

Six Steps of Hermeneutical Process at H.-G. Gadamer

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Abstract: This study aims to show how philosophizing H.-G. Gadamer. It targets highlighting the specific of Gadamerian procedure to achieve understanding/interpreting the world (people, events, work of art, texts). For it, we investigate how the hermeneutical process is carried, and provide a picture of the elements of hermeneutical process (steps of hermeneutical procedure) in conception of H.-G. Gadamer. Used method is the hermeneutic method. The conclusion that is drawn is as follows: 1) hermeneutical process starts with the element/step to observe that "something addresses us"; 2) the second step consists of idea that the process must conduct to an agreement about what is addressing us; 3) for reaching an agreement is necessary a step of common language, of mutual recognition, and symmetry; 4) then comes up step of understanding on world of work of art, things, opinions (doxa); 5) fifth step is the step of content and communication of meaning; 6) last step is that of openness to alterity, that of fusion of horizons which crowning final understanding and final agreement with itself and with other; now hermeneutical spirit returns to itself.

Keywords: *hermeneutical process; hermeneutical subject; hermeneutical object; understanding; common language; common recognition; H.-G. Gadamer.*

How to cite: Vlăduțescu, Ș. (2018). Six Steps of Hermeneutical Process at H.-G. Gadamer. *Postmodern Openings*, 9(2), 161-174. <https://doi.org/10.18662/po/26>

1. Introduction

H.-G. Gadamer, like any other great philosopher, does not say how he works. He talks about the method, but the true method of work, of philosophizing should be detected by us. As stated by Immanuel Kant in "The Critique of Pure Reason" the method "must be a procedure in accordance with principles" (Kant, 1998, p. 702).

Latin word "principium", nominative singular, has also the meaning "element". First sense is "origin", "beginning", "foundation". Latin "prīncipia" is nominative plural of "principium". Latin "prīncipia" has the meaning "elements", "principles". The elements are principles; therefore, the principles are elements. For example, Alasdair MacIntyre shows in "The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected essays, Volume 1" (2004, p. 144) that "Aquinas also uses 'principium' (...) referring to the elements". The steps of Gadamerian hermeneutical procedure and the elements of Gadamerian hermeneutical process are in same time the principles of Gadamerian hermeneutics. Every nuclear element is a principle. Elements of hermeneutical process are principles of Gadamerian hermeneutical process and principles of Gadamerian hermeneutical procedure.

The steps of own method are not effectively, clear, intentional and short listed by H.-G. Gadamer. Therefore, in our investigative approach we will clarify this steps, elements, principles. For this, we use one of the tools of hermeneutical method outlined by F. Schleiermacher (founder of modern hermeneutics); this principle indicates that task of hermeneutics is "to understand the utterance at first just as well and then better than its author" (Schleiermacher, 1998, p. 23). Given the limited objective of the research that we have proposed, to detect the elements of Gadamerian hermeneutical process, to emphasize principles of Gadamerian hermeneutical procedure, we will try, if and only if possible, to understand the author better than he understood himself.

In the center of Gadamerian hermeneutical process is situated a hermeneutical subject which H.-G. Gadamer calls "hermeneutical consciousness". This is a responsible and dedicated hermeneut (an interpreter of the world, of the meaning of the world). This hermeneut senses alterity (otherness, interlocutors, partners of dialogue) "as object of hermeneutical consciousness" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 452). For understanding and interpreting the object (the alterity, the existential subject), the hermeneut (hermeneutical consciousness) engages in a complex hermeneutical process. The hermeneut has some horizon; the generic interlocutor (other, alterity) has another horizon. Hermeneutical process is a process of adaptations,

accommodation, commensurate, and, ultimately, a process of fusion of this horizons: “In our analysis of the hermeneutical process we saw that to acquire a horizon of interpretation requires a fusion of horizons” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 398). The goal of hermeneutical process is fundamental hermeneutical agreement about the world of things and opinions.

