or what we ought to do,’ but with what happens over and above our wanting and doing.”\textsuperscript{822}

b) Related to the above, Gadamer’s middle voice perspective and shift to auditory perception aim to transcend the subjectivity of the subject and let beings come to be of their own accord, which he juxtaposes with a rationalist method (of Descartes) for conflating, as Heidegger puts it, \textit{episteme} with \textit{techne}.\textsuperscript{823}

\textsuperscript{818} Husserl’s phenomenological reduction (or \textit{epoché}) has two stages: the transcendental reduction and the eidetic. The first examines the structures of ordinary perceiving, which for Husserl is intentional because consciousness is directed by perception. Seeing only the yellow light in a room of many people is an example of how perception structures intentionality (or thinking about something). The \textit{eidetic} reduction consists of suspending the natural attitude of which one has become aware in the reduction. By suspending the mode of perception, thought and orientation, things show themselves independently of prejudices and theories about them. However, in order to bracket or suspend the natural attitude, Husserl posits a transcendental ego, which is completely independent of (because it stands apart from) the medium of language in which all beings are understood and interpreted (or translated into a system of symbols). My source is Ferrara, \textit{Philosophy and the Analysis of Music}, 64-66; 79.


\textsuperscript{820} TM, 512.

\textsuperscript{821} Ibid., 513.


\textsuperscript{823} For Heidegger, epistemology projects an idea of things in advance of their appearance and truth is making beings conform to that pre-conception, i.e., subsuming a particular under a general idea or what he also
3. Since the Sache or subject-matter is known through a dialogue the context for knowledge about anything, even the inner word, includes an inter-subjective and public context. On that basis Gadamer is open to a conversation with scientists.

4. a) Gadamer is not “against” the notion of universality. He is concerned about human sciences (since the 19th century) that interpret themselves according to the standards of the natural sciences alone. In the interest of universalizing understanding, Gadamer aims to liberate the humanities from a scientifically determined self-misunderstanding. For the sciences, universality is defined as a rule or law that has been verified. In a move reminiscent of Aristotle’s criticism of Plato’s idea of the Good, Gadamer counters that the basis of inquiry in the humanities that evades the inductive method (and universality as a law or rule) is an understanding of a phenomenon itself, in its unique and historical concreteness. He suggests that this requires an investigation of “how we conceive of the phenomenon that one is observing.” Presupposing that the knower is in fact always playing a role in the acquisition of knowledge he asks, “what kind of knowledge is it that understands that something is so because it understands that it has come about,” and answers, tact. Like other important concepts in the human sciences, such as experience, aesthetic and historical sense, judgment, taste, Bildung and sensus communis, tact has been re-interpreted according to the standards established by Mill and Hume to be a psychological, unconscious, artistic-instinctive, feeling or state of spiritual cultivation. Gadamer liberates the notion from these determinations and asserts that tact is a kind of knowledge in its own right that constitutes the science of the human sciences, which is to say their universality. Tact is to the human sciences what induction is to the natural sciences, but as Helmholtz the physiologist, naturphilosophen, physicist, mathematician, musician and classicist argues, the natural sciences use tact as well. The mode of cognition that defines the humanities belongs to the sciences and thus cannot be a basis for arguing that the humanities are not scientific.

   b) As mentioned earlier, the humanities and the natural sciences differ in how they conceive of universality. Yet there is common ground between them as well. Both assert that in order to be universal, one must transcend their subjectivity, or as Gadamer says of

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824 TM, 4.
825 Ibid.
826 Ibid.
827 Ibid., 7
Bildung, rise above one’s particular state and sacrifice the particular to the universal. No natural scientist would disagree. The question is what precisely is the engine for rising above particularity to universality? During his discussion of Bildung, Gadamer makes it clear that it depends upon examining what one knows from another’s point of view. This is not inconsistent with an experiential-pragmatic approach to acquiring knowledge and navigating life’s contingencies. When the meaning of a text, for example, is not compatible with our expectations, we are “pulled up short,” says Gadamer. As when a hammer we are absorbed in hammering with breaks, we are thrown back upon ourselves and have to refigure how to go about making sense of what we were doing. In the words of David Vessey whom I have been consulting, “the mark of successful reflection is our ability to continue in some way or other (perhaps with revised views and goals), or in Gadamer’s words, ‘theory should only be developed out of praxis’.” While Gadamer and the natural sciences have different views of how universality is achieved and therefore of what it is, they converge on the question of verification, modification of one’s initial stance and point of view, and problem solving in general.

5. Consequently, Slingerland’s belief that Gadamer advocates a metaphysical meeting of minds in a fusion of horizons is inaccurate. For starters, he would have to account for Gadamer’s repudiation of that very position in his analysis of Wilhelm Dilthey and Enrico Betti. In “Hermeneutics and Historicism” Gadamer returns to the primary impetus for his book; the epistemological analogy between the natural and human sciences instigated by Kant’s distinction between nature and freedom. Gadamer believes that the same distinction underlies Dilthey’s theoretical justification for the historical sciences. According to Gadamer, he developed a foundation for the historical sciences in a “psychology purified by all alien domination by the natural sciences”, where experience is “characterized by inner awareness,” or “subjective consciousness.” In so doing, he inadvertently mimicked the standard of objectivity in the natural sciences wherein the epistemological subject is a “bloodless abstraction.” According to Gadamer, at the same time, Dilthey could not avoid the

828 He writes, “Historical experience must, in the end, be understood as a coherence of meaning that wholly transcends the horizons of individual experience” (ibid., 508).
829 Ibid., 268.
831 TM, 508.
832 Ibid., 507.
833 Ibid., 508.
historian being “part of the same movement of historical life” that he or she is supposed to be objectifying. 

Gadamer’s criticism of Betti follows his criticism of Schleiermacher whose divination of the author’s mind Betti echoes as being decisive for interpretation.

Given Gadamer’s criticism of the very propensity in the historical sciences toward psychology one is hard pressed to understand how Slingerland could have overlooked it. Maybe he mistook an effect for a cause. Maybe he reasoned that since post-modernism came after Gadamer’s linguistic turn, hermeneutics is postmodern. In any event, Slingerland did not adequately study the philosopher he was criticizing, or perhaps more study would not have made any difference if Gadamer’s retort to Betti’s argument is applicable: “This generally means that the critic is relating the author to a question that he does not intend.”

This could be the case. Slingerland interrogates Gadamer from the side of Mill’s Logic and thus cannot but construe the universal basis for hermeneutics (tact) with something wholly subjective, psychological, unconscious, artistic and instinctual.

6. Perhaps the most often heard criticism of Gadamer is that he reduces knowledge to discourse. However, Gadamer does not deny that it is possible to know things in themselves or the forms/definitions of things. He contests only the assumption that they can be known without examining how we speak about them. He is at one with Socrates’ reasons for turning to the study of the forms in language at Phaedo 99d. While we are prone to conclude from this that knowledge is indistinguishable from culture and point to Gadamer’s notion of historically affected consciousness, alongside the latter he argues for philosophical language, or thought that pursues the true and good, having a dialogical structure. This structure does not consist solely of the give and take of a conversation. The structure of the dialogue form mirrors (or participates in) the Platonic-Pythagorean cosmology of the One and the many (modeled on the music of mathematics). This is the background to his interest in the Philebus. Therein a Pythagorean cosmology of the limited and unlimited guides Plato’s articulation of the Good yet through the medium of language, which is that which makes the idea of the Good ethical or manifest to him in friendships of virtue. Since the One and the many run through everything (and do not represent a neo-Platonic hierarchy from the human

834 Ibid.
835 Ibid., 512.
836 Ibid.
to the divine for Gadamer), their dialectical interplay imparts unity to understanding in
the midst of any given time and place. 838

7. Gadamer brings to the scientific explanation of how we understand one another in
language a doctrine of recollection. For him, understanding one another must include the
capacity to recollect (undergo because it belongs to us in language) the vestige of proto-
language in modern symbolic language. No, recollection does not refer to the deliberative
activation of a passive retention of sounds, this being the extent of Husserl’s analysis of
time. 839 Yes, the act of recollection refers to a turn of the inner ear to the hidden rhythmic
resonance between speakers in the living language without losing sight of symbols and
concepts being addressed. The task then becomes one of maintaining both sides of
language—the higher order representational thinking transmitted through history and in
culture and lower order cognitive processes associated not only with affects or emotions, but
with the prosodic dimensions of language and ultimately mood or physiological and
perceptual disposition. In the phenomenological tradition, “phaino” and “logos,” the twin
sides of language are coordinate with seeing and hearing; mental representations seen and the
interrelations between them heard. This is another way of formulating the dialectic of stances
and refers back to constant movement between forgetting and recollecting that Heidegger
associates with the Greek concept of truth (aletheia). The scientific-visual and philosophical-
auditory must thus be in a dialectical interplay in order for something to be understood. The
inner word is decisive in this regard because, as mentioned, it imparts movement between the
terms it relates; however, by virtue of this turn to language for the purpose of reaching
universality of understanding about something the sense of hearing (or non-Being of Being)
is granted primacy over that of sight.

838 The hierarchy breaks down for Gadamer because for him and the Greeks as he understands them
nous is inseparable from aesthesis or perception. The “one” is thus not pure intellect, or divine intellect and the
many are not particulars known by sensation. This way of thinking about the One and the many is neo-Platonic
and medieval rather than Greek or Plato’s view. Gadamer restores the latter by arguing that the chora or
separation hypothesis is a function of exaggerated visual perception and participation or metexis-mimesis of the
One in the many of auditory perception, which is why the Pythagoreans heard the order of the spheres in the
mathematical ratios in music, but music was for them indistinguishable from speech and gesture.
839 For a synopsis of Husserl’s thesis in A Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness that
exemplifies the limits of his analysis see Evan Thompson, Waking, Dreaming, Being: self and consciousness in
neuroscience, meditation and philosophy (New York: Colombia University Press, 2015), 233. Thompson argues
for continuity between wakeful and dream states and thereby limits himself to an isolated individual’s state of
mind or self-unfolding monologue, which is exclusionary of the relationality upon which Gadamer builds an
elevation of consciousness or higher degrees of awareness.
8. Finally, and in the interest of furthering the task to align Gadamer’s hermeneutics with natural science on bases previously intimated, consider the very rationale for his study of Greek mathematics, philosophy and medicine and what he believes they can offer modern science. Of their aforementioned theoretical interests he explains that “for modern thinking, the confrontation with Greek thinking is a kind of self-encounter for us all.”\textsuperscript{840} The Greeks are supposed to be a world apart from us. One wonders how we could encounter ourselves in them unless of course Gadamer believes that they knew something that we have forgotten. Without a method by which to achieve objectivity they still arrived at universally binding and truthful insights into, he specifies, the body, friendship, self-knowledge and language.\textsuperscript{841} From the position of being-in-the-world they achieved knowledge of things-in-themselves not independently of causal explanations but rather alongside them in ordinary language. This cannot but remind us of Socrates’ turn toward the logoi in the \textit{Phaedo} 99d. For Gadamer, being-in-the-world consists, as Heidegger says, of thinking, dwelling and building in language. The world in which we understand and interpret beings is lingual. It makes sense that by critically reflecting on our own language we sharpen our thinking and knowledge. From within language, as pointed out previously in reference to Plato’s \textit{Lysis}, we can see ourselves employing both causal explanations and adjusting our relation to one another and the subject-matter such that it replaces our psychological motives for the conversation. I pinpoint psychology because it is for Gadamer the principle impediment to a dialectical interplay of stances in which the thing speaks for itself. This is what Gadamer discovered in the Greek language, that Philippe Eberhard tells us is preserved in Sanskrit and perhaps Mandarin; a middle-voiced structure encodes a way of thinking obscured by the economics of writing today. For Gadamer, this middle-voice is the medium in which the ordinary scientific and extra-ordinary humanistic modes of cognition, comportments and attitudes meet and merge with one another (in a fusion of horizons). Language in general therefore includes the possibility of harnessing a power to unite contrary positions (that Gadamer speaks about in the ontology of language at the end of \textit{Truth and Method}). For him, this was for the Greeks a power of nature, i.e., the Good that Heidegger accessed through attunement, harkening or an open comportment toward beings . . . open to

\textsuperscript{841} Ibid., 121-125.
having one’s own disposition claimed by the self-restoring equilibrium of forces in *physis*. Gadamer writes:

The Greek conception of science is characterized by *physis*, that is, by the horizon of the existence of the order of things that shows itself out of itself and regulates itself. Thus the question that is posed for us by the confrontation of modern thinking with this Greek heritage is to what extent this ancient heritage offers a truth that remains concealed from us under the peculiar epistemological conditions of modernity.\(^{842}\)

It is this power for self-restoring equilibrium that Gadamer believes should inform science today.\(^{843}\) He is not remiss in attempting to bridge the distance himself. He nods in the direction of Heisenberg when he applauds one of the “truly productive minds of quantum physics” for having a “sincere predilection” for Plato’s *Timaeus*,\(^{844}\) and with an eye to the theory of evolution composes a plausible explanation about the origins of the universe that combines the mathematics of the said dialogue with Democritus’s atomic theory (which he notes was without a mathematical foundation).\(^{845}\) In short, he carried forward the project Heidegger abandoned around the time of writing *Being and Time* to re-introduce to modern science the ancient (and 19\(^{th}\) century) view of nature being a self-regulating, self-producing and self-renewing process.\(^{846}\)

5 **Phenomenology and Cognitive Science**

Gadamer is critical of reductive explanations for narrowing experience to the point of epistemological insignificance, but as pointed out not all explanations are reductive. Not all scientists are objective realists because they acknowledge that knowledge is mediated and that the relation between the mediator (language and culture) and epistemic claims must be explained rather than bracketed and denied. But at the same time, those who support this approach continue to reduce human level experience to lower tier biological processes because they do not acknowledge the relevance of tact, aesthetic intuition, the middle-voice or a change in stance to scientific knowledge. Instead, they continue to assert a one-sided and therefore non-dialectical approach to the acquisition of knowledge. This quandary undermines their aims. Edward O. Wilson’s stepping back into the experience of art and

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\(^{842}\) Ibid., 121.


\(^{844}\) Ibid., 135.


nature suggests that something like life must be taken into account in order to preserve the unity of understanding, or rather the human level experience of meaning in a scientific treatise. This is precisely what the early Heidegger’s phenomenology aimed for and indeed, his aspirations have been acknowledged by cognitive scientists. This is a promising development that paves a way for a study of how Gadamer’s philosophy might make a viable contribution to the current trend toward a conception of the self grounded in that which separates us from animals-in-an-environment, from animal communication systems and which makes us truly human (says Bickerton); namely, how we understand one another in language. Any foray into current trends cannot but be tenuous and partial. It is therefore more feasible to limit the study to two representative samples; one from the side of cognitive science (Benjamin Bergen) and the other from the side of bio-phenomenology (Evan Thompson).

5.1 Voice Simulation (Bergen)

Benjamin Bergen’s *Louder than Words*, is useful to consult for positioning Gadamer in relation to cognitive science because his theory is commensurate with phenomenological-hermeneutics on four counts. First, he claims that his cognitive scientific approach to an understanding of meaning is based on embodied-mind-in-the-environment. There is no inner mind juxtaposed to the external world for him. This is consistent with phenomenology’s critique of the subject standing over and against the world and situating the knower in a network of spatial relations. Just as phenomenology sees itself as rejecting idealism in favour of a return to the “life-world” so does Bergen see himself as rejecting “mentalese” (discussed below) in favour of mind-in-the-environment. Second, what Bergen calls “the new science of meaning”, namely, his embodied simulation hypothesis is, like phenomenological-ontology of Heidegger, an account of the conditions for understanding. Third, as the title of his work indicates, the condition for knowledge is linguistic, which moves him into the orbit of Gadamer’s thinking.

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848 “Bio-phenomenology” is one kind of phenomenology, “transcendental phenomenology” another. The former extends intentionality to all organisms, the latter restricts it to the human subject. See David E. Storey, *Naturalizing Heidegger: His Confrontation with Nietzsche, His Contributions to Environmental Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 28-29.
At the same time, Bergen’s explanation for the meaning of language could learn something from the transcendental turn to the mind-in-the-world and a return to a living dialogue. Heidegger analyzes human existence into three structures; understanding, mood, and language. They are equiprimordial in the sense of being implicated in one another. There is no understanding without mood, and language. Gadamer takes this over from Heidegger yet within an inter-subjective context of a conversation. However, Bergen departs from both Heidegger and Gadamer with an embodied simulation hypothesis about the meaning of language that does not, upon examination, include either mood or an inter-subjective and dialogical context. In the words of Steven Brown, “A mirror system is essentially an observation/execution matching system. In the writings of Rizzolatti and his colleagues, the focus of such a system has generally been on visuo-manual matching.” Bergen follows suit. His models and explanations for that understanding tend to be driven by visual-thinking, visuo-sensori-motor control systems, mental maps of the body, but not simulation hypotheses of the voice in a dialogue anchored in rhythm as distinct from inauthentic atonal chatter. As a result, his perspective on understanding and language is narrowed. Language is reduced by him to the communication of information about what something is in which the how of speech (e.g., laughter and tears) are ignored. His view of understanding is similarly, despite what he says to the contrary, disembodied. The explanation for this self-referentially incoherent position is that Bergen’s thinking is overly-determined by epistemic seeing. His methods, scenarios, presuppositions and perspectives consistently demonstrate that he is deaf to both mood and the relationality of human existence in language (dialogue) while trying to figure out the meaning of language. More specifically, his visual bias cannot but be indifferent to the non-literal aspects of language embedded in the acoustic properties of the breathed voice that are accounted for by cognitive psychology (Donald) and evolutionary biology (Mithen). Nevertheless, Bergen’s work is worthy of study because of its limits which, once having been delineated, might create new possibilities for a scientific

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850 Steven Brown, “Contagious Heterophony: A New Theory about the Origins of Music,” in *Musicae Scientiae* 21, no. 1 (2007): 12. In this regard, Heidegger does not land upon the idea of an interruption in hammering evoking a conversation and this suggests that for him thought is without speech or purely meditative. Meditative thought without speech is thoughtless and follows from his example of hammering, which is a simple motor-control habit of the body comparable to the way an animal experiences its environment. Simple thoughts required to hammer like those required to bury a nut are acquired by visual imitation (which chimps can perform) but not by the imitation of sounds that we find for instance human infants learning in “joint attention.” Infants imitate sounds heard before they can see or understand facial expressions. For the relation of thought to motor control systems and the simplicity of it relative to the complexity of language I am in debt to L. S. Vygotsky, *Thought and Language*, trans. Eugenia Hanfmann and Gertrude Vakar (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1962), 33-34; 37-39.
understanding of the inner word, and thus of the grounds upon which to mediate between the sciences and humanities.

Bergen contrasts his position on the meaning of language with what he calls “mentalese.” Referring to the work of Fodor (1975), Pinker (1994) and Bertrand Russell (1903) as advocates for the theory, Bergen explains that mentalese consists of translating words be they read or heard into a universal mental language; “the language of thought hypothesis states that for each word that we know, we have a mental entry that includes a definition articulated in Mentalese.” This suggests that everyone has a set of pre-given or innate concepts that enable them to understand one another and learn other languages. Not unlike Jean Grondin’s and James Risser’s concept of the inner word as a word of thought without sound, the language of “mentalese” is without sound, is of the intellect and on those bases presumed to be universal. But this is also a problem as discussed earlier with reference to the *verbus interius*. As Bergen points out, abstract symbols locked inside the chamber of the mind cannot be easily related to the world. This is an approach to the mind that he argues typified the cognitive sciences in the 20th century. Bertrand Russell’s logical systems were the basis for conceiving of the brain as a computer decades later. This in turn led scholars to think of the mind as the software that computed the formal aspects of language including; sound structure (phonology), composition (morphology) and syntax. But these are formal dimensions of language that disregard the content rooted in our shared experience. It is the latter that Bergen purports to rescue from the computer model of the mind in “a new science of meaning.”

There are two developments that stand behind Bergen’s rethinking of cognitive science within the domain of shared experience and upon which he builds. In the 1970’s a number of scholars were advancing an embodied approach to the mind. Bergen cites Merleau Ponty, Andy Clark, Mark Turner, Francisco Varela and Arthur Glenburg. But above all, it is *Philosophy in the Flesh* by Lakoff and Johnson that repositioned the question of meaning from the mind to experiences of our bodies for Bergen. Lakoff argued that reason arises from the nature of our brains, bodies and bodily experience. He thus explains that categories are “the stuff of experience.” For example, the statement “stocks plummeted” is

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851 Ibid., 9.
852 Ibid., 250.
853 Ibid., 12.
854 See the concise explication of his assumptions about reason in *Philosophy in the Flesh*, 4.
855 Ibid., 19.
meaningful to us because we use the sensori-motor experiences we have of vertical motion and map them onto another conceptual domain. But Lakoff did not according to Bergen have a mechanism to explain how. The other development upon which he builds his embodied simulation hypothesis is mirror neurons (whose primary theorist is Vilayanur Ramachandran), “So called because they seem to encode both the performance and observation of specific actions” and allow us to recognize, predict and understand the physical actions of others. However, he argues that figuring out how individual neurons record information is complex and suggests that the experiments required for ascertaining knowledge about them makes demands on science that are unethical. On this basis, he argues for abandoning an investigation of how individual neurons function and attends to systems of neurons instead, which he considers a representational architecture. He writes:

Mirror neurons, and the mirror systems they’re a part of, are relevant to the question of language in the following way. Perceiving someone else perform an action results in the activation of your own motor system. What if understanding language about action hooks into this same system, such that the motor system can be used not only when people are acting, perceiving action, and thinking about action, but also when they’re understanding language about acting.859

From Lakoff and Johnson, Bergen had learned that abstract ideas are derived from the actions of the body; from Ramachandran that systems of neurons explain why neural systems are in sync with the motor control system.

