HERMENEUTICS AND THE STUDY OF HISTORY

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Hermeneutics and the Study of History

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY

RUDOLF A. MAKKREEL

AND

FRITHJOF RODI

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS · PRINCETON NEW JERSEY

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Published by Princeton University Press, 41 William Street,
Princeton, New Jersey 08540
In the United Kingdom: Princeton University Press,
Chichester, West Sussex

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Dilthey, Wilhelm, 1833–1911.
[Essays. English. Selections]
Hermeneutics and the study of history / Wilhelm Dilthey ; edited,
with an introduction, by Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi.
p. cm. — (Selected works / Wilhelm Dilthey ; v. 4)
Includes index.
Contents: Schleiermacher's hermeneutical system in relation to
earlier Protestant hermeneutics — On understanding and
hermeneutics : student lecture notes (1867–68) — The rise of
hermeneutics — History and science — On Jacob Burckhardt's
The civilization of the Renaissance in Italy — Friedrich Christoph
Schlosser and the problem of universal history —
The eighteenth century and the historical world — Reminiscences
on historical studies at the University of Berlin.
ISBN 0-691-00649-0 (cloth : alk. paper)
1. Hermeneutics—History 2. History—Philosophy. I. Makkreel,
Rudolf A., 1939– . II. Rodi, Frithjof, 1930– . III. Title.
IV. Series: Dilthey, Wilhelm, 1833–1911. Selections.
English. 1985 ; v. 4.
B3216.D82E5 1985 vol. 4
[BD241]
121′.68—dc20 95-39698

This book has been composed in Adobe Sabon

Princeton University Press books are printed
on acid-free paper and meet the guidelines
for permanence and durability of the Committee
on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity
of the Council on Library Resources

Printed in the United States of America
by Princeton Academic Press

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

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PREFACE TO ALL VOLUMES

This six-volume translation of the main writings of Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) is intended to meet a longstanding need. It makes available to English readers translations of complete texts representing the full range of Dilthey's philosophy. The multivolume edition will thereby provide a wider basis for research not only in the history and theory of the human sciences but also in Dilthey's philosophical understanding of history, life, and world-views. His principal writings on psychology, aesthetics, ethics, and pedagogy are also included, together with some historical essays and literary criticism.

Whereas the Spanish-speaking world, which assimilated Dilthey early and intensively under the influence of Ortega y Gasset, has had an eight-volume translation since 1944–45, the English-speaking world has approached Dilthey more hesitantly. The efforts made by H. A. Hodges to aquaint the British public with Dilthey met with only limited success. H. P. Rickman has translated parts of Dilthey's writings, and his introductions have sought to dispel the distrust of Continental Philosophy, which characterized the early phases of the Analytical Movement. While a few individual works have also been translated, a systematically collected edition will provide a more consistent rendering of important terms and concepts.

An increasing interest in continental thought (Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, hermeneutics, structuralism, and critical theory) has created a climate in which the still not adequately recognized philosophy of Dilthey can be appropriated. As phenomenological and hermeneutical theories are being applied to more complex and problematic questions, it is becoming more evident that the nineteenth-century roots of these philosophical theories must be reexamined. This is especially the case with problems surrounding the theory of the *Geisteswissenschaften*. As given its classical formulation by Dilthey, this theory has been entitled in English as that of the "human studies" in order to differentiate it from the positivistic ideal of a "unified science." Currently, the more forthright title, "human sciences," has been adopted—but at the risk of becoming submerged in a universal hermeneutics and post-Kuhnian philosophy of science. Given this new situation, the difference between the natural sciences and the human sciences will need to be reconsidered. If interpretation and the circularity associated with it are in-

herent to both the natural and human sciences, then the task will be to determine what kind of interpretation is involved in each and at what level.

The translations of Dilthey's main theoretical works on the human sciences will show that Dilthey's overall position was more flexible than has been realized. His distinction between understanding (*Verstehen*) and explaining, for example, was not intended to exclude explanations from the human sciences, but only to delimit their scope. Moreover, the importance of methodological reflection in the human sciences should become more evident and serve to eliminate the persistent misconceptions of understanding as empathy, or worse still, as a mode of irrationalism. The German term *Geisteswissenschaften* encompasses both the humanities and the social sciences, and Dilthey's theory and works assume no sterile dichotomies rooted in a presumed opposition between the arts and the sciences.

The limits of a six-volume edition did not permit inclusion of some significant works: full-scale historical monographs such as the *Leben Schleiermachers*, major essays from *Weltanschauung und Analyse des Menschen seit Renaissance und Reformation* and *Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels*. We trust that our volumes will generate enough interest in Dilthey's thought to justify the future translation of these and other works as well.

This edition arose through a close cooperation among the editors, their respective universities (Emory University, Atlanta, and Ruhr-Universität Bochum), and a great number of colleagues from various disciplines who served as translators. This kind of large-scale cooperation required an organizational framework. A group of Dilthey scholars consisting of Professors O. F. Bollnow, K. Gründer, U. Herrmann, B. E. Jensen, H. Johach, O. Pöggeler, and H. P. Rickman met twice in Bochum to assist the editors in selecting the content of this edition. Several translation sessions were held at Emory University to bring the translators together to discuss terminological difficulties, and other scholars have advised us as well (see list of advisory board in the front matter and Editorial Note to this volume).

Dilthey is difficult to translate. In an effort to render the translations as coherent as possible, the editors prepared a comprehensive lexicon for the use of the translators. To guarantee the quality of the translations, they have been carefully edited. First we scrutinized the

translations for problems left unresolved by the lexicon and collected data for our bibliographical references. Then we went over each text, making revisions where necessary (1) to ensure that the allusions and idiomatic meanings of the original German have been preserved and (2) to make Dilthey's complex and indirect prose accessible to the modern English reader.

An Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship in 1978–79 made it possible for the editors to begin their cooperative efforts. The Fritz Thyssen Stiftung in Cologne enabled them to execute this project through a ten-year grant. The Translations Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities and Emory University have also made substantial means available for this project. The editors are grateful to all these institutions for their very generous support. Of course, this project would not have borne fruit were it not for the commitment of Princeton University Press and the encouragement of Sanford Thatcher and Ann Wald. Our appreciation to all who have helped us in this time-consuming but worthwhile endeavor.

Rudolf A. Makkreel
Frithjof Rodi

EDITORIAL NOTE TO VOLUME IV

In the preface we have already described our general procedures in revising translations for this edition. Coherence in the use of terminology has been our aim throughout, but when Dilthey uses terms nontechnically we have allowed the context to determine the best English equivalent. Thus, while we normally translate *Erlebnis* as "lived experience," when Dilthey uses it together with other adjectives such as "personal," we tend to drop the "lived" to avoid awkwardness. Brief notes about some of our most important terminological decisions have been provided where such terms first occur.

Words and phrases added by the editors of Dilthey's *Gesammelte Schriften* have been placed in ⟨ ⟩; those added by the editors of *Selected Works* in [ ].

The titles of works not already translated into English have been left in German. Otherwise, only the English title is used. When figures and works that are now no longer so well known are mentioned by Dilthey, we have provided brief annotations. But because they are not repeated, the index should be consulted for the first mention of names.

Dilthey's own footnotes will have a (D) at the end. Those added by the *Herausgeber* or editors of the *Gesammelte Schriften* will have an (H) at the end. Our own footnotes will be unmarked. In cases where the authorship of footnotes was not clear from the printed text in *GS* XIV, we were able to consult Dilthey's original manuscript (see Introduction).

Concerning the *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae* of Matthias Flacius Illyricus, Dilthey refers to the Basel edition of 1580. Martin Redeker, the German editor, was unable to obtain access to this edition and refers instead to the 1628–29 edition. The editors had access to neither of these, but were able to consult the 1674 Jena edition through the cooperation of Professor Lutz Geldsetzer. In order to avoid confusion about the different pagination in each of these editions, we have generally used Dilthey's page references. Only where Dilthey's references are missing have we inserted Redeker's references to the later edition—these are marked with an (H). According to Professor Geldsetzer, who has compared the early editions of the *Clavis*, there are no deviations in content, but only in pagination.

We have attempted to identify the many passages that Dilthey quoted without giving any citation. This has sometimes proved to be especially difficult; some passages could not be located even by the experts we consulted.

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Robert Scharff of the University of New Hampshire, Gabriele Gebhardt and Ansgar Richter of the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, and Dennis Dugan, Eric Nelson, Kent Still, Ryan Streeter, Paul Welty, and John Wuichet of Emory University. The person who has given us the most help with this volume, including the compilation of the index, is Daniel Richardson. We especially thank him.

HERMENEUTICS AND THE STUDY OF HISTORY

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME IV

Because Wilhelm Dilthey began to thematize the problem of hermeneutics rather late in his philosophical career, it may be surprising to some that he had already completed an extensive manuscript on the history of hermeneutics in 1860 when he was only twenty-seven. This three-part manuscript, entitled *Schleiermacher's Hermeneutical System in Relation to Earlier Protestant Hermeneutics*, constitutes Dilthey's so-called *Preisschrift* or prize-essay on hermeneutics and has been translated as the opening work of this volume.

Given this background and the fact that Dilthey today counts as one of the classical representatives of hermeneutics, it is paradoxical that in many of his main works the word "hermeneutics" does not occur at all or appears only rarely. In the *Introduction to the Human Sciences* the word is found in only two almost peripheral passages (see *SW* 1, pp. 431, 454). Also such important later works as the "Ideas for a Descriptive and Analytical Psychology" and "The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences," which are now considered part of the basic writings for a hermeneutical theory of the human sciences and which greatly influenced Martin Heidegger, hardly use the term. These works have much to say about the nature of understanding, but little about the art of interpretation.

Because Dilthey published only one small part of his *Preisschrift*, and that not until 1892 as part of a more general essay on "Das natürliche System der Geisteswissenschaften im 17. Jahrhundert" (*GS* II, 90–245), his first real publication on hermeneutics was the "Rise of Hermeneutics" (1900). His most systematic hermeneutical essay was one of his last: "The Understanding of Other Persons and Their Life-Expressions" (1910). This is part of the "Plan for the Continuation of the Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences" and therefore belongs in *SW* 3.

Dilthey's early *Preisschrift* on hermeneutics shows him to have an extraordinary familiarity with the history of hermeneutics, which was probably unmatched in his time. Then why his reticence in referring to it in his published writings? Part of the answer seems to be that at the end of the nineteenth century hermeneutics was considered a tool of theology, legal studies, and philology. Dilthey himself was still a student of theology when he wrote the *Preisschrift*, and the theological context of hermeneutical problems is

very much dominant in the first part of the *Preisschrift*. In the second part Dilthey does relate the genesis of Schleiermacher's more general hermeneutics to the philosophical background of German idealism and romanticism. In some cases, such as the dependence of Friedrich Ast's hermeneutics on Schelling's philosophy, he finds the relation a hindrance to an adequately sensitive hermeneutics. But the failure of specific philosophical links to produce an adequate hermeneutics does not deflect Dilthey from his conviction that only an understanding of history that has been penetrated by philosophical insight can provide the proper background for a general hermeneutics (see 140). Although Dilthey came to think that hermeneutics could become more than a special discipline, he held back from making such a claim for a long time. This is characteristic of the way in which he dealt with the results of his thought during his whole life. Whatever he published was always merely the tip of an iceberg whose full depth only he could estimate. This had always irritated his closest students, who could never survey the overall scope of Dilthey's views despite the fact that they worked most closely with him. Therefore they named him "the mysterious old man."

This reticence to reveal the full scope of his work even extends to Dilthey's lectures, as can be seen from his first lecture courses on logic and *Wissenschaftstheorie*. The *Preisschrift* and these lectures are only a few years apart, yet Dilthey hardly uses the results of the *Preisschrift* even though the problems discussed are intimately related. This is especially clear when one considers Dilthey's first documented lecture on hermeneutics, which has been translated in part for this volume with the title "On Understanding and Hermeneutics: Student Lecture Notes" (1867–68). Some of the basic concepts of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics are discussed, including the circular part–whole relation, the distinction between divination and comparison, and the distinction among dominant, subordinate, and expository ideas. But those who heard these lectures would not have suspected that only a few years earlier Dilthey had completed the most thorough investigation of the history of hermeneutics up to then and that he would never publish it during his lifetime.

The main reason for Dilthey's initial hesitance in using the word "hermeneutics" may be that the kind of philological hermeneutics he learned as a student from Boeckh was too narrow as a theory of understanding to provide an epistemological foundation for the human sciences. From the beginning, Dilthey was concerned to link hermeneutics as a *Kunstlehre* or theory of the rules of exegesis to the

broader tasks of philosophy and history. The first concern was to relate the problem of interpretation to the wider problem of understanding as examined in German philosophy, that is, to relate *Verstehen* to the problem of *Verstand*. In this context Dilthey came to appreciate the value for *Verstehen* of the aesthetic mode of intuition or insight (*geniale Anschauung*), which he considered to be the common basis for the classic-romantic movement in Germany beginning with Winckelmann, Herder, and Lessing, through Goethe and Wilhelm von Humboldt, to Friedrich Schlegel. The part of the *Preisschrift* that starts on page 104 gives the first indication of Dilthey's high estimation of the fruitfulness of their intuitive approach, which aims to capture the individuality of phenomena on the basis of idealistic conceptions of creativity. This discussion of the intuitive approach was expanded in the first published part of the Schleiermacher biography in a section called "German Literature as the Development of a New World-View" (*GS* XIII, 183–207). This section makes clear that the intuitive approach to understanding individuality informed the comparative approach of the Historical School. At the end of this section, Dilthey writes: "The method of intuition has been the domain of the human sciences: the Schlegels, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Bopp, the Grimms, Boeckh, and Welcker form a continuous line. At the same time, the great movement of German culture, which apprehends structure and the articulation and distinction of parts on the basis of a whole, contains within it the causes of the deep-seated errors of this epoch."

The deep-seated error of the intuitive approach to understanding is that it was content to rely on philosophical speculation. Speculative conceptions of creativity and individuality had to be replaced with empirically tested, descriptive, psychological accounts according to Dilthey (see his attempt to realize this in his *Poetics*, *SW* 5, pp. 29–173). Understanding for Dilthey is always methodologically mediated. *Verstehen* can therefore not be equated with *Anschauung* and *Einfühlung*, both of which are immediate. The positivistic rejection by Neurath, Abel, and Nagel of the process of understanding as simply intuitive or as a kind of empathy was itself a misunderstanding. As much as Dilthey found himself attracted to the idealistic project of relating intellect and intuition, they may not be fused. As much as feeling should be allowed to play a role in understanding, the idea of empathy involves a loss of self that would make understanding uncritical.

Dilthey's second broad concern was to relate traditional hermeneutics to methodological issues about the status of history as ex-

plored by Johann Gustav Droysen in his *Historik*. Like Droysen, Dilthey wanted to develop an empirical but antipositivistic theory of history on the basis of the methodological opposition between the explanative approach of the natural sciences and the understanding approach of the human sciences. This task was begun in the *Introduction to the Human Sciences* and taken up again in the *Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*. In the hermeneutical essay that completes the latter, Dilthey articulates this link between hermeneutics and historical understanding as an epistemological project. He writes: "Today hermeneutics must find a relation to the general epistemological task of demonstrating the possibility of knowing the nexus of the historical world and discovering the means to its realization. The fundamental importance of understanding has been clarified and it is necessary to determine the attainable degree of universality that is possible for each kind of understanding beginning with its logical forms" (*GS* VII, 217–18, see *SW* 3).

In summary, we can say that the comparatively scarce use of the term "hermeneutics" indicates that Dilthey started as a historian of Protestant thought, where hermeneutics was conceived narrowly as the art of providing rules of textual exegesis. At the same time, we see Dilthey constantly concerned with the general problems of understanding and explanation, which eventually led him to expand the meaning of hermeneutics by relating it to the epistemological and reflective task of founding the sciences. The primary aim of this volume is to show the genesis of this process, whereas *SW* 3 deals with the task of grounding the human sciences.

In the next two sections we will comment in more detail on the essays in the respective parts of this volume.

Hermeneutics and Its History

Dilthey's prize-essay *Schleiermacher's Hermeneutical System in Relation to Earlier Protestant Hermeneutics* provides an intricate account of the history of hermeneutics from Flacius to Schleiermacher. The basic tenet of the Reformation was that it is possible for the laity to have direct access to the meaning of the Bible. Allegorical interpretations that negate the literal meaning of a Scriptural passage for the sake of an institutionally decreed hidden doctrinal meaning are to be avoided as much as possible. Schleiermacher was a crucial figure in the history of hermeneutics because he was able to

incorporate tendencies of German romanticism that also militated against allegorical interpretation on independent grounds. Romanticism was based on an idealistic theory of creativity that favored symbolic over allegorical meaning, and universal over special hermeneutics. A symbol is a particular that itself embodies a universal, thus cancelling the opposition of the immanent and transcendent, the visible and the invisible. It is noteworthy that Dilthey was one of the first to stress the importance of Friedrich Schlegel as Schleiermacher's link to the classic-romantic literary movement of the time. Although Dilthey did not receive permission from Schleiermacher's family to publish his correspondence with Schlegel, who was in disrepute because of his scandalous *Lucinde*, Dilthey did make it very clear both in the *Preisschrift* and in the published Schleiermacher biography how productive their relationship had been.

The main division in Schleiermacher's hermeneutics is that between grammatical and psychological interpretation, but it is clear that in his overall dialectical approach to hermeneutics these two kinds of interpretation are always interdependent. It should be noted that grammatical interpretation deals with all aspects of language (not merely those having to do with grammar) insofar as they affect the interpretation of human speech and/or texts. Just as grammatical interpretation is not reducible to grammar, so psychological interpretation has little to do with psychology as we would think of it today. It deals not only with the life-moments that generate the activities of speaking and writing, but also with how these uses of language contribute to the further development of human life. Schleiermacher could just as well have distinguished between the objective and subjective aspects of interpretation.

There has been much controversy about the relative importance that should be attached to grammatical and psychological interpretation. When Heinz Kimmerle published his 1959 edition of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics based solely on Schleiermacher's own notes, he called into question Dilthey's Schleiermacher interpretation based on the Lücke edition of the hermeneutics, which also used lecture notes by students. Dilthey is criticized for assuming that Schleiermacher favored the psychological aspects of interpretation over the grammatical or linguistic aspects. According to Kimmerle this is true only for the late notes. Manfred Frank has pointed out, however, that the respective number of notes by Schleiermacher on grammatical and psychological interpretation is not a measure of their relative importance. He argues that Schleiermacher needed fewer notes to lecture on the psychological aspects of interpretation

than on the grammatical aspects because he had a better command of the former material.[1] Dilthey's *Preisschrift*, not published until 1966, shows that he knew of Schleiermacher's early notes and paid adequate attention to what Schleiermacher said about grammatical interpretation.

Schleiermacher seems to make grammatical interpretation basic or elementary when he says that "only when one has obtained certainty about an author through language, can the other, psychological task [of interpretation] begin."[2] He denies, however, that grammatical or linguistic interpretation is a lower form of psychological interpretation. Both involve the infinite task of attempting to determine what is first given as indeterminate. Because each can only approximate its goal, it is also dependent on the other. No aspect of interpretation can be final. "Language is an infinite domain because each element is determinable by the others in a special way. The same is true for psychological interpretation, for each intuition of an individual is infinite."[3]

From the perspective of language the ideal speech or text is maximally effective or nonrepetitive; from the perspective of psychology the ideal speech or text is maximally distinctive. The first perspective seeks what is classical in a text, the second what is original. Only the convergence of these perspectives can do justice to Schleiermacher's romantic search for genius in a text.[4] If interpretation is concerned with fully understanding the point of view of the other it must be psychological according to Schleiermacher, but to the extent that interpreted meaning is to remain applicable to the self it must be grammatical.

Far from endorsing Schleiermacher's conception of psychological interpretation, Dilthey attacks its assumption that in a perfect work everything can be derived from some seminal decision (*Keimentschluß*) by the author. Whereas Schleiermacher reserves external historical factors for criticism as distinct from hermeneutics, Dilthey regards psychological and historical factors as so interdependent that the idea of a seminal decision becomes untenable. In Schleiermacher's defense it should be said that the subjective aspect of interpretation is not exhausted by the psychological, but is balanced by what he calls technical interpretation. The latter has to do

[1] See Manfred Frank's introduction to Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik und Kritik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), p. 60f.