In the Gadamerian hermeneutical process is claiming a basic preliminary condition, valid both for written discourse, and oral exchange of words, that partners have a mutual goodwill. This think is principled valid for any dialogue (Medveschi & Frunza, 2018). It can not be obtained as a general rule, by constraint, but can only to be made possible. This implies a kind of debt of mutual understanding. The conceptual fight is given for an unlimited understanding. As such it is based, from this perspective, supporting the idea that “the effort to understand is needed wherever there is no immediate understanding, i.e., whenever the possibility of misunderstanding has to be reckoned” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 179). Who let trained in dialogue already recognized so that he considers that are met the conditions for this. A “You” is not an object, but it relates to others. There is an experience of “You” that captures something typical in behavior of others and acquires based on experiencing an intuition about other. We understand the other as usually understand a typical process in our experience field. We are able to anticipate people and texts: “anticipation of meaning that governs our understanding” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 293). Gadamer seeks about an ability to judge people. Before any judgment of world, the world (people, work of art, thing, and doxa) is already given through the language. Gadamer sees the language as a comprehensive pre-interpretation status of the world, element of the hermeneutical process that can not be replaced by anything. No one can respond rationally the question concerning to the first understanding of the meaning. There are always preliminary experiences of pre-linguistic meaning: “language has its true being only in dialogue, in coming to an understanding. (...) All understanding is interpretation, and all interpretation takes place in the medium of a language that allows the object to come into words and yet is at the same time the interpreter’s own language” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 443 and p. 390). Fore-understanding and dependence on prejudices are inherent in any human understanding and action. The consciousness of history effects is trying to think about their prejudices and control its own fore-understanding (Frunză & Sandu, 2017; Roșca, 2017; Lynch, 2018).

Who tries to understand is exposed misled by prejudices that are not correct by things themselves; thus, “Working out appropriate projections, anticipatory in nature, to be confirmed ’by the things themselves’, is the

constant task of understanding” (Gadamer 2004, p. 270), that would dare to make expectations that should be confirmed in things. There is no other objectivity than of developing of prejudice that comes true. This principled requirement is radicalizing of an approach that, in reality, always apply it. Far from the idea that someone hears someone or start a reading must not bring about by himself absolutely no prejudice about content and should forget all his views, openness to other design or text rather always already includes that do not put in a report with whole of own views or put ourselves in a report with them (Hammermeister, 2006, p. 87). Concepts are a mobile variety of possibilities, but within this variety of what can be conceived, that is what a cogitative spirit can find meaning and, hence, what can anticipate. However is not possible anything, and who do not listen to what a person really will not be able, finally, to integrate it neither into his own different anticipation of the meaning. Thus, also here there is criterion. Hermeneutical task turns self in an objective query and is always already co-determined by it. Hermeneutical approach acquires a firm area under his feet. Who wants to understand not abort in the first to random the character of own prejudice, that its understanding passing (Simms, 2015, p. 65), that on how it can be consistent and stubborn, in addition to the discourse conception - until, eventually, it can not escape the inadequacy and flips the alleged understanding. Hermeneutical reflection is an integral element of understanding itself. Understanding is variable and unlimited: “we understand in a different way, if we understand all” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 296).

2. Three models

Depending on the orientation of the comprehensive device, the Gadamerian hermeneutical process can be controlled by three models.

The gnosiological model: the language phenomenon and understanding prove to be a “universal model of being and knowledge in general” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 483). Gadamer performs from language and understanding the model of cognition in general.

Another model for Gadamerian hermeneutical process is the image of the translator and “translation process” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 552; O’Keeffe 2015, 149). O’Keeffe speaks about a translational hermeneutics.

The dialogical model presides also Gadamerian hermeneutical process: “the basic model of any communication is dialogue, conversation” (Gadamer, 2001, p. 450).

3. First step: hermeneutical process starts with something that addresses us

The first event of comprehension is, the fact that we are interpellated by something. Understanding begins with the fact that “something addresses us”: “Understanding begins, as we have already said above, when something addresses us. This is the first condition of hermeneutics” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 298). This is the supreme hermeneutic condition. It requires from us a principled suspension of own prejudices. However, any suspension of judgment - and especially the prejudices - is logically the structure of a question. Only where understanding by the language with the other is possible by mutual addressing, only there the communicative comprehension and understanding generically may become an issue. Scientific communication is a special case of hermeneutical process, it assumes from the outset certain conditions of communication: this lies in its addressing kind. It considers the specialist and wants to be intelligible only to one who is well acquainted with the state of research and the research language (Nielsen, 2016). The world tells us by the manner we think it.

4. Second step: the goal of hermeneutical process is fundamental hermeneutical agreement

The understanding effort that constitutes the engine of hermeneutical process has as goal, in principle, the possible consensus, the “fundamental agreement” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 430). Fundamental hermeneutical agreement must himself already rely on a precord uniting agreement that makes for first time as that of talking to each other to make sense. Agreement attracts to a participation to the common sense. In detail, the goal of any mutual understanding and any understanding is the agreement related to issue, and hermeneutics has from everlasting the task to performe the absent or disturbed agreement. What brings the agreement and what produce relations with our neighbors, co-existence in society and the state, beliefs and common decissions constitute actually dignity of own being and selfunderstanding of man. Ultimately, in the hermeneutical process the agreement is guaranteed, is universal, because, shows Gadamer “the idea itself of reason is that which can not give up the idea of general agreement. This is the solidarity that unites all” (Gadamer, 2001, p. 605) . Solidarity is what secures agreement (Kot & Grabara, 2017).