According to Bergen, there is a map of our body on our brain that allows us to simulate actions we either read or hear about. He states his position on the embodied simulation hypothesis succinctly: “Maybe we understand language by simulating in our minds what it would be like to experience things that the language describes.” We might be reconciled to suppose that understanding what someone says is tantamount to imagining it. But Bergen disavows this train of thought. Simulation, he points out, is not mental imagery. Whereas mental imagery e.g., golden mountain, is a product of our conscious minds, simulation is a cognitive process that transpires without our knowledge. It is unconscious though not in a psychoanalytic sense of the word. He is speaking of cognitive operations about which we are unconscious, e.g., accessing memories, comprehending a
stream of sound, assigning structure to a sentence, picking out and giving words meaning.\textsuperscript{862} But we do not actually enact what we understand because neurological wavelets of the motor and perceptual systems do not extend, he claims, to the cerebellum. It follows from this that there is no thinking that is purely abstract. Bergen believes that we take what we know about how to perceive concrete things and how to perform actions and use that knowledge to both describe and think about abstract concepts.\textsuperscript{863} The only difference being that concrete concepts are more detailed than abstract ones.\textsuperscript{864} For example, we have a good sense of a healthy body, but are less sure about what a “healthy society” is. Abstract ideas are, therefore, metaphors that activate the motor apparatus to perform the same action.\textsuperscript{865} All thought and talk are to one degree derived from what he believes we do most of the time, “intellectually slumming it,” or thinking and talking about mundane things we can use and touch.\textsuperscript{866} He thus compares off-line thinking to the running of circuits during REM.\textsuperscript{867}

Bergen’s theory goes a considerable distance in explaining three key elements of Gadamer’s hermeneutics. First, what Gadamer refers to as a fusion of horizons, Bergen would reason is, in fact, a re-creating of each other’s mental simulations in a shared virtual experience.\textsuperscript{868}

the fact that people perform motor simulation while understanding language is yet another piece of evidence that people are creating scenes in their minds from the perspective of an immersed experiencer. Motor simulation is intrinsically about projecting oneself into a body—often someone else’s—and, when you simulate what it would be like to do things someone is described as doing, you’re taking their perspective, not merely in a visual way, but in terms of what it would be like to control their actions.\textsuperscript{869}

Shared understanding depends on common experiences, or at least mental simulations similar enough to one another to allow neural networks in people’s brains to be lit up while projecting themselves into each other’s body. Shared understanding is a meeting of minds, but it is not mysterious.

\textsuperscript{862} See Lakoff, \textit{Philosophy in the Flesh}, 10-11.
\textsuperscript{863} He writes, “We boot strap harder things to think and talk about—abstract concepts—off of easier things to think and talk about—concrete concepts.” Bergen, \textit{Louder than Words}, 29.
\textsuperscript{864} Ibid., 209.
\textsuperscript{865} Ibid., 205.
\textsuperscript{866} Ibid., 50.
\textsuperscript{867} Ibid., 254.
\textsuperscript{868} Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{869} Ibid., 92.
Second, Bergen’s hypothesis converges with that of Gadamer on the issue of misunderstanding. Gadamer accounts for it with prejudices, temporal distance (objectivity) and culture. Bergen’s reasoning is similar. He writes, “If meaning is based on our experiences in our particular bodies and in the particular situations we’ve dragged them through, then meaning could be quite personal.”

Personal meaning is imbued with prejudices that impede the formation of a common understanding. Hence, he reasons, “When our mental lives differ, communication can grind to a standstill. But at the same time, people are still often able to make themselves understood, even when simulating differently from the people they’re communicating with.” This last point that mutual understanding is often possible leads to the third feature his work shares with Gadamer’s. For both Bergen and Gadamer even if one’s mental life is formed solely by the positive sciences, it is still relational. Since meaning is built on systems evolved for perception and action combined with the plasticity of our cognitive architecture and language, common understanding is always a potential possibility in advance of any misunderstanding on account of abstracting from or forgetting it.

However, Bergen’s analysis is from Gadamer’s perspective also limited by a visual bias. The following is a list of instances where that bias comes to the surface and guides his thinking.

1. Bergen’s theory is dedicated to explaining the meaning of language yet restricts simulation to that which is perceivable, actions. If they alone can be simulated, then the meaning of language is similarly restricted to whatever is amenable to description, perceivable, visual. Bergen is aware of this. He points out that language is used to flirt, command, beg, inform and form social bonds. But his experiments do not take them into account. Instead, the flirt, command and so on are the “how” of the spoken word that he subsumes to a visual-orientation about the meaning of what is said, or thought.

2. He distinguishes what he calls two styles of thinking; verbalizers and visualizers. In the course of doing so he specifies that “Overt verbalization uses your motor and auditory systems to create perceptual and motor memories of the sound and feel of the words you’re

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870 Ibid., 12.
871 Ibid.,152.
872 He recognizes and acknowledges that variations in how people think (ibid., 192-193), different mental abilities and capacities and that contingencies such as culture account for a variety of understandings (ibid., 176-178).
873 Ibid., 3.
articulating. Covert verbalization also uses your motor and auditory systems, just to simulate what it would be like to say and hear the relevant words. The neural pathways we use to speak are the same as the ones used to listen to others and speak to ourselves. This is promising because it indicates that Bergen is on track to incorporating mood and the affects into his concept of language and embodied simulation. However, when he recounts the verbalizer processing a written dialogue that includes exclamations, dramatic pauses, questions, formal and informal language, a man’s and a woman’s voice, he ignores these variations in what it would be like to simulate the voice and refers to them collectively as “a smorgasbord of novel and counterintuitive linguistic tidbits to gobble up.” Indeed, the section of Louder than Words in which he contrasts verbalizers and visualizers, he refers to verbalizers as having a “different cognitive style” but does not think of it as distinct verbal mode of understanding in its own right. While he mentions the simulation of “feelings” he reverts to interpreting them according to that which is perceived, movement.

3. Evidence of Bergen exercising a non-dialogical frame is as follows: He distinguishes such creatures as dogs and bats on the basis of the sense perception they prize and adds, “but we humans, more like birds of prey and honey bees, prioritize our sense of sight.” While we are also unlike bees and eagles, since as he says in contrast to ACS our language is open-ended, i.e., we assemble a great deal of information from sight and use the motor pathways to construct abstract ideas or as he interprets them, metaphors, sight is for him indispensible for the acquisition of knowledge. He writes:

Vision is the main way we collect information from the world, so it’s fitting that vision is also the sense we most closely associate with the internal life of our minds. We even decode it directly in our language—when we talk about meaning, and about understanding, we actually use language about sight. We say: You see what I mean? The argument was crystal clear? Let’s shine some light on this topic. As we’ll see (there it is again!), vision has everything to do with understanding.

4. Bergen thinks of neural networks solely in terms of “what” and “where pathways”; neural networks for objects and spatial relations. The “what pathway” is for

874 Ibid., 164.
875 Ibid., 169.
876 Ibid., 16.
877 Ibid., 49.
878 Ibid., 4.
879 Ibid., 49.
880 Ibid., 53; 93-94; 116; 169.
colour and shape; the “where pathway” is for location.\textsuperscript{881} Neither deal with sounds the processes of which he subsumes to visual processes. He writes, “Shortly after the sound waves of the spoken words hit our ears or the light of written characters strikes our eyes, we engage our vision and motor systems to create the non-present visions and actions that are described.”\textsuperscript{882} Tone of voice, cadence, meter, rhythm, as Schleiermacher suggests distinguishes glib platitude from sightless wit, dull innuendo and irony are not processed by Bergen’s model of the mind. Consequently, he conflates what is heard with what is seen. He writes, “You could use your auditory system to virtually hear what it would be like for a polar bear to slide along the ice . . .”,\textsuperscript{883} as if the bear’s outer behaviour were heard. While he stipulates that motor simulation “is intrinsically about projecting oneself into a body” (he specifies “someone else’s”) he assumes that in so doing we simulate what it would be like to control their actions rather than to simulate their mood or state of mind.\textsuperscript{884}

5. In a chapter titled “The Mind’s Eye” and after having reported on experiments involving pictures alone he states, “All these studies point to the same conclusion. Hearing or reading language about objects leads people to mentally simulate those objects,”\textsuperscript{885} as if there were no difference between a visual and auditory simulation. In fact, he explicitly effaces the difference between them stating whether you verbalize or visualize does not matter—one has engaged simulation.\textsuperscript{886} Hence, he treats the sensory dispositions as one and the same when he reasons, “While we listen to or read sentences, we simulate seeing the senses and performing the actions that are described. We do so using our motor and perceptual systems”\textsuperscript{887} and later grasping the process with the metaphor, “in the mind’s eye”.\textsuperscript{888} After relating experiments involving only motor simulation of meaning couched in sentences he concludes, “So people

\textsuperscript{881}Ibid., 57. As Bergen says, simulation is based on analogy between vision and language (ibid., 242). He is referring to his claim that a mental simulation of action is performed by our perceptual and motor systems (ibid., 45). These two cannot be separated from one another. That is to say, by narrowing simulation to what is perceived by the eye, he has narrowed meaning to action or rather, as he puts it, what is done. He cites the active and passive uses of a verb to convey what a sentence means (ibid., 25). He identifies meaning with perceiving and action because action is perceivable and takes this as an organizing principle for how the mind works (ibid., 45) writing, “We use our primate perception and action systems not only when we’re actually perceiving or acting but also when we’re understanding language about perceiving or acting” (ibid., 253).

\textsuperscript{882}Ibid., 223.
\textsuperscript{883} Ibid., 14.
\textsuperscript{884} Ibid.92.
\textsuperscript{885} Ibid., 59.
\textsuperscript{886} Ibid., 174.
\textsuperscript{887} Ibid., 15.
\textsuperscript{888} Ibid., 16.
simulate performing the actions that they read or hear about.” Similarly, when distinguishing the meaning of the sentence, “My sister was a track star” from “My sister WAS a track star”, he recognizes that they imply different meanings, but interprets them according to the same scaffolding. The emphatic sentence he reasons is the negation of a positive sentence, the first one, thereby overlooking the context-specific connotations and indeed character of the speaker implied in saying “WAS.” When he discusses intuition it is not about state of mind/mood, but rather about how a lock works and whether one is sober enough to drive. Finally, he concentrates on eye movement rather than voice in order to figure out what is going on inside someone’s head.

In conclusion, while Bergen had said that, “The theory proposes that embodied simulation makes use of the same parts of the brain that are dedicated to directly interacting with the world,” none of his experiments about how meaning is constructed by our minds has anything to do with verbal interactions with others. The experiments from which he makes inferences about the mind do not include other people, which in turn place his claims to have surpassed the computer-model of the brain in question. That is to say, “the new science of meaning” is purportedly about an embodied simulation. This is the advance over the 20th century view of the mind as a computer. However, insofar as Bergen’s thinking about the mind ignores how meaning is constructed with others he has abandoned his inferences about our mental architecture to what is recommended by experiments of people interacting with pictures and visual prompts e.g., the “Perky Effect.” The upshot is a re-installment of the interior mind apart from the external world and model of the self typical of the very strands within his discipline that he had criticized for being disembodied. The “new meaning” of his cognitive science is a variation on an old one that he calls “mentalese.” Lakoff might be over estimating science when he concludes that the embodiment revolution changed how we understand the mind by tying it into feeling and emotions. They play no role in Bergen’s science of embodied simulation. It is, therefore, not by coincidence that he focuses on action throughout his book. Hence, his account of understanding is silent about listening, which is prior to a

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889 Ibid., 82. See also ibid., 53.
890 Ibid., 148.
891 Ibid., 53.
892 Ibid., 61.
893 Ibid., 14.
894 Ibid., 26.
895 Lakoff, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, x.
verbal simulation “louder than words” and surely required in order to understand what is said.\(^{896}\)

5.2 Evan Thompson

At this point it is apt to depart from Bergen and sharpen the argument to include people who have made a concerted effort to break out of theoretical objectivity that neglects the relevance of experience to scientific explanations. One such philosopher is Evan Thompson. In *Mind in Life* (2007) he claims to have harmonized science with phenomenology yet this very claim is befuddled in ways that point back to the essential components of this dissertation; the importance of the middle medium in reconfiguring a contradiction into a harmonious whole. In short, Thompson recognizes that mediation between science and phenomenology yields a dual account of an object of inquiry that is coordinate with the spectator and participant perspectives; however, rather than affirm the ontologically distinct auditory dimension of cognition that would facilitate dialectical mediation between science and phenomenology, he consistently asserts in his “enactive approach” to cognitive science the first-person perspective on experience. As a result, even though he aims to transcend the first person standpoint and think about life from the side of genetic phenomenology, he cannot but conflate the latter with static phenomenology and thereby reduce his concept of life (self-generation, autopoeisis) to an ontic science.\(^{897}\) He effectively undermines his intention to have mediated between science and phenomenology.

The stages in the argument are as follows: (1) “Incongruity of Speech and Deed” argues that Thompson purports to have a dialectical theory about how to mediate between the sciences and phenomenology, but in practice contradicts it because he does not recognize the ontological difference between the two modes of cognition. (2) “Inverted Platonism, Platonism Nevertheless” explains how his conflation of beings with Being

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\(^{896}\) He states, “just as recalling sight and sounds activates perception—specific brain areas, so recalling actions activates those parts of the brain that are responsible for engaging those same actions” (Bergen, *Louder than Words*, 44). But sounds are not perceived, and he never refers to speech as an action but rather, the latter is consistently defined in terms of doing something rather than having something done to one, which is also required for understanding i.e., simply listening. And he describes meaning as what you can do with something (ibid., 274 and 250).

\(^{897}\) Static phenomenology analyzes the formal structures of consciousness and its objects statically; genetic phenomenology “is concerned with how these intentional structures and objects emerge through time.” Evan Thompson, *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of the Mind* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 16-17.
argued for in (1) amounts to his return to the living body being a re-instigation of Cartesian dualism. (3) “Empathy is Prior to Empathy” explains how Heideggerian elements of Gadamer’s thought such as the ontological structure of human existence, auditory disposition and uniqueness of language for understanding among humans helps Thompson overcome the limits of his thinking and fulfill his intentions.

5.2.1 Incongruity of Speech and Deed
Thompson states, “The book as a whole is intended to bring the experimental sciences of life and mind into a closer and more harmonious relationship with phenomenological investigations of experience and subjectivity.”898 With this statement he indicates how he believes science and phenomenology differ from one another. If as he says phenomenology deals with experience and subjectivity (ultimately the lived body from a first person perspective on emotions, motives and affects),899 then it is probable that for him the experimental sciences of life such as biology, neuroscience and psychology do not. The latter tend to produce laws, theories and rules from a third-person standpoint that abstract from “this concrete thing here.” Phenomenology and the physical sciences thus have characteristics that stand in opposition to one another, but the opposition is not a contradiction. Like E. Slingerland and E.O. Wilson, Thompson believes that embodied cognitive science, or rather his and Francisco Varela’s “enactive cognitive science” is positioned to mediate between science and phenomenology and thereby, implicitly, removes the contradiction between them.900 In contrast to its precursors in the “relatively short history of cognitive science,” their “enactive approach” aims to “build bridges between embodied dynamicist accounts of the mind and phenomenological accounts of human subjectivity and experience. The present book,” Thompson adds, “continues this project.”901 From the time in which the mind was modeled on a computer to the 1990’s when the embodied dynamicist approach emerged, cognitive science had been dominated by a top down approach to the body and life.902 That approach stems from the subject-

898 Ibid., ix.
899 I recall here that Bergen has been shown to have neglected these very elements of human experience in his voice simulation hypothesis.
901 Thompson, Mind in Life, 13.
902 The embodied dynamicist view of cognitive science treats the mind as a self-organizing dynamic system in the world rather than as a static container of representations. Thompson has four criticisms of the embodied dynamicist account of the mind the principle one of which is that it does not have a means by which
object dichotomy of classical cognitive science and justifies the mind being a system of
internal representations opposed to the body, action and the external world and thus
without a clear relation to them. Thompson believes that he and Varela have broken down
this dichotomy and as a result, have reconfigured how to think about cognition. According
to the “enactive approach” mental processes are coupled with “the performance or
carrying out of an action.”903 Considered as such, mental processes cannot be disentangled
from the bio-physiologial processes of the body. To understand one requires an
understanding of the other. For this reason, there is no contradiction between the mind and
the body nor for the same reason between scientific explanations and phenomenological
accounts of experience. They are harmonized with one another in a bottom to the top
approach to explain human cognition.

The problem with Thompson’s endeavor to mediate between science and
phenomenology is that he does not retain their independence from one another. Harmony
consists of uniting opposing sides and not subordinating one to the other. By emphasizing
how the differences are removed Thompson effectively undermines the basis for
harmonizing science with phenomenology. This comes to the fore in both his explanation
of complementarity and when he operationalizes it in “experimental
neurophenomenology.” With respect to the former, while reporting on the fifth idea united
under the enactive approach he specifies: “. . . experience is not an epiphenomenal side
issue, but central to any understanding of the mind, and needs to be investigated in a
careful phenomenological manner. For this reason, the enactive approach maintains that
mind science and phenomenological investigations of human experience need to be
pursued in a complementary and mutually informing way.”904 He elaborates upon what he
means by a mutually informing and complimentary way as follows:

    it is not enough for phenomenology simply to describe and philosophically analyze
lived experience; phenomenology needs to be able to understand and interpret its
investigations in relation to those of biology and mind science. Yet mind science has
much to learn from the analyses of lived experience accomplished by

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903 Ibid., 13.
904 Ibid., 13-14.
phenomenologists. Indeed, once science turns its attention to subjectivity and consciousness, to experience as it is lived, then it cannot do without phenomenology, which thus needs to be recognized and cultivated as an indispensable partner to the experimental sciences of mind and life. As we will see, this scientific turn to phenomenology leads as much to a renewed understanding of nature, life and mind as to a naturalization of phenomenology.\footnote{Ibid., 14.}

According to Thompson, phenomenology and science complement one another by employing one another’s discoveries in order to advance their own designs. He envisions an experimental science that complements subjective experience and a subjective experience that complements empirical science. The circularity of this mutually informative formulation exhibits a problem explained earlier in the section on “method” and with reference to Descartes. While Descartes had distinguished mathematics from the experimental sciences, they presuppose Euclidean space and therefore, add and subtract from the same world view. Does Thompson’s argument for interplay between phenomenology and science also amount to a repetition of the same? Is the complementarity of science with phenomenology a smoke screen for making one conform to the other?

In the section of Mind in Life titled “Experimental Neurophenomenology,” Thompson aims to incorporate phenomenological investigations into experience into neuroscientific research on consciousness.\footnote{Ibid., 338-346.} In order for neuroscience and phenomenology to stand in a mutually complementary relation to one another the assumptions of each must be preserved. In the context of a doctor-patient relationship this might involve “empathy as a prerequisite for informed consent,” discussion of “psychosocial aspects of disease,” “nonverbal communication between patients and medical practitioners,” “humanistic medicine” and considerations of “physician conscience for the physician-patient relationship.”\footnote{Ibid., 312.} Thompson, however, dispenses with the context in which these considerations would have been important. He replaces the inter-subjective context with the singularity of the phenomenological reduction. When it is applied to the contents of consciousness it is not the flow of experience that is preserved and instead what he calls the data of experience.

\footnote{I am copying titles of essays from the table of contents in Gerald P. Turner and Joseph Mapa. ed., Humanistic Health Care: Issues for Caregivers (Ann Arbor: Health Administration Press, 1988). The book is one among many dealing with humanistic health care available at the Markham-Stouffville Hospital library.}
The first indication of Thompson breaking with the hermeneutical or interpretive and therefore communicative and inter-subjective forum in which to understand a medical condition is in his interpretation of the phenomenological reduction. He argues that the “reduction” includes “awareness of awareness” or “meta-awareness.” The latter requires one to both suspend “one’s inattentive immersion in experience” and “the capacity to notice such immersion.”909 This ability to suspend consciousness while also being aware of its movements in a situation he likens to Buddhist mindfulness (shamatha-vipashyana).  