[2] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 80.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

with the process through which the author presents or displays his thoughts in terms of a two-phase development from "meditation" to "composition." Schleiermacher writes that "psychologically man is free, whereas on the technical side it is the power of form that is dominant and controls the author both in the moment of meditation and that of composition."[5] The technical side of interpretation must recognize that the way authors present their ideas is subject to the formal rules of the genre in which they work. Dilthey's contribution to our understanding of this technical or rule-bound aspect of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics is to trace its central idea of self-display or self-explication back to the idealistic theories of Fichte, Schlegel, and the like (see 100–118). In this context it can also be shown that Schleiermacher's conception of the hermeneutical circle, where parts are understood on the basis of the whole to which they belong and vice versa, resembles Fichte's conception of the oscillating (*schwebende*) movement of the productive imagination. Because Fichte's imagination oscillates between two philosophical principles, that of the I and the not-I, its movement is not just any activity but one meant to reconcile general opposites. Similarly, the movement of Schleiermacher's hermeneutical circle is a dialectical activity that explicates an original constructive act that instantaneously or intuitively grasps the unity of a whole. Interpretation is conceived idealistically as a process of reconstructing the original constructive grasp of reality attained by a creative mind. This interpretive process involves two phases: (1) a dialectical explication (*Darstellung*) of the original constructive intuition in terms of Schleiermacher's dual material principle of identity and distinctiveness; and (2) its codification in terms of a plurality of rules of exegesis (see 149).

Another hermeneutical model had already been developed by Friedrich Ast on the basis of Schelling's philosophy. According to Ast the hermeneutical process proceeds through three general stages: (1) a unity that is merely anticipated; (2) a plurality that relates particulars to each other; and (3) a totality in which unity and plurality are fused. Dilthey finds Ast's theoretical philosophical model for interpretation too abstract and considers Schleiermacher's philosophical hermeneutical principle an improvement in that it locates hermeneutics in practical philosophy. The understanding of human speech and communication finds its more proper horizon in the world of ethical action and praxis. It is interesting to note that one

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

of the kinds of action distinguished by Schleiermacher fits right into his hermeneutics of explication (*Darstellung*), namely, explicative action (*das darstellendes Handeln*). Just as hermeneutics presents or explicates the fundamental principles that constitute human individuality (identity and distinctiveness), so explicative action communicates the spiritual inner life of an individual.[6] Explicative action could also be called "communicative action" to relate it to a more recent counterpart. What is communicated is nothing personal, but the extent of the sovereignty of spirit or reason over one's flesh or body. Explicative action is thus not expressive of what is distinctive, because spirit like reason is the same in all of us.[7] Just as Kant subsumes what is expressed in a symbol to what it presents or explicates about our rational ideas of transcendent moral ends,[8] so we find in Schleiermacher's hermeneutics an ideal of explicating the meaning of the ethical community in the most universal terms possible.

Because Schleiermacher's hermeneutics is so steeped in his philosophical presuppositions—one could say that it is as philosophical as Heidegger and Gadamer claim their hermeneutics to be—any criticisms of it must, according to Dilthey, address its philosophical base. On this score Dilthey objects that Schleiermacher's philosophy aims at the formation of concepts rather than at the formation of judgments (see 133). Schleiermacher's philosophy constructs the world on the basis of a series of fundamental concepts that are static and timeless. Thus Dilthey writes: "All efforts to explain culture by appealing to the multifarious motives that appear in the course of history give way to a mode of explanation that is grounded in the Absolute and its antitheses" (133f.). Schleiermacher's philosophical system is basically classificatory and tries to explain historical events and action by manipulating general concepts dialectically. What would have been more appropriate, according to Dilthey, is a hermeneutics based on a philosophy oriented to the formation of judgments. Such a philosophy relates concepts, not to each other, but to the actual particulars of historical life. Only such a judgment-oriented philosophy can really help explain historical change (see 133). Here we can speculate that if Dilthey had been interested

[6] See Schleiermacher, *Die christliche Sitte* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1884), p. 510.

[7] See *ibid.*, p. 510.

[8] See Rudolf A. Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant: The Hermeneutical Import of "The Critique of Judgment"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 125.

in developing his own hermeneutics at this early stage of his thought, he would have replaced Schleiermacher's hermeneutics of conceptual explication with one that can better mediate between philosophical understanding and the historical explanation of facts.

What we have entitled "On Understanding and Hermeneutics: Student Lecture Notes" is taken from a larger lecture on intuition and understanding given in Basel as part of Dilthey's course *Logik und System der philosophischen Wissenschaften* in 1867–68. It shows Dilthey beginning to make an explanation–understanding distinction. In the Schleiermacher manuscript, Dilthey allowed for a continuity between explanation and understanding and spoke freely of historical explanation. Now seven years later, he seems to have appropriated Droysen's distinction between understanding history and explaining nature.[9] Droysen insisted that explanation is inappropriate in history because it regards the present as necessitated by the past. Conceiving the historical world as an ethical domain, Droysen ruled out historical explanation because it is incompatible with human freedom.[10] As we will see later, Dilthey's distinction between understanding and explanation is less categorical. Droysen's influence seems evident when Dilthey relates understanding to the knowledge of agency that we possess in moral affairs. But unlike Droysen, Dilthey does not simply equate the moral domain with the historical world and rule out explanation from the latter altogether. Dilthey speaks of understanding in his lecture as disclosing "the inner core" of human action. Explanations about physical force, by contrast, give us knowledge of its effects, but not of "the nature of its agency" (229).

Dilthey suggests initially that in the moral world I can "understand everything," yet he goes on to say that a "human being who understood everything, would not be human" (230). Because to understand something for Dilthey is to grasp its individuality, there will always be a limit to what can be understood. To understand everything would be to lose one's own individuality. Morality is in principle understandable because it deals with individual agency and responsibility. Here the universal can be embodied in specific choices. Everything about the moral world is understandable if this means being able to apply the moral law to myself, but

[9] The evidence for the priority will be discussed in Part II.

[10] See Johann Gustav Droysen, *Historik* 2nd ed., ed. Rudolf Hübner (Munich: Verlag von R. Oldenbourg, 1943), p. 151.

not if this means having access to the rationale of everyone else's choices.

Understanding is never just a matter of abstract thought. Instead, it requires the imagination to exhibit the universal in the particular, the whole in the part. We can discern the remnants of older intuition theories when Dilthey defines the hermeneutical task as understanding "the whole of a text . . . in a flashlike instant" (231). However, understanding is basically an inference from analogy that proceeds from particular to particular. This means that an initial reading cannot yet produce understanding: "It only gives us a general idea; we must then understand the particularity [of the work]" (231). The understanding of the work's particularity seems at first to be conceived in terms of Schleiermacher's idealistic reconstruction of its author's creative act. But the reconstruction is more "free" and involves a process of exclusion and generalization. To understand a text is not merely to grasp the general meanings of its words, nor to imaginatively reactivate the particular sense it had for its author, but to activate that concrete sense that it can have in relation to my present experience (see 233). Here understanding becomes a function of criticism and considers relevance as well as meaning.

One of the interesting features of this lecture is the way the discussion of hermeneutics leads into that of history. This relation between hermeneutics and historical consciousness is the very theme of this volume, and leads Dilthey to broaden hermeneutics from the science of interpreting texts to the science of interpreting all historical objectifications. But more than that, it allows us to conceive the relation between hermeneutics and history as moving from the mere philological art of interpreting meaning to the philosophical theory of judging truth. The theory of history (*Historik*) is a crucial link for through it "a sense for truth was first cultivated" (234).

It is also worth noting that Dilthey distinguishes three levels of historical understanding: (1) that of the chronicler, who has an "epic interest" in the narrative configuration of events; (2) that of the pragmatic historian, who has an interest in the political motivations behind the affairs of state; and (3) that of the universal historian, who "has the task of reconstructing the whole of inner life" (234). It is clear that the reconstruction of inner life here is not only a psychological activity, but also involves the grammatical and technical aspects of interpretation based on the language and genre employed as well as all the contextual features derived from the perspective of universal history. Friedrich Schlosser is claimed to be the

first to "have taken the full measure of the domain of universal history" (233), and a full essay in the second half of this volume is devoted to his work.

"The Rise of Hermeneutics," having appeared in two prior English versions, is one of Dilthey's best known essays. But this is the first time that the important addenda have also been translated. The essay and addenda provide much more than a summary of Dilthey's early *Preisschrift*. For one thing, the essay goes back farther than the Protestant background used in the *Preisschrift*, to the exegetical and rhetorical views of the Greeks. The conflicts between the Alexandrian and Pergamene schools of philology set the stage for later interpretive controversies. When Alexandria was ruled by the Greeks and Romans, it became a depository of learning. The art of textual verification and criticism was developed based on linguistic and historical research. This made it possible to identify spurious works and exclude inauthentic passages. Pergamene philology appropriated the Stoic principle of allegorical interpretation, which became influential in the efforts to "resolve the contradictions between inherited religious texts and more abstract and purely [philosophical] world-views" (240). Dilthey sees the same kind of opposition between the so-called grammatico-historical and allegorical approaches recur in the later theological schools of Alexandria and Antioch. But now the Alexandrian School, represented by Origen, is the proponent of allegorical interpretation and the Antioch School, represented by Theodorus, champions the kind of literal interpretation arrived at through the grammatico-historical approach. Origen, who was strongly influenced by Platonic and Stoic thought, distinguished between literal and pneumatic senses in texts, but Theodorus often rejected a higher allegorical sense as in the case of the Song of Songs, which for him was nothing but a nuptial song. It is clear that Dilthey sees more continuity between his own approach to hermeneutics and the Antioch School than with the Neoplatonic tendencies of the Alexandrian theologians.

Combining what Dilthey says in both the *Preisschrift* and "The Rise of Hermeneutics" we could distinguish two general hermeneutical approaches, the first rooted in the linguistic considerations found in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*, the other in the spiritual concerns of Platonic philosophy. Aristotle's contribution to hermeneutics lies in his ability to organize our understanding of texts through considerations of plot structures and the analysis of linguistic means. The Aristotelian approach to the metaphorical use of language is to see it as a modification of a literal use by means of a kind

of transference. Although Dilthey himself adheres to the Vichian view that poetic meaning is more original than literal meaning, what is attractive about Aristotle's approach to metaphor is that it allows us to intuit "similarity in dissimilars."[11] Whereas Aristotle allows us to see a continuity between literal and figurative meaning, the Platonic and Stoic approach tends to separate them as the sensuous versus the spiritual. Allegorical interpretations can be ingenious in overcoming anomalies and contradictions in a text by appealing to higher spiritual senses, but they do not resolve these problems in ways that promote historical understanding. For Dilthey the grammatical approach provides the kind of interpretation that can be more readily allied with historical inquiry.

Peter Szondi's "Introduction to Literary Hermeneutics," which is in many ways a critical commentary on Dilthey's essay, gives a different reading of the distinction between grammatical and allegorical interpretation. He sees *both* as ways of coming to terms with the historical distance created by an aging text. He writes: "Grammatical interpretation aims at that which was once meant and wants to preserve this in that it replaces a verbal expression . . . which has become historically alien by a new one . . . . Allegorical interpretation, on the other hand, is kindled by the sign which has become alien, to which it gives a new meaning born not of the conceptual world [*Vorstellungswelt*] of the text, but rather belonging to that of its interpreter."[12] The new expression that Szondi attributes to grammatical interpretation is meant to dissolve the historical distance between us and an ancient text by supposedly allowing us to transport ourselves back into its original meaning. Whereas grammatical interpretation is assumed to be restorative and is said to require us to "efface"[13] our own historical standpoint, allegorical interpretation is claimed to be forward-looking. Allegorical interpretation need not replace a literal sense with a spiritual sense located in the timeless realm of the Good, but can according to Szondi replace a faded literal sense with a new temporal sense deriving from the present historical horizon of the interpreter. From Dilthey's perspective, however, Szondi's accounts of grammatical and allegorical interpretation could be said to miss the mark. First, his account of grammatical interpretation seems to confuse it with psy-

[11] Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1459a (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 2335.

[12] Peter Szondi, "Introduction to Literary Hermeneutics," *New Literary History* 1 (1978): 24.

[13] *Ibid*., p. 20.

chological interpretation. We already saw in the case of Schleiermacher that psychological interpretation aims at restoring the original intention of the author, whereas grammatical interpretation allows us to extend the meaning of a text to make it applicable to the present situation of the self. Even more important, no interpretation can efface the historical standpoint of the interpreter. In the *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (1883) Dilthey had already chided the historian Ranke for his wish "to efface himself in order to see things as they were" (*SW* 1, 143), because it places too much faith in intuition while dispensing with the necessary critical and analytical powers of the interpreter. Just as grammatical interpretation cannot be self-effacing, so allegorical interpretation cannot be self-absorbing. It is impossible to wholly absorb an old text into one's present horizon. Both pictures drawn by Szondi of bridging historical distance require inexplicable leaps. The real task of hermeneutics is mediation.

One of the reasons why Dilthey was suspicious of allegorical interpretations is that they tend to become doctrinally rigid. Even when allegorical interpretation does perform a historical function of updating an old text, it fails to create a historical link between a no-longer acceptable literal meaning and the new meaning imposed on it. Only a link that can illuminate how a revised meaning has come about can allow for further revisions in meaning. Instead, allegorical interpretations have tended to become the fixed property of organized religions and other exclusive institutions. In this respect the layman-oriented hermeneutics of early Protestantism is seen by Dilthey as a continuation of the Aristotelian tradition of grammatical interpretation, of the critical and historical research of original Alexandrian philology, and of the antispeculative tendencies of the Antioch school of theological interpretation.

Dilthey notes in the addenda that the history of hermeneutics has been an episodic one. This is because hermeneutics "receives attention only when there is a great historical movement, which makes it urgent that singular historical phenomena be understood scientifically. But then the interest in hermeneutics wanes again" (252). Because hermeneutics had already accomplished its goal of codifying the philological rules necessary for historical understanding in the work of Boeckh and Droysen, Dilthey found the interest in hermeneutics to be declining. In order to revive hermeneutics, Dilthey broadened the scope of understanding to encompass what is distinctive of all the operations of the human sciences vis-à-vis the natural sciences. Hermeneutics no longer provides merely the material rules

for understanding human objectifications, but is also the formal theory of what makes understanding in the human sciences possible. "If understanding is basic for the human sciences," writes Dilthey, then "the epistemological, logical, and methodological analysis of understanding is one of the main tasks for the foundation of the human sciences. The importance of this task only becomes fully apparent when one makes explicit the difficulties contained in the nature of understanding with reference to the practice of a universally valid science" (252f.).

Because these difficulties constitute aporias or impasses, a long-term philosophical interest in hermeneutics now seems assured. The first aporia formulated by Dilthey states that each of us is "enclosed, as it were, within his own consciousness" (253). This should make it even more clear that Dilthey does not share the Rankean ideal of self-effacement when it comes to understanding others. The only ground for understanding others is the presupposition that the same basic psychic processes are to be found in all individuals, although they are possessed in varying degrees of intensity. Thus Dilthey's motto "transposition is transformation" (253) means that the possibility of identifying with what is other or alien through transposition lies in a process of self-transformation.

Dilthey's second aporia involves the familiar hermeneutical circle between parts and wholes. The third aporia points out that a psychic state is not understood from within, but on the basis of "the external stimuli that aroused it." As a consequence, "milieu is indispensable for understanding" (253). Because understanding involves all kinds of external factors, Dilthey admits that "when pushed to its limits, understanding is not different from explanation, insofar as the latter is possible in this domain" (253).

This projection of an ultimate convergence between understanding and explanation can be imagined in two different ways. The first or weaker version of convergence merely acknowledges that the full understanding of human life must also take into account the explanation of the external contextual factors involved. Here explanation can continue to mean what it normally means for Dilthey: the derivation of particular instances from the general causal laws found in the natural sciences. However, it is also possible that Dilthey is conceiving a mode of explanation *sui generis* to the human sciences. Then explanation would be the process of bringing what we know about the external contextual factors to bear on the inner processes to be understood. This is what is suggested when Dilthey

goes on to write: "There, where general insights are consciously and methodically applied in order to bring what is singular to comprehensive knowledge, the expression 'explanation' finds its proper place in the knowledge of the singular. It is only justified insofar as we remain aware that we can never allow what is singular to be fully submerged by what is universal" (257).

The first mode of explanation subordinates the particular to the universal, but remains an external supplement to the process of understanding the meaning of human activities and their objectifications. The second mode of explanation does not allow the particular to be submerged in the universal, but would seem to let what is contextual enter into our understanding. Part of the difference here would seem to lie in the nature of the universal involved. Explanations of the first type are causal explanations where the universal is a law or generalization. Explanations of the second type seem to refer to a universal or inclusive framework. Thus when Dilthey speaks of universal history, he means a study of all aspects of life during a certain time span. As we will see in the second part of this volume, universal history does not entail that there are universal laws of historical development.

Interpretations of History

As in Part I of this volume, we have arranged Dilthey's writing on the theory of history in Part II chronologically. We again start with three early texts and end with texts from shortly after the turn of the century. Approximately the same periods are represented in each part, without them, however, adding up to a theory of the human sciences. Such a project—which is the topic of *SW* 3—can here only be indicated *in nuce*.

Even more than in his early work on the history of hermeneutics, Dilthey's early writings on history and historians show him to be concerned with defining his own position. This proceeds especially by way of a demarcation over against the English and French positivists, which is then extensively worked out twenty years later in Book One of the *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (see *SW* 1). Dilthey is also concerned to set himself apart from other German-speaking historians. This is not a case of a confrontation between sharply opposed historical interpretations, but one of a more subtle critique as of Jacob Burckhardt. One major position that Dilthey

did not deem worthy of an explicit discussion is the speculative metaphysics of history of German idealism. Hegel is mentioned rarely and appears as the representative of a fully surpassed epoch whose extreme standpoint serves merely as a foil. As late as in 1903—shortly before his reassessment of Hegel—Dilthey writes: "There is no separate philosophy of history that could be of any value" (*GS* III, 229).

By reviewing Buckle's *History of Civilization in England* for the *Berliner Allgemeine Zeitung* in 1862, the twenty-nine-year-old Dilthey found himself at the leading edge of methodological debates. A year after his review-essay, Droysen's polemical attack on Buckle's book also appeared. Both Droysen and Dilthey reject the claim that history can be made a science by adopting the methods of the exact natural sciences. This constitutes the beginning of the ever-escalating controversy concerning the methods of explanation and understanding. Dilthey does not yet use the explanation–understanding distinction in his review. Droysen clearly used it first. But precisely because Dilthey formulates his counterposition to Buckle without appealing to this conceptual opposition, it becomes possible to recognize his original intention independently of terminological definitions.

By contrast to Droysen's sharp critique of Buckle, Dilthey's seems moderate. This is partly due to the fact that this anonymous newspaper article was meant to fulfill a general informational service and could not expect its readers to follow an academic debate. But more important is the realization that Dilthey—who belongs to the generation that succeeds Droysen—is much more receptive to new ideas from other European nations. This is especially true for his response to the cardinal question raised by Buckle about laws in the historical world. Dilthey agrees in principle with the thesis that in nature as well as in history neither mere chance nor providence rules, but that in both domains each event stands within a lawful causal nexus. Like Comte, J. S. Mill, and Buckle, Dilthey searches for the laws that operate within the socio-historical world. Again like them, he rejects metaphysical questions and seeks an empirical basis for historical inquiry. He shares their belief in a scientific solution to the problems of society. And this is true not only for the young Dilthey. Still in 1886, in a memorial essay for Wilhelm Scherer, he writes that the social, religious, and pedagogical tasks of European society threatened by crisis can be solved only by causal scientific knowledge. He continues: "Only insofar as we know the laws according to which these causes produce effects, can we pur-

posively bring about the necessary results for improving society and heal the wounds of the social body in an insightful way" (*GS* XI, 237).

Dilthey opposes Buckle's positivism not because it is overly scientific, but because it fails to recognize the distinctiveness of the historical world over against nature. This lack of recognition is methodologically determined. Proceeding from a model of exact empirical inquiry, Buckle assumes that his subject matter must be of such a nature as to allow strict scientific knowledge in accordance with laws. According to Dilthey the result of this is that Buckle "advances the most paradoxical claim ever uttered by a historian. He excludes the actions of individuals, of the mighty ones of this world, from consideration, and he makes social conditions as they manifest themselves in the behavior of masses the only subject of historiography" (265). A further consequence is the reduction of history to a statistical survey of empirical data about social conditions and finally the formulation of inductively obtained laws, which are then again applied deductively to analogous states of affairs. This is in principle the research program of the empirical social sciences, which have become increasingly powerful in projecting consumer and voter responses on the basis of surveys and polls.

Dilthey's protest is not against the social sciences and their methods, but against the claim that they should replace more traditional historical inquiry. Indeed, Dilthey expresses the "hope that the realm of our knowledge will be enriched by a new field, the science of society" (269). But he also insists that statistical correlations and any laws to be derived from them will only be valid for "relatively indifferent" (267) human behavior. This is the argument of a historian who was not yet in a position to witness the power of economic forces in modern democracies with their market analyses and advertising strategies. That the issue of what is indifferent and what is important could be decided by economic, demographic, and electoral forces was not yet obvious in Germany in 1860. The fact that Dilthey still had a limited view of the potential significance of the social sciences does not diminish the validity of his claim that historical interpretation should also focus on other factors, such as the role of the individual in a social context. Dilthey's second objection is that regularities derived from statistical analysis cannot yet claim to be laws. He maintains that Buckle mistakenly identified "the concepts of regular recurrence and lawfulness" (267).