5. Step 3 - common language, mutual recognition, and symmetry are critical

“Language in which something comes to speak is not a possession at the disposal of one or the other of interlocutors. Every conversation presupposes a common language, or better, creates a common language. (...). Language is the medium in which substantive understanding and agreement take place between two people” states Gadamer (Gadamer, 2004, p. 371, p. 386). It is the game they play with partners. No one is ahead of the other. To each has his turn and is constantly on the move. Indeed, most often the partners understand each other. Finally, when they recognized something that seemed strange and unintelligible, then they fall into the linguistic orderly world (Risser, 2009, p. 308). More misunderstanding than understanding needs words. To speak means to speak to someone. The word must be the right word, but this does not mean only one partner presents by the word that question, but that he put in front of the other, whom he speaks. For this reason, speech does not belong to the sphere of the ego, but the scope of us: the reality of speech consisting of interpellation. Language appears as the true center of the human being (Nixon, 2017, p. 31). He occupies the field of human coexistence, communication, the more comprehensive agreement, that is as indispensable human life as the air we breathe. Gadamer issues “thesis that any communication is a linguistic problem and succeeds or fails in the linguistic environment” (Gadamer, 2001, p. 495). As such, all the phenomena of communication, understanding and misunderstanding, which is the subject of hermeneutics, are linguistic phenomena. Comprehension of what anyone says means understanding in language and not a transposition in the other and this experiences restoration (Bleicher 2014: 34). The sensory experience that happens in understanding includes permanently application. All this process is one related to language. Language is the center in which is performing the understanding with each other, of partners and agreement concerning the work. Not only in interhuman communication process, but any understanding process is a linguistic deployment. Any agreement is linguistic. The silent understanding, quietly, is presented as being the highest and intimate understanding mode (Davey, 2012, p. 85).

In hermeneutical process is performed a common language. Acquiring of a common language is not a tool for the preparation of communicative purposes. “We begin with this proposition: to understand means to come to an understanding with each other (sich miteinander verstehen)” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 180). From this perspective, the

communication between people creates a common language in the same way that, conversely, implies. Alienation of people is showed in that they do not speak the same language (as it is said), and the approach in that is found common language.

As performing of hermeneutical process, each dialogue requires a common language, or better said, finds and performs a common language. Is here something to put in middle to which the dialogue partners are partaken and in connection with changing points of view. Understanding on something meant to be performed in the hermeneutical process means that, necessarily, preliminary to develop a common language (Lawn & Keane, 2011, p. 55). It is not an external process of adjustment of some tools, even be downright wrong to say that partners adapt to each other. Partners arrive rather within dialogue sensed in fair way under truth work of art that unites in a new community (Dumitru, Budică & Motoi, 2016, p. 36). Understanding is not a simply self-throw into the game and a impose of an own point of view, but a metamorphosis to the common element in which we do not remain what we were (Teodorescu, Calin & Busu, 2016; Marone & Neely, 2017).

The report I-you is not one directly, but one reflexive. Any claim is corresponding one contrary. Hence, the possibility of any partner of this report to outperform reflexive the other. He claims that knows the other's claim, that he understands even better than he understands himself. With this you lose the immediacy with which they direct the claim on the other. Understanding is produced, but rather a reflexive interception and anticipation in terms of the other. The inner historicity of all existential relations between people is that mutual recognition is constantly disputed: "constant struggle for mutual recognition" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 353). These dialectics of reciprocity that dominates all relations between an "I" and "You" is, however, necessarily obscured the individual conscience. A tragedy is a battle for recognition, a tyranny for recognition. The servant tyrannizes his master serving him does not believe at all that he wills himself in it. Indeed, their sense of self is precisely this avoidance from dialectic of this reciprocity, in a gesture to extract reflexive himself from a relationship with the other, becoming thus inaccessible to this. Understanding the other one, stating that we understand him, we kidnap him any legitimacy of their claims. In particular dialectics of care is what is stated in this way, engraining all relationships with others as reflected form of the aspiration to domination (Grondin, 2011, p. 56). The claim of understanding him anticipating the other is complying with the function to protect ourselves of the claim of the other (Barthold, 2010, p. 239). Similar phenomena are well known for instance in pedagogical relation, an authoritative form of assistance.