910 As with this sort of mindfulness, the “phenomenological reduction” as Thompson understands it aims “not to break the flow of experience, but to reinhabit it in a fresh way, namely, with heightened awareness and attunement.”911 In the words of his colleague and collaborator Francisco Varela, it strives for the mind “to be present to itself long enough to gain insight into its own nature and functioning.”912 Perhaps the best example of preserving the flow of experience in the conscious mind is James Joyce’s novels in which he describes the stream of consciousness. He captures what it is like to be immersed in an experience while also being mindful of it (otherwise he could not have written about the contents of his mind). Thompson does not, however, opt for this manner of preserving the phenomenological side of the process. Instead, he reduces the flow of experience that his Buddhist version of the phenomenological reduction is supposed to preserve, to data. He mentions that first-person data “strongly constrains the analysis and interpretation of physiological processes,” and that data about the latter might similarly constrain “first-person data.”913 He states concisely, “such first-person descriptive reports can be called ‘first-person data’”914 (my italics). As we can see, rather than the give and take of a conversation between patient and doctor playing a role in the articulation of a phenomenological account of experience; a process that would yield not only an understanding of the patient’s motives and purposes, but in addition, the opportunity to sharpen their knowledge in light of reports by others with similar experiences, symptoms and ailments, Thompson opts for a first-person translation of experience into data that he

909 Thompson, Mind in Life, 19.
910 Ibid., 445, Note 2.
911 Ibid., 19.
913 Thompson, Mind in Life, 340.
914 Ibid., 338. He mentions “data” eight times in two pages, ibid., 338-339.
says belongs to the third-person. The experimental-empirical side of his system thus matches, and does not correct, theoretical science. Daniel Dennett explains:

> The term “phenomenology” has traditionally been associated with an introspective method—an *examination* of what is presented or given to consciousness. Although this has been the ideology all along, it has never been the practice. Locke, for instance, may have thought his ‘historical, plain method’ was a method of unbiased self-observation, but in fact it was largely a matter of disguised aprioristic reasoning about what ideas and impressions *had to be* to do the jobs they “obviously” did.  

Thompson might believe that phenomenology discloses an unbiased description of the flow of experience, but as suggested above by Dennett is in fact collecting data that conforms to a pre-given belief that introspection has exclusive access to the authenticity of experience. This introspective method for understanding experience leads the mind to retreat into ever more remote realms from common sense and ultimately from “the external world” until a state of mysticism is achieved. It is not by mere coincidence that Thompson finds solace in the Buddhist desire not to desire to have an experience and instead, to merely undergo one, which he believes the phenomenological reduction also achieves. In the domain of practice where his “enactive approach” is supposed to distinguish itself from its classical predecessors he shows that it is, in fact, a continuation of the Cartesian *cogito*.

In order for Thompson to avoid complementarity from becoming conformity and a confirmation bias he must separate the spheres of phenomenology and science from one another and insist upon their lack of congruence at the level of operating assumptions and methods. Indeed, this is implied by Neils Bohr’s theory of “complimentarity physics” according to which mutually exclusive aspects of matter, wave and particle, also have complementary properties. Had Thompson preserved that principle of physics he would also have preserved the capacity of phenomenology and science to, as he intends, “strongly constrain” one another’s tendency. This however presupposes making an ontological distinction between them, which he endorses in words, yet cancels in performance on more than a few spurious occasions.

Thompson asserts a position from which boundaries are retained in order for a dialectic of standpoints to operate for the sake of finding unity when he distinguishes

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static from genetic phenomenology in Edmund Husserl’s later philosophy and suggests that they are coordinate with epistemologies that vary according to human disposedness or ways of relating to an object of knowledge. He explains:

The correlational structure of intentionality belongs to what Husserl called static phenomenology. As his thought progressed, however, Husserl found that he needed to articulate a genetic phenomenology, that is, a phenomenology whose point of departure is not the explicit correlational structure of intentional act (noesis) and intentional object (noema), but rather the genesis of intentional experience in time. From the standpoint of genetic phenomenology, we need to account for the correlational structure of intentionality developmentally by understanding how it emerges from inarticulate experience that does not have a clear subject-object structure. One wellspring of this kind of experience is the lived body (Leib); another is time consciousness. The shift from static to genetic phenomenology thus marks a turn toward the lived body and time-consciousness. Thus it enables us to deepen the connection between phenomenology and the enactive approach.917

In this crisp distinction between the two kinds of phenomenology Thompson distinguishes the correlational structure of intentional act and intentional object from the developmental correlational structure of intentionality that emerges from experience that does not have a clear subject-object structure. He aligns his enactive approach to cognitive science with the latter and suggests that it entails a relation to an object of inquiry distinct from that typical of the first stage in the evolution of cognitive science, i.e., classical cognitive science that models the mind on a computer. That he is aware of the difference between them being a question of human disposedness or way of relating towards objects of knowledge is evident in the distinction he makes between “active” and “passive genesis.” He writes, “In active genesis subjects play an active and deliberate, productive role in the constitution of objects. The products of active genesis are tools, artworks, scientific theories, experimental interventions, logical judgments, mathematical propositions, and so on.” This “active genesis” he explains next presupposes “passive genesis.” It consists of “a state of being involuntarily influenced and affected by something. In particular, it means being influenced and affected on an aesthetic level, in the original Greek sense of aesthesis as sense perception, including especially the perception and felt experience of what is attractive and unattractive.”918 Here we have the rudiments of the third-person perspective of classical brain science that insists on a separation between thought and the body; hence, Thompson’s criticism that it neglects the affects, emotions and motives that

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917 Thompson, Mind in Life, 28.
918 Ibid., 29.
are accessible to subjective experience and; the first-person perspective that renders human experience relevant to epistemology. He even draws the reader’s attention to Merleau-Ponty’s term *comportement* to describe the structure of behavior, which is in alignment with phenomenology in general having a “view of the mind as having to constitute its objects.”

Despite endorsing a positional epistemology where what something is depends upon how we comport ourselves to it, Thompson exhibits a tendency to deny it. Autonomy is a moral category in philosophy. Autopoiesis is a biological category. They belong to different domains of inquiry and are revealed to us from different points of view and yet, Thompson subsumes both to the idea of self-regulation and self-production. This suggests a tendency to think from one side of a problem alone for the sake of internal consistency, which is typical of a mind that is more concerned about rules than with questions they generate about their own limitations relative to the meaning of a topic and thereby foster a radical about-face evident in the early and late thought of Husserl, Heidegger, Wittgenstein and Plato to name a few. The philosophical theory propounded at the outset of their life of inquiry contradicts the position they took toward the end. This is one reason to cast a vote for Gadamer’s dialectical approach to interpretation (prefigured by the technical and psychological sides of interpretation advocated by Schleiermacher). The life of thought is not linear. By being consistent with one side of the dialectic, Thompson undermines “the inner life of the real.”

Further to the point, rather than be consistent with his own distinction and explain how differences are a catalyst for the endeavor to find common ground between them, Thompson justifies the phenomenological character of his enactive approach to cognitive science in terms of the empirical sciences, i.e., family resemblance. He states that the enactive approach includes under its heading the idea “that living beings are autonomous agents that actively generate and maintain themselves, and thereby also enact or bring forth their own cognitive domains.” He mentions that the nervous system is “an autonomous dynamic system,” that “cognition is the exercise of skillful know-how in situated and embodied action,” that “a cognitive being’s world . . . is a relational domain enacted or brought forth by that being’s autonomous agency and mode of coupling with

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919 Ibid., 15. He also contrasts Merleau-Ponty’s “outside spectator” adopted by the empirical sciences in “viewing matter, life, and mind as part of nature,” from what Merleau-Ponty calls the “inside participant” (ibid., 81).
The influence of phenomenology on his characterization of “enactive cognitive science” is clear. By “autonomy” he means autopoeisis or self-generation from a self-organizing structure that he detects in Merleau-Ponty’s account of the lived body. “Skillful know-how” harkens to being immersed in an activity such as hammering, profiled by Heidegger in the “ready-to-hand,” in which the subject-object dichotomy does not apply. The mention of “world” recalls the task to think of beings in-the-world rather than independently of it. In addition, the notion of enaction he uses to define “enactive” cognitive science mirrors the endeavor to understand the temporal coming to be (how-being) of an entity, which is propounded by both Heidegger and Gadamer in the event of understanding. The features of Thompson’s enactive approach to cognitive science are thus similar enough to phenomenology as to render the distinction between them insignificant. The result of a blended version of both he calls “enactive cognitive science.”

The problem with Thompson’s reasoning is that his way of categorizing a multiplicity of data is acceptable to an empirical and inductive method, but it is anathema to the philosophical tradition with which he identifies. Genetic phenomenology urges an approach to understanding from the side of emergent properties. Were Thompson consistent with it he would preserve the difference between science and phenomenology rather than efface it in order to yield not complementarity and instead, a dialectical tension between them that is affirmed in mutually self-correcting methods and assumptions. The fact that he argues for common ground between cognitive science and phenomenology in terms of features alone indicates that he privileges one side of the dialectic over the other. Hence, although he contrasts his “enactive approach” from its predecessor, which would entail respecting the findings of a computational model of the mind, he believes that the first stage in the relatively short history of cognitive science is retained in the later ones. Rather than treat the computer model of the mind and its classical subject-object dichotomy as a viable theory and method in its own right, he blends it and other models of the mind into his own thus undermining his claim to have harmonized different perspectives with one another.

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920 Ibid., 13.
921 Ibid., 4.
5.2.2 Inverted Platonism but Platonism Nevertheless

Rather than return the mind to life on the basis of humans having evolved (with the advent of displacement and symbolic language) to forget “life” and therefore being in constant need of an act of recollection, or turn of the inner ear to the voice of the Other within; rather than return the mind to life on the basis of having struggled with that which differentiates humans from all other life-forms, i.e., language, which would have compelled him to be explicit about that which he presupposes—the capacity to transpose himself into the world of animals and organisms not to mention other people’s worlds (of understanding and not only their “emotions”), Thompson grounds his concept of life in the biological structures of organisms. He makes this clear in the first sentence of the Preface to Mind in Life:

> The theme of this book is the deep continuity of life and mind. Where there is life there is mind, and mind in its most articulated forms belongs to life. Life and mind share a core set of formal or organizational properties... the self-organizing features of mind are an enriched version of the self-organizing features of life. The self-producing or “autopoietic” organization of biological life already implies cognition...

For Thompson, biology implies cognition. This follows from his ground to the top method of analysis that he positions against the top to the bottom approach characteristic, he argues, of every other stage in the recent history of cognitive science. The mind is in life because in the “relatively short history of cognitive science” life has been excluded by its concept of the mind. The ramifications of this reactionary habit of reasoning has been seen before. Thompson’s reverting to the body or its biological structure in order to do away with the mind being a container for mental representations inverts the classical binary opposition between the mind and the body without changing the binary nature of their relation. Heidegger had criticized Friedrich Nietzsche for tabling an inverted Platonism, yet Platonism nevertheless. Shoji Nagataki echoes this criticism when he writes of Thompson’s touchstone Merleau-Ponty:

> He attempted to attribute to the body the whole range of Husserl’s transcendental subjectivity, including “representation-hungry” cognition. And just because of it, his theory was criticized as “phenomenology without a head” (Madison 1973, p. 238).

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922 Ibid., ix.
Some argued that he could not give a satisfactory solution to the problem of mediating between the concrete character of perceptual cognition (i.e., a lower level cognition in the present text) and the abstract character of intellectual cognition (i.e., a higher level cognition), because he attributed too much to the body (Tilliette 1970, p. 83). Indeed, he showed that the origins of the intellectual or scientific cognition are in perception, which is one of the finest contributions of phenomenology of embodiment. The whole of human cognition, however, cannot be explained in terms of a constitutional-cognitive function specific to the body.\footnote{Shoji Nagataki and Satoru Hirose, “Phenomenology and the Third Generation of Cognitive Science: Towards a Cognitive Phenomenology of the Body,” in Human Studies 30, no. 3 (September 2007): 228.}

According to Nagataki, Merleau-Ponty replaces the traditional role of the mind in classical cognitive science with the body and perception. The latter are responsible for “representation-hungry” cognition.” The result, a “phenomenology without a head” is an inversion of the tradition whereby the head is without phenomenology. To the extent that Thompson is a disciple of Merleau-Ponty and Nagataki’s interpretation of the French phenomenologist can be accepted at face-value, Thompson re-institutes the dichotomy between the subject and object typical of the classical Cartesian computer model of the brain. He inverts the poles in the binary opposition between the mind and the body and thereby repeats the subject-object dichotomy from the opposite pole of the binary opposition. As a result, rather than acknowledge, as mentioned, the difference between human and non-human organisms on the basis of language, and the capacity to form representational systems, which is Gadamer’s starting point for thinking about thought, Thompson borders on holding the body, like Merleau-Ponty, responsible for “the whole of human cognition,” i.e., thought processes are an effect of the body’s mechanisms. Hence, his “neurophenomenology” never strays from the sciences that he believes cannot grasp life.

If Thompson intends to avoid reducing “life” to a cause, and to grasp the “action of enacting a law”\footnote{Ibid., 13.} instead, then he must deploy the dialectic of standpoints in whose tension-filled moment the thing might announce itself. He requires a phenomenology that is enlivened by logos/contention rather than a confirmation bias in order to prevent the question from becoming a theory. While he claims to have done this by positioning the enactive approach between science and phenomenology and acknowledges that they are coordinate with two forms of intentionality (static and genetic), it is also clear from the structure of his argument that he refuses to think about the question from opposing sides.
The implication is detrimental for his project. Rather than heed a lesson from Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics and locate life in the space between human being-in-the-world and the environment of animals, and on that basis harmonize the sciences with phenomenology (where phenomenological hermeneutics has access to an experience of species-being in language), Thompson confines the idea of life within only one side of his two-pronged phenomenology.

5.2.3 Empathy is Prior to Empathy
“Intersubjective interaction” is addressed by Thompson in the last chapter of his book and is set up as being a corrective to the problem of solipsism to which he (like Husserl) is led by making the subjectively-lived body the primary way in which to access “life,” i.e., autopoeisis. The interaction by which the self is drawn out of its introspective self-interpretation is language and the transmission of culture through it. He calls this process “generative phenomenology” and supports it with the research of M. Tomasello’s developmental cognitive psychology about joint attention. The joint attention or bond between infant and mother is the basis later in life for feelings of empathy among different people. This is a reasonable way in which to escape solipsism because the very formation of the self and thus first-person account of experience is structurally open to others.

However, Thompson also undermines his intentions. While he aims to step outside of his subjectivist account of life with intersubjective considerations such as empathy and language, he bypasses the significance of hearing to his account of openness to others (or structural openness of intentionality) and reasserts instead the primacy of motor-control systems of the body in order to make sense of human relationality. Hence, he reasons about how to transcend human subjectivity in terms of imaginative repositioning of the self into another location rather than in terms of the living language, and therefore never in fact transcends a subjective perspective on experience and life. Proof of this follows.

926 Consider Thompson’s explanation for autopoeisis: “the form or pattern of the autopoietic organization is that of a peculiar circular interdependency between an interconnected web of self-regenerating processes and the self-production of a boundary, such that the whole system persists in continuous self-production as a spatially distinct individual” (Thompson, Life in Mind, 101). What is the mechanism for this circular interdependency between self-regeneration and the self-production of a boundary? Although he acknowledges loops of interdependency that include the environment (ibid., 367), his explanation of autopoeisis quoted above mentions the “self” three times in one sentence; “self”-generation and “self”-production,” which is mentioned twice. This suggests that the movement of an organism arises from within and out of itself or its structure. Autopoeisis means what it says—self-making, which is a synonym for the terms “self-production” and “self-generation” that he uses to explain it.
Thompson mimics Edith Stein and interprets empathy solely in terms of projecting the self into someone else’s position.\textsuperscript{927} This of course is physically impossible and hence, empathy is always an “as if” experience.\textsuperscript{928} However, the impossibility depends on thinking of transposition being a change in spatial location. When it is reconfigured in terms of language, empathy so called depends on the capacity to share the mood heard in the rhythmic tonality of each other’s voice and on that basis understand what is being said about a topic. Thompson does not consider the possibility of reasoning about human connectedness in the middle voice (although he alludes to it) and instead, muzzles it by misappropriating forces of attraction and resonance that belong to action at a distance in sound and applying them to motor control systems, and, by misunderstanding why infants cry. With respect to the first, he attributes forces that belong to sound to the body when he states that seeing another person being pricked by a pin is an example of “affective resonance,” and “mutual resonance of motor systems.”\textsuperscript{929} We do not see resonance, but instead feel it through the nervous system. Consider how he positions the body:

Thus the thought behind the active/passive distinction is that our active orientation toward things in practical or theoretical reason, or artistic creation, presupposes a deeper and more fundamental openness to the world. It is an openness to being sensuously affected and solicited by the world through the medium of our living body, and responding by attraction and repulsion.\textsuperscript{930}

The active/passive distinction belongs to the middle voice of the living language (originally music) anticipated by Thompson in the phrase, “responding by attraction and repulsion” and in the claim that they are presupposed in the active and passive voices. But he replaces the living voice and thus language as the medium between the mind and the world with the “living body.” If as he says motor systems resonate then it is not due to the dynamic couplings of the body, but nervous system to which an auditory disposition is receptive in the structural openness of intentionality. Hearing responds to vibration and sight, to things seen.\textsuperscript{931}

\textsuperscript{927} Ibid., 386-393.
\textsuperscript{928} Ibid., 195; 380-390.
\textsuperscript{929} Ibid., 394-395.
\textsuperscript{930} Ibid., 29-30.
\textsuperscript{931} The following explanation by Albrecht is what I have in mind. He writes of music, “we should not fail to observe that it communicates in a more fundamental manner without symbols and across cultures as the direct transfer of energy,” adding that “[s] ound quite literally vibrates not only upon the eardrum but upon the skin and throughout the entire body.” Robert Albrecht, Mediating the Muse: A Communications Approach to Music, Media and Culture Change (New Jersey: Hampton Press Incorporated, 2004), 8.
This tendency to make the body and its motor-control systems that account for movement do the work of hearing is also evident in Thompson’s interpretation of why infants cry. He uses the example of a crying infant in response to another infant crying in order to explain “affective resonance.” He quotes Gallese as follows in support of his argument: “when we observe action performed by other individuals our motor system ‘resonates’ along with that of the observed agent.” It never occurs to Thompson that the babies who are crying in response to one another cannot see each other. When that fact is taken into account his explanation in terms of “bodily coupling” or “pairing” that allows empathy to be “the experience of another living body subject like oneself” falters. Babies cry in response to the sound of another voice because they cannot distinguish their own voice from the one they hear. They think it is their own because they have no concept of a self distinct from other selves at the level of sound and hearing. The capacity to differentiate self from other is only operative at the level of perceivable bodies. No baby is mistaking its hand for another baby’s hand, but sound?—very likely. The reason for this is that sounds are not experienced as being external to us. They cannot be seen or handled. Instead, they are a channel to the emotions. We therefore do not have empathy for others because we have emotions, but because prior to them and feelings we are open through an auditory mode of cognition Heidegger calls attunement. Rather than neglecting the body, as Thompson argues, Heidegger tries to prioritize the auditory disposition in the act of understanding and thereby anticipates Gadamer’s linguistic turn in philosophy. There are other elements of Thompson’s work that could be scrutinized for a visual bias including his concept of time (future directed because it is derived from Husserl) and decoupling, which is based on motor-control systems and not language with the result that he has no sense, as Gadamer says of Helmholtz’s view of memory, of “losing one’s way.” Thompson raises the question of dynamic interdependence between sensory stimulation and bodily activity in order to explain “changes in qualitative expression” and reports that

933 He writes, “Life is asymmetrically oriented toward the future because the realization of the autopoeitic organization demands incessant metabolic self-renewal. As Jonas (1968) declares, echoing Spinoza, life’s basic “concern” is to keep on going. This immanent purposiveness of life is recapitulated in the temporality and intentionality of consciousness. Consciousness is a self-constituting flow inexorably directed toward the future and pulled by the affective valence of the world. What I wish to explore now is how this forward trajectory of life and mind is fundamentally a matter of emotion” (ibid., 362). He compares the impulse of the emotions moving outward to the arrow of intentionality aiming at a target,( ibid., 364), which is a misappropriation of Aristotle’s metaphor. Aristotle is referring to *prohairesis* which has a future trajectory that aims at achieving an end. He is not referring to the emotions to which hearing is typically a channel.
934 Ibid., 313; 333.
hearing and touch have different structures, but does not explain how they differ from sight. He is concerned with the affects and emotions and movement, but never thinks of entrainment or how the body is moved by sound. He tries to transcend the first-person perspective with M. Tomasello’s research about a cognitive psychological explanation for the affects, but then comes back to that perspective. Rather than see the other as constitutive of the self and on that basis justify taking an interest in them for their own sake, i.e., their own good, he believes that others help humans to understand themselves and that this varies according to cultures. Overall, his introspective method confuses experience with contents of his mind because he discounts “being-with” being an ontological structure of human existence to which humans are attuned in language.