Dilthey's review of Jacob Burckhardt's *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, which appeared in the same year, is critical in

a quite different way. While welcoming this work as "the first thorough-going working-out of a cultural-historical approach in Germany" (272f), he nevertheless warns that such an approach tends to dissolve "the temporal and causal fabric of a set of events" by concentrating on "general states or conditions" (273). Whereas he criticizes Buckle for making excessive and simplistic causal claims, he finds Burckhardt too hesitant in asserting causal relations. This leads Dilthey to a more general assertion that is worth noting. Speaking of history, he writes that "a causal nexus is its solid framework; without that, even if history is crammed with individual traits, it remains an amorphous mass" (273).

Although Burckhardt is acknowledged to have contributed to the method of cultural history in attempting "to describe the true and strict coherence of the many-sided life of this period" (274), his concern to show that all the individual traits of the Italian Renaissance add up to the rise of modern man leads Dilthey to the charge that he reduced the Renaissance to a schematic unity by means of a not fully plausible universal image. This is responsible for Dilthey's harshest claim of the essay: "Hegel could hardly have devised a more arbitrary play with general concepts than Burckhardt has in some passages" (276).

The overall positive effect of Burckhardt's work is nevertheless acknowledged to be that no one before him had so successfully articulated the distinctive Italian character of this great epoch. Dilthey then sketches the outlines of the kind of causality required of a true cultural history. It must not allow itself to disintegrate into special aspects "such as Court Life, Attire, Domestic Life" (273), but must derive such conditions from their causes. According to Dilthey, Burckhardt did attempt to do so when he placed the cultural aspects of the Renaissance in relation to the political and institutional life of the Italian states.

The kind of causal account demanded by Dilthey in these early years and which he sees at least partly realized in Burckhardt relates to contexts or systems whose structure he designated as "systems of reciprocal influence (*Wirkungszusammenhänge*)" in his last writings. It may seem surprising at first that in the next essay—in seeming contrast to what was claimed about Burckhardt—the historian Friedrich Christoph Schlosser is criticized for considering everything "solely in reference to its origin and effect, solely as historical causality" (321). Merely going backward and forward in time can detract from an understanding of the historical phenomena themselves. The task of historical narrative is not to merely describe a

continuum of historical efficacy, but to grasp how several genetic sequences coalesce to form a complex historical phenomenon. The historical causality that Dilthey finds inadequate simply connects a sequence of events; the kind he expects allows us to understand the genesis of complex states of affairs.

One could ask why an early essay by Dilthey about Schlosser, a historian, who today would be regarded as of secondary importance and as a forerunner of greater exemplars of German historiography, has been chosen for this volume. There are in fact two reasons for our choice. First, Dilthey's essay as well as Schlosser's own work constitute a significant contribution toward the understanding of German liberalism in the first half of the nineteenth century. A year after Schlosser's death in 1861, Dilthey showed not only the shortcomings of this stubborn patriarch of the South German School, but also his great contributions to the political education of the middle classes, especially in southern Germany. The great popularity of Schlosser's *World History for the German People*, which appeared in nineteen volumes from 1844 to 1857, is often forgotten today when more emphasis is placed on the influence of German historians on the political consciousness of the more cultured classes. Schlosser's hatred of the aristocracy and his harsh judgments about German court life, connected with his intention to arouse the political conscience of his nation instead of gaining political influence, manifest an interesting but little-known version of liberalism. In this sense, Dilthey's essay provides an important perspective on the history of political education in Germany and at the same time informs us about Dilthey's own political stance ten years before the beginning of the founding of the German Empire by Bismarck.

The second reason why we have chosen this essay is that it supplements Dilthey's contemporaneous essays on Buckle and Burckhardt by establishing another kind of methodological delineation. Dilthey distinguishes Schlosser's historical approach from certain teleological approaches to history and in doing so performs a kind of balancing act to define his own developing position. An important concept in this context is that of "immanent teleology" (309, 313), which would play a prominent role in Dilthey's later writings. Immanent teleology is that property of a whole which allows it to develop its structure and meaning out of itself and not from some externally given end or purpose. Applied to history, immanent teleology involves the rejection of a pure teleological philosophy of history that projects a purpose of history or searches for God's provi-

dential intent by which all historical epochs are to be judged. Ranke's famous phrase that each epoch stands "in immediate relation to God" embodies the rejection of such an external teleology in favor of immanent teleology.

The young Dilthey's own relation to immanent teleology is not uniformly positive. On the one hand, one can discern a certain critical distance to it when he compares Schlosser's "basic historical category of sober causality" positively with the "immanent teleology of phenomena and a dialectical process, by which in our century the effort was made to spiritualize the rigid mechanism of pragmatic history" (309). On the other hand, Dilthey criticizes Schlosser for ignoring immanent teleology, which is in turn described as a procedure for "concentrating a historical period into an ideal image and dialectically constructing the moments through which history passes" (313). Dilthey is very vague in these passages and mentions no direct representatives of immanent teleology, only Ranke and Droysen as those historians in whose work the influence of the immanent teleological perspective on history has been positive (see 313). It is also unclear what decisive difference is to be found between the acceptable procedure of "concentrating an age into an ideal image" of immanent teleology and the objectionable way "the teleological philosophers of history from Herder to Hegel" organized "particular data on the basis of a total idea of some historical period into a system" (313). To be sure, an ideal image is likely to be more aesthetic and concrete than a system based on an idea, but one might have expected a sharper delimitation. Perhaps the reason for this lack of precision derives from the fact that Dilthey is alluding to two aspects of Hegel's historical thinking: on the one hand, a teleological *philosophy of history* with its implausible explanative schemata; on the other hand, an immanent teleological *approach to history* that contributed greatly to the process of overcoming pragmatic history. Perhaps the twenty-nine-year-old Dilthey, surrounded in Berlin by all the great representatives of the Historical School, did not want to establish an explicit link between Hegel and Ranke.

The real theme of the Schlosser essay, however, is the special kind of universal history that Schlosser first developed into a proper cultural history. As in the Basel lecture on understanding and hermeneutics, universal history is distinguished from pragmatic history. In contrast with pragmatic history, which concentrates on individual agents as the only genuine historical causes and examines their

motives and practical goals, Schlosser's universal history attempts to derive "a practical world-view based on the totality of history" (307). From this larger perspective man is fundamentally historical; that is, "he fulfills his moral task only in the continuity of culture" (299). Dilthey points to two genuine contributions made by Schlosser. First, he searched for the same human nature in all epochs of world history and in that way made each epoch equally close to the reader. Thus Schlosser engendered the conviction "that no changes affect the moral law and the divine world-order, and that his own time and his own surroundings also are subject to this standard" (308). Second, Schlosser considered all historical events in relation to their own cultural context and at the same time measured them by the whole of human culture. When examining the cooperation of political and cultural life in any period, Schlosser made special use of literature as a historical resource. By also comparing individual phenomena to world history at large, he generates a conception of universal history in which the life and death of particular cultures is thematized.

In his later essay on the eighteenth century, Dilthey speaks of a "false ideal of cultural history" that severs the connections existing not only between general conditions and the actions of individuals, but also "between the power struggles of nations and the regular advances of civilization" (345). He stresses that the philosophical spirit of the eighteenth century as represented in the works of Hume, Gibbon, and Robertson, as well as of Voltaire and Frederick the Great, already grasped these cultural-historical connections. They provide a genuine philosophical interpretation of history as distinct from the philosophy of history that is to be rejected. This distinction is already found in the Schlosser essay, where Dilthey designates the philosophical task of the historian as that of "grasping the place of the individual phenomenon within cultural history" (293). A philosophical treatment of history should take into account "the causes that advance and hinder this culture, its branches and connections, its influence on the nation's education as embodied in the state" (303). Here again we could say that the idea of systems of reciprocal influence is anticipated in these earliest writings and that Dilthey considers their study as the proper philosophical task of history.

In his last great work on the theory of history, "The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences" (1910), Dilthey gives a short summary of his Schlosser essay according to which the

most important contribution of this historian is his aim to lead his people to a practical world-view. He once again emphasizes Schlosser's cultural-historical approach, but criticizes his rigid moralism, which detracts from his appreciation "for the splendor of historical life and the individual appeal of great personalities" (*GS* VII, 108f.). In a fragment for the "Continuation of the Formation," Dilthey expresses a much harsher judgment about Schlosser. He is now linked to pragmatic history, which traces the relation of motive, action, and effect, and which especially in France has had the tendency to suspect motives and be disparaging. Great historical results are derived from petty and egoistic motives. Thus we now read, "typical is the so-called moralism of Schlosser, who is a pragmatic historian with an extra dose of French reductionism, but on the basis of moral judgment." Such a perspective leads to historical skepticism and can only be overcome "when psychological *raffinement* is replaced by the understanding of the products of the human spirit" (*GS* VII, 260).

The essay "The Eighteenth Century and the Historical World" (1901) represents a new focus of interest on Dilthey's part. A decade earlier he had published a series of essays on the scientific and philosophical movements of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. And earlier in the *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, he had sympathetically described the rise of the Historical School in nineteenth-century Germany as a reaction against a certain aspect of eighteenth-century rationalism, namely, against the theory of natural rights and the revolutionary advancement of human rights. The present essay is part of a series of works that provides us an important supplement and modification of Dilthey's earlier attitude toward the century of Enlightenment. A related essay on "Frederick the Great and the German Enlightenment" (1900) introduces a more positive evaluation when it warns the German people that it should not forget that its particular place among cultured nations at the beginning of the twentieth century is in large part due to the "much maligned Enlightenment" (*GS* III, 134). One of the features of the German Enlightenment that distinguished it from its French counterpart was that figures such as Lessing and Kant were willing to allow religion a continued role in culture. This did not prevent them from being attacked by institutional religion. According to Dilthey the great contribution of the German Enlightenment was its ability to relate the dogmas of Christianity back to certain truths about moral responsibility and human

dignity. This was overlooked not only by the "hateful theological polemics" of organized religion, but also by the romantic critique "based on the proud perspective of genius" (*GS* III, 142). It seems that Dilthey now wants to soften some of his own earlier critiques of Enlightenment philosophy based on sympathy with the standpoints of romanticism and the Historical School. Perhaps he saw the need to distance himself from a newly rising irrationalism derived from Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Whatever his reason, the essay on the eighteenth century shows how unjust one would be to Dilthey's thought to call it an irrational life-philosophy based exclusively on the German tradition.

The opening sentence of the essay already expresses his positive evaluation of the eighteenth century: "The Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, which is reproached for being unhistorical, produced a new conception of history" (325). Among the historians then cited as examples of this new conception there is only one German: Frederick the Great. Two-thirds of the essay deals with French and British representatives of Enlightenment history. Only the last two chapters are devoted to the beginnings of a specifically German conception of history, which Dilthey locates in the "Patriarch of Osnabrück," Justus Möser, in the Göttingen circle centered around Schlözer, and in the still oft-cited art historian Johann J. Winckelmann. They made it possible to overcome the limits of French and British Enlightenment history, which are to see in the past merely stages toward the exalted level of present civilization and thus to lack any appreciation of the intrinsic value of past epochs.

Without any reservation, Dilthey speaks of the "sovereignty of the new spirit represented by the name Voltaire" (325). Voltaire himself is called "this liveliest of men" whose historiography differs completely "from anything that had ever been written on history" (348). While listing the leading ideas of the Enlightenment, Dilthey adds a formal affirmation of the ideals of the Age of Reason: "I find no greater event in the history of the human race than the emergence of this system of ideas, which extends from the knowledge of natural laws to the control of reality through the power of thought, and from there to the highest ideas that determine us all" (340).

From these guiding ideas Dilthey places one above all in immediate relation to the historical world, namely, the idea of the solidarity concerning the progress of the human race. For this idea is directly involved in a universal history. As in the early essay on Schlosser, Dilthey stresses the link between universal history and cultural his-

tory. It is the main achievement of the "philosophical spirit" of eighteenth-century historians "to have moved into the foreground the universal historical perspective of the progressive culture of the human race" (346). It has already been indicated that cultural history for Dilthey is not limited to specific cultural domains such as the arts or court life, but must show how advances of civilization are connected with "the power struggles of nations" (345). The technique used by the English to do this is to establish at certain points in the course of historical development cross-sections of the various realms of culture, such as economics, art, science, and ethics. According to Dilthey, Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* represents the best application of this technique.

A theme that Dilthey already broached in the *Introduction to the Human Sciences* as part of his critique of philosophies of history (see *SW* 1, 156f.), is once again taken up: the three-stage law in its original formulation by Turgot and in its further development by Comte. In his essay on the eighteenth century, Dilthey fittingly refers more to Turgot. Whereas in the *Introduction* Dilthey's critical destruction of Comte's philosophy of history predominated, here we find a positive evaluation of the law that the human mind develops by moving through a sequence of theological, metaphysical, and scientific stages. Turgot was the first to exhibit "a regularity in the progress of history that is immanent in history itself" (355). He and Comte erred to be sure in matters of detail, but in essence their law is valid and needs only "a more exact formulation . . . which accords more closely with the facts" (355).

Many Enlightenment historians do, however, lack a "genetic understanding" (363). Even when the stages of human development have been intuitively delineated by them, Dilthey still misses a recognition of "the inherent value of each historical phenomenon" and a sense of participation in its life. Thus the English historians he praises so highly are also criticized because "only themselves, only their present did they fully understand. They valued in the past only what was akin to their own cultural ideals, and even this they viewed as a bit of civilization in the midst of barbarism" (363).

The transition to the final part of the essay where the genetic understanding of the Germans is introduced is reminiscent of Wilhelm von Humboldt's characterization in his essay "Das achtzehnte Jahrhundert" (The Eighteenth Century). Humboldt also stresses the special capacity of the Germans to sense the peculiarities of each age and nation, and "to exhibit their distinctiveness by means of their

genesis."[14] Whereas Humboldt's account of genetic understanding is still defined by a rejection of the predominance of French intellectual life, Dilthey was able to approach the great Enlightenment figures produced by France and Germany relatively free of bias. Even the discussion of German historians occurs without any false patriotic pathos. Dilthey acknowledges that compared with the sophistication of a Voltaire or Hume, the originality of a Möser is inseparable from the provincial narrowness of the German situation. It was intimate acquaintance with regional life in isolated villages and their gradual growth that made it possible for German historians to develop this genetic mode of understanding.

Justus Möser was a functionary in Osnabrück and much admired as a local historian by Herder and Goethe in their Storm and Stress phase. His writings on economic and legal history take special account of local traditions. Dilthey gives a fitting characterization of Möser's conservative attitude by writing that he "recognized in the class divisions and patriarchal relations of his native Lower Saxony something generated by history, and thus something meaningful and necessary" (365). Not coincidentally does he use the word "indigenous" three times to characterize Möser's work and personality (364ff.). He is for Dilthey the embodiment of a movement that in contrast to the abstractions of rationalism "brought to the fore the historical genesis of all political institutions and this, moreover, in organic connection with all other forms of life" (367). Dilthey sees here the beginning of the Historical School with all its merits, but also with all its deficiencies and limitations.

Dilthey repeatedly asserts that during the entire eighteenth century Germany never produced a comprehensive work of political history. The split between cosmopolitan universality and particularism produced a corresponding dualism of "universal historical surveys and . . . particular histories" (374). Although there is no German historical work that can match the greatness of what was produced in France and England during this period, nevertheless we see in Germany many initial formulations of "a new, genuinely historical world-view" (364), which became the basis for the great achievements of the nineteenth century. In all of Dilthey's writings dealing with this connection, the achievement of Winckelmann, the founder of comparative art history, is emphasized. In the essay on the eighteenth century Dilthey gives a characterization of the appeal

[14] Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Akademie Ausgabe*, II, p. 73.

to genial intuition made in Germany since Winckelmann and Herder. Here Dilthey is more positive about the use of intuition than he was in the early *Preisschrift*: "This intuitive approach grasps works of the human spirit through an inner movement of the soul. It makes a work intelligible in terms of its productive force, starting with the whole and moving down to the last technical stroke that expresses the work's inner [form], down to every line of a drawing or every rhythm and sound of a verse" (375). The procedure of genial intuition is similar to Schleiermacher's principle of divination as found in psychological-technical interpretation. Historiography and hermeneutics are related when Dilthey sees Schleiermacher further extending the line from Winckelmann and Herder in order to "understand religion as the spontaneous total expression of the human essence" (378). The essay closes with a prospect toward the great movement that begins with Winckelmann and Herder, and leads to the romantics and to Humboldt, Schleiermacher, and Hegel. The limits of the Enlightenment are overcome and the new historical consciousness of the nineteenth century can establish itself.

Dilthey's speech on his seventieth birthday on November 19, 1903, is a look back at the time in Berlin when historical consciousness had also established itself academically. It is the time immediately prior to the early works of this volume. Although relatively brief in his characterizations of the greatest figures of the Historical School, some of whom were his professors (Bopp, Trendelenburg, Niebuhr, Boeckh, Jacob Grimm, Mommsen, Ritter, and Ranke), Dilthey repeatedly uses the same word *Anschauung*: Boeckh created a "comprehensive intuition of Greek life," Jakob Grimm revived a "total intuition of early German life," Ritter and Ranke attained a "universal intuition of our globe and of the history that runs its course there" (388f.), and about Ranke we also hear that he absorbed historical documents as well as the leading philosophical ideas of an age and transformed them into the historical "power of objective intuition." It almost seems as if the genial intuition of Winckelmann and Herder has fully triumphed over the Enlightenment. But it should be recalled that Dilthey's Critique of Historical Reason thematized not merely the limits of the Enlightenment but also the presuppositions of historical consciousness. In this sense the *Introduction to the Human Sciences* already undertook a critique of the principle of genial intuition (see *SW* 1, pp. 47–49). That Dilthey was no one-sided champion of the Historical School, even though he had his roots there, is sufficiently documented in the texts

of this volume. How little he saw himself as being on the victorious side can be seen from the concluding sentences of the birthday speech: "when historical consciousness is followed to its last consequences" and relativizes all convictions, ideals, and philosophical systems, the question arises "where are the means to overcome the anarchy of opinions that then threatens to befall us?" (389). Dilthey considered his own lifework to be devoted to the solution of the problem raised by historical consciousness.

R.A.M.
F.R.

PART I.

HERMENEUTICS AND ITS HISTORY

1. SCHLEIERMACHER'S HERMENEUTICAL SYSTEM IN RELATION TO EARLIER PROTESTANT HERMENEUTICS (1860)[1]

Translated by Theodore Nordenhaug

Section One
Hermeneutics before Schleiermacher

1. The Earliest Systems of Hermeneutics: Flacius, Franz, and Glassius

The Origin of Hermeneutics

The science of hermeneutics actually begins with Protestantism, although the art of exegesis and reflection on it are, of course, much older. There are, for example, hermeneutical passages in Origen[2] and in the writings of the Antioch School, as well as the seven rules of Tyconius.[3] Even more extensive discussions can be found in the third book of Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine* and in the second book of Junilius's[4] well-known work, *Instituta regularia divinae legis* (Rules for the Divine Law).[5] But as important as these writings are for the history of the canon and doctrine, one cannot really call the scattered statements they contain a scientific treatment of the subject. They are, rather, an agglomeration without a connecting principle. Their form reflects the inherent lack of independence of Catholic exegesis. As a result of the battle against Gnosticism, the legacy of the Apostolic Age had been placed under the protective custody of the authority of tradition. Henceforward, hermeneutics

[1] This is a translation of Dilthey's prize-essay on Schleiermacher's hermeneutics, which he submitted in 1860. Only one section of the text (*GS* XIV, 612–18) was published by Dilthey himself as part of the essay "Das natürliche System der Geisteswissenschaften im 17. Jahrhundert," *Archiv für die Geschichte der Philosophie* 6 (1893): 69–95 (*GS* II, 115–36). The full prize-essay was first published in 1966 by Martin Redeker in *GS* XIV, 595–787. Pagination in the margins refers to this volume.

[2] Origen (185–254), Church Father, head of the Christian school of Alexandria.

[3] Tyconius (d. before 400), Donatist theologian.

[4] Junilius Africanus, high official under Byzantine emperor Justinian.

[5] [Junilius, *Instituta regularia divinae legis*], Gallandi Bibl. XII, 79ff. ⟨*Patrologiae Latinae*, vol. 68, pp. 25ff.⟩; [Matthias] Flacius [Illyricus], *Clavis [Scripturae Sacrae]* (Basel, 1580), II, pp. 158ff. (D)

would not exist until the rise of Protestantism began to set exegesis free. However, the discipline had not yet developed when the Catholic Church launched a determined, concerted attack on the new principle of Scripture. In the face of this onslaught even less disputatious men than those who had grown up in the battles of the Reformation would have been compelled to defend themselves. At any rate, the science of hermeneutics was born of the ensuing battles.