Making a hermeneutical process “is not possible if one of the partners necessarily believes in a superior position to the other” (Gadamer, 2001, p. 450), such as when he claims to have a prior knowledge about the prejudices is which is marked the other. He is so closed in his own prejudices. Hermeneutical process refuses asymmetry. His domain of defining is the symmetry. Who understands does not claim a superior position, but admits that his really supposed truth to be put to the test (Dima & Voinea, 2015; Budica, Busu, Dumitru & Purcaru, 2015). This is also involved in any understanding and that any understanding contributes to development of consciousness of the history effects.

6. Step 4 - understanding on world of work of art, things, opinions (doxa) is decisive

Understanding means, first, to understand on the work art, the thing, same thing, and only secondly, to highlight and understand the other's opinion as such: “First of all hermeneutical conditions remains preliminary understanding that results in the fact of having to do by the same thing” (Gadamer, 2001, p. 225). Hence, it is determined what gets made as a unitary direction and, with it, the application of the “ fore-conception of completeness” (concept introduced by Gadamer): such anticipation is “an axiom of all hermeneutics”: “This is, in fact, an axiom of all hermeneutics: we described it above as the fore-conception of completeness” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 364). Now, it is outlined the three moments of Gadamarian comprehension: fore-understanding, understanding preliminary of the work of art and common understanding of the work of art.

A proper hermeneutics of themselves things should highlight this proper reality of history in itself understanding. Gadamer calls that so requested “history of effects”. The consciousness of history effects tries to think about their prejudices and control their own fore-understanding. Understanding is a process of the history effects nature, and inherent linguisticity any understanding is that in which is performed the hermeneutic approach. A truly historical thinking must also consider the own historicity. What to Heidegger was hermeneutical circle to Gadamer has an analog in “circular structure of understanding” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 293). “To understand each other rather means to understand related to work” (Gadamer, 2001, p. 400). We understand each other talking to each other, often talking to each other, and yet, ultimately, by the use of words, bringing things together in front of us expressed with words. Comprehension and communication take into consideration one thing we face. As someone

communicates with the partner in dialogue regarding a thing, so the interpreter understands, in his turn, the thing that is communicated. Understanding of the thing about which is spoken must be designed from the process. In parallel, hermeneutics must start from the fact that whoever wants to understand is related to the thing that is expressed through the transmission process. Thus, how we enter into the process each other and we are somewhat worn beyond of its evolution is not determined the will, who withdraws or is open, of individual, but the law of the fact about it that causes the discourse and reply, and finally balances one against another. Thus, where a dialogue answered, we remain mastered of it.

Each of us has “his own language” (Gadamer, 2008, p. 56). There is no way the problem of a different language through which we can understand beyond individuals limits, peoples and times. Clearly, this miracle can not be separated from the fact that the work of art we are talking about are presented before us as something common in that we speak about them. The way how a work of art reveals us somewhat only when we are talking about him (Frunză, 2017). Words that bring a thing the language constitute a speculative occurrence. Understanding of the work of art necessarily is going as linguistic form, through simultaneous verbalization form to understanding. Mode of making comprehension is rather bringing to the language of the work of art itself, whether it is text or dialogue partners that present that work of art. The truth of speech is determined so that as the adequacy of speech at work of art, which means that the adequacy of fact to let to show by speech the work of art which is presented.

Hermeneutical process always involves a meeting with the expressions, with the opinions of the other. These need to flaunt their own persuasion power to be understood. Emphasizing this idea, Gadamer states: “Hermeneutics is philosophy because it does not let limited to a technique to just understand the opinions of other” (Gadamer, 2001, p. 450). It decodes both work of art, thing and opinion (doxa). Thus, the cogitative subject, opinions’ producer, is obliged to know and to respond to the produced effect of his word. Understanding with the other involves in case of opinions that partners that are willing to get and try to admit the foreign element, even adversely (Dănciulescu & Colhon, 2016; Ali Taha, Sirková & Ferencová, 2016; Basic, 2018). If this occurs each other, and partners puts in doubt the arguments in his turn the adverse arguments keeping them in the same time his, it can finally reach through a mutual transfer discreet and involuntary of points of views (we call this exchange of opinions) to a common language and a common verdict. The hermeneutical process requires that when to admit the objective justice of opinions of the other, of

what says, to strive, when we want to understand, to further strengthen his arguments (Costache, 2016, 78).