935 Ibid., 254; 257.
936 Ibid., 282-283.
937 In the words of Heidegger, that “Being transposed into others belongs to the essence of human Dasein” Martin Heidegger, The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 209. Were Thompson to cede that others are a structure of human existence, then he would be in a position to argue that although humans are constituted to be forgetful of social-being, or being-with-one-another, through dispositional recollection/turn of the inner ear humans are alerted to understanding that care of others is included within care of the self. Thompson, however, does not pursue this line of reasoning. He rejects Heidegger’s existential ontology because it does not take into account the body and therefore, for Thompson, the emotions. Thompson, Mind in Life, 477, Note 6.
Chapter Seven: Gadamer, Mithen, Donald

1 Introduction

Has Gadamer captured something of language from a middle-voiced (and ultimately humanistic) auditory stance that can be corroborated by the inter-subjectively verifiable methods of the natural sciences? Is an evolutionary theory about the origins of language in a proto-language prior to the distinction between language and music at all relevant to the inferences Gadamer makes about the musical dimensions of the inner word he believes is audible in both the spoken and written language today? A reply to the second question must precede an answer to the first. This is because if a proto-language, however it is construed, does not bear upon language as he understands it, then there is no point attempting a scientific explanation of his claims. But another methodological question is in order as well. Of all the theorists of evolution that could be consulted about the theme of this paper, this chapter focuses on Steven Mithen and Merlin Donald. This requires a justification that is acceptable to Gadamer since it is his claims that are being examined.

   (1) “Method” justifies selecting theorists about the evolution of language whose methods are contrary to one another (2) “Proto-language and Contemporary Language” argues that vestiges of a proto-language are in modern language and (3) “Reading and Speaking” argues against there being an unbridgeable divide between them and incorporates Derek Bickerton into the argument because he makes clear the presupposition underlying Mithen’s work. These are preliminary steps to understanding a scientific explanation of the inner word in the last chapter.

2 Method

Lammi quotes Gadamer with reference to Plato, “It is the task of philosophy to discover what is common even in what is different.”938 If, as Gadamer believes, truth is more likely to bubble to the surface in this context than one in which two parties agree, bringing Merlin Donald into a conversation with Mithen makes sense. In Pre-History of the Mind, Mithen distinguishes his position from that of Donald’s. Whereas he purports to be an archaeologist drawing upon psychology, Donald, he says, is a psychologist drawing upon archaeological

This seems about right. In *Origins of the Modern Mind*, Donald says that theoretical speculation is undervalued and should play a greater role in science.

Broad integrative theories of origin have traditionally predicted, synthesized, and inspired experimental work. Such theories have often preceded the strong confirmatory data upon which they would stand or fall; their function has been heuristic and imaginative, and their virtue has resided less in their correctness than in their ability to provide direction. Cognitive science needs more such theories, and more of that speculative wonder and respect for the whole that has raised other fields to such spectacular heights. Donald reports that theories with strong confirmatory data have a heuristic and imaginative value in that they prompt new directions in science. But at the same time, if there is so little validation of the theory, it might better be coined speculation and conjecture, which is Mithen’s point about Donald’s approach. Theories based on speculation are not scientific. Nevertheless, Mithen suggests that Donald’s work be read in tandem with his. This suggests that they share a common ground and that whatever that ground might be (according to the dialectic of a dialogue) will yield a higher degree of knowledge about a subject-matter than if they were in a huddle of like-minded people increasing their knowledge by addition of the same. That they themselves agree with this method follows from their aim to take into account different, even opposing disciplines in order to do more than either science could on its own. It is, therefore, not by coincidence that Mithen reaches similar conclusions about proto-language as Donald. They agree that mimesis is the bridge between ape and human forms of communication. Although their methods differ, the fact that their approaches

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939 Mithen writes, “I want to follow in Donald’s footsteps, although I believe he made some fundamental errors in his work—otherwise there would be no need for this book. But I want to turn the tables on Donald’s approach. Rather than being a psychologist drawing on archaeological data, I am writing as an archaeologist who wishes to draw from psychology. Rather than having archaeology play the supporting role, I want it to set the agenda for understanding the modern mind.” *The Prehistory of the Mind: a search for the origins of art, religion and science* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 10-11.


941 Because there is no fossil record for the evolution of language, Donald insists that a theory about it be constructed from the limited archaeological and anthropological data and existing literature (ibid., 203). It is this the archaeological data about which Mithen argues Donald is in error, *The Prehistory of the Mind*, 10.


943 Mithen writes, “It is my task within this book to perform a union, the offspring of which will be a more profound understanding of the mind than either archaeology or psychology alone can achieve (ibid., 13). Donald distinguishes two approaches to the mind; (1) cognitive science and neuropsychology that focus on mental capacity but not on evolution and (2) biopsychology and phylogenesis that do not deal with higher cognitive functions of humans and instead, in contrast to (1) with the continuity between apes and humans. After pointing out that the first resorts to a modulate theory to deal with higher functions and the second to a unitary theory (or single adaptation), Donald positions himself as a mediator between the two sides in that he will use both approaches; a modular theory of the mind and a theory of evolution. *Origins of the Modern Mind*, 9.
converge on mimesis gives them a higher degree of credibility concerning the evolution of language. Truth is a function of what can be inter-subjectively verified; its value is increased by the dialectical logic of their having taken up contrary sides to the same theme; archaeology (empirical facts) and psychology. Stated otherwise, Donald’s reaching for archaeology from psychology, and Mithen’s reversal of that direction cannot but yield a degree of cross-fertilization that makes an understanding of what they are talking about more robust than if either were taken on his own terms alone, or if the proto-language were examined from within the confines and assumptions of one discipline alone. That the dialectical interplay of these views should yield a higher degree of truth value is pertinent since, as I will argue below, Mithen’s reasoning is largely disengaged and functionalist whereas Donald’s tends toward the middle voice and performance.

3 Proto-Language and Contemporary Language

Are Mithen’s and Donald’s theories of language evolution relevant to Gadamer’s inferences about the inner word heard in language today? Donald’s answer is more certain of being affirmative than that of Mithen. Donald distances himself from cognitive science that he says “carries on as though humans had no culture, no significant variability, and no history.” He is thinking of what Julian Kiverstein calls GOLFAI in which the understanding of the brain was modeled on the computer. In contrast to that view, Donald thinks of the “brain-in-the-environment within a social-cognitive system with its own structure.” When thus situated cognitive development begins to have as much to do with culture as it does with natural processes and their functions. In fact, Donald thinks of human culture as a biological context on analogy with, or identical to, the context in which animal mental capacities develop. But the analogy is also false. Human capacities have outstripped those of any other species because of cultural accretions retained in our cognitive architecture. This argument is stated by him succinctly:

The essence of my hypothesis is that the modern human mind evolved from the primate mind through a series of major adaptations each of which led to the emergence of a new representational system. Each successive new representational system has remained intact within our current mental architecture, so that the modern mind is a mosaic structure of cognitive vestiges from earlier stages of human

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944 Donald, Origins of the Modern Mind, 1.
945 Merlin Donald, A Mind So Rare: the Evolution of Human Consciousness (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 152
946 Donald, Origins of the Modern Mind, 2.
emergence. Cognitive vestiges invoke the evolutionary principle of conservation of previous gains and are similar in principle to the many other vestigial behaviours we possess—for instance, baring teeth in anger, or wailing in grief.\(^{947}\)

According to Donald, there are representational systems and stages in the mind’s evolution: the episodic of the apes and *Australopithecus*, the symbolic of modern humans and the midway point between them, the mimetic of *Homo erectus*. As he sees it, while these cultural systems are created by us and represented, e.g., in a grimace, coordinated dance or choice of words, they are also internalized as part of the cognitive architecture or structure of our minds.\(^{948}\) They are like filters or mediums between our minds and the world that make sense of our experiences. But the point of pertinence mentioned above is the “evolutionary principle of conservation of previous gains.” Our capacity for cultural innovation that yields new representational systems does not purge a prior system from the mind. The cognitive gains of the past are conserved and applied to the present. Even the episodic system typical of apes, continues to surface and shape how we experience and respond to the world. Whatever Donald, therefore, uncovers about a precursor to symbolic language has a bearing upon how cognition operates today; how we experience the world and respond to it.

Being an archaeologist first, Mithen’s research would seem to bear less upon the current state of affairs than Donald’s interest in the origins of the modern mind. And yet, in *The Pre-History of the Mind*, Mithen claims to be looking for the innate structure of human cognition.\(^{949}\) He maps out the development of technical, social and natural history modules. The transformations in the structure of the mind that Donald attributes to a capacity for cultural innovation, Mithen explains in terms of cross-domain mapping or cognitive fluidity. It accounts for the cultural explosion between 30,000 to 60,000 years ago (40,000 years after the emergence of anatomically modern humans).\(^{950}\) Hunting improved when the social intelligence of early hominids seeped into the natural history intelligence. By thinking of animals as people, they were able to more successfully predict where they would go. Thus does he account for the mind’s plasticity and its continual evolution. The modules are not encased or self-enclosed. How the walls between the modules of the mind merge with one another varies over the course of time in response to new demands.

\(^{947}\) Ibid., 1-2.

\(^{948}\) He states concisely, “we might assert that what humans evolved was primarily a generalized capacity for cultural evolution” (ibid., 10).

\(^{949}\) Mithen, *The Pre-History of the Mind*, 89.

\(^{950}\) I am consulting Slingerland on Mithen’s theory in *What Science Offers the Humanities*, 20.
However, after having written *After the Ice* (2006), Mithen realized that he had overlooked an important element in evolution of the mind when he had written *The Prehistory of the Mind* (1996); namely, the precursor to every other module of the mind. When he asked how, when and why language emerged in *The Singing Neanderthals* (2004), he was led to a common origin for both language and music before they evolved into separate modules. He argues that the common origin was likely part and parcel of the formation of a general intelligence that developed before the emergence of functionally specific modules. The general intelligence or rather the mechanism for merging the different chapels (natural history, social and technical) and “the sort of module free level of representation described by Jerry Fodor (1983) or Dan Sperber (1994) as the distinguishing characteristic of human intelligences” was music.  

Ian Cross remarks that for Mithen (and Karmiloff-Smith) playing music motivated the shift in later hominin evolution from domain-specific to domain-general competencies. It motivated the shift to “a generalized ability to deal with information that is not specific to a particular domain” due to “floating intentionality.” The same proto-musical act, such as tapping with a stick or foot can be transposed into different activities and therefore, different domains of the mind thereby uniting them (i.e., seeping through the chapel walls) in what we might think of as a general processor.

This suggests that a trace of the proto-language persists in language today, for example, in formulaic, spontaneous idioms that frequently, as Mithen says, violate rules of grammar, in gestures as well as in onomatopoeia, vocal imitation, sound synaesthesia, and IDS. He summarizes these remnants of Hmmm in modern language on page 276 of

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954 He specifies, in particular, how tempo, rhythm, melody and information affect meaning for infants (*The Singing Neanderthals*, 179) to such a degree that “melody is the message” (ibid., 72). These are the very aspects of language that Gadamer calls the “inner word” and that Mithen suggests are retained during the course of normal development. In contrast to the perfect pitch of infants that is eroded by language acquisition (ibid., 79), he does not think the same of melody and rhythm both of which characterize the prosodic nature of the spoken language (ibid., 24). He reasons, “On the basis of child development, it appears that the neural networks for language are built upon or replicate those for music” (ibid., 70). That this music is not simply a stage of infant development, but rather points back to a much earlier time of ancestral evolution (ontogeny as a guide to phylogeny) is affirmed by Mithen when in *The Pre-History of the Mind* he writes, “we can use child development to track the development of ancestral mind”, i.e., match up their cognitive architecture with the general intelligence of children, *The Pre-History of the Mind*, 64.
The Singing Neanderthals. But he adds, almost as an after thought, “the use of rhythm.” He says that rhythm is the most significant survival of Hmmmm within language, that it “enables fluent conversation to take place.”

Could rhythm or joint-attention be the deep structure of language that is evoked by music today and that is common to the human psyche, “although it may not appear in the surface structures?”

This might be his position, but it is also submerged in his tendency to distinguish music from language. These issues are discussed further below. Overall, much of what he concludes about this proto-language bears upon language today in some pre-scientific, non-rational contexts.

4 Reading and Speaking

Is a theory of evolution about the origins of language in a proto-language (prior to the distinction between language and music) relevant to the inference Gadamer makes about the musical dimension of the inner word that he believes is audible in both the spoken and written language today? As suggested above, in general, from Mithen’s perspective there is a narrow opening for the protolanguage to squeak into the spoken language today. The relevance of the proto-language for the written word is even more remote because Mithen draws a line between music and language that seems to contradict Gadamer’s view that reading is a conversation with a text. I repeat “seems” to contradict Gadamer’s opinion because he and Mithen have different assumptions about language. But as argued for already, this ensures that an inquiry into both positions and a dialogue between them is productive.

After having specified that hermeneutics aims to “reawaken the petrified language of writing so that it speaks anew” Gadamer relates in “Aesthetic and Religious Experience”:

Of course, it is not the mere fact that something is written down that is decisive here. It is certainly true that all forms of writing have to be brought to speak. Yet the usual function of writing lies in its referring back to some original act of saying, so that in this sense the text does not claim to speak by virtue of its own power. When I read the notes that someone has made, it is the speaker rather than the text that is, as it were, to be brought to speak again. However, in the case of “literary” texts (in the broadest sense), it is clearly not the speaker who is to speak again, but precisely the text, the message, the communication itself. How this comes about is a problem in its own

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955 “Hmmmm” is Mithen’s abbreviation for holistic, manipulative, multimodal, musical and mimetic. The Singing Neanderthals, 172.
956 Ibid., 276.
957 Ibid., 14. Or as Mithen says, “the neural networks for music processing evidently extend beyond the cerebral cortex into parts of the brain that have had a much longer evolutionary history.” Ibid., 67.
right. In fact, we call writing an art when poetry or literature succeeds in “speaking” to us.\textsuperscript{958} Gadamer is making it clear that for literary texts, it is not the voice of the author, their intentions or feelings that is brought to life again in the spoken language (that would be Schleiermacher), but rather “the text, the message, the communication itself.” As Walter Ong and Eric Havelock argue, writing re-wires the brain, alters thought processes from being pre-logical to being logical.\textsuperscript{959} What Gadamer therefore aims for is a kind of reading that is dialogical without being subsumed to the emotions, feelings, imagination and poeticizing mentality. This is accomplished by his belief that good reading consists of having a conversation with a text in the sense of re-enacting the structure of a living dialogue; putting one’s prejudices at risk, being questioned by the ideas and responding to them with a view to contemporary problems, e.g., objectivity. We can read about Socrates doing just that with sophists without losing an argument and in fact, making the content of what is being spoken about clear and distinct. What Gadamer picks up on is how this happens; namely, through a dialogical structure discernable in Plato’s dialogues and therefore, literally readable.

So what is this dialogical structure? Gadamer claims to have returned the dialectic to the living voice. The structure that moves a conversation (as distinct from either idle chatter or contesting sophists yearning for public approbation) is determined by rhythmic and tonal units (cadence and modulations of the voice, attunement to mood as argued for in Part One). The structure of a dialogue when couched in terms of the voice has specific acoustic features that are symbolic (or a symbolic transformation) of mood heard in harmony of voices. This requires further elucidation, and in fact prefigures the next chapter. Oliver Sacks provides a provisional explanation in terms of music and memory:

Entire books can be held in memory—the \textit{Iliad} and \textit{The Odyssey}, famously, could be recited at length because, like ballads, they had rhythm and rhyme. How much such recitation depends on musical rhythm and how much purely on linguistic rhyming is difficult to tell, but these are surely related—both “rhyme” and “rhythm” derive from the Greek, carrying the conjoined meanings of measure, motion, and stream. An articulate stream, a melody or prosody, is necessary to carry one along, and this is something that unites language and music, and may underlie their perhaps common origins.\textsuperscript{960}


\textsuperscript{960} Oliver Sacks, \textit{Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain} (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2007), 239.
There is a structure of tones and rhythms, a pattern of tonal waves and meters inherent to poetry that facilitates memorization. This means that “entire books” can be held in memory when they retain the structural elements of the spoken language; not simply a pulse or a pitch, but a pattern of rhythms and tones to which one relates by responding in a repetition (or recitation). Just what is uttered can never be the same as the author’s voice. But that is not the point in any event. The subject-matter is the point of convergence between voices that evoke cadences and modulations.

Mithen stands as an obstacle to holding that either thinking, writing or reading are on a continuum with the musical dimension of the spoken language. This is because, in contrast to Gadamer, he is not concerned with the phenomenon of language (or with the event of speaking, reading and writing in which cadence and modulation are important to understanding), but with the idea of language instead. In order to think about the idea of language one cannot be thinking of it in terms of being a speaker. Ideas come into focus through hindsight and reflection upon what has happened thus rendering the phenomenon an object (or the history of thought, a tradition). Sundering contingencies and circumstances from language in order to clarify general characteristics does not befit hermeneutics of the voice, and instead a functionalist account. Consequently, when Mithen examines music and language he reaches very different conclusions about them than Gadamer who models understanding on play (or a middle-voiced participation).

On the one hand, Mithen points out that music is without meaning because it is non-referential, without universal rules (only stylistic ones) and does not communicate anything about the world. To explain how music is meaningless, he observes that if the words in a sentence are rearranged, the meaning is fundamentally altered, but if the notes are rearranged, “It may make the piece sound awkward, but the reversal cannot be said to change its meaning, because there was none to change in the first place.” Even music that bears the closest resemblance to the spoken language, Indian music, is without meaning because it does not have a grammatical structure. In fact, the lengthy “speech acts” of Indian mantras being without any grammatical structure (and therefore without meaning), yet fixed and

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962 He states that “some sequences of notes, may create similar emotional responses in different individuals (as I will examine in chapter 7), there is no agreed convention describing how notes refer to emotions as there is for words and their meanings” (ibid., 18).
963 Ibid., 20.
964 Ibid., 12.
passed down from generation to generation he concludes “are, perhaps, even closer than
IDS to the type of Hmmmm utterances of our human ancestors.”

So what good is music? He writes:

It can also make us move, by the phenomenon of entrainment. We can therefore
describe music as ‘manipulative’ rather than referential in character. Language is
often thought to be principally referential because it tells us things about the world;
often, however, when we are told something we are driven to action, and so language,
too, might be portrayed as being manipulative.

Mithen reasons that music is emotional and taps into motor-control systems, hence
entrainment that “naturally leads to dancing.” He gives this topic more attention in the
section “Music and Motion” in The Singing Neanderthals. But the point is the same. Music
expresses and induces the emotions and hence, is manipulative. After pointing out that music
is non-referential and therefore does not “tell us anything about the world,” he explains that it
has an impact on both the emotions (anger, joy, disgust, sadness), and the body (entrainment
or moving in time to music). He concludes: “We can therefore describe music as
‘manipulative’ rather than referential in character.” Given his concern for the relationship
between music and the evolution of the human physique it makes sense that he would
focus upon the manipulative-emotional side of music since it is the emotions, he later points
out that trigger action of the body, but for him, thoughts do not.

On the other hand, he defines language as having a stable lexicon of symbols and
grammar. While the spoken language might well be musical and therefore emotional and
manipulative, it is distinct from music in that it is rule bound and communicates something
about the world (or is referential) and therefore, has meaning. Music and language have
characteristics that are opposite to one another. Mithen makes contrasting statements that
make this clear such as, emotional expression is more central to music than to language

965 Ibid., 277.
966 Ibid., 22-23. He re-iterates this position, “In summary, music can be used to express our emotions,
and to manipulate the emotions and behaviour of others. In modern Western society, and probably in those of
all modern humans, music is rarely used in this manner other than for entertainment, because we have a far
more powerful means of telling someone what we are feeling: language. But there would have been a time
when our ancestors lacked language even though they had a complex range of emotions and the need at times to
influence the behaviour of other individuals. This is, in fact, the situation of our close relatives who are alive
today, the great apes” ibid., 101.
967 Ibid., 152-153.
968 Ibid., 22.
969 Ibid., 15.
970 See ibid., 25 for his summative contrast.
971 Ibid., 24.
and thought arises from language and not music. Mithen is putting forward a distinction between them that resembles Lucien Lévy-Bruhl’s distinction between the pre-modern and modern mentalities, or Derek Bickerton’s distinction between speech and language.

Bickerton states his objections to theorists of human evolution who do not distinguish speech from language. He writes, “My heart sinks every time I open a new book on human evolution, turn to the index, and find the entry ‘language: see speech.’ ‘You don’t see speech, you idiot,’ I feel like yelling. ‘You hear speech.’ You can have speech without it meaning a thing; lots of parrots do. Speech is simply one vehicle for language. Another is manual sign.” Bickerton is emphatic about the fact that speech is heard and language is seen to the extent that he overlooks the ramifications of his literal interpretation of “see speech” in an index; namely, that the index can talk. This glitch in his verbal swagger provides an insight into the gist of his position. For him, whereas sounds are by themselves meaningless, language is meaningful because it has rules for combining phrases into meaningful wholes. These rules are grammatical and syntactical, but they could not have become standardized until the invention of the phonetic alphabet and writing. By seeing language, he must then mean printed word. This is supported by the concept of time he uses to distinguish A.C.S. from H.C.S. (Animal Communication System and Human Communication System respectively). In short, for Bickerton, language is the area of rational thought and speech, because it cannot but involve others and therefore the emotions, is potentially non-rational.