598 **The Conditions That Gave Rise to Hermeneutics**

The attack was launched by the Council of Trent. The council decided the Catholic position on the relation of Scripture to tradition once and for all—a relation that had been treated rather freely and with great diversity in the medieval Church. The diversity came passionately to the fore in the sessions of the council itself. Finally, the session of April 8, 1546, decided in favor of the strict anti-Protestant party. The decrees on Scripture and tradition, and on interpretation and the Vulgate were aimed directly at the Protestant Scripture-principle.[6] Scripture and tradition were to be accepted as equal for faith [*pari pietatis affectu*].[7] After all, because both emanated from the same Spirit, how could they possibly conflict on any point of doctrine?[8] Bellarmine,[9] the leading Catholic theologian of this period, opens his sweeping polemic against the heretics of his time with a discussion of the word of God,[10] which he takes to be the centerpiece of Protestant doctrine. He goes on to point out, with an air of academic innocence, that, because the Hebrew vowel points

[6] "If anyone, however, should not accept the said books as sacred and canonical, entire with all their parts, as they were wont to be read in the Catholic Church, and as they are contained in the old Latin Vulgate edition, and if both knowingly and deliberately he should condemn the aforesaid traditions let him be anathema." [This citation from the Council of Trent was published in J. D. Heinrich] ⟨Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum*⟩ [and reproduced from the English version of the 30th ed.: *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder, 1957)], ⟨§784⟩. (D)

[7] Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum*, §783. (H)

[8] "The basis of any doctrine that may be taught to the faithful is that it contains the Word of God, which is apportioned between Scripture and tradition." The way was prepared for the following crude conception of the doctrine of tradition by Albert Pigghe: "If we had been mindful of the doctrine that heretics should not be refuted or vanquished by Scripture, our cause would be in a better state; but in lowering ourselves to a contest with Luther over Scripture, in order to show off our brilliance and learning, we have kindled a fire—much to our sorrow—as we now see" (*Hierarchie ecclesiasticae assertio* [1538], I, 4). (D)

[9] Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621), Italian theologian.

[10] *Disputationes de controversiis christianae fidei adversus huius temporis haereticos* (1586–93), I–III. (D)

were added later to the text, the readings remain very doubtful in many instances. He notes, further, that important passages in the New Testament (I John 5:7–8, *inter alia*) are absent from the earlier manuscripts, and so on.

A veritable flood of Catholic polemical writings now followed.[11] They attempted to prove the critical uncertainty and unintelligibility of Scripture. For example, they expatiated on how the linguistic knowledge of Origen and Jerome had been lost. They also adduced a large number of critical and hermeneutical arguments to prove the principle of the hermeneutical insufficiency of Scripture and the need for the supplementary authority of tradition.

How Flacius Conceived the Task of a Science of Hermeneutics in Light of These Influences 599

The Catholic attack turned on two major points. The first, the scientific authority of the Church Fathers, was easy to deal with. But for that very reason the second point, which concerned the sufficiency and the intelligibility of Holy Scripture, now took on added seriousness. The situation demanded a demonstrable hermeneutical method and other tools that could serve to build a firmly grounded Church dogmatics. Such was the occasion for the organon of exegesis (*Clavis*) (1567) of Matthias Flacius Illyricus or "The Golden Key" as a grateful Lutheran Church was to call it. Flacius based it on the studies in philology he had undertaken in Germany and Italy; he was the first Protestant church historian with enough breadth to be familiar with the entire compass of patristic literature and its hermeneutical rules and methods. Even Richard Simon[12] conceded his outstanding knowledge of the Bible. Indeed, by the standards of his time, Flacius surpasses the majority of his successors both in the independence of his research and in the completeness of his formulation of the hermeneutical rules. He was, consequently, to mold the character of hermeneutics for quite some time to come.

Flacius's hermeneutics is actually scattered over several sections of the second part of the *Clavis*.[13] I find the clearest and most precise

[11] The writers that deserve special mention here are Tiletanus, Felician Ninguarda, Canisius, Melchior Canus, and Martin Peresius. (D)

[12] Richard Simon (1638–1712), French theologian.

[13] The first part is an excellent Latin concordance. The second concerns materials of antiquity, criticism, what was called Biblical rhetoric, and grammar, all interspersed with an introduction. This kind of varied mixture is a familiar feature of works of this period. Witness the *Clavis homerica* [by Antonius Roberti, 1638]. The first book contains a summary of the major rules. They are proven in the second book by a collection of rules taken from the Church Fathers. Only some components

formulation of the specific purpose of this key to the Bible in its two prefaces.

In the second preface, Flacius clarifies the historical position of his work. He reports on the barbaric distortions of Scripture that may be attributed to ignorance of languages and the influence of Aristotelian philosophemes. He goes on to assert that the pure word of life was proclaimed by the genuinely faithful teachers of Holy Scripture, particularly Luther, whose work he modestly hopes to
600 continue. This second preface is, on the whole, devoted to the negative aspects of the task. The first preface provides the real focal point for a Protestant hermeneutics.

It opens with forceful invectives against the Catholic opposition. After God had given the Scriptures to man for his salvation:

> on account of . . . God's unfathomable love for man, . . . most of God's people, the so-called Christians, now blaspheme horribly, crying out that Holy Scripture is obscure, ambiguous, and insufficient to instruct the Christian man fully unto salvation. Finally, they say that it is a dead letter and a book for heretics, the source of all heresies and errors![14]

Flacius claims to have proven earlier, against the blasphemies of the Fathers of Trent, that the Scriptures are the norm of faith.[15] They, in turn, had replied that the issue was not the authority of Scripture but its intelligibility; hence the need to supplement it with tradition. Flacius in turn responds: If there is a failure to understand the Scriptures, the fault does not lie in their unintelligibility, but in the inadequacy of the linguistic preparation and the erroneous method with which scholars have approached them. At this point, he offers a magnificent formulation of the principle of Reformation hermeneu-

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of the subsequent books belong to our discipline. They deal with the separate parts of discourse: grammatical parts of speech, tropes and figures, the coherence of sentences, New Testament style in general, and some suggestions about the styles of Paul and John. The last chapter, which is tacked on, reflecting the informality of the discipline during this period, contains a series of separate tracts on what we might call Biblical theology. Among them we find Flacius's famous tract, "De peccato originali," in which he first undertook to summarize his theory of original sin as the essence of human nature, against the repeated warnings of his friends. Only the last of these tracts concerns us. It forms the conclusion of the second part, and it deals with Scripture as "the norm and rule of heavenly truth." This conclusion is amply indicative of the ultimate purpose of the *Clavis*. (D)

[14] Flacius, *Clavis* I, preface, p. 3. (D)

[15] He is referring to *Protestatio contra conciliabulum* and *Norma simul et praxis synodi*, which were not accessible to me. (D)

tics that underlies the body of his work.[16] As the passage indicates, the lived experience of the Reformation occupies a middle ground between the principle of Scripture proper and the material principle of the Reformation: It is an experience that consists both of comprehending and living through the inner coherence of Scripture, a coherence that enlivens all of its separate parts. This coherence is the essential basis of Protestant hermeneutics. Thus we can define the intention of Flacius's work as follows: It attempts to establish the normative independence of the Bible by developing an organon of exegesis based on the Reformation conception of the unity and coherence of Scripture.

Scientific Resources for Addressing the Problem 601

What scientific means did Flacius employ to solve this formidable problem? His treatment of the concordance that makes up the first part of his work is highly characteristic of his striving to grasp the inner coherence of Biblical concepts. The work of his predecessors provided an adequate foundation for it, in contrast to the second part of his work which, he complains, had to be created almost from scratch, a point that applies especially to its specifically hermeneutical content. Obviously, he could not simply rely on his own hermeneutical reflections. So he drew on two outside sources for help.

The first of these was rhetoric. Aristotle, whom Flacius was fond of quoting, had developed a firm canon for it. However, in the century immediately preceding Flacius, the field had undergone an essential transformation. In particular, the changes introduced by Melanchthon[17] had two significant implications for hermeneutics. First, he had emphasized more strongly than any of his predecessors that the immediate purpose of rhetoric is to furnish a guide for read-

[16] [Flacius, *Clavis* I], preface, p. 3: "The transparency and truth, as well as the purity of Christian teaching has been damaged considerably because almost all authors and Church Fathers viewed, treated, and explained Holy Scriptures more as a mixture of propositions rather than as a well-formed work that fits together, whereas, indeed, most of them are composed by the best method. This accounts for the fact that their true meaning could not be discovered. Instead one found a work that had been dissolved into so many disparate points of view. The true meaning is extracted from Holy Scripture, just as from other writings, from the context, the major purpose, and, to a certain extent, from the proportion and agreement of the parts and members; just as elsewhere one gains insight into the individual parts of any whole, by taking account of the other parts and by the harmony of the whole." (D)

[17] Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560), leading German humanist and friend of Luther.

ing the authors of antiquity.[18] To be sure, in keeping with the prevailing humanism, which sought to reproduce the style of antiquity everywhere, such study should in turn lead to the imitation of models.[19] But the direct purpose of rhetoric for Melanchthon was to foster an understanding of authors. So, in a certain sense, this rhetoric pointed the way to hermeneutics. Second, following the theological trends of the day, Melanchthon added instruction (*didaskalikon*) to the "types of discourse" (*generibus causarum*), which up until that time had been the main topics of rhetoric: demonstration (*demonstrativum*), deliberation (*deliberativum*), and judgment (*judiciale*).[20] As he says explicitly, he also wanted to make room for an understanding of theological subject matter in rhetoric. His illustrations include several rhetorical interpretations of the Psalms. His book thus anticipates a synthesis of Biblical hermeneutics with rhetoric.

602 *Exegesis and the Origins of a Theory of Hermeneutics*

Flacius did not rely on rhetoric alone, however. He drew even more heavily on exegesis and the beginnings of an exegetical theory that were already available in the discipline from Origen to the contemporary Protestant interpreters. So extensive, indeed, was his reliance on the Fathers that Richard Simon was able, not unfairly, to charge him with the contradiction of denigrating the Fathers in his prefaces while making adroit use of them throughout the rest of the book. He uses almost all of the fourth book of Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine* in separate excerpts, as well as the entire theory of Junilius. His book is actually based on the legacy of the whole preceding history of exegesis.

The Synthetic Approach to Scripture as a Whole (The Analogy of Faith, Parallel Passages)

How does Flacius construct a hermeneutics from this material?[21] His purpose determines the point at which his technical theory be-

[18] Melanchthon, [*Elementa rhetorices*], p. 12: "Wherefore we also teach rhetoric in order to help young people to read good authors; without this path they would never understand them"; cf. also p. 11: "hinc exstitit ars sq." (I am citing the Wittenberg edition of 1606). ⟨[*Corpus Reformatorum* (Halle: C. A. Schwetschke, 1846)], XIII, pp. 418, 417.⟩ (D)

[19] Melanchthon [*Elementa rhetorices*], p. 66: "Although imitation produces more eloquence than art does, the precepts are taught to young people for this purpose: to help them to read the discourses of authors." ⟨*Corpus Reformatorum*, XIII, p. 451.⟩ (D)

[20] [See Melanchthon], *Corpus Reformatorum*, XIII, p. 421f. (H)

[21] The arrangement of the second volume already indicates the division of the organon into a hermeneutics (tract. I.II. 1–93–174), a grammar (tract. III. 174–210), and a rhetoric (tract. IV.V. 210–340–396) of Scripture, which Glassius was to

gins. Because he first explicates the difficulties of Scriptural interpretation (*causae difficultatis*, pp. 1ff.), he occupies the same initial ground as his opponents. Indeed, as Richard Simon recognized, Flacius heightens the consciousness of these difficulties. He elaborates them in a splendid manner. They include the limited availability of [Hebrew] literature[22] and the fact that [standard] linguistic usage has yet to be established; the concise style of Scripture[23] and the sparing use of verbal moods and conjunctive forms in Hebrew; the alien character of Judaic customs; and the conflict between the Old Testament and the New. He then counters these "difficulties" (*difficultatibus*) with "remedies" (*remedia*),[24] which receive their final formulation in "Rules for Understanding Holy Scripture" (*regulae cognoscendi sacras literas*).

At this juncture, Flacius invokes an unscientific distinction. He seems to have been enticed into it by Augustine's unfortunate habit of documenting hermeneutical rules by appealing to appropriate and inappropriate Biblical passages alike. The distinction in question concerns "rules taken from Holy Scripture itself" (*regulis ex ipsis sacris literis desumptis*)[25] and "rules collected and invented by our own will" (*nostro arbitrio collectis aut excogitatis*).[26] More- 603
over, his method of collecting numerous passages in support of the first category is bound to raise serious questions. Nevertheless, the factual arrangement of his rules does lead toward an important distinction.

The first part of the *Clavis* views Scripture purely and simply as a whole. This conception yields the following major rules: to place each passage in its total Scriptural context, a point that Flacius presents in true Scholastic fashion in two syllogisms;[27] to develop from this context a summary of faith; to unify this summary by logical methods; and to illustrate this coherence of all Scripture by furnishing parallels for each individual passage. He places special value on the use of parallels. So much so in fact, that the whole

expand later. Here we are primarily concerned with the first part of this volume, whose first tract, "On the Basis for Knowing Holy Scripture," is completed by the second tract, "The Opinions and Rules of the Fathers." This first part presents the technical doctrine itself ("as the practice of the entire work," preface, p. 1). (D)

[22] The 17th difficulty of Scriptural interpretation reads: "The lack of books makes it impossible to recognize or illuminate the usage of an obscure word or expression from elsewhere."

[23] The 18th difficulty reads: "Scripture is sparing in its words and sentences."

[24] ⟨Flacius, *Clavis* II⟩, pp. 6ff. (D)

[25] ⟨Flacius, *Clavis* II⟩, pp. 6ff. (D)

[26] ⟨Flacius, *Clavis* II⟩, pp. 16ff. (D)

[27] ⟨Flacius, *Clavis* II⟩, p. 7f. (D)

first part of the *Clavis* is devoted to them. He also expressly emphasizes them again under the heading of "remedies,"[28] which indicates that this rule stands in a special relation to his basic conception of hermeneutics.

In fact, the rule requiring that every passage be placed in its total Scriptural context and clarified by parallels is really an instance of the more general principle that Scripture as a whole is explicable only by appealing to its totality. We shall find this trend becoming more pronounced in Franz,[29] who stresses the thematic relation of individual passages to the whole rather than their grammatical relations to their immediate contexts. The shortcoming of this kind of exegesis is evidently its ahistorical, abstract, logical conception of the principle of the Scriptural whole or canon. The extremes of Protestant and Catholic exegesis meet here: Passages of Scripture are torn from their more immediate or narrower contexts and are primarily brought into a broader, abstract, and logically conceived relation to Scripture as a whole. This is a consequence of the formula explained above, which attempts to resolve all conflicts between individual passages purely on a logical plane. We shall have occasion to return to this point later.

The Synthetic Approach to Interpreting Individual Books of Scripture (Purpose, Conception, Disposition, Principal and Subordinate Lines of Thought)

The same synthetic method is also used in the second part of the *Clavis*, which deals with the general rules of interpretation that are
604 based on reason. What we have so far described was the outcome of Reformation exegetical dogmatics, which still made use of earlier hermeneutical reflection. Now we come to the second mass of material that derives from rhetoric. Here one starts with the purpose and tendency of an individual book of the Scriptures;[30] from there the interpreter moves to apprehend the as yet unarticulated substance of the text,[31] from which the inner order of the conception of the

[28] He calls them "powerful remedies" (p. 5, rem. 7); p. 11: "In the exposition of Scripture, the collation of passages has the greatest power and efficacy after the Holy Spirit." (D)

[29] Wolfgang Franz (1564–1628), German historian and theologian.

[30] "Therefore when you come to read some book . . . do it in such a way that you first take note of the point of view, purpose, or intention of all that is written." [Flacius, *Clavis* II], p. 17. (D)

[31] "Second, take care to have the entire argument, summation, epitome, or overview in your grasp. By argument I mean that fuller conception that encompasses both the purpose and the entire body of the work." [Flacius, *Clavis* II], p. 17. (D)

work—its scheme—emerges. How the "individual members"—that is Flacius's favorite term for them—coalesce to form the whole of the work now becomes apparent.[32] The way in which he executes this idea is admirable. Moreover, Flacius is clearly conscious of his own originality in introducing this element into the hermeneutical procedure. The passage also contains a good summary of the main points of his method.[33] The account of the interpretive procedures already anticipates Schleiermacher. Nevertheless, the broader context disappoints the contemporary reader. For rhetoric is held up as the touchstone; the types of discourse (judgment, demonstration, etc.) put in an appearance, followed by the categories of formal logic. In fact, an almost pedantic formality is revealed in the way rhetoric is made to approach the concepts pertaining to the inner form of a Scriptural text. Flacius recommends the use of a synoptic table, thereby importing his predilection for distinctions and schemata into the art of interpretation itself. Still, we dare not overlook the excellent distinction between the principal and subordinate lines of thought in a text, merely because it happens to be hidden in all this awkward concern with rules.[34] On the contrary, we must emphasize that this second part of Flacius's hermeneutics contains the 605
kernel of a modern theory about the process of interpretation. This theory, in turn, assumed the greatest importance because it furnished a solid foundation for philology and history.

The hermeneutics of Flacius, then, contains two elements of divergent origin and equally diverse historical significance. The first

[32] "Third, in order to have the arrangement or disposition of the whole book before your eyes . . . weigh accurately what sort of body it is, how it embraces all its members, and by what plan these several members or parts come together to make one body." [Flacius, *Clavis* II], p. 17. (D)

[33] "For (to confess my feeling frankly), although many interpreters, in the course of expounding the Holy Books, have argued learnedly about their individual parts and even about their meaning, no one—or very few, certainly—has habitually examined the text with care, much less diligently traced the argument and the disposition at the same time; nor has anyone taken the principal idea and the members of the entire body and carefully compared them to each other and mulled them over, in the course of the exposition; nor has anyone been accustomed, when inspecting, weighing, and illuminating the separate parts, to compare and relate them consistently and carefully to the remaining parts, especially to the principal themes, and, hence, to the body as a whole." [Flacius, *Clavis* II], p. 18. (D)

[34] "First and foremost, the reader ought to be concerned to consider those opinions that are, as it were, primary and substantive, in which the entire solution to the question propounded resides; second, care should be taken to weigh those opinions that are, as it were, external, adventitious, or accidental, etc." [Flacius, *Clavis* II], p. 19. (D)

springs from the depths of the religious experience in the Protestant world. Subsequently, theology would extract this kernel from its hard, lifeless shell, and establish its proper importance. The second element of this hermeneutics stems from the great quest of the whole humanistic period to attain a clear, pure, and certain understanding of literary works. This element lays the groundwork of philological and historical knowledge.

The question is whether Flacius succeeded in fusing these two elements. The only way to accomplish this was to bring the exegetical operations dealing with the purpose and composition of a work into a tenable relationship with the other operations relying on the principle of the wholeness of Scripture. Had Flacius done so, he would have addressed—however imperfectly—the fundamental problem of Biblical hermeneutics. But, as it is, his notion of the Scriptural whole made this impossible. The total Scriptural context—defined as the analogy of faith and hermeneutically expressed through the collation of parallel passages—is so prominent in the exegesis of individual books of the Bible that little concern is shown for their purpose and inner form. Because of this dogmatic presupposition [of the analogy of faith], the method that requires every passage be explained in terms of its relation to the Scriptural whole, nevertheless leads to a procedure courting the very fragmentation and distortion of the whole that Flacius was contesting in Catholicism. This procedure disperses the components of the individual books of the Bible among the various topics of dogmatics; it even attempts to oversimplify these components logically for this purpose. If the living experience of Scripture, expressed in the works of the Reformation period, had not succeeded in perpetuating itself, albeit in a limited and constricted form, and if this inner experience had not been able to safeguard the correct conception of its doctrinal center, Flacius's method would never have done so. That, certainly, is clear from the dogmatic aberrations of its founding theoretician. Much more time and intense exegetical work would be needed before anyone would have so much as an intimation of Biblical theology, the proper intermediary between hermeneutical and dogmatic procedures. And even more time would pass before both procedures would be enlivened by the historical spirit, and before historical consciousness would establish the definitive and valid link between them by transforming Biblical theology into a history of Christianity. This development would afford the first opportunity to create a scientific connection between the two separate sets of hermeneutical procedures in Flacius. He was, like his age, obsessed

with superimposing logical organization on things that are inherently unconnected. Thus, after having introduced the Protestant-Scholastic distinction discussed above, he merely places the two sets of procedures in an utterly formal juxtaposition. 606

Words, Meaning, Tropes, Parable, Allegory

In keeping with the Scholastic fashion of imposing external organization on things, Flacius follows up his presentation of the main rules with a treatment of the difficulties that arise in applying them.[35] Where those difficulties directly concern words, we see that Flacius has assimilated all the teachings of the Church Fathers about words, meaning, tropes, and allegory into his hermeneutics. This produces a total obfuscation of these concepts that will not begin to clear until [Siegmund Jacob] Baumgarten.[36] Flacius fails to distinguish the diverse meanings that a word may have in general from its sense in a particular passage, which is always unitary, thereby conjuring the phantom of a multiple sense wherever there are tropes, figures, parables, and the like.[37] Consequently, the allegorical sense is given the protection of some very respectable company. As an afterthought, Flacius does add some artificial restrictions. In one set of passages, for example, the first sense may have validity as well as the second, but not in another set. And he more severely restricts allegorical interpretation to apply only where faith and love, and the like, would be injured by the actual sense, and even then, only when a second sense is clearly expressed elsewhere. While these restrictions certainly reduce the deleterious effects of this method of interpretation on dogmatics, they scarcely serve to protect exegesis.