7. Step 5 – communication of meaning is the core of hermeneutical process

When two spirits meet and communicate to each other something, then, always, two worlds, two perspectives on the world and two images of the world are those that are somewhat closer together. Hermeneutical process is characterized, on the other hand, also, that which is revealed within it, as in that of a perfect dialogue, is not surprised and said by someone, so only that partner to master the issues in question, but participation in truth and the other is acquired only in communion. Dialogue is the a task of hrmeneutics and is a task as “communication of meaning”: “in dialogue spoken language, in the process of question and answer, giving and taking, talking at cross purposes and seeing each other's point, performs the communication of meaning that, with respect to the written tradition, is the task of hermeneutics” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 361).

8. Step 6 - openness to alterity, and fusion of horizons are subtle

Hermeneutical process is basically impossible if one partner “is not really open” (Gadamer, 2001, p. 450) to the conversation, dialogue, communication. Openness is the condition of understanding; without openness understanding can not occur, because “understanding is always the fusion of these horizons” of two sides of hermeneutical reality (Gadamer, 2004, p. 305).

Who wants to understand will provide himself from the beginning to abandon to him own prejudices, ignoring intention of the other with such consistency and obstinately until it becomes unignorat and flips alleged understanding “The hermeneutical reduction to the author's meaning is just as inappropriate as the reduction of historical events to the intentions of their protagonists” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 366). Who wants to understand is rather willing to listen alterity, rather willing to let to tell him something. Therefore, an educated conscience hermeneutic speaking must be, from the beginning, receptive to alterity. Such receptiveness would not entail any objective “neutral” and no auto-rejection but include the detachment proximity of own pre-formulation and expectations, involves a revocable assumption of their own preconceptions and prejudices, for what is understood to appear in his alterity and, in this way to acquire the possibility to oppose his objective truth of our own preconceptions (Forero Pineda, 2017).

That you can enter in the hermeneutical process miracle is decisive: “I can listen with understanding” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 378). Meeting with other rising above own limit, even where is the matter of dollars or the interests of power. Ability to listen, argues the contrary Gadamer has two sides: the subjective side, consisting of actual ability to listen, and the objective side, meaning to have a common language. Compared with peers, important is his experiment of “you” as “you”, in other words, do not ignore his claim and allow him to address us. This requires openness. However, this opening does not occur, until the end, just to the one that we want to let him address us. One who is willing to listen is, rather open in principle: “for it opens one's eyes to the thing” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 460). Without such openness to others there is no genuine human connection. Comembership always means, in the same time, possible to listen to the other. If the two understand each other, this does not mean that one he “comprehend” the other, i.e. it includes the mind. Likewise, to “listen/someone” does not mean simply that we blindly what the other wants. Such individuals are called dependent (Dostal, 2002). Opening for other includes, thus, being forced to admit to myself something against me, even if there was no other who could impose it against me. The fact to not hear and to hear wrong - are the result of the same cause, which can be found in ourselves. He doesn't hear or he hears wrong the one who is listening permanent himself, whose ear is somehow so full of that address that he permanent address himself, following his instincts and interests, so that he may not hear the other (Ślusarczyk, Baryń & Kot, 2016; Voinea & Negrea, 2017). This is all possible nuances, the essential feature of all of us (Gama, 2016). The fact of becoming again and again, against this, apt for understanding, i.e. listen to the other, it seems to be true elevation of man to the condition of humanity.

9. Final remarks

It follows that in Gadamer's philosophy, understanding and interpretation do not occur randomly and spontaneously. Hermeneutical process is not totally free: it is limited by the freedom of understanding and interpretation of otherness. In structural terms, hermenutical process is double articulated. Reinforcement of hermeneutical process consists of two elements: an endogenous element and exogenous element. Endogenous element is intrinsic capability of hermeneutical subject to understand itself. Exogenous element is availability of hermeneutical subject to pay attention to the existential subject, to otherness. In the minds of H.-G. Gadamer, understanding and interpreting are related a) with comprehensive amplitude

of hermeneutical subject, and b) with altitude at which this hermeneutical subject rises his attention to existential subject (other).

We say that H.-G. Gadamer teaches us that hermeneutical subject is more a hermeneutical consciousness so he is closer to realize a correct, kind, generous and sensitive understanding and interpretation of the other, of the existential subject. H.-G. Gadamer's lesson is that the world of hermeneutics, understanding and interpretation belongs to those watching respectfully, egalitarian, wise and open to alterity, to otherness. The main feature of an hermeneut, as understood by Gadamer, is the opening to alterity.

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