For Mithen and Bickerton, Gadamer’s hearkening for the inner word is nothing more than a reversion to a childlike state of mind typified by IDS (infant directed speech), PDS.
(pet directed speech) or the mentality of a gorilla. Hence, Mithen’s retort to John Blacking’s *How Musical is Man?* in the conclusion to *Singing Neanderthals* is not to get carried away by “the innate capacity for music.” Rather than think about the divine, when listening to “J.S. Bach’s Prelude to C Major think of *Australopithecines* waking in their treetop nests” or “a member of *Homo heidelbergensis* showing off a hand-axe” when listening to Vivaldi’s Concerto in B flat. An evolutionary explanation for music is very sobering. If the only purpose of music is to express and induce an emotional state, then there is virtually nothing that Gadamer’s notion of the inner voice has in common with music and by implication musi-protolanguage. For him, modulation, cadence and harmony of the inner voice make understanding of what is said during a conversation (or reading) possible. Mithen effectively debunks this possibility by identifying (in general) language with standards of technical efficiency and economy of style. Gadamer considers this in keeping with what has become of language in recent decades. It serves to direct attention toward what he calls “the living language,” Risser the “hermeneutics of the voice” as the locus for a study of how people understand one another. That is to say, Mithen’s exaggerating the distance between language and music is a tacit recognition that, as Gadamer says we are alienated from the voice of the other that is nevertheless within our grasp to heed in a way that addresses problems that concern us today.

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978 Ibid., 277-278.
Chapter Eight: The Inner Voice and Non-Manipulative Hmmmm

1 Introduction

Mithen and Gadamer disagree because they are interpreting language according to what each of their stances is capable of grasping. Mithen treats language as an object, and Gadamer as a phenomenon. But as mentioned earlier with respect to Mithen and Donald and the overall methodological efficacy of dialectic, differences are fruitful. Either coasting the surface of ontic beings or exacerbating the existential quality of the living language petrifies thought and is incapable of substantive self-criticism. Gadamer and Mithen thus have something constructive to say to one another in the course of building a case for the inner word being vestige of the proto-language lodged in our cognitive architecture. As seen in his contrast between music and language, Mithen’s dominant mode of reasoning is epistemic. In his account of the proto-language Hmmmm he is thus inclined to emphasize the manipulation of emotions rather than shared mood; a theory of mind in which other’s thoughts and desires are distinguished from one’s own rather than shared interaction. Nevertheless, there is also evidence of him wavering on his epistemic-visual orientations traces of which are developed by Merlin Donald and Ian Cross. Their research corrects the excesses of Mithen’s functionalist standpoint and thereby redirects it toward mood and shared interaction both of which are in sync with Gadamer’s concern for the event of language, the disclosure of being-as-a-whole, and the structure of reply and address in the production of harmony.

The first section, “Mood and Emotion: Mithen’s Functionalism” argues that Steven Mithen’s theory about the evolution of language lacks clarity because he is not cognizant of a change in stance that would enable him to differentiate feelings from moods and therefore, explain the transition from A.C.S. (animal communication systems) to H.C.S. (human communication systems). Section Two, “Moods and Emotion: Donald’s Middle Voice” turns to the work of Merlin Donald for an example of how scientific theories incorporate the middle voice and thereby creates new possibilities for understanding the evolution of language exemplified in work by Ian Cross, discussed in the third section, “Acoustics of the Proto-Language” and by Mithen, discussed in the fourth, “Moods, Mimesis and Boundary Loss.” The final section “Back to Gadamer and the Inner Word,” weaves together the ideas of Gadamer, and scientists such as Nicholas Bannan and Steven Brown to explain what the inner word is and how it functions in language to create unity out of disunity and thereby
closes the divide between the two disciplines and makes hermeneutics, or as Gadamer suggests the inner word, universal.

2 Mood and Emotion: Mithen’s Functionalism

According to Mithen, the protolanguage of both music and language that predates their separation is holistic, multimodal, manipulative, musical and mimetic. By holistic he means a system in which entire phrases constitute the communication rather than words. Rather than understanding “ma” “ta” “to” “pa” to mean mother go to dad, they would have uttered “matatopa” to mean the same thing. The parts gain their meaning from the whole phrase. As Alison Wary puts it, holistic phrases or noise/gesture systems convey meaning from the whole rather than from “the sum of meaning-laden parts.” The meaning conveyed she believes, and Mithen echoes her, is manipulative. She writes of the communication of chimps and humans:

In both species they are used for social interaction, where their purpose is the manipulation of the hearer, either to act in the interests of, or to recognize the identity and status of, the speaker. Given this cross-species correspondence, it does indeed seem reasonable to suppose that in protolanguage too, day-to-day social interaction was achieved by means of holistic utterances.

For her and Mithen, in a social setting or in a group the manipulative function of the protolanguage—to distinguish one’s role and purpose, one’s status from others (personal and social identity) is intensified.

From a strictly functionalist perspective there is without a doubt good reason to suppose the protolanguage included manipulation of the emotions or affects. Chimps and apes make sounds that trigger emotional responses in others, e.g., to warn them of an eagle or snake. *Australopithecines* likely also used to “sing” for similar reasons. But Mithen attributes

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979 Alison Wray, “Holistic Utterances in Protolanguage: The Link from Primates to Humans,” in The Evolutionary Emergence of Language: Social Function and the Origins of Linguistic Form, eds. Chris Knight, Michael Studdert-Kennedy and James R. Hurford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 285. Contra Bickerton’s argument that the pre-cursor to language was segmented words without grammar (his compositional theory). His theory is discussed by Mithen in The Singing Neanderthals in contrast to Wray’s on page 3.

980 Wray, “Holistic Utterances in Protolanguage,” 289. Alison Wray’s work is a point of departure for Steven Mithen’s research. Contra Derek Bickerton’s argument that the precursor to language was segmented words without grammar (his compositional theory), she argues that the precursor to language (words as symbols that represent things, events and states of affairs) was a communication system of holistic phrases (3). Holistic phrases or noise/gesture systems convey meaning from the whole rather than from “the sum of meaning-laden parts” (ibid., 285) e.g., tebima means give that to her. Her views led Mithen to reason that there are remnants of holistic phrasing in modern language. She distinguishes six kinds of “formulaic utterances” that exemplify this idea (ibid., 186).
the same system to early humans *Homo ergaster, Neanderthals* and *Homo erectus* without acknowledging a transition out of emotional manipulation to an emotional stance or state of mind. Derek Bickerton has, therefore, rightly criticized him on this score. With *The Singing Neanderthals* in mind he argues that the singing of gibbons cannot be used as a model by which to gauge the singing of early hominids. This is because they lived in different habitats. Whereas gibbons live in the canopy of trees, *Homo erectus* lived on the treeless savannas. The kind of singing that led to successful pair-bonding, demarcation of territory and keeping in touch among gibbons would have resulted in certain death for *Homo erectus*. Vociferous and prolonged sounds would have been a magnet for predators. There is thus no analogy between the songs of gibbons, “the middling relatives of humans,“ and the vocalizations of early hominids.

The musi-language theory about the origins of language is thus not out of the picture as of yet although nor can it be retained in the form that Mithen holds. Like Bickerton, he does not account for a rudimentary mood taking shape among our ancestors distinct from the instincts of a chimp or ape. This is an important omission because it is shared motivational structure or shared mood (being-with) that distinguishes human from animal communication. Unless Mithen is clear about the difference he cannot be clear about the nature of music that is responsible for the transition from A.C.S. to H.C.S. His lack of clarity is evident in the alternative to Aiello and Dunbar’s thesis. He explains, “Their proposition is that among our hominid ancestors there would have been a gradual transition from social bonding based on physical contact to social bonding based on vocalization.” The “bonding” they are referring to is gossip. This is not feasible because *Homo habilis* and *Homo rudolfensis* could not have had the imagination to sustain gossip (actually, Bickerton’s point), let alone refer to a third party. Mithen’s alternative to their version of bonding has intriguing implications for distinguishing emotions from manipulation (which he had previously aligned with one another). He writes:

> If we conceive of early vocal grooming as relating to the origin of music rather than of language, then Aiello and Dunbar’s arguments are more persuasive. We know that singing together enables social bonding, and this may induce the same feelings of pleasure and contentment as being groomed, as I will explore in chapter 14.

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982 Ibid., 62.
and Dunbar’s characterization of vocal grooming in its earliest stages is in fact much closer to song than speech, for they prioritize its tone and emotional content over its information content.\textsuperscript{984}

According to Mithen, Hmmmm originated in the circumstance described by Dunbar (population growth of \textit{Homo ergaster} or late \textit{Homo erectus} forcing grooming at a distance) yet did not have the purpose of transmitting information about others. Instead, singing together stimulated endorphins that made primates feel positively disposed toward one another.\textsuperscript{985} This is a plausible explanation. But the point here is that his highlighting of tone and emotional content in contrast to the information content e.g., beware snake, in Dunbar’s research suggest that something else is afoot than mere emotional manipulation in either music or holistic utterances of the protolanguage. He writes, “A mood is slightly different from an emotion: the former is a prolonged feeling that lasts over minutes, hours or even days, while the latter may be a very short-lived feeling.”\textsuperscript{986} Mithen has found himself in the same quandary as John Stuart Mill. Mill struggled to distinguish the desirability of virtue over the appetites on the basis of the duration of pleasure involved, but could not help asserting a qualitative difference between them.\textsuperscript{987} Mithen detects a difference between mood and emotion but cannot quite put his finger on how to define it. Hence, the non-referential tone and emotional content to which he refers as being constitutive of the origin of music and the point of transition from A.C.S. to H.C.S., he still attributes to monkeys. If it is shared interaction, shared mood (\textit{mitsein}) that distinguishes human and H.C.S. from non-human animals and A.C.S., and music is a conduit for the formation of social-bonds and therefore shared moods, then “music” so understood cannot also characterize the speech of monkeys. Yet Mithen asserts just this. Shortly after the indented passage quoted earlier he specifies that “rhythmic and melodic utterances” imply an emotional content alone typical of gelada monkeys.\textsuperscript{988} Gelada

\textsuperscript{984} Ibid., 136.
\textsuperscript{986} Mithen, \textit{The Singing Neanderthals}, 90.
\textsuperscript{987} In the essay “Utilitarianism” Mill attempts a solution. He argues that virtue was pursued because it was useful, but that over the course of time this reason for seeking it was forgotten and since then it has been thought to be pursued for its own sake. In \textit{The Genealogy of Morals}, Nietzsche argues that virtue being useful explains why its origins in utility would never, ever be forgotten by servile types. John Stuart Mill, \textit{Utilitarianism}. Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Incorporated, 1957. Friedrich Nietzsche, \textit{The Birth of Tragedy and The Genealogy of Morals}, trans. Francis Golffing. New York: Doubleday and Company Incorporated, 1956.
\textsuperscript{988} Mithen, \textit{The Singing Neanderthals}, 136.
monkeys might well create such utterances, but if so, then the utterances must be distinguished from the prosodic elements of human speech, i.e., a uniquely human sort of music in language which Mithen does not define. It might well be for this reason that he continues to equivocate on the meaning of moods and emotions. For example, with reference to the work of Patrik N. Juslin and Klaus R. Scherer he speaks of “emotional states” as if they were the same as emotions.989 Further to the point he reasons “just as we automatically infer a speaker’s thoughts when listening to a spoken utterance, and to some extent come to share those thoughts, so we automatically have emotions aroused within ourselves while listening to music. In fact, music often manipulates our mood.”990 Mithen is making inferences about human communication on the basis of the experience of listening to music. In this case, music is not the expression of a private feeling, but rather the channel or forum for shared emotion, which he suggests might also account for shared thoughts (i.e., theory of the mind).991 The point is not “emotion” but the meeting ground between conspecifics. On the basis of tuning into that middle ground the music of language builds common understanding and not a cacophony of independent and spontaneous utterances. This makes sense and indicates that he has a nuanced understanding of emotion being a state of mind (attitude or ethos) distinct from mere feeling. Evan Thompson is helpful in this regard. He explains that there is no “natural kind of emotion” (which I interpret to mean mood) such as the emotion (I would say feeling) of anger, surprise or fear. Instead, emotion, i.e., mood, he says is a “prototype whole brain event . . . a global state of the brain that recruits and holds together activities in many regions, and thus cannot have simple neural correlates.”992 Emotion-mood thus understood, as he says, is not a reflex and instead, wells up in an organism to coordinate the entire neuraxis of the brain stem, limbic area, superior cortex, visceral, endocrine and immune systems. This is what I understand Heidegger to mean by a state of mind or mood that discloses our way of being-in-the-world. Mithen tends to confuse it with feelings.

Mithen hijacks the distinction between mood and reactive emotions (or really feelings) when he unreflectively and without qualification adds to the words quoted

989 Ibid., 101.
990 Ibid., 23.
992 Ibid., 362-363.
above, “In fact, music often manipulates our mood.” With this qualification he has effectively contradicted his earlier reasons for using music to exemplify the sharing of thoughts and moods. Mithen’s wavering on the difference between moods (shared because they are intrinsic to mitein or human relationality and the emotions (in the sense of private feelings) is a consequence of the position from which he thinks about music. When he interprets it from the position of a spectator he is prone to think about function or as Daniel Dennett urges theoreticians to ask, “who benefits?”993 From that standpoint the only alternative to benefitting oneself is being used for the benefit of others.

Ray Jackendoff is explicit about the two standpoints that Mithen tends to run together and this enables him to identify the limits of thinking in terms of one side alone, and new possibilities from another side. He distinguishes a functionalist from a processural and structural approach to understanding music.994 The processural befits the coming to be of the phenomenon and is from that account of origins closest to the roots. The latter is just below the surface of Mithen’s thinking about mood or state of mind, but because he is not explicit about the change in stance to which Jackendoff has just alerted us, he is not aware of the limits of his analysis and for that reason, is not aware of a viable alternative explanation of the same phenomenon. Jackendoff is and demonstrates it when he writes, “Consider now what music is used for. Probably furthest from the evolutionary roots of music are the uses in which people sit and passively listen to a performance (just as paintings in a museum are probably the uses of art furthest from the roots of human pictorial abilities).”995 From the position of the process, Mithen’s conclusion about music and the manipulative dimension of the proto-language are furthest removed from their evolutionary roots. Why is that? He is a self-professed archaeologist making inferences about language from the fossil record. Is not carbon dating as close as anyone can come to the extant origins of the phenomenon? No, because it is not amenable to a performative understanding of the act of speaking. The phenomenon of language cannot be grasped from the disengaged perspective alone, only the idea of language can.

993 Dennett writes, “Fortunately, Darwinian reasoning is all about explaining things ‘with a point.’ An account in terms of natural selection presupposes an answer—one answer or another—to the question Cui bono?” Daniel C. Dennett, Freedom Evolves (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 260.
994 Jackendoff does not agree that music and language having common origins. I am consulting him as a guide for how to think about a problem.
The primary obstacle to Mithen’s excavating the roots of music is the stance he takes. Archaic humans had no cognizance of the spectator’s position he invokes in order to juxtapose music with language and reason about their adaptive roles in an evolutionary framework. But if hominids were not engaged in a back and forth reactive movement between the active and passive dispositions upping the ante in a contest for $x$, then how did they communicate? From a strictly logical point of view, one cannot both be active and passive, a sender and receiver of a message any more than the inner word can be public. From a propositional point of view, the existential answer makes no sense. But from the plausible middle voice it does. Hominids who sang were affected by the song they made. This presupposes a de-centering of the self typical of an auditory disposition and the capacity to translate feelings and emotions into a symbolic form (musi-language) others can understand (more about this later). While Jackendoff, therefore, concurs with Mithen that music is largely used to enhance affect associations, in contrast to him, he is aware that this could not have been the primary adaptive function. Not only is evidence for it scanty, as Jackendoff points out, but in addition, to expect an early hominid to have been a passive listener, like Mithen, is not credible. Instead, if the “thought experiment” Bickerton says is vital to science has any currency, then maybe the act of making sounds together or on the savannas was not for purposes of “pair-bonding” or “sexual display” and instead, for the purpose of mutual assurance and security. We are vulnerable outside of a group setting and cannot survive without the cooperation of others. Singing or making sounds in response to other sounds to ensure one another that we are there contributes to the consolidation of a group. Reply and address in kind and synchronicity, and not meaningless grunts or squawks were thus crucial to the formation of a proto-language because our survival depended on them.

Even Derek Bickerton can be enticed to vote for this motion. He argues that protolanguage consisted of pidgin and icons. He explains that pidgin is what people do when they speak different languages yet nevertheless try to communicate. This attests to vestiges of the pre-human language in modern human cognitive architecture that is not indexed to a situation and moreover, includes the capacity to combine phrases. For Bickerton, although pidgin has no rules, it can still combine gestures and sounds. On what basis? The “intra-action” of rhythm between speakers is the skeleton for language. The spoken language in

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996 Bickerton, *Adam’s Tongue*, 3.
997 Ibid., 41.
combination with other speakers in a dialogical context, which is how Gadamer thinks about language, has a self-unfolding structure. Is it context specific? Very likely except that pidgin by Bickerton’s own reasoning includes symbols or words about a state of affairs that have meaning independent of the stimulus or occasion. He argues that icons were the first symbols because they can act as indices as well. The rules for combining phrases of symbolic import, i.e., information about a source of food and not just warning calls or mating calls intended to enhance one’s own fitness in the “here and now,” likely combined with other symbols during the process of cooperating with others. The fission-fusion process that he says characterized pre-hominid and early hominid collectives would not have been an impediment to the standardization of the rules and instead would have facilitated their transmission across many groups. In short, the “here and now” that he associates with indices is precisely the time in which rules for combining symbols transpired. Those enacting the process would surely have felt a sweep of exhilaration and this in turn might have motivated the creative process with others. The concrete now is thus delivered from being an A.C.S. involving manipulation to being the time for the event of understanding, which is how Heidegger and Gadamer view the meaning of Being.

Further to the point, the sounds could not have been reciprocated unless late Homo erectus or early humans had acquired the capacity to control their voice. Those who may have yelled spontaneously rather than utter a tone in kind to the one they heard to form a collective voice they would not have been able to distinguish from their own, would have been shunned, deselected and vulnerable to attacks by tigers and wolves. Spontaneous and vulgar grunts like barks would have been disadvantageous to the group’s survival. To Bickerton’s probable retort that singing on the savannas would attract predators it is important to relate that the songs were not like those of gibbons because they required the early humans to listen to others, which implies as mentioned control over one’s own impulses in the formation of one voice. A hundred or so humans strolling across the plains making sounds in time to one another’s voices would have produced a formidable visual and audible threat to predators. But this “thought experiment” presupposes a position from out of which to frame an argument against the narrowly construed functionalist one that has yet to be justified.
3 Mood and Emotion: Donald’s Middle Voice

If a clarification of Mithen’s arguments were left at the stage of using his words against him in order to make another point he alludes to, then the project to develop middle ground between the humanities and the sciences on the basis of their dialectical center the inner word would never come to fruition. The art of interpretation is quintessential to the arts. Unless there is evidence in scientific scholarship for what has been established including the manner of reasoning singled out for making science better, then the results are limited. Fortunately, the middle-voice location from which to think can be detected in Bickerton’s thought. As mentioned, he employs thought experiments by which he means imagining what it would have been like to have been an early human and even another species in their environment. However, as indicated, like Mithen he retains the analogy between the singing gibbons and early humans as if the twelve to twenty million years of evolution had not included any variations in anatomy, e.g., drop of the larynx and b-ipedalism that might account for humans and chimps vocalizing different sounds. Bickerton’s thought experiment acknowledges a change in environment (treetop canopy, treeless savanna), but not a change in species evident in the fossil record, e.g., size of the cranium. *Homo erectus* did not sing like a chimp because it was not a chimp. Nevertheless, despite his persona not having migrated out of his own species for the purpose of creating a “thought” experiment, this very endeavor attests to the importance of a participatory approach to epistemologically relevant problems; an approach that ultimately refutes the assumptions undergirding the functionalist perspective that both he and Mithen share about the nature of musi-language being comparable to IDS (infant directed speech). In order to make this clear I defer to the work of Merlin Donald. His participatory approach to solving evolutionary questions leads him to reason in ways about the origins of language in “rudimentary song” that correct Bickerton’s and Mithen’s dominant mode of thought.

Donald’s theory about the origins of the modern mind evolving through stages in representational systems is cognizant of the middle voice perspective. As mentioned, he thinks of the brain-in-the-environment within a social-cognitive system with its own structure. With the hyphens he means to convey the fluidity and interplay of different elements in the process. For purposes of the evolution of language, if the culture is lingual, then it is inter-subjective or communal. Taking this into consideration inclines Donald to

reason that “culture reconfigures use patterns of the brain and patterns of use determine how the central nervous system is organized.” Or as he says:

One element frequently left out of cognitive modeling is the element of culture, that is, shared patterns of acquired behaviour characteristic of a species. But the cognitive capacities of animals directly affect the kinds of culture they produce, and in the case of humans, the opposite is also true: specific types of human culture have direct effects upon individual cognition. In fact, the uniqueness of humanity could be said to rest not so much in language as in our capacity for rapid cultural change. If we wished to put the proposition even more strongly, we might assert that what humans evolved was primarily a generalized capacity for cultural innovation. Part of that capacity was linguistic communication; part of it was the ability to think and represent the environment.