The problem of historical circumstances produces yet other difficulties. They are dealt with by applying the customary formal categories: person, mood, cause, council, place, the intrumental.[38]

[35] "On Various Difficulties pertaining to Words, Phrases, Sentences, or the Entire Tenor of the Discourse," p. 20f. The following chapter, "On Reconciling Conflicting Statements," also belongs to it. "On Expressions and Words That Allude to the Character and Nature of Men and Places" ⟨belongs to a different series; see Flacius, *Clavis* II, p. 44.⟩ (D)

[36] Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten (1706–57), German theologian, older brother of the philosopher Alexander Baumgarten.

[37] ⟨Flacius, *Clavis* II⟩, p. 49f. (D)

[38] ⟨Flacius, *Clavis* II⟩, p. 26: Here is a sample. Concerning mood, we have this example: "(In John 2:4), Christ (says to his mother) what have I to do with you, woman? The mood of this speech appears much too vehement . . . and, while it may not sensibly befit our purely human community, it befitted him who was not merely

Particular difficulties, which are presented in sequence, are then resolved by a relentless and monotonous appeal to the concept of the accommodation of the persons that speak and write. Baumgar-
607 ten's treatment of historical circumstances is the first advance beyond Flacius, but it is obviously still based on this chapter. So are the several changes in the hermeneutical application of accommodation introduced by Baumgarten.

This logical but playful treatment of difficulties, which would have been irresponsible had it not been a purely naive expression of a total lack of historical sense, attains its zenith in the chapter on the resolution of contradictions.[39] A problem is solved on a purely logical level by appealing to some category or other. Or the contradictions dissolve when one can show that the predicate is to be construed in a different relation than the subject. The Gospels (to which both categories and *tempus* are applied) are, for example, to be handled as follows: If the same event seems to be recounted differently in two Gospels, and the contradiction cannot be resolved by any other hermeneutical contrivance, one must then resort to the categories of time and place and construct two similar events at different times and places.[40] Here hermeneutics still exhibits a naive unconcern for truth.

Characterization of the Language of the New Testament

From the large number of topics covered in the *Clavis*, we need only stress one more point, namely, Flacius's efforts to arrive at a characterization of the New Testament style, especially of the Pauline and the Johannine. This is located in the parts that come after the grammar (*III. de partibus orationis*), which was later to comprise rhetoric in Glassius's work.[41] It is part of an effort to develop a grammar of the New Testament, and the deficiencies of this grammar carry over to the treatment of style. Flacius himself strongly felt the imper-

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a man but also truly God." And this, by way of explaining the *instrumenta*, where distinctions should be carefully noted: "Peter killed Ananias with a word, Samson slew so many Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, David killed Goliath with a pebble, etc." (p. 27). (D)

[39] ⟨Flacius, *Clavis* II⟩, pp. 29ff. (D)

[40] "If an event is narrated in one Gospel, and also appears in another Gospel, but some part of the second conflicts with the first, so that it is impossible to reconcile them, then one can only assume that both events occurred in different places or times, so that both Gospels have spoken truth. For it does not run counter to the truth of the Gospels, if one remembers what the other is silent about." [Flacius, *Clavis* II], p. 32. (D)

[41] [Flacius, *Clavis* II], p. 340f., p. 393f. (D)

fection of his work in this area.[42] Still, the idea of incorporating the entire form of an author's thought in the concept of style is excellent. Moreover, the application of this idea to the characterization of specific styles had happy results in several cases. Nevertheless, the tendency of the *Clavis* to prove the perfection and sufficiency of 608
Scripture asserts itself once again with disturbing results. Among many excellent observations, we also encounter the schema of the perfections of Scripture,[43] a doctrine that reaches a peculiar culmination in the thought of Glassius.

Flacius's work ends as it began. As a fitting symbol of the the intention of the entire work, the chapter on Scripture as the norm and rule of faith comes at the end, and also signals the end of Flacius's battle with the decrees of the Council of Trent.

Richard Simon's Critique of Flacius's System

There was no lack of Catholic opponents to renew the battle. Richard Simon, the great critic, is unquestionably the best of them. In the thirteenth chapter of book 3 of his *Histoire critique du vieux testament* (Critical History of the Old Testament), he puts Protestant exegesis since the time of its patriarch, Luther, on trial, taking Flacius as the foremost representative of its hermeneutical theory. He immediately attacks the prefaces we discussed by calling attention to the inadequate knowledge of Hebrew in Flacius's time[44] as well as to the wide diversity of interpretations; and he also argues that Origen and Jerome were better linguists than Luther and Calvin. He praises Flacius's acute exposition of the difficulties of Scriptural interpretation by emphasizing the fifty-one points in which Flacius had presented them—not without some irony about the pedantry of this German. But he finds that Flacius's remedies are considerably less persuasive than the difficulties. Flacius, he alleges, made excellent use of the hermeneutics of the Church Fathers without being fair to his sources. The main point is that a sharp, critical mind is able to expose the real contradiction in

[42] The task is, he says, [Flacius, *Clavis* II], (p. 340 pr.), "to enable the reader to see plainly by what plan and method the entire body was composed. Now one thing truly disturbs me: that we may not make an all-out effort, but rather merely collect parts and fragments, as it were. To speak frankly, I wish that it was even sufficient for that." (D)

[43] "simplicity, efficacy, fullness, (brevity, or) economy, etc." [Flacius, *Clavis* II], p. 351f., p. 353f. (D)

[44] "That even today most of the words of that language are equivocal" (Richard Simon, *Histoire critique [du Vieux Testament]* [1680], p. 482). (D)

which Flacius's theory of interpretation moves,[45] namely, that while asserting the self-sufficiency of Scripture, it actually subordinates exegesis in practice to the Protestant creeds.

609 **The Hermeneutics of Wolfgang Franz**

We have sketched the outlines of a creative hermeneutical system, one whose like would not reappear during this early period. Some very important components, which were not even to be developed further until Baumgarten, will not resurface until Schleiermacher. Moreover, their reemergence will not be due to any historical transmission, but rather to the intrinsic power of the issues themselves. This makes comparison all the more instructive. However, there are other features of Flacius's work that do continue to exert their influence on the immediately succeeding developments in the art of interpretation up until the time of Semler and beyond.

The changes that Flacius's system was to undergo in this early period require only a few scattered comments.

The work of Franz,[46] the second member of what Budde[47] calls the hermeneutical triumvirate of the early period, starts from the same dogmatic presuppositions as the work of Flacius. But Franz employs a different method for dealing with hermeneutical operations. From the start he advances the self-sufficiency and the normative status of Scripture as two hypotheses, derives the problem of hermeneutics from them, and then sets up rules of interpretation to solve it. This represents a gain in formal clarity. Anything that is not amenable to the setting of [general] rules, but is rather a presupposition of a specific rule, turns out to be a presupposition of these initial hypotheses. Baumgarten's "dogmatic lemmata" correspond to these hypotheses in Franz. In formulating his general rules, Franz is now able to begin with the elements themselves and to ascend from

[45] "Indeed, he wants, above all things, to instruct people about the truths of religion, because, according to him, the explanation of Scripture must conform to faith. Nevertheless, he has no other teacher but his patriarch, Luther, to instruct him in these truths of Christianity; as though Luther had preserved the faith of the Church Fathers. Thus while the rule he prescribes here is very good and very useful, its application is false; and in order to turn it to good use in applying it to the Church, it is fitting that we report it in his very words: 'Everything that is said about Scripture or from Scripture must be in harmony with the catechism or articles of faith' " (Simon, *Histoire critique*, p. 484). (D)

[46] [Wolfgang Franz], *Tractatus theologicus novus et perspicuus de interpretatione Sacrarum Scripturarum maxime legitima* (1619). (D)

[47] Johann Franz Budde (1667–1729), German theologian.

them to the whole. For the first time simple individual procedures receive their due. And while Flacius had tucked his discussion of context away in a corner of the first part of his work, this concept is now also accorded its proper place. Because the rules are presented under the twofold heading of language and context,[48] we can see here at least a seed of subsequent classifications. By "context" is meant the whole continuum, starting from the immediate surroundings of a passage up to parallels, *circumstantiae*, and *harmoniae*.[49] That despite this we remain entirely in the domain of Flacius is 610
shown by the odd question as to which of these two hermeneutical elements is to be assigned priority. Franz decides in favor of the context, which is just another way of ensuring that analogy and parallels will retain their decisive place in hermeneutics.

Beyond these main outlines, there is nothing more to mention in Franz. This is because in the first part of his work he immediately turns to a polemical treatment of translations; in the second, to a discussion of the proper use of concordances, which he recommends instead of a lexicon. Then he appends a series of interpretations that amount to a course in applied hermeneutics. On the whole, the poverty of Franz's development of the rules stands in clear contrast to the overpowering richness of Flacius—even if that richness is often illusory and contrived.

The Hermeneutics of Glassius[50]

Glassius's book,[51] which has been widely and justly praised, owes its reputation more to its progress in grammar and rhetoric than to its hermeneutics. The latter comprises the first two books. The first

[48] "This dichotomy is completely homogeneous, delightful, and easily observed, and the precepts are to be applied to any and all particular texts, sayings, and, for genuine understanding, to any and all complete books of the sacred codex; they seek to examine, recover, and express the original meaning and hidden intrinsic purpose that the Holy Spirit itself is most intent on. The first thing to be sought is a knowledge of the words and phrases of Scripture in the original language. Second, one should seek a knowledge of the overall coherence of context, the antecedent and subsequent sentences that tie it essentially together, both of which must be dealt with in their proper order." [Franz, *Tractatus*, p. 24.] (D)

[49] "By context I mean: the whole and the parts, the preceding and the following sentences, whatever comes before and after the text itself including the glosses, the headings, parallel passages, circumstances, and harmonies." [Franz, *Tractatus*], preface, p. 6. (D)

[50] Salamo Glassius (1593–1656), German Hebrew scholar.

[51] [Glassius], *Philologia sacra, qua totius V. et N. T. Scripturae tum stylus et litteratura, tum sensus et genuinae interpretationis ratio expenditur* (Jena, 1623). (D)

book provides a characterization of language in view of the intelligibility of Scripture and its complete appropriateness to the needs of the Church. This lays the ground for the rules of hermeneutics in the second book.

Whereas Flacius faced the difficulties of interpretation clearly and openly, this is totally absent from Glassius's first book. And while Flacius had merely drawn the first sketch of a doctrine of the perfection of Scripture, Glassius now allows this doctrine to control his entire general characterization of language.[52] Polemics against Catholics, Calvinists, and sects pervade the work, which is couched, for the most part, in the Scholastic style of disputed questions.[53] The teleological perspective implicit in the doctrine of the perfection of Scripture ruins even the simplest observations.[54] Glassius defends the integrity and unity of the canon as the basis for hermeneutics with a sophistry that reaches its highest point here, and actually
611 becomes insincere.[55] To be sure, specific philological observations are on the whole dependent on Flacius. But they often develop his ideas with the help of an improved sense of grammar.

The other book of Glassius's work contains the rules of interpretation. I find it not to be as closely tied to Franz as is usually claimed. In any case, the dependence of the preceding part on Flacius is more evident. The new organization that Glassius selects is certainly not an advance. Quite to the contrary, it represents an extreme exercise in polemical and sterile dogmatic distinctions

[52] "Certitude and clarity, simplicity, effectiveness, evidence, richness, brevity, coherence, reverence, chastity, propriety." [Glassius, *Philologia sacra*], pp. 236–82. (H)

[53] "Evolution of the controversy; establishment of the truth; defense against the arguments and conjectures of objectors." Sometimes they also appear in a different order. (D)

[54] The Hebraic tendencies of the New Testament are explained in terms of the purposes of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The New Testament authors used Hebrew expressions because "they wanted to adapt their language to the Old Testament." ⟨Glassius, *Philologia sacra*, p. 297.⟩ (D)

[55] The well-known discrepancy about the inherited burial place, which Stephanus broadened, is explained by an *enallage* [interchange]: "So close are the bonds between parents and children that morally they may be taken as one." ⟨Glassius, *Philologia sacra*, p. 219. The account of the burial of Jacob and his sons, in the Stephanus version of Acts 7, does not agree with the accounts in Joshua 24:32 and Genesis 50:13. According to Joshua 24:32, only Joseph was buried in Sichim in a grave purchased by Jacob, not by Abraham. The discrepancy between Acts and the Old Testament accounts presented a difficult problem for the old Protestant hermeneutics because of its doctrine of verbal inspiration. Hence, the attempt to solve it by the contrived *enallage* of parents and children.⟩ (D)

when the entire investigation is made to turn on the difference between the literal and the mystical senses. He continues to tie the *sensus allegoricus* to the *sensus mysticus*. He follows Flacius in determining the limits of the mystical sense. But he emphasizes that only the literal sense of a passage is vested with evidentiary force, in order to protect himself against the dogmatic methods of proof used by the Catholic allegorists.

2. *Systems of Transition: Socinians, Arminians, Pietists, Christian Wolff, Baumgarten* 612

The foregoing hermeneutical literature reflects the conflict between the dogmatic presuppositions of Protestantism and the auspicious beginnings of a scientific theory of interpretation.[56] Its real significance, however, is that the basic procedures of all the human sciences were here undergoing examination for the first time. A scientific movement of far-reaching importance for the future was emerging within ecclesiastical theology, among Protestants and Catholics alike. Now while this was taking place within ecclesiastical theology, a second major theological trend of the century, rationalism, was proceeding to provide a sweeping critique of dogma.

It was Erasmus[57] who initiated this second theological direction. Throughout the sixteenth century, rationalism made progress only when it followed the trail blazed by this prescient man. Specifically, Erasmus furnished two resources [for the new approach]. First, he maintained the distinctness of the various factors that constitute religious experience as they could be extracted from the formulas of Church doctrine. He isolated free will from divine intervention, while assuming a cooperation between them. By insisting on the priority of the freedom and dignity of man, he found a basis in man's moral nature for criticizing Church dogma. The second resource, his distinction between the teachings of Christ and everything else in the Bible, allowed him to interpret Christ as comparable to similar emissaries and prophets of God. This, in turn, provided a reference point for historical criticism of Christian doctrine. He was then able to develop a formal and ethical critique of dogmas, and within the limitations of the vantage point we sketched above, a critique of the

[56] Insertion made by Dilthey when he published this section of his prize-essay in the *Archiv für die Geschichte der Philosophie* 6 (1893): 87–91 (see *GS* II, 129–33). (H)

[57] See *Archiv für die Geschichte der Philosophie* 6: 63. (H)

doctrinal content of the Bible. And, for the most part, rationalism remained within those limits until it came to launch its attack on miracles under the influence of the natural sciences, and began to dismantle the historic scaffolding of Church doctrine on the basis of a critical examination of the Pentateuch and the Gospels.

613 These resources of the first rationalistic period also sufficed to dissolve the doctrines of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ, along with the doctrines of the atonement and divine sacrifice, and the doctrine of election by grace. This movement began in Italy and southern France. The Italians tend to favor free scientific societies and academies. Because the masses of Italy were still dominated by the Church, the Protestant movement there was restricted to the educated classes of a humanistic bent. Consequently, the movement there assumed a more academic and less ecclesiastical nature. We hear of gatherings in Venice where ultimate questions about the value of specific religions were debated without reserve. The founders of this Italian Protestantism were driven by an uncompromising desire for intellectual clarity. When men of such spirit ultimately fell into opposition to the Church, unencumbered as they were by any organic ties to a congregation, a religion, or a scientific school, the natural outcome was bound to be logical, moral, and historical criticism of everything that Protestantism had left standing. In vain they turned to Geneva. After all, Serveto[58] had been executed there. Only in Poland did they find a permanent place of refuge. Poland had more vital ties to Italy in any case, and the prevailing political anarchy there made freedom of movement easier. Thus it was to become the home of Socinianism.

What was epoch-making about Socinianism was its clear-headed commitment to the idea of requiring the new Protestant Christianity to justify itself against Erasmian humanism, and, more generally, against the historical-critical, formal, and ethical reason of the great, advancing century. Ochino,[59] the Socinians, and later their great Arminian spiritual kinsman, Grotius, were all seeking an apologetics for Protestantism. And they were quite prepared to purify Christianity in the bargain. One can only understand what these noble spirits, immersed in their studies, were after and accomplished by focusing on their skepticism, their cheerful and bold worldliness, and the liberal scientific humanism to which we have called attention. They initiate a remarkable period in which Chris-

[58] Michael Serveto (1511–33), Spanish humanist and critic of the doctrine of the Trinity.

[59] Bernardino Ochino (1487–1564), Italian preacher and reformer.

tianity retained its validity above all in the lively discussions of the educated classes, but solely on the basis of historical and moral arguments that limited its scope to just what such arguments could certify. The whole profundity of a great religious past was now renounced as mystical fog and superstitious hallucination. Against this, a Judeo-Christian faith in the emissary whom God had vested with the credentials of miracles and the Resurrection carried the day. Thus, the conditions of the time once again bred a religious outlook that is totally unacceptable to people today. But that is precisely the lesson of history: In its deepest concerns, the human race really has no inkling of the way the walls of historical conditions enclose its life. The validity of the Scriptures and the Christianity 614
they contain was made to depend, in the first instance, on historical-critical certainty about the crucial facts of the New Testament. The Resurrection is the cornerstone of this entire argument. The disciples attest to it in such a way that one must either accept it as historical fact or assume that they were insane. Moreover, the miracles were acknowledged even by opponents of Christ, and they could hardly be regarded as demonic because Christ was the enemy of the devil. This testimony also bolsters historical certainty about Christ's divinity. Furthermore, the validity of the Old Testament can be proved solely on the basis of this prior historical certitude about the facts of the New Testament.

This sort of argument fully reflects the religious horizon of the humanistically educated class: The emissaries of God are to be vested with varying degrees of dignity according to the reports of ancient history. One can only understand the rationalism of the age, especially Socinianism, in the light of this positive presupposition. At the same time, this mode of argument is negatively conditioned by its religious horizon in that it lacks a critique of the Gospels and a concept of the power and validity of laws of nature that allow no exceptions. For this concept did not really emerge until after Descartes had banished all psychic forces from nature. A lifeless, purely mechanical nature could no longer tolerate magic, miracles, or demons. Thus it fell to a Cartesian living in Amsterdam, Balthasar Bekker,[60] to be the first to declare war on the whole tribe of angels, devils, and witches, and the sorcerers with all their miracles and magic. Then came Spinoza's *Tractatus theologico-politicus* where the validity of the doctrine of the laws of nature is firmly established by the sovereign intellect.

[60] Balthasar Bekker (1634–98), *De betooverde Weereld*, 3 vols. (1691–93). (H)

No one represented this position—so historically limited, yet so epoch-making—more moderately, more learnedly, more shrewdly than Hugo Grotius. He was vitally committed to the great historical-critical tendencies of his time: to French and Dutch humanism, from which modern philology and jurisprudence were emerging just then; to the authentication of the contemporary scientific history; and to the geographical and anthropological universality of the contemporary outlook. The great scientific tendencies of the age spoke through this universal mind in altogether different accents than we hear in even the most significant of the Socinians, than even in, say, the able Wissowatius.[61]

Grotius's Christian apologetic centers on the relationship of man to God and on the human quest for happiness: Christianity promises
615 this happiness, but the credibility of this claim must be examined. An examination of the original sources, which are especially taken into consideration by secular historians, establishes that Christ lived, died on a cross, and was already the subject of veneration in Nero's time. This, in turn, can only be explained by assuming that the miracles actually occurred, especially because so many educated people participated in the worship of Christ. For such people would certainly have obtained the most reliable information available on such an important matter. Moreover, even the opponents of Christianity had not dared to doubt that the miracles took place. In keeping with his century's prevailing belief about miracles, Grotius expressly defends the idea that miracles should be attributed to God, not to demons. For Grotius, the second, considerably more important proof of Christianity lies in the fact of the Resurrection. Given the state of historical criticism at the time, this had to be accepted as demonstrated fact. Grotius makes an ingenious case by noting the large number of witnesses to the Resurrection, their readiness to sacrifice their lives for a faith that was founded, in the first instance, on this fact, and their disinterestedness, since no particular advantage was to be gained from it. And, once again, in keeping with the prevailing belief in miracles, the possibility of the Resurrection is established by an appeal to other occurrences of Resurrections in ancient authors.

Reading Grotius's work, one is continually reminded that even a scientific mind of the stature of Bodin[62] declared himself for miracles, magic, and witches, and appealed to the testimony of the ancients on this point. In any case, Grotius concludes from the miracles and the Resurrection that Christ had a divine mandate.

[61] Andreas Wissowatius (1608–78), *Religio rationalis etc.* (H)
[62] Jean Bodin (1529–96). (H)

This sober evaluation of the sources by means of historical-critical reason represents inestimable progress, which would lead to improvements in interpretation and hermeneutics.[63] It often happens that a comprehensive system evokes opposition and new ideas from many quarters at once. Flacius's hermeneutics and the classical theology generated just such a reaction. There were also several attempts to reconcile the new with the old. This period of transition lasted into the middle of the eighteenth century. Its classical representative was [Siegmund] Jacob Baumgarten.

The Movement among the Calvinists, and Especially the Remonstrants[64]

The first such transitional movement numbers several distinguished Reformed critics and exegetes among its leaders, particularly the Remonstrants.[65] While Germany was still under the domination of 616
Flacius's hermeneutics, Drusius[66] was paving the way for a scientific use of translations, while de Dieu[67] did the same for the Semitic dialects. Meanwhile Capellus[68] proved to Buxtorf[69] that the Hebrew vowel points were added later. This would then furnish Lowth[70] and Michaelis[71] with the basis for a radical reform of Old Testament exegesis. Hugo Grotius was the best interpreter since Calvin, and he would remain without peer for some time to come. With his subtle breadth of spirit and experience in jurisprudence and worldly affairs, he practiced exegesis with refinement, at least, with all the refinement that his position and sect permitted. His use of the Septuagint and of Philo[72] and Josephus[73] helped fix the boundaries of the ideas and language of the New Testament proper. His often sparkling account of classical writers helped break down the barriers

[63] End of the insertion described in n. 56. (H)

[64] The Remonstrants were a small Arminian sect in seventeenth-century Holland.

[65] Clericus (Le Clerc, 1657–1736), Dutch Arminian theologian and author of the *Ars critica* (1696). (H)

[66] Johannes Drusius (1550–1616), *Opera theologica exegetica* (1622–36). (H)

[67] [Lodewijk] de Dieu (1590–1642), *Animadversiones in Veteris Testamenti libros omnes* I (1648). (H)

[68] ⟨Ludwig Capellus (1585–1658)⟩, *Arcanum punctationis revelatio* (1624); ⟨*Diatriba de veris et antiquis Ebraeorum literis* (1645).⟩ (H)

[69] Johann Buxtorf (1599–1664). (H)

[70] Robert Lowth (1710–87), English theologian.

[71] Johann Heinrich Michaelis (1668–1738), German orientalist and theologian.

[72] Philo of Alexandria (ca. A.D. 40), Jewish-Hellenistic religious philosopher.

[73] Flavius Josephus (37/38–ca. A.D. 100), Jewish historian.

between sacred and profane authors, even if it also tended to neglect the uniqueness of the former. One can see the beginnings of historical interpretation in his treatment of the Psalms and the Prophets. His account, based on his interpretation of classical authors, moves, in spirit, toward the kind of aesthetic approach to Scripture that Lowth was to revive. Grotius's method of exegesis was compact, its sole purpose being to clarify. Koppe[74] was the first to pursue it in Germany with any conscious acknowledgment of its source. Meanwhile, Le Clerc, a professor in the Remonstrant gymnasium in Amsterdam, based his *Ars critica* (The Art of Criticism) on a similar connection between classical studies and interpretation. He first sought to establish the hermeneutical principles of such an approach. He began with grammatical and critical investigations, treated ambiguities more freely, and appealed to historical modes of explanation.

Similar ideas also appear in a more condensed form in the hermeneutical work of Johann Alphonso Turretini,[75] a statesman and theologian from Geneva. He was the son of the orthodox Geneva politician, Franz Turretini. The first part of his treatise is polemical; the second contains his own system of general and special rules—albeit in a freewheeling treatment. At its very beginning, we encounter, for the first time, the principle that hermeneutical rules should possess universal validity.[76] Even Scriptural exegesis is unconditionally subject to them. Grammatical interpretation comes first. Every work is to be explained by the linguistic usage of its time, its sect, its people.
617 Context and the author's purpose furnish the first supplements for interpreting a particular passage. Only after this does Turretini mention parallels. The historical mode of explanation makes itself felt, but it is not as yet distinguished from philosophical explanation, which had appeared half a century earlier in Holland. There was widespread pressure—in seeming contradiction to the worldview of the period—to part company with Biblical revelation. Of necessity, this pressure developed first in the freer literary circles of

[74] Johann Benjamin Koppe (1750–91), professor of theology at Göttingen. (H)

[75] [Johann Alphonso Turretini (1671–1737)], *De Sacrae Scripturae interpretandae methodo tractatus bipartitus* (1728). This book was published without Turretini's knowledge and was repudiated by him. (D)

[76] "At the very outset, we observe that, in general, Scripture is not to be interpreted in any different manner than other books; attention must be paid, of course, to the meaning of words and expressions, to the author's purpose, to what precedes and what follows, and things of that kind." [Turretini, *De Sacrae*], p. 196. (D)

those Protestant countries where, in contrast to Germany, political conditions made it impossible for the theologians to isolate themselves from the upper classes. The origins of historical interpretation are, accordingly, first found in Holland, Switzerland, and England. Semler would be the first to adapt it to the more restricted conditions prevailing in German theology.

Only the beginnings of historical interpretation are visible in Turretini. Although he allows Scripture to be illuminated by a knowledge of ancient customs and opinions, Turretini's penchant for philosophical interpretation is far more pronounced. The supreme rule for him is to explain by appealing to the nature of things themselves. Indeed, he asserts that if a passage contradicts reason, then it must either be given another sense, or, failing that, be rejected as spurious.[77]

The gifted Wettstein,[78] who was, like Clericus, a Remonstrant, worked out the basic principles of this approach in a simple hermeneutical form and with a strong historical sense. He presents only a few rules, and he does so straightforwardly and precisely. They foreshadow all the aspirations of the grammatical-historical method.

For a strict treatment of linguistic usage, Wettstein appeals to the efforts of John Locke to interpret the Pauline Epistles in terms of their own usage. Though they are philosophically weak, they are still universally and rightfully acclaimed because of their orientation and form. I find that Wettstein's hermeneutical rules contain a much clearer consciousness of strict philosophical method—which he attempts to study in maximum isolation—than is present in his actual practice of interpreting the New Testament. At any rate, he is the first to give a clear formulation to the rules of the historical interpretation of this epoch.[79] Biblical authors are to be interpreted through

[77] "One should observe what follows from words, because there are passages of Scripture that appear to run counter to the natural light or to displace common notions. Hence, either a different sense must be ascribed to such passages, or, failing that, the book containing them should either not be treated as divine or the passages in question should be deemed spurious. For because, in all fairness, we owe it to learned authors not to believe that they teach what is contrary to reason, how much more do we owe it to God and the authors inspired by Him." [Turretini, *De Sacrae*], p. 202. (D)

[78] [Johann Jakob Wettstein (1693–1754), Protestant New Testament scholar], *Libelli ad crisin atque interpretationem N. T.*, ed. Semler (1766). (D)

[79] It is found in the fifth rule, "on interpreting the New Testament." "The passages that appear to us to conflict with each other or with the truth can generally be reconciled without difficulty, if we say that the sacred writer has not always

the concepts of their own time. Nevertheless, he still explains whatever the reader finds unworthy of inspiration through an accommo-
618 dation to such concepts. Surprisingly, he appeals to a dictum of Malebranche.[80] The historical approach is more clearly and fully evident in the last of his rules. In a certain sense it epitomizes his ideal of interpretation: In reading one should completely transport oneself into the time and place of the [original] readers; their customs, their opinions, their methods of proof and persuasion, their idioms and images, should all be kept constantly in mind. On the other hand, one should suppress anything that smacks of present systems of thought.[81]

The first form of historical interpretation is accordingly the theory of accommodation. It leaves the concept of inspiration untouched, but the Divine Author is to be contemplated through the specific historical circumstances in which He had to work. By taking them into account we can explain the divine thoughts insofar as they go beyond what is normal and universal. The earlier technique of interpretation drew exclusively on parallels from Scripture. The new technique, however, takes its parallels from the Rabbinical tradition and the Talmud, from Philo, Josephus, and the secular writers. Wettstein practiced it so superbly, particularly in his use of the Talmud and Rabbinical literature, that even today his work remains an indispensable aid to interpretation.[82]

This many-sided movement typifies the orientation of hermeneutics in the Reformed countries. But in Germany, Pietism and Wolffian philosophy were to transform it decisively.

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expressed his own opinion and stated how things stand, but has on occasion given utterance to the opinion of others or to the common opinion that were either uncertain or false." See Wettstein, *Libelli*, p. 139. (D)

[80] I was unable to determine which work of the philosopher this comes from. In any case, it says: "When an author appears to contradict himself, and natural fairness as well as other (better) reasons compel us to reconcile him with himself, we have a sure rule for picking out his real opinion. Just because he says what others say does not mean that he should be taken to mean what others mean. When he says something plainly true that conflicts with common opinion, even if he says it once, we should with reason judge this to be his intent and opinion." ⟨See Wettstein, *Libelli*, p. 139.⟩ (D)

[81] See Wettstein, *Libelli*, pp. 149ff. (H)

[82] At the same time in England, Presbyterian John Lightfoot [1602–75] indiscriminately related the treasures of Rabbinical wisdom and the Talmud to the New Testament, applying them equally to passages in need of clarification and to those that are perfectly clear. (D)

Pietism: The Hermeneutics of the Affections

The Pietistic approach to exegesis developed virtually without contact with any movement outside Germany. It welled up from the depths of the German Lutheran Church as a reaction against the revival of Scholasticism within Protestantism and against a scholarship bent on amassing materials, a reaction on behalf of the Reformation emphasis on attaining salvation through absolute absorption in Scripture. It did not seek doctrines from Scripture, but a state 619
of the soul. Accordingly, the interpreter was required above all to surrender himself to the state of the soul expressed in Scripture. This is the real meaning of the doctrine of the "affections" of Scripture that August Hermann Francke was so partial to. The doctrine appears for the first time in an appendix to the *Manductio ad lectionem Sacrae Scripturae* (Manual for Reading Holy Scripture) of 1693. It is then revised in the *Hermeneutica* of 1717 (pp. 193ff.). As unscientific as it is, it is nevertheless the first effort to explain the Scriptures in terms of the inner states of their authors. It represents the beginning of psychological interpretation, which would soon, with philosophical encouragement, free itself from its original religious tendencies. All speech—so Francke teaches—possesses, in virtue of its inner origins, an affection within it.[83] This affection is the very nerve or soul of speech.[84] Hermeneutics thus requires a theory of these affections, a "pathology" of Holy Scripture.[85] Such a theory begins with the contrast between the natural state of the soul and that of believers, a contrast that can hardly be grasped sharply enough.[86] This distinction appears in the principle, purpose, object, subject, and the like. Love is the basic affection of those who are born again. It also makes up the essential content of Scripture, pervading all its aims and expressions. It dominates all Scripture and

[83] August Hermann Francke, ⟨*Praelectiones hermeneuticae, ad viam dextre indagandi et exponendi sensum Scripturae S. theologiae studiosis ostendendam* (Halle, 1723), p. 196⟩: "An affection proceeding from the very essence of the soul is present in every word that men utter." (D)

[84] Francke, ⟨*Praelectiones hermeneuticae*⟩, p. 197: "for these are so tightly bound to the external word, and their harmony is so indissoluble, that they elevate the nerves, nay the very soul itself, out of the body, with the result that an affection wells up from speech." (D)

[85] Francke, ⟨*Praelectiones hermeneuticae*, *regula I specialis*, p. 229⟩. (D)

[86] Francke, ⟨*Praelectiones hermeneuticae*, *regula II specialis*, p. 231⟩: "In the same measure as a man born again differs from a natural man, the two also differ in the kinds of affections they have." (D)

permeates each word. It is a love, however, that is founded in Christ; the controlling aim of all Scripture is to educate toward this love.

The hermeneutic technique of this school rests on this fundamental rule: to grasp Christ everywhere as the core of Holy Scripture and to relate all affections to love. The relation to Christ is achieved by applying a typology and by invoking a mystical sense. This theory is contained, for example, in the pamphlet *Christus der Kern der Heiligen Schrift oder einfältige Anweisung usw.* (Christ, the Core of Holy Scripture, or a Simple Guide, Etc.). The affections dominant in particular books of the Bible are found by discovering their purposes as they are set forth in this guide, while they are found for
620 individual words by attending to the force or emphasis.[87] How this was exaggerated into a technique for discovering as many emphases as possible is well known. An incapacity to discriminate among various meanings of words intensified the eagerness to proliferate emphases.

A noteworthy effort to relate this Pietistic theory to orthodoxy and earlier hermeneutical scholarship was made by Rambach.[88] By virtue of its tight-knit organization, his system prepared the way for Jacob Baumgarten's.

The Logical Method of Christian Wolff

Despite their initial enmity, the rising Pietistic trend in exegesis eventually came to be united with Wolff's method. One should hardly be surprised to learn that the influence of Wolff's system even reached hermeneutics. For this was the first time that a single philosophy dominated all the lecterns in Germany and could take the thinking of the nation in hand. This philosophy with its "mathematical method" pushed its way into every book as only a modern philosophy could. Given these conditions of scientific thought, the idea of a hermeneutics founded on first principles and employing a scientific method of demonstration was bound to arise. I find the first trace of it in Wolff's famous proposal for a deductive foundation for Christianity, published in the *Actis eruditorum* (Proceedings of the Learned) of 1707.[89] Such a deduction now becomes for

[87] Francke, 5th ed. (1710). Compare *Commentatio de scopo librorum Vet. et Novi Test.* (D)

[88] Johann Jakob Rambach (1693–1735), *Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae* (1723). (H)

[89] Christian Wolff, *Acta eruditorum anno MDCCVII publicata*, ⟨pp. 166–69:⟩ *Methodus demonstrandi veritatem religionis christianae.* (D)

the philosopher what it had been earlier for the theologian: an organon for constructing dogmatics from exegesis. Because dogmatics is an element of demonstrative science, Wolff wishes to see it grounded in a universal hermeneutics. However, his own efforts to develop this science are unbelievably deficient.[90] He first establishes a universal hermeneutics and then works out its application to the New Testament. Anyone familiar with his method will find absolutely nothing worth mentioning in these dessicated propositions; indeed, it takes great effort even to summarize them. The section that deals with the Bible begins, promisingly enough, with the doctrine of the unity of sense. But it does not dare to draw the consequences for allegorical explanation. Grammar, hermeneutics, everything receives a purely logical treatment. "Historical writings," which do not admit of such treatment, are dispatched almost condescendingly. For them it suffices to connect the individual words with 621
the concepts that accord with general usage. The "dogmatic writings," however, are forced to undergo the torture of an analytic method that produces a complete display of definitions and normative conclusions. And this mistreatment is equated, in effect, with understanding, because there is no way to understand a sequence of thoughts except through their logical form.

Chladenius: The Connection of the Logical and the Psychological Elements

The universal hermeneutics of Chladenius[91] is far richer and more thorough. Traces of the Wolffian School are visible in it everywhere, even though he never once mentions his teacher in his book. In almost the same manner of Wolff's art of discovery, Chladenius attributes to his rules of interpretation the power to teach everyone to write good commentaries. And when he defines interpretation as the addition of those concepts that are necessary for distinctness[92] that, too, is completely in the logical spirit of Wolff. He has, however, superb rules for interpreting the historical parts of Scripture,

[90] Christian Wolff, in both treatises on reason, but in most detail in *Philosophia rationalis sive logica* (Halle, 1740), pp. 641ff. (D)

[91] Johann Martin Chladenius, *Einleitung zur richtigen Auslegung vernünftiger Reden und Schriften* (Leipzig, 1742). (D)

[92] Chladenius, [*Einleitung*], preface: "Interpretation consists of furnishing those concepts that are necessary for the understanding of a passage." Preface: "It [the philosophical art of interpretation] exhibits the rules that can be used to pass judgment on all annotation, scholia, and commentaries that are in accord with reason." (H)

the area where Wolff was so indescribably deficient.[93] He is really motivated by the emerging psychological disposition of that time to penetrate the innermost intentions, perspectives, and emotions. Not only does he offer a guide for grasping the subsidiary thoughts of an author; but, like Ludovici[94] who once included in a list of Wolff's writings everything that he had wanted to write but had not written, he also pursues the question to what extent one can reach the subsidiary thoughts suppressed by an author himself.

622 **The Role of Empirical Psychology in Transforming Hermeneutics**

The psychological fashion that was cultivated in Wolff's philosophy, and continued to spread after the first wave of logical enthusiasm for this system had abated, influenced interpretation significantly. These same aspirations last well into our century. Garve writes diaries and self-observations. He says: "Perhaps I like to brood on my own feelings too much, and I often lose an object from view while trying to investigate its effects."[95] Christoph Meiners declares flatly that the theory of reason and psychology are identical.[96] There was a flurry of psychological experiments. Karl Moritz, who would make a remarkable subject for empirical psychology himself, collected an enormous amount of material for a so-called empirical psychology in a *Magazin für Erfahrungsseelenkunde* (Magazine for Experiential Psychology).[97] Such psychologists were fond of observing unusual psychological facts, finding rubrics for them, and garnishing them with pragmatic reflections.

The Comprehensive Character of [Siegmund Jacob] Baumgarten's Hermeneutical System

The influences on the old hermeneutical method were many and various. Both individually and collectively these influences manifested themselves here and there. Baumgarten assumes a noticeable place in the history of hermeneutics because he found room for each

[93] See Chladenius, [*Einleitung*]: "What the perspectival point is," §§ 309, 311, 517f. (an expression that Leibniz and the Wolffian school originally borrowed from physics); "on the different relations that emerge from it, on reduced images." (D)

[94] Carl Günther Ludovici (1707–78), *Entwurf einer vollständigen Historie der Wolffschen Philosophie* (Leipzig, 1737–38). (H)

[95] Christian Garve [1742–98], *(Vertraute) Briefe an eine Freundin*, ⟨(Leipzig, 1801), Letter 24, November 11.⟩ (D)

[96] Christoph Meiners [1747–1810], *Revision der Philosophie* (1772). (D)

[97] Karl Philipp Moritz ⟨(1756–93), *Magazin für Erfahrungsseelenkunde* (1783–95)⟩, 10 vols. (D)

of these influences in his own system without breaking with the received orthodoxy. His system and method, then, either preserved the inheritance or prepared its overthrow, depending on how one chooses to look at it. Baumgarten combines the insatiable learning of the polyhistorian with rigorous logical method, a combination rare in a single individual.

Semler called Baumgarten's textbook "the first German scientific plan for a hermeneutics."[98] To be sure, he had an exaggerated respect for the rule-bound, scientific method stemming from Wolff just because his own turbulent and volatile mind was incapable of practicing it. At any rate, Baumgarten's hermeneutical system—especially as we have it in the superb edition of his lectures—deserves praise in two respects: first, for its completeness in relating all the assimilated hermeneutical materials; and second, for the remark- 623
able logical translucency of its content and its clear articulation. But compared to these traits, his hermeneutical skill and attentiveness are less prominent.

Here we are primarily concerned with the principles, organization, and definition of the main parts. [Baumgarten's] book offers such a clear and apt summary of the most important points of the older hermeneutical outlook that I was delighted to be able to use it for purposes of comparison on the most important points. In any case, it is an especially important source, as are the works of Ernesti[99] and Keil.[100]

The principle of the earlier hermeneutics is presented more clearly in Baumgarten's system than in any of those earlier systems themselves, notwithstanding the newer material that is included. By starting with general hermeneutical principles followed by dogmatic lemmas,[101] so that throughout general rules precede the special treatment of the New Testament, the work clearly displays its ultimate presuppositions. They are, however, nothing more than the presuppositions of a purely mechanical teleology. Instead of a causal treatment, the single category of purpose governs everything from the highest principle to the lowliest detail. It preemptively defines the very foundation of hermeneutics, namely, the concept of language: A word is a sign invented for the purpose of communication. Speech, accordingly, may be said to have been understood if it

[98] Johannes S. Semler, *Lebensbeschreibung von ihm selbst abgefaßt* (Halle, 1781), pt. I, p. 208. (D)

[99] Johann August Ernesti (1701–81), philologist at Leipzig.

[100] Karl August G. Keil (1754–92), philologist and theologian at Leipzig.

[101] Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten, *Biblische Hermeneutik*, ed. J. Christoph Bertram (Halle, 1769), §2, p. 6. (H)

arouses those thoughts in the listener that its author intended.[102] The art of interpretation is simply a method of evincing the sequence of thoughts that the speaker aimed to produce. The divine teleology, which appears in the dogmatic lemmas, could be absorbed naturally into this system of aims and purposes with the same old superficiality evident in Glassius's doctrine of the completeness of the canon.