Humans evolved the generalized capacity for innovation. They invented representational systems and these systems in turn had “direct effects on human cognition.” His medial thinking is not unlike Bickerton’s—hominids invented a niche, which then selected for traits that were advantageous for niche construction. Donald’s archaic humans were inventers subject to the culture they made. This manner of thinking is evident as well in the following statement: “Cognition is the mediator between brain and culture and therefore must have been the engine, as well as a locus of change.” Cognition is both the vehicle or inventor of culture and that which is affected by the innovation. This way of thinking about the phenomenon of language distinguishes his account of its evolution from that of Mithen and moreover, enables a more complete explanation than Mithen’s spectator perspective.

Donald’s indirect correction of Mithen surfaces with the topic of music. For Mithen, music is a dimension of Hmmmm. Both he and Donald think of it in terms of modulations and cadences that are audible and characteristic of spoken language today. After pointing out that “Darwin’s manner of thinking was psychological because he was interested in the underlying structure of language,” Donald states that the first clue to that structure was what Darwin found humans had in common with other species: voice modulation, mimicry, complex auditory discrimination, communication by gesture and facial expression. If these characteristics can be attributed to gibbons and chimps and the first hominids were at roughly the same vocal starting point as them, then it follows that these were likely the

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1000 Ibid., 9-10.
1001 Ibid., 168. See also pages 11, 13-14, and 186-187.
1002 Ibid., 32.
1003 Ibid., 38.
features of rudimentary song as well save one caveat; the emphasis for both Darwin and Donald is on cadences and modulations of the voice as that which distinguishes us from the other species. This has already been established with Mithen and forms a point of contact between him and Gadamer as long as we concede that the analogy between gibbons and early hominids is false because of the social structure that differentiates them (e.g., in the words of Bickerton, “a fission-fusion structure like that of contemporary apes; that’s to say groups would be continually splintering up and reforming, merging with other groups”).

What about Donald? At first, he disputes Darwin’s claim that “the first aspect of voice control to evolve was prosody” on the grounds that it presupposes a linguistic context. He admits that rudimentary song is difficult to define, but then concludes that it would have been “a precursor of both the prosodic envelope surrounding speech and the rhythmic, melodic and harmonic aspects of song—that is, everything but the lyrics.” In effect, Donald is quibbling over semantics. He believes the rudimentary song would have been modulation in the voice, but does not want to call it prosody or even “song” because they did not exist at the time a precursor to language and music existed. His ambivalence indicates just how immersed he is in thinking about the question. He is keenly aware of how our assumptions about the meaning of terms today cannot be transferred holus bolus into pre-history, which is a perfect example of what Gadamer struggles with in translation and explains why Jackendoff had said that a functionalist approach to understanding music is furthest removed from its evolutionary roots—hominids were not functionalists. Of course, in the end Donald has no choice. He calls the precursor to language, “rudimentary song,” the meaning of which is somewhat coordinate with the music of Hmmmm of which Mithen speaks—variations in modulation and cadences, rhythm and tempo heard in the spoken language today.

Then they part ways. Donald writes, “The logical first step from limbic speech and some form of voluntary voice modulation would have been improved prosodic modulation.” Limbic speech is restricted to emotional utterances found in humans, but above all are of an episodic representational system (that of apes) whose vocal communication Donald characterizes as follows: “Primates produce a variety of vocalizations—a few categories at most, according to Passingham (1982)—and these are all

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1004 Bickerton, _Adam’s Tongue_, 63.
1006 Ibid.
1007 Ibid., 183.
in emotional or manipulative contexts.\footnote{Ibid.} Limbic speech is, for Donald, emotional and manipulative. It falls within the range of apes and phonetic control of the right temporal region, but is independent of prosodic control of the left temporal region.\footnote{Ibid., 182.} There is thus an anatomical basis for distinguishing emotional utterances from modulations of the voice, the latter being characteristic of humans. But as suggested, Donald does not explicitly distinguish these modulations, waves or units from the emotions even though he has already established an anatomical basis for doing so that dovetails with the “lingual” archaic ancestors being distinct from other species on account of having the capacity to control utterances.

4 Acoustics of the Proto-language: Ian Cross

But what Donald leaves in abeyance, Ian Cross develops. He acknowledges that Donald’s notion of mimesis being the “possible” bridge between A.C.S. and H.C.S. However, he also has a slightly different view of mimesis than Donald. Although Donald refers to vocal mimesis (noted above), his endeavor to be as thorough as possible detracts from focusing on how the voice is mimed, discussed earlier in Part Two in terms of harkening to rhythm of the voice between speakers. He emphasizes that mimesis is the intentional representation of gestures. In contrast to him Cross examines how motivational structure or what he calls “music semanticity” can be determined from acoustic signals.\footnote{Ian Cross, “The Evolutionary Nature of Musical Meaning,” \textit{Musicae Scientae} 13 (2009-2010): 187.} By shifting from a theory of mind (where I recognize thoughts and desire of others are different from my own) to motivational structures and interactions, he takes up, like Donald, a performer’s perspective on the phenomenon yet unlike him in terms of the acoustics of language which in this paper is the locus for shared understanding (in shared mood or attitude of being-with-one-another).

In “The Evolutionary Nature of Musical Meaning,” Cross makes inferences about motivational states of animals in order to clarify what an “honest signal” is for a human being. The motivational-state of an animal refers to intentional (mental) and bodily state.\footnote{Ibid., 181.} Animals detect it through the acoustic features of the signal.\footnote{Ibid., 184.} He states, “there is a straightforward physical correspondence between the pitches-frequencies of sounds and the dimensions of physical objects that can produce them.”\footnote{Ibid.} Varying bandwidth, frequency

\begin{flushright}
\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{Ibid., 182.}
\footnote{Ibid., 181.}
\footnote{Ibid., 184.}
\footnote{Ibid.}
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and intensity of sound transmit different dispositions that animals can read and which are situation specific. In this regard, Nicholas Bannan’s quoting L. R. Titze is relevant to recall, “We can tell when someone is eating while they are talking . . . we know when they breathe hard, when they are nervous, when their throat is dry or swollen, when they are sad, happy, or disgusted—all from the voice signal.” The voice signal we read is an aspect of communication whose evolutionary origins pre-date symbolic language yet persists in parallel to it. Consequently, our resorting to conceptual language displaced from a situation (the point of discontinuity between H.C.S and A.C.S. for Derek Bickerton) does not mute the “unsaid” context specific understanding audible in the acoustics of the voice. There is a vestige or the motivational-structure of A.C.S. in human speech. Cross calls it an “honest signal” and explains:

Thus there appear to be at least two different dimensions to meaning in music: one that is grounded in cultural context and action and can be described as culturally-enactive, and one that has evolutionary roots in survival critical relationships between sound structure and biological significance—the motivational structure. The simultaneous operation of these two dimensions of meaning in music would appear to allow music to seem to constitute an honest signal yet maintain a semantic indeterminacy; in the light of its universality, it seems that music may indeed be a communicative medium of the type outlined at the outset of this paper.

At the outset of his paper Cross had said that in the absence of an institutional framework “language can transform encounter into conflict as each party articulates their own personally-motivated view of a situation.” With this statement, he might have Dawkins’ selfish gene in mind that exploits every opportunity to replicate itself, but alongside this view he argues for a parallel system of communication that “by its very nature tends to promote the likelihood of a sense of affiliation and joint action but that lacks language’s potential for specificity of meaning.” Signals that display, as he says, an unambiguous fit between acoustics, hard-to-fake motional-intentional (mental) and bodily states are honest.

Cross thus takes a step beyond Donald by thinking about the phenomenon of language in terms of vocal mimesis. This leads him to foreground acoustics of the voice which convey state of mind or mood in the pre-cursor to language that persists in a non-

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1014 Ibid., 185.
1017 Ibid., 180.
1018 Ibid., 180-181.
trivial sense in modern language. Wray prefigures his theory. She couples the selection pressure for a vocal tract capable of articulating “discrete meaningful utterances” with:

a pressure for fine auditory discrimination, without which one would not be able to tell utterances apart and would consequently miss out on aspects of the group’s communication. Certainly, the pressure for finesse in both production and discrimination would be greater in the context of holistic communication than in language with a small set of combinable morphemes.\(^{1019}\)

Her mentioning a refined auditory discrimination points back to what has been concluded about the inner ear in Gadamer’s thought. Perhaps hearkening to mood was as critical to early human communication as the information that was being transmitted. But she bypasses this. Wray assumes that the utterances were directives, pleas and commands and thereby eclipses that which they presupposes, the basis for shared interaction, which is what concerns Cross. Mithen leans in this direction. He writes of Aiello and Dunbar’s grooming at a distance hypothesis, “Those individuals who were able to generate utterances with pitch sequences that induced emotions of happiness are likely to have had a selective advantage, because they would promote greater degrees of cooperative behaviour.”\(^{1020}\) In chapter 14 of *The Singing Neanderthals* he explains that group music-making included the synchronization of vocalization and movement, and that it was not undertaken for the purpose of selecting mates (since doing so would have attracted predators) but instead, “for building trust between males, and more particularly females, who need to engage in a variety of behaviours that require mutual support and reliance.”\(^{1021}\) Groups that are dependent on one another have to trust one another. Music making or singing together makes it probable that future cooperation will be forthcoming in situations like scavenging (not eating what one finds on the sly), hunting and defense. In contrast to Wray, Mithen moves the analysis into a social dynamic where bonding becomes a functional adaptation for cooperation. But at the same time, his functional focus on “who benefits” leaves the conditions that make cooperation advantageous hidden. This is what Cross brings to the table. Hence, even though he acknowledges that the precursor to language was for management-assessment, he understands that that function is not possible without what “can be inferred from the acoustic features of the signal, generally instantiated as changes in motivational state.”\(^{1022}\) Robbins Burling concurs with him. He

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\(^{1019}\) Wray, “Holistic Utterances in Protolanguage,” 293.


\(^{1021}\) Ibid., 207.

\(^{1022}\) Cross, “The Evolutionary Nature of Musial Meaning,” 184.
explains that before speaking we comprehend and understand the other person: “Comprehension plays a crucial role in the origin of animal signals, for signals become communicative not when they are first produced, but only when they are first understood.”

Gesture, posture, eye contact are difficult to fake and factor into understanding what someone says independently of what they say. They pertain to the unity of character we interpret, yes, on the basis of ritualized conventions, but also on the basis of this prior motivational structure argued for by Cross. Might not an understanding of these instrumental acts also have been a precursor to language as Burling argues? Unless this pre-comprehension is in place, the forming of a contract, e.g., between a female and a potential mate, will not take place. Nor will grooming at a distance. The motivational state is heard, for Cross, in tone of voice and is, he says, a mental and bodily disposition running parallel to symbolic language that does not vary between cultures. But he does not explicate the existential conditions in which it is heard and for this we return to Mithen.

5 Moods, Mimesis and Boundary Loss
From a functionalist perspective, or an ordinary way in which the world is pre-given to us, the non-manipulative dimension of the protolanguage is concealed. It tacitly comes into focus for Donald and Cross in terms of moods and motivational states when a shift is made to the middle-voice. From that location, the proto-language bears a closer resemblance to what Gadamer detects in the inner voice, which evokes being-with-one-another or cooperation, solidarity and trust. But in contrast to both Donald and Cross, Mithen explicates the existential condition in which the shared mood comes to the fore. It is boundary loss (i.e., a


1024 Ibid., 36-37.

1025 Cross points out that the universal capacity for music suggests common ground between all peoples. We recognize organized sound as music even if we do not understand it (“The Evolutionary Nature of Musical Meaning,” 188). What accounts for this recognition of music being music irrespective of differences in style? He quotes Blacking, “There must be supra-cultural cognitive resonance, and that there must be levels at which different composers, listeners and musical systems use the ‘same’ musical modes of thought.” (Ibid., 188-189). Socio-intentional dimensions of musical meaning is evoked by everyone, irrespective of their varying beliefs and desires, timing their voices and actions to a pulse (entrainment) from out of which shared goals come into focus when the emphasis is on cooperation (and not music for sex, which is functional ibid., 189-190). Inter-personal entrainment is a dialogue and a parallel structure to human cognition that holds out the possibility of cooperation. It is this subliminal, underlying realm of meaning that bubbles to the surface during rituals, festivals, dance that Lammi had said is typical of the Greek experience of the divine and in which being-as-a-whole is audible in harmony. Cross concludes of Owings and Morton’s research, “They are thus postulating a close relationship between the motivational state of organisms (governed by affective systems) and the global structural characteristics of acoustic signals . . . Hence, in terms of music as sound, a close relationship can be postulated between the motivational states of listeners and the global structural characteristics of musical sound” ibid., 185.
diminution of strong feelings of self), what Gadamer had said is the falling away of the pre-given world in “The Nature of Things and the Language of Things,” implicated in mimesis where a de-centering of the self is required in order to participate in the event of language.

Referring to the work of William McNeill, Mithen explains how communal music making induces the feeling of a group identity. For example, a Nazi party rally and training for the U.S. army consists of marching and intoned voices shouting, at least on the road in Texas, “Hut! Hup! Hip! Four!” The experience is prone to create a higher degree of cooperation, which Mithen takes as being indicative of why early hominids likely sang together—to defend themselves from predators, hunt and scavenge effectively as a group. But already, McNeill has inadvertently said something about why it was effective. He refers to marching and singing together in unison that is to say, to synchronicity of rhythm and tonal waves. William Benzon, to whom Mithen refers the reader, leans in the same direction with his notion of “coupling” (another word for “boundary loss”):

For Benzon, “coupling” arises when people synchronize the sounds and movements they make, enter similar emotional states, and hence attune their nervous states to one another. Most of us have actual experience of this when we sing with others and are no longer able to distinguish our own voice from all the rest.

Is this synchronicity of sound and movement, tone and rhythm not what is heard by the inner ear of the poet or better yet, between two speakers in dialogue with one another? When voices merge they form a song, as Risser had said, in one continuous breath without edges. Lammi calls the same event, although from a philosophical point of view, “being-in-one-another” and also says that it is divined during communal singing, gestures and dancing. From Donald’s perspective, it amounts to a resurgence of mimetic memory over a symbolic representational system, culture and thought.

But why should song evoke this boundary loss or coupling? Why does not playing a sport or raising a family amount to the same thing? Surely, the pressure to cooperate selected for the ability to tune into one another’s “emotional state” through the rhythm and tone of voice and “understand” them. In a cooperative context, this does not entail reading their thoughts and desires (as Mithen says of the theory of mind) in order to manipulate them.

1027 Ibid., 208 and 214.
1028 Ibid., 209.
1029 Ibid., 216.
Rather, what is happening, he points out, is “bonding” and not manipulation. If this capacity to bond through the falling away of the pre-given world was selected for and retained (assuming Donald’s principle of conservation in evolution), then being-in-one-another and the de-centered self are nothing more than the loss of consciousness and immersion in a primitive state of mind in which we are without self-control. Walter Lammi remarks that in a Greek cult experience of the divine, “a kind of together-with or Mitsamt that characterizes the animal as opposed to human community or Miteinander.” He asks, “But can a collapse of the human bespeak an elevation of human consciousness? Is it possible that a kind of species-togetherness represents the spiritual peak of human community?” These are questions to which Gadamer answers in the affirmative. A new kind of self is produced by attunement or attentive listening/tarrying, rather than a reversion to animal nature. While speaking about the nature of the game in a dialogue Gadamer remarks of the common ground that takes place in speaking with others, “And surely the elevation of the dialogue will not be experienced as a loss of self-possession, but rather as an enrichment of our self, but without us thereby becoming aware of ourselves.” Mithen captures what is at stake when he speaks about the transition from A.C.S. to H.C.S. He writes of Hmmmm, “While each of these features is found in the communication systems of modern apes and monkeys, I believe that they became integrated together among the early hominids. The result was a communication system more complex than that found now among non-human primates, but one quite different from human language.” In this case, Mithen is proposing that the protolanguage is more complex than A.C.S. because the elements, although shared with the vocalization of ape and monkey systems, are more highly integrated and therefore, presumably, less differentiated. But he does not explain how they were integrated and less differentiated. The working memory is one explanation. Neural networks combine and recombine to integrate new experiences with previous ones retained. Mithen has another suggestion. He quotes McNeill, “communal music-making is actively creating, rather than merely reflecting, that pleasing sense of unity.” Mithen has shifted from thinking about the activity of making music together to the activity of singing together and

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1031 Ibid.
1034 Ibid., 208.
reflecting what others sing or have sung. Hominids “talking” in parallel to one another or back and forth constitutes harmony. If what Mithen says about perfect pitch being eroded by language acquisition is true for both infants and early humans,\textsuperscript{1035} then the songs must have been very harmonious, like birds chirping back and forth except that the phrases of hominids were elongated, responded to and expressed mood in synchronicity. Integrated and less differentiated Hmmmm that comes by way of “boundary loss” or “coupling” was, therefore a time when consciousness would likely have broadened since in order to respond to another the capacity to read the intonation of their voice must have been sharp. This has nothing to do, as Mithen says, with the idea that “consciousness evolved as a cognitive trick to allow an individual to predict the social behaviour of other members of his or her group.”\textsuperscript{1036} On the contrary, as Cross explains, “But let us hypothesize the possibility of access to a parallel system of communication, one that, by its nature, tends to promote the likelihood of a sense of affiliation and joint action but that lacks language’s potential for specificity of meaning. Such a system of communication could powerfully complement that provided by language; it could turbo-charge human communicative capacities in managing the uncertainties of social interactions.”\textsuperscript{1037}

Understanding in language depends on the capacity of the inner ear to discern common ground, which is the site for the music of language or inner voice. However, an argument is only as good as the problems it can solve. Bickerton’s position is a fitting test. He argues that the invention of language represents a complete break of the human from animal communication systems yet he also resorts to a midway point between them that creates a window for what is being argued for here about the pre-condition being an intermediary realm of rhythm between voices. As explained, he identifies the intermediary stage between A.C.S.’s and H.C.S.’s with the use of icons in “pidgin.” Pidgin refers to an assemblage of improvised gestures and sounds which people devise when trying to communicate despite speaking different languages.\textsuperscript{1038} Icons such as “buzz” for bee or “grrr” for lion he argues can function as either indices or symbols and thereby qualify as having

\textsuperscript{1035} Ibid., 79.
\textsuperscript{1037} Cross, “The Evolutionary Nature of Musical Meaning,” 181.
been an intermediary stage between A.C.S.’s and H.C.S.’s.1039 Under pressure to communicate information about a food source early hominids had seen and which required the recruitment of others to exploit, Bickerton reasons that they would have had to resort to a combination of pidgin and icons displaced from situation specific needs. However, as with Mithen, since the invention of writing he holds that the musi-language (Steven Brown’s term) implicit to communication has been separated from language and become a means for the expression of non-rational emotions. In other words, although he agrees that proto-language is retained in modern language, he specifies that it is a degraded form that is retained, i.e., spontaneous vulgar utterances. The structure of language he identifies with grammar and syntax, but not sounds.

In a bid to challenge Bickerton’s position on the origins of language and on the basis of how phrases are combined, I consult the research of Ray Jackendoff. He writes, “I will be able to show, not just that these earlier stages are still present in the brain, but that their ‘fossils’ are present in the grammar of modern language itself, offering a new source of evidence on this issue.”1040 He takes his study in the direction of the rhythmic organization of syllables rather than phonemes alone.1041 Without going into the details, his argument interfaces with what has been concluded here about the intermediary realm of rhythm formed by voices conjoined into one harmonious whole forming the grounds for common understanding, i.e., Ian Cross’ position. On this score then, Jackendoff seconds the motion being argued for here; that effective communication today depends as it did hundreds of thousands of years ago upon the capacity to understand not solely body language, but in addition the tones and cadences of the voice.1042 More specifically, effective communication depends upon having an inner ear for the inner meaning/power that renders coherent anything said and thereby forges shared understanding and a communal ethos. The music of language is the meeting ground between theorists about the evolution of language, cognitive scientists and Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics.