The materials offered by Pietism and by grammatical-historical interpretation are also assimilated into this connecting form. The third chapter on "the historical circumstances of the passages to be interpreted" is excellent.[103] The doctrine of circumstances [*circumstantiis*] appears in a completely revamped form under the influence of Reformed hermeneutics. "Moreover, in choosing its ideas and expressions, divine inspiration conforms itself as much as possible to the habitual thought and speech of men of God."[104] This requires examination, in addition to the speaker's state of mind. Baumgarten provides excellent rules for recognizing the latter. They are based on
624 the psychological tendencies of the Pietists and the Wolffians. For parallel passages, moreover, the times must be taken into account lest writings of much later authors be used to clarify earlier works.

At the same time, Baumgarten weaves final purposes into the whole of Scripture (sect. V). The final purposes of any of the particular books of the Bible are disclosed by the relations of its parts, with the proviso, however, that they may not contradict the higher final purpose of Scripture as a whole. The pattern is repeated as we move down to the final purposes of individual words. Baumgarten is, in fact, as profligate with final purposes as August Hermann Francke. Even emphases—he calls them "stresses"—retain their prominent role (sect. VII).

The Distinction between Interpretation and Explanation

It is important to note that Baumgarten separates his treatment of the explanation of Scripture (which is discussed in sect. VI) from interpretation, which is the subject of the hermeneutical operations discussed above.

> To explain the content (of a speech that is to be interpreted) is to investigate both individual concepts and their mutual relationships; thus it cannot be turned over to a mere translator. To learn to expound a text and to learn to explain it are very different

[102] Baumgarten, *Biblische Hermeneutik*, §6, p. 22. (H)
[103] Baumgarten, *Biblische Hermeneutik*, §§36–55, pp. 134ff. (H)
[104] Baumgarten, *Biblische Hermeneutik*, §40, p. 144. (H)

> things. Accordingly, the entire content of a speech that is being interpreted must be explained, or be made comprehensible and clear, by referring to its principal concepts.[105]

By subsuming the previously discussed operations under exposition, while assimilating the subsequent ones to explanation, he introduces a sharp dichotomy between grammatical and dogmatic explanation. This second class of procedures involves preparing the results obtained from grammatical explanation for dogmatics. There is a twofold technique here: first comes a logical treatment, and then a treatment of parallels. And so the circle, in which Flacius's hermeneutics had moved, becomes explicit. Hermeneutics is based on lemmas borrowed from dogmatics and supports them in turn.

Baumgarten's Place in the History of Hermeneutics at the Turning Point of Its First Two Periods

Baumgarten opened up new paths on particular points, as we shall see. Meanwhile, his chief contribution consists in the fact that on the basis of universal hermeneutics he elaborated a logical web of hermeneutical rules that cover even the smallest detail, to be sure, with the aid of a theory of inspiration that extends all the way to the individual word.[106] With his talent for comprehending previous de- 625
velopments in a logical form, Baumgarten occupies a place in hermeneutics comparable to Wolff's achievement in an incomparably more important area. And just as Wolff's metaphysics is deeply rooted in the work of the Scholastics, Baumgarten's hermeneutics harks back to its old Protestant foundations. In fact, the comparison can be carried further. In philosophy, Kant, who was himself originally a Wolffian, arrived at his critical position because of doubts aroused by the English and the progress of the physical sciences. Two decades later Baumgarten's disciples, Michaelis and Semler, would play a similar role under the very same influences in exegesis and hermeneutics. The same Baumgarten who brought ecclesiastical hermeneutics to its completion was also to become the father of the Historical School.[107]

[105] Baumgarten, *Biblische Hermeneutik*, §86, p. 286. (H)

[106] Töllner's *Grundriß einer erwiesenen Hermeneutik der Heiligen Schrift* (Züllichau, 1765) tends in the same direction. The preface declares that the aim of the book is to transform hermeneutics into a system in Wolff's sense. By separating the historical components from those that contain religious knowledge, in the manner of Wolff, it gives up the infallibility of the former in order to protect the latter. (D)

[107] It is worth noting that Dilthey uses the concept "Historical School" in the broad sense that encompasses the entire development of the human sciences in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Baumgarten's Contribution to the Rise of the Historical School

Of course, this would not have been possible had Baumgarten's work not contained another element besides the logical thrust of the Wolffian School. This other element had been overshadowed by logical construction ever since the time of Scholasticism, especially in Germany. It had long been used to fill the big, boring drawers of the systems with an endless array of details. But now, even in Germany, scholarship was beginning to turn against systematics, its former mistress. This came about primarily through the influence exerted by the lack of concern for system of the English. Baumgarten's historic mission was to mediate this influence. He directed two projects that planted the seeds of the new aspirations. The first was the publication of *Reports from a Library in Halle*, which appeared in five volumes.[108] It described Baumgarten's own immense library, which abounded in original editions and rare works. One comes across reviews of old German writings and rare Italian literature. But its most influential feature was its relatively complete catalogue of the English literary exchange between the freethinkers and the Christian apologists. In fact, Baumgarten's opponents charged him with first really publicizing the English freethinkers in Germany. He
626 certainly had a fondness for English literature, which, though rare among the scholars of his day, was soon to gain such crucial significance for German literature. The second project involved critical historical research. It is well known that after the initial upsurge of interest in this field stemming from Leibniz, Pierre Bayle, and Thomasius, only sporadic efforts were made to develop such research. These efforts are associated with Gundling,[109] Mascov,[110] and Köhler.[111] In any case, Baumgarten's project of translating the English history of the world with a critical commentary provided a renewed stimulus. For years the sequels and supplements to this work, and some related projects, nurtured the field.[112] The book's unreliability made new investigations necessary, while other research was occasioned by disputed questions. Semler, Michaelis,

[108] This form was not unusual, because in the prevailing climate, scholarship was feeling its way along toward literary history. (D)

[109] Nicolaus Hieronymus Gundling (1671–1729), [author of] *Vollständige Historie der Gelehrtheit*. (H)

[110] Johann Jakob Mascov (1689–1761), [German historian and lawyer]. (H)

[111] Johann Bernhard Köhler (1742–1802), professor of oriental languages in Kiel and Göttingen. Studied Arabic with Reiske. (H)

[112] It is well known that this translation project played a decisive role in the education of Christian Gottlob Heyne [(1729–1817), German philologist]. (D)

Heilmann,[113] and a number of other scholars were thus stimulated by it. But it had its greatest impact on Baumgarten's own trusted disciples who were directly involved in the work itself. Even in those days the utility of such communal projects for the younger generation was apparent. The most important result of the project was its impact on Semler. It aroused the keen sense of history that he was to apply to Biblical studies. These projects had little effect on Baumgarten's own hermeneutics, however. He was too little practiced in exegesis for the new appetite for research in this field to modify his hermeneutics. Even so, traces of it appear in the third major part of his work discussed above, and they readily distinguish his hermeneutics from all its German predecesors.

3. The Grammatical, Historical, and Aesthetic Movements in Hermeneutics 627

A. Michaelis and Semler

Michaelis and Semler both received their first impetus from Baumgarten. The two men share the primary responsibility for the transformation of Biblical philology. Both came from Pietistic backgrounds. Nevertheless, one cannot ascribe any essential influence on their development to this source. Rather, both were primarily influenced by the Englishman, Lowth,[114] and the Periphrasts.[115] Semler was also substantially influenced by Wettstein, Bayle, and Clericus. This influence is highly remarkable.

We shall later have occasion to mention the influence of Guthry[116] and Gray,[117] as well as the influence of Wood[118] on Heyne.[119] Then, too, there is the profound influence exerted by Lowth and Percy's[120] collection on Herder's historical-aesthetic orientation. To say noth-

[113] Johann David Heilmann (1727–64), professor of theology in Göttingen. (H)

[114] Robert Lowth, *Praelectiones de sacra poesi Hebraeorum*, ed. J. D. Michaelis (1758–62) (1769–70), with annotations and supplements. (H)

[115] Paraphrase: a particular technique of Biblical exegesis.

[116] William Guthry, *A New Geographical, Historical, And Commercial, And Present State Of The Several Kingdoms Of The World* (London, 1774). (H)

[117] Thomas Gray (1716–71). (H)

[118] Anthony Wood (1632–95), [English antiquarian and historian, author of] *Athenae Oxoniensis* (1691–92). (D)

[119] Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729–1812), German classical philologist, edited works of Pindar, Homer, and Virgil.

[120] Thomas Percy (1729–1811), English poet. Dilthey refers to his ballad collection *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765).

ing of poetry, the impact of this kindred spirit was far more significant for scholarship than the influence of the French. Bayle is the sole exception; the keen feeling for scholarship he developed in the Netherlands was otherwise foreign to the French. This English influence on our scholarship, which cannot be stressed too strongly, was twofold. In the first place, the English were not governed by any system in their historical research. Accordingly, they encouraged people like Michaelis and Semler to break the bonds of Wolffian metaphysics and the dogmatism of orthodoxy. Second, their feeling for ethnology, coupled with the wealth of material that was readily available to them as a seafaring nation, furnished resources for historical insight that were nothing short of liberating. Wood's comparative study of the customs of Asia Minor, Lowth's efforts to trace certain Biblical passages back to oriental poetry, Herder's conception of the natural vitality of folksongs, the countless travel books from which commentators on the Old Testament recovered some elementary notion—however misguided at first—
628 of the conditions of the ancient Israelites—all this was a world new for German scholarship. From it we developed our historical perspective.

Johann David Michaelis: The Impact of His Trip to England on His Development

No one was more open to these new impressions than Michaelis. He was by nature drawn to geography and history in any case. While he was still a poor Pietistic student in Halle, he became an enthusiastic student of mathematical geography and appropriated everything available on history in the library, which never had a well-stocked collection in the field. Michaelis arrived in England full of the prejudices of the orientalists. In the Bodleian Library,[121] he was soon completely absorbed in the incomparable collection of Syriac and Hebrew manuscripts. He compared vowels and grammatical minutiae with a table drawn up by his father. After all, the belief was still prevalent in Germany that the texts uniformly employed the same consonants. He wrote:

> If I had taken any one of my friends with me to read one of the ordinary editions (which would have been difficult because only a few of them knew Hebrew), I would have brought something

[121] Thomas Bodley (1545–1613), the founder of the modern Oxford Library. It opened with 2,500 volumes in 1602; the first catalogue appeared in 1605; by the end of the seventeenth century, it had approximately 25,000 volumes. (H)

> more important back from Oxford. This would also have been the case had I been able to get to know Lowth personally.[122]

Indeed, it was Lowth who had counseled Kennicot[123] in a debate to make this very experiment with a number of passages.[124] Kennicot thereby became the leader in an enterprise that was being enthusiastically pursued in half of Europe, even though he was far less able than Michaelis. Meanwhile, Michaelis did bring something else back with him: a sharp eye for historical statistics and a broad interest in mathematical geography, which were to open up a new perspective on the conditions in ancient Israel. His historical virtuosity now produced a very fruitful relation to new ideas. Ancient history, precise geographical knowledge, ethnology, comparative studies of Semitic languages, training in classical philology—all played their part in creating the new historical perspective that governs his *Mosaisches Recht* (Mosaic Law)[125] and his study of the "Völkertafel" (The List of Nations, Genesis 10).

Michaelis's Position on Exegesis and Hermeneutics: Paving the Way For a Unified Intuition of the Foundation of a Work. Two tendencies of historical intuition appear in both these works and also in his work as a whole. One, stemming from the Dutch School, is an effort to get at the character of a nation and the essence of language by linguistic comparison. The other concentrates on achieving a realistic consideration of the people of Israel, who had been viewed for so long solely from a theological perspective. Such a consideration includes a sense of the land and its geographical features, of the laws and customs, and of the available literature—in short, of the concrete circumstances. Here the English writings, particularly Lowth's, exerted their influence, primarily on the literary and aesthetic realm, just as Montesquieu exerted his on the political side. 629

These efforts were of signal importance for hermeneutics. The sense of the historical unity of language, history, literature, law, and so on, on which the very possibility of hermeneutics rests, was first propounded scientifically by Michaelis on the basis of his efforts

[122] Johann David Michaelis, *Lebensbeschreibung von ihm selbst abgefaßt*, Rinteln (Leipzig, 1793), p. 35. (H)

[123] Benjamin Kennicot (1718–83), English theologian, *Vetus Testamentum Hebraicum cum variis lectionibus*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1776–80). (H)

[124] Michaelis, *Lebensbeschreibung*, pp. 32–36. (H)

[125] Michaelis, *Gründliche Erklärung des mosaischen Rechts* (1770–75). (D)

to develop these connections in a single field. It was the biggest step since Leibniz in the direction of a scientific foundation for hermeneutics!

Michaelis himself began to transfer the method that was developed for the Old Testament to the New. It is worth noting that this kind of transfer always appears in the most important periods in the history of exegesis and hermeneutics. His translation, annotated for the layman, was also the first attempt to popularize interpretation. Incidentally, Lessing suggested the project to him in a conversation. Michaelis's commentary is characteristic of a purely historical interest in Scripture, which was however still everywhere bound to an apologetic form. But this very form enables us to see how historical *explanation* by its nature inevitably lowers Scripture to the level of the petty motives inherent in the attempt to explain and defend.

At any rate, Michaelis transformed exegetical procedure into something totally different: He paved the way for the first combination of the disparate elements of language, law, literature, and the like, on which a scientific hermeneutics must rest. But since his all-encompassing desire to know inclined more to breadth than to depth, historical interpretation remained tied to dogmatic interpretation throughout. As a result, he failed to challenge the presuppositions of the old hermeneutics, which were tied to the concept of the canon.

630 *Johann Salomo Semler*

It is the enduring merit of J. S. Semler to have taken the biggest strides toward a scientific conception of Scripture during the period between Leibniz and Kant. Unfortunately, his scientific investigations have been lumped together with the superficial neology of the 1780s. Semler's works are no longer read, not just because they are badly written and pedantic, but also because they sprang entirely from the theological climate of their time [and thus] everything they contain has [supposedly] already had its impact. But someday a true history of the sciences will rescue Semler's memory from such distortions—just recently another such distortion was put forward.[126]

As far as our discipline is concerned, it fell to this man to break through the systematizing, logical methodology inherited from the old hermeneutics by means of historical research that was free of such systematic concerns.

[126] Dilthey is probably referring to H. Schmid's presentation of Semler's theology (Nördlingen, 1858). See also the assessment of Semler by F. C. Baur in *Die Epochen der kirchlichen Geschichtsschreibung* (Tübingen, 1852). (H)

Semler's Scientific Orientation. We have shown how the old hermeneutics was based on the principles of the inspiration, unity, and intelligibility of Holy Scripture, which Baumgarten straight forwardly called dogmatic lemmata (*Hermeneutik*, p. 6); and how, further, as a consequence of these principles, the explanation of any given passage is based on all the other passages belonging to the same topic. Thereby the inner coherence of the passages in question is lost and only the coherence of the dogmatic topics remains. Such was the method Semler inherited. On the other hand, he found in Baumgarten support for a research instinct that was associated with the current passion for book learning, and sought to ascertain the causes of literary phenomena, opinions, and ideas. By the time he left the university, Semler's intellectual outlook was fully formed: He was very well read, a virtuoso in history, gifted with a keen sense for new combinations in all fields, indeed, even divinatory. He was also pedantic, but, nevertheless, impatiently groping for something. Even though he shared lodgings with Baumgarten, he was incapable of listening to his lectures regularly. He soon fell into a vague skepticism as a natural consequence of being bombarded by the many contradictory opinions of the theologians of all the ages. He was seized by a restlessness that drove him to explore the nooks and crannies of the old system in a hasty and desultory way without being able to command a calm view of the whole edifice. His mentors were the foreigners whose works he became acquainted with through Baumgarten or snapped up at book auctions. He was very impressed by Bayle, who, 631
next to Leibniz, was his most important predecessor in historical criticism. Even as a student, he used Bayle's *Dictionary* for his reviews in Baumgarten's *Reports from a Library in Halle*, the project that first set him on the road toward historical scholarship, along with Heilmann and some others. In 1748 he published a sample of improvements to the *Dictionary*,[127] just as Lessing would later do for Jöcher's lexicon,[128] and excerpts from rare works by Giordano Bruno and Campanella. He made long excerpts from the *Journal des savants*[129] and from the *Histoire de la republique des lettres*.[130] He knew Clericus and Richard Simon thoroughly.[131] He says:

[127] Joh. S. Semler, *Lebensbeschreibung von ihm selbst abgefaßt*, pt. I, pp. 114–15. (D)

[128] Lessing, *Kritik des Jöcherschen Gelehrtenlexikons* (1752). (H)

[129] *Journal des savants* (Paris, 1665ff.). (H)

[130] *Histoire critique de la republique des lettres*, 15 vols. (Utrecht and Amsterdam, 1712–18). (H)

[131] In the excerpts from his studies that appear in his autobiography, he first mentions foreigners as his teachers. (D)

> Much should have become offensive to me after I became acquainted with the freedom of observation and independent research of Walton,[132] Simon, Isaac Vossius,[133] and Clericus, which contrasts with the approach of the German scholars, who, for the sake of greater certitude and for religious purposes, were willing to remain in deliberate ignorance and to perpetuate it.[134]

It is noteworthy that during this first period of his studies, he wrote philological articles[135] and produced a number of historical monographs, which were occasioned by his participation in Baumgarten's project, in addition to his studies of theological literature. By the time he left the university, he was completely caught up in the contemporary interest in encyclopedic historical learning. He ranged over the whole realm of historical scholarship searching for a more accurate way to determine historical truth. A year in Altdorf forced him to concentrate his interests for the first time; it was a crucial time for him. While there, he put the knowledge that he had acquired piecemeal into historical perspective, specifically, the perspective of literary history. He lectured on both topics.[136] When he returned to Halle, Baumgarten turned the subject of historical theology over to him. His task, for which his whole life up to then had prepared him, was to introduce historical criticism into theology.

We must pass over Semler's contribution to the study of medieval sources and to a critical history of dogmatics. His hermeneutics was also epoch-making. It was based, of course, on the standpoint we have just described.

632 **Semler's Lectures on Hermeneutics During Baumgarten's Lifetime. His Use of the Prevailing Method of Organization. Expansion of the Historical and Critical Elements.** Semler's first lectures in Halle included not only church history and literary history, but also hermeneutics. In all three areas, he followed in Baumgarten's footsteps. Now Semler adopted an attitude toward Baumgarten's compendium from the very outset that sheds a great deal of light on the transformation of the discipline. He expresses it quite openly.[137] As a student, he had attended Baumgarten's lectures and had taken them down word for word, in the customary manner. He regarded

[132] *Journal des savants* (Paris, 1665ff.).
[133] Isaac Vossius (1618–88), Dutch scholar of chronology.
[134] Semler, *Lebensbeschreibung* (Halle, 1782), pt. II, p. 122. (D)
[135] *Miscellanearum lectionum* (Norimberg, 1748–49). (D)
[136] ⟨Semler lectured there on "Köhlers history of the Empire and . . . on Heumann's literary history."⟩ J. S. Semler, *Lebensbeschreibung*, pt. II, p. 164. (D)
[137] Semler, *Lebensbeschreibung*, pt. I, p. 208f., and pt. II, p. 145f. (D)

this book as the first scientific[138] work in hermeneutics. He was all the more impressed with it because he could follow its distinctions only with effort. He forced himself into the framework of this method; but even so, he obviously differed with it on two points. He expresses the first point as follows:

> It was necessary for me to spend a great deal of time arranging everything according to the accepted method of division that prevailed in Halle. It divided everything by using big numerals and small Latin, Greek, and even Hebrew letters, a procedure, certainly, in which ideas and concepts were neatly juxtaposed.[139]

But Semler could not convince himself "that there is a genuine historical basis for applying such methods to the writings of the New Testament."[140] [Second,] in contrast to this importation of Scholastic distinctions into the Biblical subject matter, he envisioned a method that would be rooted in the nature of the Scriptures themselves. Because the method of analysis seemed false, he proposed to lay greater emphasis on the critical and historical aspects of the inquiry. "What was best and most important for New Testament hermeneutics by my lights and knowledge was virtually relegated to the last place in this treatment, that is, to the ninth chapter under the heading of the hermeneutical tasks."[141] He was referring specifically to paragraphs 143 and 144, which were entitled "how is the correct way of reading to be tested?" and "how is the correct understanding to be found?" He would have preferred to deal with both these points earlier "not only because I had a much more exact and a rather complete knowledge of them, but also because I was quite intrigued by the idea that it might be the best way to clear away a great many prejudices and erroneous opinions that almost always led to confusing interpretation with the currently useful application."[142] Baumgarten himself, certainly, was still entangled in such prejudices. It was, after all, at his instigation that Semler had come forward with a defense of the authenticity[143] of I John 5:7 against the honorable Whiston.[144] But more generally, what was the state of

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[138] Dilthey notes that Semler tends to use the word *szientifisch* rather than *wissenschaftlich*. ⟨See *Lebensbeschreibung*, pt. II, p. 147.⟩

[139] Semler, *Lebensbeschreibung*, pt. II, p. 147. (H)

[140] Semler, *Lebensbeschreibung*, pt. II, p. 147. (H)

[141] Semler, *Lebensbeschreibung*, pt. II, p. 146. (D)

[142] Semler, *Lebensbeschreibung*, pt. II, p. 146f. (H)

[143] William Whiston (1667–1752), [English] mathematician and theologian. (H)

[144] *Vindiciae contra Whistonum*. Compare what Semler himself said about this later. ⟨*Historische und kritische Sammlungen über die sogenannten Beweisstellen in der Dogmatik. Erstes Stück über I Joh. 5,7* (Halle and Helmstedt, 1764)⟩, pp. 8ff. (D)

the critical treatment of texts in Germany? It was still dominated by the principles of Buxtorf, Wasmuth,[145] and Danz;[146] "everything was still imbued with a divine air and origin, even the textual variations of the printed Bible." Hiller,[147] whose *Arcanum* Semler "owned as a schoolboy, had confirmed a new hypothesis, to the effect that the Holy Spirit had allowed Ezra, under the names of Kethibh and Qere, to make one more revision and arrange the texts in their present form."[148] Germans simply did not know how to approach manuscripts. So it was something of an event when Semler got hold of a copy of "the immortal Breitinger's edition"[149] of the Septuagint.