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1039 Ibid., 51-54. Displacement of symbols consists of communicating information independently of the occasion or trigger for a reaction, i.e., “non-situation specific information.” Indices are those very utterances that are situation specific, ibid., 51.
1041 Ibid., 243.
1042 Jackendoff sides with language arising from “the vocal-auditory modality” rather than the “gesture-visual modality.” Ibid., 236.
These correlations between Jackendoff, Cross and Gadamer on the nature of language might not suffice to refute Bickerton especially on matters of the origin of language not requiring “rudimentary song.” Nevertheless, he makes a concession that creates just that possibility. He argues that predication is a precursor to syntax.\textsuperscript{1043} Since he argues for the epistemological utility of thought experiments I have one of my own to explain predication that involves wholistic phrases (as Alison Wray understands them). The thought experiment comes by way of Eric Havelock. He claims that writing, “is a visual artifact designed to trigger the memory of a series of linguistic noises by symbolic association.”\textsuperscript{1044} Could cave paintings have been a visual artifact to trigger the memory of what had been communicated in elongated wholistic and musical phrases? The cognitive fluidity that music may have enabled between different chapels of the mind, e.g., social, natural history and technical (Mithen’s position), may have become stabilized in art. That is to say, painting may have been used to represent not only what had been experienced, but also what had been sung and thereby contributed to the stabilization of sounds in a sequential pattern. This would have compelled human ancestors to distinguish parts of the phrases they were using. Most crude paintings depict a subject acting and objects being acted upon. Such images would also have compelled their interpreters to think in an orderly and linear way in the course of figuring out which sounds to assign to which image. The segmentation of wholistic phrases and with it the origins of predication might well have been due not to the similarity of sounds among different phrases, i.e., Alison Wray’s theory, but rather to the process of figuring out what sounds looked like. In the course of doing so basic rules of predication emerged from the dialectical interplay of opposing demands of the visual and auditory systems that then became fixed in the spoken language.

6 Back to Gadamer and the Inner Word

The inner word is the meaning that transcends anything said by isolated individuals. Through recollection or turn of the inner ear toward the rhythm of language in boundary loss when the ordinary run of the mill or pre-given world has fallen away we discern the middle that holds the conversation together. From that position the resonant interval that conjoins tones of voice in a conversation is audible and by responding to it in kind the conditions for a truth-

\textsuperscript{1043} Ibid., 43.
\textsuperscript{1044} Eric Havelock, The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 112.
claim to be true are in place. But of course, this sort of explanation of what the inner word is and how it functions in language is speculative—it merely mirrors the phenomenon of language and does not explain the process, at least not in terms that would meet scientific standards of credibility.

Gadamer interprets motion in terms of an unfolding mathematical structure in language. Like music, language for Gadamer is structured by numbers not in the sense of being “tools for the construction or reconstruction of matter” but in the sense of being “the actual bearers of the order of reality, the regularity of the circular movement of the heavenly bodies.” Thus understood to have a mathematical structure, the phenomenon of language ought to be a magnet for investigation. Whence the coherence of language-thought that is presupposed by science? Causal explanations alone might explain how a system functions, its behaviours and laws, but do not account for the system’s unity. Unity is alleged here to be ontologically distinct from the parts of which it is composed, e.g., harmony of voices distinct from particular voices, i.e., “ontological emergentism.” It is with regard to the latter that there may be room for non-mechanical explanations for changes of state in modern science. Music or the way in which tones and beats hang together might be a way in which to model how language and thoughts relate to one another. This is where Gadamer’s linguistic turn points via the inner voice. However, he was not interested in a theory of evolution and therefore, did not think about how harmonic resonances known to us in the middle voice might have played a role in our development and potential for common understanding. Helmholtz will have to act as the go-between especially since he corresponded with and influenced the thought of Charles Darwin.

Section One, “Evolution and Harmonics,” justifies bringing Gadamer into a dialogue with theories about the evolution of language by way of Helmholtz’s relationship to Charles Darwin. Helmholtz’s findings on music and language, however occasional and secondary to other research interests, influenced Darwin. To the extent that Gadamer’s thinking has affinities with Helmholtz’s on the prosodic dimensions of speech, Gadamer’s thought is similarly brought into proximity to the theory of evolution; specifically that of Steven Brown and Nicholas Bannan who argue for the origins of language in a harmony of voices. Section

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1046 Ontological emergentism holds that “the whole is more than the sum of its parts and their intrinsic properties,” Thompson, Mind in Life, 417-418.
1047 Bannan, “Harmony and its Role in Human Evolution,” 293.
Two, “Music and Time,” and Section Three, “Inner Ear and Unity,” return to the philosophical conditions reached about the inner word in Part One and accounts for them in terms of evolutionary cognitive science and theories about the evolution of language. Thus is the universality of hermeneutics accomplished in a way that is different from, yet still connected to philosophical hermeneutics, which is evident in how Brown in particular reasons about the origins of harmony. The concluding chapter closes the gap between the humanities and the sciences on the basis of the pedal point for interplay between these distinct modes of cognition, the inner word.

### 6.1 Evolution and Harmonics

Nicholas Bannan notes that Darwin was an admirer of Helmholtz (“who corresponded with him”). What did Darwin admire? Surely his admiration must have been for Helmholtz’s renowned *Die Lehre von den Tonempfindungen als physiologische Grundlage für die Theorie der Musik* (1863) in which he develops a physiological and anatomical explanation for “the harmonic nature of human oral communication.” In *The Experience of Emotions in Men and Animals* (1872), Darwin acknowledges Helmholtz’s research. However, while in debt to his findings, Darwin wrongly discounts the evolutionary merits of his theory. He writes in *The Descent of Man* (1871), “Helmholz has explained on physiological principles why concords are agreeable to the human ear; but we are little concerned with these, as harmony in music is a late invention.” Bannan is quick to point out that harmony was not only a 17th century invention. Both he and Steven Brown trace it to the early hominid vocalization to which I will return below. That Helmholtz was predisposed to this idea is evinced by him explaining in 1863 that music:

> may have been originally an artistic imitation of the instinctive modulations of the voice that correspond to various conditions of the feelings . . . An endeavor to imitate the involuntary modulations of the voice and make its recitation richer and more expressive, may therefore very possibly have led our ancestors to the discovery of the first means of musical expression, . . .

We cannot be sure what he means by specifying “what music originally was.” But he explains that before our ancestor’s discovery of musical expression there was in place “an

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1048 Ibid.
1049 Ibid., 294.
1050 Ibid., 294-295.
1051 Ibid., 301.
1052 Ibid., 292.
artistic imitation of the instinctive modulation of the voice.” Could this be what Darwin called rudimentary song? Helmholtz was a physiologist by training yet his insights into the origins of music reach beyond it to the evolution of language. After quoting Darwin on Helmholtz in The Descent of Man, Bannan comments:

Darwin’s placement in the evolutionary context of The Descent of Man of Helmholtz’s evaluation of the engineering properties of the human eye parallels attempts to reverse-engineer our species’ capacity for vocalization. This is important when considering the development pathway, involving a series of anatomical and neural adaptations and exaptations that must have bridged the gap between the animal communication of our nearest ancestor with the great apes and modern human vocality.

Bannan is suggesting that Helmholtz’s research on the eye and how it processes light might have inspired Darwin to speculate on the evolution of our capacity for vocalization and communication with the important caveat, as mentioned, that Darwin considered harmony a recent and not an ancient invention. This is precisely the misunderstanding about the nature of harmony that Bannan aims to remove by building upon Helmholtz’s study of its nature echoed by others in an evolutionary context.

Both Bannan and Brown break with the spectator’s position on the origins of language that treats it as an idea and focus instead, on the process of generating sound from within the process. Both are concerned with what Gadamer would term a hermeneutics of the voice—not the idea of language that yields functionalist explanations about its emergence, but rather the event character of language. Accordingly, harmony is neither in sound nor in our perception of sound or in the anatomy of the ear (cochlea), but rather in the voice or as Brown specifies: the blending of voices. Is this not the location for inquiry to which we are led by the middle-voice? Brown seems to suggest this with a turn of phrase similar to Heidegger’s and Gadamer’s that “language speaks us.” He adds that “another way of saying

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1054 David Cahan argues that for Helmholtz it is the capacity to think that separates us from animals. But the justification for his evidence seems to be the opening words of Helmholtz’s ruminations; “Under the light of Darwin’s great thought . . .” Cahan himself remarks that for Helmholtz we are distinct from animals because we do not live by “individual experience.” This suggests that Cahan would be receptive to what is being argued for here about connecting to our social-being through attunement to the intermediary realm of rhythm. Cahan, “Helmholtz and the Civilizing Power of Science,” in Hermann von Helmholtz and the Foundations of Nineteenth Century Science, ed. David Cahan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 570.
this is that harmonization is the source of harmony.”¹⁰⁵⁷ There is this third thing itself not over and above but within language (like the noumena within the phenomena) that leads the speakers. Gadamer refers to it as the “pure tone of the original sensation” and the “intermediary realm of rhythm.” It is accessed through attunement and harkening of the inner ear to the event of language. Chapter four argued that this turn of the ear is an act of recollecting a prior condition of being-with-one-another in language. Now we have evidence of the latter being recognized (or recollected) through mimetic memory. This puts a different spin on how to interpret that which has been forgotten and how it is remembered.

Gadamer believes that the moderns have forgotten how to listen, which, being a matter of disposition, means that we have forgotten how to live in a way that could make that which we say authentic. On account of language having become indistinguishable from marketing, we have grown deaf to the middle of language that imparts unity and clarity to understanding and life. For Gadamer, it is revived through play, which Mithen grasps in terms of boundary loss and Lammi in terms of a Greek cult experience of the divine. The evolutionary origins of the intermediate realm of rhythm recollected by us in boundary loss in the middle of language are tapped into by Brown and Bannan. Brown argues that the proto-language was formed out of “contagious heterophony.” He defines it as follows: “a group vocalization in which each individual produces a variation on a similar kind of call but in which the members of the group call asynchronously; group-wide vocalizing emerges through a sequential process of spreading or contagion.”¹⁰⁵⁸ This “evolutionary precursor of human music and speech” consists of early hominids singing not in step,¹⁰⁵⁹ but nevertheless transmitting a resonance, “a kind of resonant behavior in which a common state of group activity is achieved through matching or imitation.”¹⁰⁶⁰ Without resonance between voices there is no unison. Brown’s insights are echoed by Bannan.

According to Bannan, resonance has two properties that lead back to harmonization being the source of harmony, i.e., the verb acting on us. On the one hand, he explains that there is room for variation in harmonization. “This ‘vowel melody’ will not represent a fixed phenomenon: the voices of different singers will resonate in a manner related to personal voice quality; and the same singer will generate variant performances on different

¹⁰⁵⁷ Ibid.
¹⁰⁵⁹ Ibid.
¹⁰⁶⁰ Ibid., 9.
occasions.”^{1061} Every voice has its own resonance determined likely by anatomical variations in size of the larynx, vocal cavity . . . On the other hand, resonance is intrinsic to the sounds themselves. After listing three adaptations on which the acquisition of song depended (voluntary breathing, monotony that transcends emotional motivation and tonality) Bannan writes, “While chant could be either solitary or gregarious, its resonant production could have been consistent with sensitivity to the properties of the harmonic series. An implicit ‘theory of harmony’ could thus shape musical interaction prior to, and in the absence of, language.”^{1062} It is not my voice or anyone else’s to which he is referring, but to the harmonic series itself. From Brown’s perspective, Bannan is inclining toward the “sound theory” of Jean-Philippe Rameau (1772) in which “harmonics are the source of harmony” (and harmony is an “intrinsic feature of sound itself”).^{1063} Yet it is also a feature of our ancestor’s voices from which musical intervals evolved, from which a communicative activity evolved. The point here is that the activity had a life of its own for the singers comparable to a chant, as Bannan says, of many voices and into which the voices merged. Not individual voices, but rather the chant itself becomes the source of production and generation. This parallels what was concluded earlier about the harmony of the dialogue form in which die Sache or thing itself appears to us. The harmony is formed whenever speakers key into the upper partials and overtones (harmony) of what is being said.^{1064} The harmony of tones Helmholtz says are heard by the “spiritual ear,” which he contrasts with the “material ear.”^{1065}

6.2 Music’s Time

Brown argues that because music emphasizes the repetition of meter and phrase, it is a cyclical system that does not allow for any variation. He concludes, “I think that music has taken a highly conservative approach to the process of phrase generation.”^{1066} Being thus constrained by the rhythm of a language, oral cultures tend not to be creative. However, what

^{1061} Bannan, “Harmony and Its Role in Human Evolution,” 316.
^{1062} Ibid., 328.
^{1064} See vocal composition Stimmung (1968) by Karlheinz Stockhausen which is an overtone singing to spoken names and texts. From Bannan, “Harmony and Its Role in Evolution,” 314-315.
^{1065} Hermann von Helmholtz, “Physiological Causes of Harmony in Music,” in Popular Lectures on Scientific Subjects by Hermann von Helmholtz, Vol. 1, trans. E. Atkinson (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1904), 77. For his description of the harmony of tones discerned by the spiritual ear see ibid., 91-93. He compares music to the rhythmically repeated movement of waves in the sea, which recalls how the Greek language is said to have sounded (rheo).
^{1066} Brown, “Contagious Heterophony,” 16.
if phrases in language are combined on the basis of an affinity between vowels? Insofar as thought is lingual, creative thinking consists of having an inner ear for the potential \textit{(dunamis)} in the combinations. The “primitive mind” is a source for generating unforeseeable thoughts above all in a context in which spontaneity is channeled into method. This section argues that it is the conservative cyclical character of musi-language; the synchronized output (without the external aid of a metronome) that enables and facilitates variation and innovation.

In order to sort this out we must be clear about the structure of language and its middle for which I defer to the ad lib. This is based on Mithen’s own move. When viewed as a dynamic process, as he writes citing Kirby, “the process of learning itself can lead to the emergence of grammatical structures” and commensurate with them, modulations and cadences; the prosodic elements of speech we hear today.\textsuperscript{1067} Accordingly, in an improvisational setting where no pre-given rules are provided, there transpires a system of sounds whose production takes on the form of a conversation. This is the back and forth movement, reply and address between singers (or for Gadamer, play of conversationalists). According to Jackendoff, there are roughly four acts within the context of ad lib that are necessary for the emergence of rules with which to combine phrases; (1) mimesis of each other’s vocal production; (2) the retention of what has been mimed including the order and pattern of tones; (3) an expectation about what will come next and; (4) a capacity to innovate, to receive, process and send a reply. Indeed, these are what Jackendoff argues the processing of music and language share.\textsuperscript{1068} But note also the similarities with what occurs in Augustine’s \textit{Confessions} in relation to music. He discovered while reciting a poem aloud in the company of others that the structure of time also consisted of memory, expectation and what he called a “vital energy” in the present.\textsuperscript{1069} The same insight resurfaces in Husserl’s description of the structure of internal time consciousness and is the foundation for the hermeneutic circle, visualized by Heidegger in terms of seeing and projection, but when thought in terms of language refer us back to music’s time. In short, the rules for combining phrases are in the expectation of synchronicity that depends on transcending the tendency to

\textsuperscript{1067} Mithen, \textit{Singing Neanderthals}, 24.
\textsuperscript{1068} Jackendoff, “Parallels and Non-Parallels Between Language and Music,” 196-197.
fixate on images or forms by an act of recollecting the primordial realm of rhythm
between speakers. This is what brings them into contact with one another.

So what precisely is the rule for combining phrases and whence this capacity to
innovate? Jackendoff mentions “mimesis of each other’s vocal production.” He could be
more precise and hone in on the principle responsible for the motility of language. This
principle is not independent of language when the object of inquiry is the living voice.
Indeed, the rule emerges from in and out of an expectation about the future and is intensified
by the distance between the latter and memory or retention. This is another way of
formulating recollection, i.e., anticipation of a unity we have forgotten. This is not urged by
the power of the mind, but at this level of analysis by the nature of rhythm. As mentioned
earlier in Part One, tone and rhythm create an expectation (a game of expectation, Levitin
says), a “peculiar directedness through rhythm” (says Jeremy Begbie), re-iterated, for
Mithen, by Peter Auer. To quote him again, “the initial speaker establishes a clear rhythmic
pattern, and then ‘unproblematic turn taking . . . is not simply a matter of the absence of
overlapped (simultaneous) talk and/or ‘gaps’ but, rather, depends on a sense of rhythmicity
that makes it possible to predict when the first stressed syllable of the next speaker’s turn is
due.” In the words of Ferrara, “out of such internalized probability systems arise
expectations, i.e., the tendencies upon which musical meaning is built.” To bring Donald
into the mix, he emphasizes that rhythm is unique within a mimetic system of representation
because it “does not directly reproduce, represent, or signify any aspect of the natural world.”
And from this he infers that it be regarded as a reciprocal game based, he suggests, “on self-
cueable vocal imitations.” He is very close to indicating that rhythm accounts for the “self-
generation” of vocal imitations. The emergent rule for combining phrases in both music
and proto-language is rhythm. But Mithen takes it a step forward. He concludes, “The most
significant survival of ‘Hmmm’ is within language itself.” He mentions vocal imitation and
sound synaesthesia, but the last idea he mentions to which the others lead (accumulating like
overtones) is the most telling. “Another is the use of rhythm which enables fluent
conversation to take place.” This was Gadamer’s point as well about the intermediary
realm of rhythm in his essay “The Nature of Things and the Language of Things.”

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early hominids attended to the meter (resonance of internal affinity between vowels “intentional resonance” says Bannan) I reckon that the holistic phrases, as Wray calls them, could not have been combined with one another to form elongated “sentences.” Fluent conversation depends on getting into the time of the conversation. The time itself leads the interlocutors, i.e., the rhythm happens to them and makes demands of them about what they will say next. Since we are anatomically varied (at the very least) our personal voice qualities are not the same and hence, the “vowel melody” is never standardized. Evolution favours diversity in any event. Contrary to what Brown says, rhythm in even a conservative oral culture allows for variation.\textsuperscript{1074} The creative potential it harnesses to combine phrases might well explain why music helps patients who have lost language to find their way back to it.\textsuperscript{1075}

The only “conservative” speech is idle chatter. Being without attunement and rhythm such talk does not go anywhere (although it is often pleasing for that reason because it resembles peace). The stasis resurfaces as a result of being closed to the bio-physiological rhythms of nature (or bodies). The problem with idle chatter is therefore not the topic or the simplicity of the language, but the orientation. The possibility for movement in thinking increases when we tune into the structure of music’s time. In this regard, it is not untimely to repeat what was concluded earlier, although in the words of John A. Sloboda who registers the time of natural processes. He describes his transcription of an Australian Aboriginal song as follows:

Here we see that the rhythm sticks provide a basic unadorned pulse. The didjeridu is, however, doing something more complex. It synchronizes with each beat of the rhythm sticks, but adds a second ‘pulsing’ sound after each beat, which has the effect of subdividing the beat, marking its passage by an asymmetric disposition of sounds (the long ‘pulsing’ sound marks the end of the beat, the short sound the beginning). Through such asymmetry, a sense of location within the beat is created. Such ascribing of location is given the general name of accenting, and it is crucial to the music of nearly all cultures.\textsuperscript{1076}

\textsuperscript{1074} For a study of the spontaneity, flexibility, expressive and momentary features of Greek orality see Eric Havelock, \textit{The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 63-79.

\textsuperscript{1075} “Melodic Intonation Therapy” that draws on “brain regions that modulate the rhythmic and tonal aspects of language, bypassing the speech pathways” have bee proven to help those recover the capacity for language lost as the result of an injury. Since music stimulates the body (entrainment) and listening to or making music plays a role in teaching the brain to remember itself, or regions that evolved before symbolic language was invented by us. I am quoting William Forde Thompson and Gottfried Schlaug, “The Healing Power of Music” in \textit{Scientific American Mind: Behaviour, Brain Science, Insight} (March/April, 2015), 34.

There is room for historical variation on the accents influenced by the instrument being employed and meter desired, but the most simple rhythm alternates between long and short pulsating sounds that determine the location or accent of the beat. It is found in nearly all cultures. This suggests that beats in a meter resemble a natural law. In support of this claim I refer to Charles T. Smith’s words about music’s “crude beginnings.” He wrote in 1948:

Consider for a moment the circumstances of their emergence. Breathing is regular—in and out; movement of the arms tends to become regular—to and fro; swinging is regular—up and down or forwards and backwards; owing to the balanced construction of the body, the strides in walking and running are regular—right and left; and the sounds produced by, or emitted in association with, these regular movements are therefore regular, usually one stressed beat being followed by its counter beat—hence the strong-weak, strong-weak, of two-pulse measure.  

The strong-weak beats referred to above by Sloboda surface in Smith’s account of the origins of music yet are applied to walking and breathing. Smith has broadened the scope of analysis from the concept of rhythm, which constrained Brown’s thinking by leading him to conclude that it was “conservative,” to include life, but if “life” is complex, then so too are its rhythms; networks of them converging and diverging from one another around modulating tensions and resolutions (or overlapping hermeneutic circles). We anticipate always finding ourselves at home (oikeon) in language. Lawrence Ferrara grasps the idea in terms of symbolic transformation in Susanne Langer’s Philosophy in a New Key:

This dialectic of permanence and change assumes the patterns of growth and decay. People, companies, towns, countries and even civilization begin, grow and decay. This sets up a rhythmic sense of beginning and end, exemplified within the context of a day or a human life beginning and ending. The formal structure of life rhythms is marked by patterns which include motion and rest, tension and resolution, slow or sudden change. These proto-rhythmic, pre-musical materials are in the existence and ritual of everyday human life.  

Music is not the expression of a private feeling; quite to the contrary for Langer and Ferrara. It is a formal representation of the inner logic or moving structure of life. David Abram explains that in his final writings Maurice Merleau-Ponty held that “it is not human language that is primary, but rather the sensuous, perceptual life-world, whose wild, participatory logic ramifies and elaborates itself in language.” The logic he says is “weblike in character, and

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hence organic, interconnected structure.” As Langer says, music is a symbolic transformation of cycles of life, “the rhythm of ordering life”; a law of tension and resolution inherent to walking, talking, breathing, manual labour, cooking and so on.

It is, therefore, not the case that the meter of music is “conservative” or ever was as Brown suggests. It consists of beats whose pulse points forward to incoming sounds, which constitute movement; movement is a power that generates difference internal to the process. In contrast to mechanics, which “studies bodies insofar as they are constrained and made to do things that left to their own natures, they would not do,” the principle of motion in language (musi-language) is internal to the phenomenon. This is effectively what Jackendoff means when he reasons as follows: “work songs convey the rhythm of work . . . marches convey the coordinated action of walking . . . Religious music conveys transcendence and spirituality, with associated affect anywhere from meditative to frenzied.” From the position of a participant to the process the cause-effect and “who benefits” interests proscribed by the spectator’s standpoint are dropped and replaced by this ambiguous terminology “conveys.” It is not a scientific term, or is it? Maybe Jackendoff is grasping after the laws of attraction and repulsion between distances, or the space in between that was designated “vital energy” by Augustine, the power binds elements together (dunamis) by Gadamer and rhythm by Susanne Langer.

6.3 Inner Ear and Unity

The inner ear harkens to the inner word. The inner word might be construed as the word of God by a theologian. Indeed, in his lecture “The Phenomenology of Religious Life” (1920-21) Heidegger writes, “Phenomenology is explication of this totality of sense, it gives the ‘logos’ of the phenomena, ‘logos’ in the sense of ‘verbum internum’ (not in the sense of logicalization).” The question is the extent to which a phenomenological explication of the verbum that is intended not to take concepts at face value and instead to

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[1082] Lawrence Ferrara writes of Langer (citing her work *Problems of Art*), “The cardinal truth of the organismic form is rhythm, which is a unifier of life processes in the dialectic of ‘permanence’ and ‘change.’” Organismic life form is primary or basic and an actual experience he points out. Ferrara, *Referential Meaning in Music*, 134.
re-think them according to how they originally became accessible to us does not overturn the onto-theological overtones. This seems to have been Heidegger’s intention echoed in scholarship about the inner word in Gadamer’s hermeneutics moving toward it being voiced and thus acoustic and audible to us in the zone between speakers, provided we are properly disposed toward it. In Part One, chapters three and four the middle of language was analyzed into three tiers; rhythm, tone and harmony discerned by harkening, hearing and attentive listening. The inner word in the middle of language makes three distinct demands of our auditory apparatus. Gadamer concurs. He asserts that everything in writing “requires something like a kind of heightening for the inner ear . . . I take care to tell my students you must sharpen your ear, you must realize that when you take a word in your mouth . . . you are committed to a line of thought that comes from afar and reaches on beyond you.”\textsuperscript{1084} He is speaking as a philosopher and is not very precise, but he is not a mystic. This concluding section presents a scientific explanation of the inner ear and the middle of language.

Anthony Storr refers to the “inner ear” as the vestibular apparatus and explains,\textsuperscript{1085} “From an evolutionary perspective, the vestibular apparatus antedates the auditory system which developed from it. Although the two systems remain functionally separate, the vestibular nerve and the cochlear nerve, which respectively convey information from the vestibular apparatus and the auditory apparatus, run in close parallel.”\textsuperscript{1086} Storr’s analysis of the anatomy of the ear and its evolution parallels what Cross had discovered about a parallel form of communication below the surface of ordinary speech. He had reasoned that even amidst a misunderstanding there is a shared motivational structure audible in an honest signal. Could this be what is transmitted to the vestibular apparatus by the cochlear fibers and nerves? From Gadamer’s perspective it would have to account for the intermediary realm of rhythm between speakers that imparts harmony. The evidence is promising. Storr explains that the vestibular apparatus is “itself primarily concerned with

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\item\textsuperscript{1084} Hans-Georg Gadamer, \textit{Truth and Method}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} revised edition, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005), 551-552. Henceforth, designated by TM.
\item\textsuperscript{1085} He describes what I believe Darwin calls “rudimentary song” as follows: “Music’s attributes of \textit{embodying, entraining, and transposably intentionalizing} time in sound and action (see Cross 2003a) enable it to be efficacious in contexts where language, precisely because of its capacity to be interpreted unambiguously, may be unproductive or impotent; and it can therefore be suggested that the emergence of musicality is likely to have been crucially adaptive in processes of human evolution.” Ian Cross, “Music as an Emergent Exaptation” in Bannan, ed., \textit{Music, Language and Human Evolution}, 268.
\end{footnotes}
symmetry and closely linked with balance,” orients us to gravity, and the restoration of
equilibrium. Symmetry and even our moral ideals are for George Lakoff and Mark
Johnson derived from the necessity to keep balance, \(^{1087}\) which in evolutionary terms is a
requirement for standing and walking upright. Symmetry discerned by the inner ear
harkens then to our having learned to walk (or the cerebellum). If indeed it is
synchronicity of rhythm that distinguishes our language from animal calls (as Brown
argues), then during the process of learning to stand and walk and exercise control over
our somato-motor reflexes we acquired the capacity to hear today what is called the inner
word. Walking is above all a matter of keeping time. When we lose it, we stumble (or
stutter). There is therefore an inter-subjective element to imitation that coincides with
theories about music being responsible for cohesion and group solidarity. It resurfaces in
Gadamer’s belief that understanding includes going along with being-with another,
tarrying alongside. When doing so we are recollecting the first steps we took together that
separates us from our closest non-human relatives.

Rhythm is simple. Why then does Gadamer refer to it as a mystery and enigma? It
accounts for the intelligibility of what we say to one another. By mentioning intelligibility
of language I am referring to the unity and inner coherence of what is said. The role of
music in developing relations has been stated concisely by Daniel Levitin. He remarks:
“At a neural level, playing an instrument requires the orchestration of regions in our
primitive, reptilian brains—the cerebellum and the brain stem—as well as higher
cognitive systems such as the motor cortex (in the parietal lobe) and the planning regions
of our frontal lobes, the most advanced region of the brain.” \(^{1088}\) Of course, music unites
different cranial lobes and functions. It is possible that, as some studies have shown, “the
processing of language and of melody utilize a shared neural network.” \(^{1089}\) And that the
neural networks for music are widely distributed, \(^{1090}\) which in turn accounts for music
enabling cognitive fluidity. Maybe playing and listening to music simulates the cross-
fertilization of cognitive domains that Steven Mithen argued was responsible for the
Cultural Revolution in roughly 60, 000 B.C. But the said Revolution presupposes social

\(^{1087}\) They argue that the metaphors that define our moral concepts are “grounded in the nature of our bodies and social interactions.” Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: the Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books 1990), 290.


\(^{1089}\) Mithen, *The Singing Neanderthals*, 58.

\(^{1090}\) Ibid., 64.
intelligence and therefore the capacity to synchronize one’s voice with that of others—a sense of rhythm for what is being uttered that happens to us. If “singing” predates the emergence of distinct regions of the brain, e.g., technical and historical intelligences, as well as symbolic language, then so too does the auditory stance toward beings, i.e., the inner ear or vestibular apparatus. The inner ear that discerns the cadence of language must, therefore, be responsible for finding the inner coherence within language; specifically, whenever it recalls joint-timing acquired by us in the process of learning to walk and run (in groups for days over the savannas). However, for phenomenologists within a tradition of a dialectics of stance the unity heard in the tonal variations is also seen. How can we make sense of the stances merging into one another (the active and passive voices)?

Edward Slingerland argues that the neurological correlate to Mithen’s modular theory about cross domain mapping of the mind is synaesthesia. It involves “the unusual blending of two or more senses.” Musicians and poets in particular are prone to think that sounds can evoke colours, but everyone, in fact, does. Most people, as Ramachandran has argued, cross-activate different regions of their brain when they identify a jagged figure with Kiki, and a rounded one with Bobo, or claim that cheese is sharp. This is the work of the angular gyrus being at the point of convergence between occipital, temporal and parietal lobes. Assuming that synaesthesia is not due to a genetic mutation that causes a malfunction in neural connection pruning during brain development (Ramachandran’s thesis), and instead can be learned through an education in aesthetics or how to perceive (intuition), the event of language that Heidegger describes in terms of seeing what is heard, and the thing itself speaking to us, is simply the act of repositioning ourselves in relation to objects of knowledge, i.e., changing perceptual stance from hearing to seeing independently of one another, to the eyes following the sounds (which is crucial for survival in a thick forest when we are most vulnerable to being eaten). If we take into account the urgency of the circumstance in which our capacity to hear has evolved we can see why sounds need to be heard. Doing so is a matter of survival. If one sees a predator before one hears it, it is likely too late to

1091 Slingerland, *What Science Offers the Humanities*, 156.
1092 Ibid., 159.
1093 Ibid.
1094 Ibid., 105.
1095 Ibid., 159-160.
escape alive. If one images in the mind’s eye the source of a sound heard at a distance one has an evolutionary advantage over those that require visual confirmation. The act of seeing does not, however, follow what is heard, i.e., one after the other. As Slingerland says, synaesthesia is neither a voluntary act of the mind nor the result of cognition and memory. Instead, it is a “perceptual popping out” or a “sensory effect.” In other words, it happens to us. When we sense that things speak to us, as Heidegger and Gadamer purport transpires in the event of language we are simulating the unity of perception upon which the survival of our species depended.

The constraint on Slingerland’s theory is the same as Benjamin Bergen’s discussed in chapter six. Slingerland writes, “conscious awareness is fundamentally structured by a set of dynamic ‘somato-motor maps’ anchored in the body, which serves as the basic ‘yardstick’ for the various neural processes that we experience as the mind (xvi).” Although he argues for blending senses in order for there to be a “popping out” effect (where I argue language acts on us) Slingerland’s model for neuron simulation is visual. He bypasses the importance of the rhythm of language that Gadamer’s linguistic turn brings to the fore. This does not amount to conflating science with discourse. Gadamer’s linguistic turn focuses our attention on the lingual conditions for understanding. He thus compares his own thinking to a melody and expresses regard for Dilthey’s favorite metaphor for thought being music. Thinking arises not from feeling, but as Levitin suggests from the coherence of different regions in the mind. Coherence forms the structure of a living organism. Proto-music in language, e.g., simple rhythm, imparts unity and coherence. Storr therefore explains that music “can order our mental contents.” He uses the example of talking to oneself to convey what he means. This is also how Gadamer describes thinking after Plato; a dialogue with oneself. There does not seem to be anything inherently musical about talking to oneself except that for Gadamer it anticipates a conversation with someone else (as he says). The main point here is not “someone else” but “anticipation.” If talking to oneself includes a sense of the future then it is also an act of recollecting and gathering together (i.e., weaving) that which “is” with what has been to form a consonant whole. One might assert that this act of recollection is simply cognitive memory at work, but this cannot be since Gadamer complains that Helmholtz’s theories were merely psychological and not existential. Helmholtz had no

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1096 Ibid., 156.
1097 Ibid., 163.
sense of what it meant to lose one’s way in life. What then might turn the mere act of recollection into an existential-ontological category? Perhaps by adopting an orientation toward natural processes that transforms them (or the generative power of nature) into a symbolic form, i.e., gathering together the inner order of nature we are prone to forget in a technological society. In so doing, our mental contents are organized. Storr thus explains that the ordering of our mental contents consists of structuring the “inner world” symmetrically, i.e., finding balance in the course of thinking and hitting the mean, which he expresses with a writer exclaiming, “‘I see how to put it.’” He adds, “It is often equally appropriate to say ‘I hear how to put it.’”

We have a version of what Gadamer calls the “fitting” or “ringing true” or even good judgment/tact. Smith concurs. He quotes Jules Combarieu’s definition of music, “‘Music is the art of thinking with sounds.’ . . . Music is the art of reasoning with sounds. Good music then becomes good reasoning—defined in the dictionary as rationalism. So in that sense we define worthwhile music as rationalism in sound, and that is probably what Combarieu meant.” Yet it is also likely what Gadamer means as well since like Heidegger in What is Called Thinking?, he equates ratio with logos. The history of the concept “reason” points back to chorus.

In conclusion, Mithen had insisted on distinguishing rules for combining phrases in language from those for music (recursion). As he points out, chess and cooking use rules, but that does not mean that they are a language. “The same applies to music” he concludes. But one wonders if the analogy between recipes for cooking and rules for music is sound considering that language and music originate in the same sound system (by his reckoning). The paradox occurs to him as well. He writes, “musical phrases, gesture and body language are holistic: their ‘meaning’ derives from the whole phrase as a single

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1098 Storr, Music and the Mind, 41.
1099 Smith, Music and Reason, 39.
1101 Mithen says that music and language have the following in common: vocal, gestural, written, biological basis in the brain, culturally transmitted, combinatorial systems. These characterizations pertain to the process of speaking and the process of making music. At this level of analysis, they start to look very much alike. Similarly, when Jackendoff reflects not on the function or character of language and music, but rather on “the acquisition and processing of language and the acquisition and processing of music” (“Parallels and Non-Parallels Between Language and Music,” 196) they begin to resemble one another. Both require and build memory, their processing involves creating expectations about the future, fine motor-control systems and vocal imitation to name a few (ibid., 196-197). Mithen explains that the language and music modules work together in that they rely on the same computational processes in the brain. The language and music systems are anatomically distinct, but are united during mental simulation while talking to another person or reading. We use the same neural networks to process prosody of sentences as we do pitched contours of melodies, The Singing Neanderthals, 57.
entity." Mithen had denied that music has any meaning. According to him, Buddhist mantras don’t have any. But he has now revealed that musical phrases do—their meaning derives from the whole phrase. Although he places scare quotes around meaning it is not surprising that musical phrases have some because the first feature of his protolanguage Hmmmm is that the phrases are holistic. If early hominids survived for millions of years communicating with such phrases, then they too must have “meant” something independently of a referent or information about the world. Wray thus distinguishes referential meaning of holistic phrases from those that are “interactional in function.” But for her, interactional means either manipulative (get others to do something) or pertains to one’s personal and/or group identity. There is another sense of interactional meaning she is missing that happens between human-in-the-world and animal-in-the-environment, i.e., the point of uniquely human life in biological evolution. The search for meaning shifts from semantics to the vocal structure between speakers, which are a precondition for segmentation and recursion, when cadences and modulations come into view. They are not stand alone spontaneous vulgar utterances, but in a dynamic interplay with a motivational-structure or mood. The evidence from The Singing Neanderthals, The Origins of the Modern Mind and Philosophy and the Analysis of Music supports the idea that the communication system of early hominids included a dynamic interplay of tension and resolution in rhythms and tones. The structure was dynamic or moved to the extent to which one intuited-perceived (for us recollect what was natural to our ancestors) the middle of language or the intermediary realm of rhythm. If the timing was off, if there was no reply, then the tension built until a reply was returned that evoked another answer in sync with it. Without this logic of rhythms and tones a fluent “conversation” could not have happened, or as Gadamer says of the “realm of rhythm,” nothing could have been understood.

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1102 Ibid., 25.
Conclusion

Slingerland’s contention that Gadamer’s hermeneutics is responsible for a post-modern antipathy toward objective standards of knowledge and judgement is seriously flawed and mirrors his alleged adversary. Just as Slingerland and his cohort reduce Gadamer’s linguistic turn to post-modernism in advance of having thought about the topic, so too do the post-moderns tend to reduce natural science to a caricature of logical positivism. Neither side recognizes how the polar extremes hang together on the basis of human disposedness; specifically on the basis of how hearing and seeing play a role in articulating what beings are. Consequently, like Slinglerland, the post-modern potential to think about the same topic from different perspectives and find unity throughout them rather than contradictions that would force reducing claims to somebody’s camp is not very well developed. In contrast, hermeneutics aims to reverse the relationship between judgement and understanding exemplified by Slingerland’s criticism of Gadamer and the post-modern antipathy toward the natural sciences by arguing for an ontological distinction between mere seeing and seeing with the ears, between a visual and auditory way of relating toward beings. This cannot but involve language if indeed relating ideas to one another in thought is a lingual rather than an exclusively representational process based on fixed properties and family resemblance.

Consenting to the proposition that thought is lingual does not mean that there are no objectively valid grounds for an argument. On the contrary, the study of the inner voice in terms of two modes of inquiry has disengaged the idea from what Gadamer says about it and has sought to understand the thing itself. In so doing, a number of different accounts of the inner word have surfaced, for instance from philosophy, phenomenology and the physical sciences. This is not characteristic of post-modernism and instead, of modernity. Gregor Schiemann writes, “The sign of modernity in the philosophy of nature is not the substantiation of one concept of nature with an exclusive claim to truth for another; it is the formal acknowledgement of the narrowness and contingency of validity conditions and granting equal standing to alternative approaches.”1104 But equal standing does not mean there is no basis for harmonizing the validity conditions with one another. In contrast to the visual perspective that Gadamer says grasps distinctions within its sphere, a cultivated

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consciousness as he calls it, takes in many points of view. This is because it has honed the capacity to transcend its own location and to think about the topic on the basis of other and competing assumptions or prior understandings. This cannot but entail weaving common ground between them on the basis of their inner relation or meaning. Even a scientific explanation that aims to do more than be a showing and instead to explain and justify itself cannot but draw upon the middle of language or the inner word. The result is a double account of the object of knowledge that invites further thought and experimental procedures in order to clarify whatever has been concluded.

The ramification of the dialectical interplay that has an inner ear for combining both sides of an equation is that the grounds for the universality of hermeneutics shift from phenomenological-ontology to natural science. With respect to the former, discussed in Part One, attunement to the rhythm of language is an act of recollecting a pre-discursive awareness of one’s aion zoon, of one’s relation to the time of being captivated by an animal-environment. This is what a Greek cult experience of the divine or an education in music opens up for us through our social-being. Play is a way of rehearsing this state of mind that has made it possible to understand one another in language and that Gadamer grasps in terms of an auditory repositioning of the self in the middle voice. With respect to the natural sciences, the same process is configured in terms of the evolution of language. What Gadamer calls the inner word is the vestige of a pre-discursive understanding in the music of language. A philosophical dialogue, as Gadamer understands it, presupposes the capacity to hearken to, as in dispositionally recollect, the humanity or miteinandersein forged by early hominids in advance of the emergence of symbolic language. The inexhaustible meaning of anything said refers the attentive listener to the origins of language in the “now.” A theory about the evolution of language explains why hermeneutics is universal.

A predictable objection to the assertion that the ontological grounds for the universality of hermeneutics have shifted from philosophy to natural science comes from the concept of historically effected consciousness. How can we purport to have transcended history and culture to anything like grounds independent of human subjectivity, fancy and caprice? Is not our understanding in language always determined by the values of an epoch?

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1105 TM, 16.
1106 Gadamer explains the term as follows: “it is used to mean at once the consciousness effected in the course of history and determined by history, and the very consciousness of being thus effected and determined.” TM, xxx.
Gadamer might reply by pointing out that historically effected consciousness knows that it is effected and therefore, by objectifying itself clarifies its own way of interpreting things. In so doing, we become more conscientious about our use of concepts. \(^{1107}\) The problem with this answer is that language, as Gadamer understands it, is in the process of being translated into computerese or electronic forms of communication such as instant messaging in which worlds and worldviews are no longer inhabited. We do not live in spaces organized by projects because places are increasingly insignificant. One reason for this is the homogenization of culture by a global economy evinced by the concentration of multinationals in Canada. Another reason is, as Northrop Frye says in *The Modern Century*, speed. The speed of electronic communications obliterates spaces and therefore the meaning of places. The upshot is that history and tradition and everything that might remind us of them, e.g., War Memorial in Ottawa, is being re-interpreted as information. Information has no location in the sense that it depends on the neutralization of context, assumptions, prior understandings and prejudices. In this non-worlding global village there is no historical consciousness to speak of because history is not effective. Hence, the standard Gadamerian objection to grounding the universality of hermeneutics in sciences does not apply. Since culture and tradition are increasingly irrelevant in the age of information, so too is their role in enabling the pursuit of knowledge in the humanities. The position for questioning assumptions and prior understandings is shifting from a dialogue with the tradition (s) to the sciences. They are the default position for research in an age with little to no historical consciousness that still aspires to critical thinking. However, as Gadamer teaches this is not viable since deferring to the scientific mode of reasoning, i.e., logical deductions about agreed upon facts (consensus and social recruitment) in the entirety would eclipse the very form of inquiry that enables discovery in both the sciences and humanities, i.e., tact or the capacity to create unity out of a cacophony of information. The primary justification for a liberal arts education is therefore to heed the middle ground that mediates between many perspectives by training the inner ear to hear the inner voice in the works of most philosophers and poets that do not seem to make any sense and moreover in a forum where the living language and as Gadamer refers to it, “being-with-one-another,” has been preserved.

\(^{1107}\) TM, xxiii.
Bibliography


_____ . *The Singing Neanderthals: The Origins of Music, Language, Mind and*