Semler's Hermeneutical System. It took a while for Semler to venture from these outer defenses into the well-fortified citadel of the old hermeneutics itself. As long as Baumgarten was alive, he stuck to the latter's textbook and lectured in the traditional way, until his ideas had solidified. In this respect, he was similar to Kant. It was not until 1757 that Semler came forward with his own distinctive hermeneutical views. By 1760 he had worked out his theological position.

The Contrast between the Two Basic Views. On the basis of the two points we have used to distinguish Semler from his predecessors in hermeneutics, namely, by his aversion to the dominant systematizing and his emphasis on historical and critical exegesis, he ex-
634 panded the scope of hermeneutics. His comment on the old hermeneutics is incisive: "The idea occurred to me [more than once] that theological squabbling between the Protestant and Roman Catholic scholars, [who even differed among themselves] over Holy Writ, had persisted far too long. As a consequence, it had prevented us from gradually collecting independent ideas about the history of the Bible as a book and as a literary work."[150] Here he puts his finger on

[145] Matthias Wasmuth (1625–1752), German orientalist and theologian, author of *Pro hebraeo textu vindiciarum anti Capell—Waltonianarum pars tertia sive anti Conringius apologeticus* (Kiliae, 1669). (H)

[146] Andreas Danz (1654–1727), [German orientalist and theologian, author of] *Nucifragibulum, Sanctam Scripturae V. T. linguam ebraicam enucleans* (1686). (H)

[147] Matthaeus Hiller [(1646–1725), German theologian and Hebrew scholar, author of] *De arcano Kethib et Keri*, libri II. *Pro vindicanda S. codiciis Hebraei integritate etc. contra L. Capellum, Is. Vossium, Waltonum etc.* (Tübingen, 1692). (D)

[148] Semler, *Lebensbeschreibung*, pt. II, p. 121. (H)

[149] Semler, *Lebensbeschreibung*, pt. II, p. 128; compare Johann Jakob Breitinger, *Septuaginta-Ausgabe* (Zurich, 1730–32). (H)

[150] Semler, *Lebensbeschreibung*, pt. II, p. 122f. (H)

the strongest motive underlying the doctrines of the affections and unity of Scripture, which had interfered with correct exegesis for so long. Similarly, he knew how to clearly grasp the contrast between the two basic views. As he puts it:

> The theological or dogmatic writers adhered to an approach that tended, by sheer assertion, to transform all the books of the Bible . . . into a whole whose parts were more or less on an equal footing, and then to treat them exclusively as such a whole; moreover, they imposed the same obligations on all Christians and readers toward these so-called Scriptural revelations. For my part, I was unable to convince myself that these books, which were initially meant to be so many separate ways of furthering the diverse purposes of the various early churches, could really have acquired ex post facto the character imputed to them. Nor could I believe that they could be just as easily applied in an entirely different setting without any distinction among such diverse contemporaries, readers, and teachers; much less that they ought to be applied in such a manner.[151]

The Dissolution of the Unity of the Canon. Semler's attitude toward the canon epitomizes his work with Biblical writings. One sees how closely his major work[152] is connected with his hermeneutical labors. The basic idea running through all his work in this field is to dissolve the traditional conception of the canon as a single work transcending time, in favor of an individual approach that relates the Scriptures to their own time and modes of thought. What Turretini had fruitlessly called for in his own day, namely, to subject the Bible to the same principles of exegesis that apply to all other writings, was now implemented in Semler's historical investigations of the formation of the canon. At long last, the ground was prepared for true exegesis. Genuine historical and philological understanding cannot begin until Biblical writings are approached individually. Even though it would later prove necessary to rehabilitate the idea that these writings form an inner nexus, their prior separation was 635
prerequisite for the rise of modern exegesis and hermeneutics.

The Implications of the New Conception: How the Scriptures[153] *Are Bound to Time and Place.* The task of hermeneutics now devolved upon understanding particular Scriptures in their local settings.

[151] Semler, *Lebensbeschreibung*, pt. II, p. 150. (H)
[152] Semler, *Abhandlung von freier Untersuchung des Kanon I–IV* (1771–75). (D)
[153] Reading *hermeneutischen Schriften* as *biblischen Schriften*.

> Because the individual books (of the New Testament) were occasioned by specific, localized, historical situations, and their first readers found themselves in diverse circumstances, it follows that both the content and the form in which it is clothed were composed under these limitations to varying degrees.[154] . . . These writings display variations in content that correspond to the varying abilities of the first disciples.[155]

As a result, it becomes the purpose of exegesis to pursue the time-bound features of the individual Scriptures. "In all the writings that comprise the so-called canon there are, [quite certainly] passages, parts of speech, and compositions that have faded with the passing of that time, because they refer to circumstances that vanished with the passing of their readers and listeners."[156] From this exegetical standpoint, Semler went on to derive everything except the ethical content from external influences. When pushed to its logical conclusion, such an approach was bound to apply its historical category of the temporal and local conditions to the very heart of the Scriptures. Consequently, the inner unity and organization of the works, which Baumgarten's school had taken for granted, now vanished in the face of the new outlook. Their components were to be constructed by purely external means. Their being together remained contingent.

Despite its mechanical aspects, there is something great and comprehensive about this notion. The kind of geographical perspective that was so much in favor at the time enables Semler to behold the diversity of human opinions. "The moral world can be divided up into very different climates or according to unalterable influences just as surely as a location on the globe will account for variations in physical products."[157] Semler invites comparison with Ferdinand Christian Baur, who currently heads the critical school. Not only did both men share a talent for founding schools, but both also read history as a conflict between opposing parties. Semler was, for example, the first to introduce the conflict between Judaic Christianity and the more independent Christians into the history of the canon and of dogma. He made three attempts to develop the implications
636 of his standpoint for hermeneutics. But in none of them did he pro-

[154] Semler, *Letztes Glaubensbekenntnis über natürliche und christliche Religion*, ed. C. G. Schutz (Königsberg, 1792), pp. 35, 38. (D)

[155] Semler, *Letztes Glaubensbekenntnis*, p. 38. (D)

[156] Semler, *Von freier Untersuchung des Kanon*, I, p. 42. (D)

[157] Semler, *Letztes Glaubensbekenntnis*, p. 130. (H)

pose to establish a thoroughgoing system. Rather, because his method of interpretation was guided by a very general level of historical understanding, and lacked the precision of Ernesti's school, Semler was given to hasty conjectures. His hermeneutics remained, accordingly, in a fragmentary state with no precise organization.

The Treatise on the Demonic as a Point of Departure for the Hermeneutical Task. The clarion call of the historical movement was sounded by Semler's *Commentatio de daemoniacis quorum in Novo Testamento fit mentio* (Commentary on the Demoniacs Mentioned in the New Testament) (Halle, 1760). It starts with the widespread use of the term "demonic" among other nations. Why, then, should the term be connected to a special, supernatural concept in the New Testament alone? On the contrary, the Bible was merely adopting the prevailing view of this illness. Such an explanation was by no means new. Wettstein had already suggested it in his *Prologue* (1730) and in his commentary (1751).[158] And an English doctor, Richard Mead, had claimed that demoniacs were epileptics.[159] But because Semler's presentation of the issue was immediately followed by a discussion of its supporting general principles in the first part of his *Vorbereitung zur theologischen Hermeneutik* (Propaedeutics to Theological Hermeneutics), which appeared in the same year, and because he undertook to reply to the published objections in the second edition, a storm of controversy erupted over these questions. Even Ernesti found himself in opposition to Semler. The controversy was quite similar to the one evoked by *The Life of Jesus* in our own time.

Semler's "Vorbereitung zur theologischen Hermeneutik" *as the Major Work of the Historical School of Hermeneutics.* This book is the principal work of the historical school of interpretation, even though it was only preparatory. The formal task of this discipline, as this work itself conceived it, was to remain unfulfilled until Schleiermacher. That task is to derive the hermeneutical rules from each other and thus make scientific knowledge possible. Semler's *Vorbe-*

[158] Johann Jakob Wettstein 1713: *De variis lectionibus N. T.*, 1730: *Prolegomena ad N. T. graeci editionem* (Amsterdam), 1751–52: *Novum Testamentum [graecum editionis receptae cum lectionibus variantibus codicum mss., editionum aliarum, versionum et patrum nec non commentario pleniore ex scriptoribus veteribus hebraeis]* (Amsterdam). (H)

[159] Richard Mead (1673–1754), *Media sacra, sive de mortis insignoribus, qui in bibliis memorantur, commentarius* (London, 1749), (English trans.: London, 1755). (H)

reitung contained only some contributions toward its solution, and
637 to be sure in an unruly way because all his new and powerful historical and exegetical insights were bubbling to the surface here for the first time. In actuality, only a few, exceedingly simple ideas underlay this ferment. Indeed, these decades were characterized by indefatigable repetition of ideas formulated once and for all. Some moderns are inclined to make fun of them—enchanted, as they are, by the wealth of ideas that has since been accumulated in philosophy, literature, and history. This repetitiousness was, however, closely connected with the greatest achievement of the period: a relentless consistency in working out the implications of these fixed ideas.

The Fundamental Ideas of This School: Semler's Historical Account of the Preceding Modes of Interpretation. Semler's immediate concern is to explain the preceding approaches to interpretation. He labels the first approach as that of *spiritual and moral interpretation*. By failing to distinguish between exegesis and the customary use of the Bible, this approach imported ideas into a passage that apply only to the changeable state of mind of a few people. A second approach is that of *traditional interpretation*. Semler astutely observes that "most of the earlier Christian interpretations are actually a history, that is, ideas about Biblical passages that are faithfully—perhaps even slavishly and anxiously—handed down because this or that teacher or respected man had chanced to communicate them in accordance with his circumstances and the prevailing climate of opinion."[160] Because all dogmatics had to appear as anchored in exegesis, one proceeded, conveniently enough, to base exegesis on dogmatics.[161] A third approach is that of *allegorical interpretation*. Following the prevailing custom, Semler invokes the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, and the entire Orient to explain how the Jews hit upon the idea of using allegorical interpretation to harmonize their ancient Scriptures with the new doctrines and innovations they learned from the sages of other peoples. Indeed, he calls allegory "the remnant of the most ancient mode of representation"[162] that is also present in metaphors and tropes—a position reminiscent of that developed in Vico's *New Science*. ⟨According to this approach⟩ Christ followed Jewish custom, but also enriched a number of Biblical passages with new meanings; and the apostles followed the same practice.[163]

[160] Semler, *Vorbereitung zur theologischen Hermeneutik*, I, p. 9. (D)
[161] See Semler, *Vorbereitung*. (H)
[162] Semler, *Vorbereitung*, I, p. 35. (H)
[163] See Semler, *Vorbereitung*, I, p. 69. (H)

The New Principle of Historical Interpretation. We move now 638
from the history of interpretation, which Semler dealt with in monographs such as the one on Origen,[164] to the actual founding of the new method of historical interpretation. "They (the disciples), as well as Jesus himself, were hardly destined to teach a more enlightened psychology or pneumatology, any more than they offer the paradigm of an exact or beautiful and perfect discourse or speech about familiar natural objects."[165] "It (inspiration) is of use only to distinguish what is important in events: in the specific case of Jesus, his sayings and teachings, that is, those things that unite Him with God."[166] Thus the Holy Scriptures contain "a connection between so-called natural, human knowledge [and opinions] and a number of new, revealed [doctrines and historically important] truths [that arose at that time]."[167] But where are the boundaries between these components of the books of the Bible? "He (Christ) did not refute any of those ⟨remaining⟩ ideas and opinions that were not germane to his purpose and did not actually interfere with them, any more than he proposed to offer an encyclopedia of all true knowledge." The controlling purpose was "the true service of God."[168] We can now see that at the very core of Semler's conception of interpretation subjectivity is given free rein and left with the task of drawing the boundaries of the true service of God.

Thus, Semler fails in his task. He had seriously intended to separate the religious element in Scripture from ⟨extraneous⟩ opinions by means of historical interpretation. One reason for his failure is that at this juncture, the historian requires a feeling for the power of the unique and a sense for inner connections among ideas. Semler was, by nature, too impatient to trace the tortuous path of a literary product in intricate detail. His sense for inner form was as little developed as his own writing style, which was unmatched even at that time.

Laying Down Positive Rules and the Form of Hermeneutics. Semler summarizes his positive rules as follows:

> The most important prerequisite for hermeneutical proficiency is
> not only to possess a thorough command of Biblical usage, but 639
> also to be able to visualize and distinguish the historical circum-

[164] See Semler, *Vorbereitung*, §§14–15, pp. 94–131. (D)

[165] ⟨Semler, *Vorbereitung*, p. 79⟩, and even more clearly in Semler's *Neuer Versuch, die gemeinnützige Auslegung und Anwendung des Neuen Testaments zu befördern* (Halle, 1786), pp. 292, 295. (D)

[166] Semler, *Vorbereitung*, I, p. 82. (H)

[167] Semler, *Vorbereitung*, p. 79. (H)

[168] Semler, *Vorbereitung*, p. 83. (H)

> stances of Biblical speech; moreover one must be able to discuss these matters now in a way that fits our changing times and human circumstances. . . . One can reduce all the rest of hermeneutics to these two points.[169]

However, the form of hermeneutics still needs to be worked out more fully. According to Semler, "Specific, isolated canons and rules are appropriate solely as an aid to memory. Because they do not carry in themselves any restrictions on the range of their application, their use is much more difficult and uncertain."[170] Scientific knowledge is possible only to the extent "that the hermeneutical rules are derived from each other."[171] He explains the first point in more detail. One should begin with idioms, sentence structure, and frequently used words. Next, one should compare all the expressions whose similarity or close kinship has been noticed; it is especially important to examine the similarities and differences of subjects and predicates as well as their immediate contexts. Then one should pick out the major concepts from among the various meanings. He illustrates this by comparing the Gnostic heresy of Josephus and the Apocrypha.[172]

Semler's Influence on Hermeneutics. Even though Semler never got beyond these initial efforts in hermeneutics, we certainly cannot infer from this that his impact was merely negative. Although he destroyed the complicated older method that viewed exegesis as the organ of dogmatics, his motives were positive: to clear the way for historical interpretation. Of course he never quite managed to elevate this to a well-developed methodology. In fact, there is something inherently unmethodical about ⟨his approach⟩. For if the interpreter wishes to give systematic form to hermeneutics, he must focus on some sort of unity, be it the unity of a system, or of an author, or of historical development. Semler did have a notion of such a unity through the main dynamic directions of a work, but he was never able to organize them into any coherent process. So, for him, historical unity always collapsed into an agglomeration of so many logical and temporal unities.

[169] Semler, *Vorbereitung*, p. 160f. (H)

[170] Semler, *Vorbereitung*, p. 163. (H)

[171] Semler, *Vorbereitung*, p. 162. (H)

[172] See Semler's *Neuer Versuch*, p. 249f. Only the last part of this work contains hermeneutical theses, and they are presented piecemeal. The middle part deals with the history of hermeneutics. Semler's effort in 1788 to revise ecclesiastical hermeneutics is also predominantly historical; as far as our interests go, only the clearer account of the conflict in very early Christianity between "Judaizing Christians" and the Pauline and Johannine traditions is worth mentioning. (D)

B. Ernesti and Keil: Historical and Grammatical Interpretation 640

The other trend of the time on which progress in hermeneutics rested was grammatical interpretation. Schleiermacher used to call it the hermeneutics of observation. When we compare it to the mainstream of historical interpretation and hermeneutics, which affected all of the contemporary sciences, Ernesti's school must seem rather plain and simple. But simplicity is also the hallmark of exacting, purely philological exegesis. Thus Bengel,[173] for example, took a simple but significant step forward in Biblical criticism when he classified the New Testament manuscripts according to major recensions. By the same token, Ernesti's effort to base hermeneutics on linguistic usage was an equally simple and equally significant advance.

Johann August Ernesti's Scientific Position

Ernesti's immediate contribution was to win recognition for the results of Dutch philology in Germany, where philology had up until then been in the hands of the theologians. He and Gesner[174] were now the first to succeed in placing philology on a more independent footing by furnishing a scientific underpinning for it in grammar. The third important philologist of the period, the noble Reiske,[175] who was decidedly superior to Ernesti as a Greek scholar, was held back by an inferior position at Leipzig. He did not even succeed in getting his work published, let alone establish a philological school. While Gesner, following the approach of the Göttingen School, was seeking the essence of philology in connecting linguistic and factual knowledge, the Dutch School, with whom Ernesti carried on a lively correspondence through Ruhnken,[176] was engaged in linking the work of accumulating facts, intricate criticism, and etymological comparisons into a science of comparative linguistics. Meanwhile, Ernesti's school concentrated exclusively on the linguistic usage of authors as the basis for interpretation. As his school spread throughout Germany, Ernesti's approach was preparing the ground for the rise of German philology. Wherever his young disciples went, their grammatical knowledge reinvigorated school teaching. Even Heyne,

[173] Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687–1752), German theologian.

[174] Johann Matthias Gesner (1691–1761), [German pedagogue and philologist]. (H)

[175] Johann Jakob Reiske (1716–74), [German philologist of Arabic and Hebraic languages]. (H)

[176] David Ruhnken(ius) (1723–98), [Dutch professor of history and rhetoric] 1. *D. Ruhnken et J. A. Ernesti, Elogia T. Hemsterhusii et J. M. Gesneri* (Halle, 1787); 2. *Opuscula . . . Oratoria, philologica, critica* (Leipzig, 1807). (H)

who was to be responsible for the next advance in philology, admitted that his first conception of grammatical interpretation had come
641 from a private tutorial session with Ernesti. So when this man turned his attention to New Testament exegesis and hermeneutics, he was bound to have a decisive impact.

Linguistic Usage. As early as 1745 Ernesti had laid the groundwork for a new hermeneutics of the New Testament in several monographs on hermeneutics and its history. In 1759 he joined the theological faculty [at Leipzig]. Two years later he published his *Institutio interpretis*,[177] which became the classical work in New Testament hermeneutics for the next half century. The work adopted the generally prevalent view of language: Words have been assigned their meanings by deliberate decision;[178] in order to prevent an endless proliferation of words, several meanings often came to be attached to the same term.[179] And while the number of objects [of reference] increased with the rising level of culture, only the languages of the most cultivated peoples kept pace to any corresponding degree.[180] As a rule, metaphorical meanings were assigned to the available stock of words.[181] Now every language that is fully developed in this way is comprised of different linguistic spheres. The difference among languages, however—and here the memory of an acute observation by Locke raises him above his usual standpoint[182]—is due not only to the diversity in outlook among different nations, but also to original variations in mentality whereby different peoples were affected by objects in idiosyncratic ways and formed their own abstractions. In a more restricted sphere, linguistic usage depends upon the age, the religion, the school, and the political conditions, all of which conspire to stamp it with a unique character.[183] The narrowest sphere of usage is represented by the individual author; for the individuality of every author adds some-

[177] [Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis novi testamenti*] (Leipzig, 1761). (D)

[178] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, p. 8: ⟨"Words do not carry their meanings in themselves . . . but through human institutions and custom."⟩ (D)

[179] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, p. 8. (D)

[180] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, p. 17. (D)

[181] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, p. 16. (D)

[182] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, p. 23, see Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, III, 5, 6. (D)

[183] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, p. 11: ⟨"Many things determine usage: time, religion, sect, discipline, the common life, in short, the constitution of society. These things virtually determine the character of the speech that each writer employs in his age. For all of them contribute to the origin and variation of usage. Often the same

thing or other to the common usage.[184] Linguistic usage is the basis of interpretation, for the aim of interpretation is to understand every passage of an author grammatically. All factual knowledge, 642
investigation of purposes, and so on, are merely aids to an interpretation that concentrates on usage.

The Technique of This Method of Interpretation. The technique of this method is described by Ernesti himself. The key is to read an author several times in quick succession in order to ascertain his linguistic usage. In this way, one determines the range of meaning for individual words. In doubtful passages the meaning may be confirmed by appealing to the remaining ones; in older passages one can survey the overall range of meanings through comparison. Even though Ernesti does take the grammatical aspects of usage into account, his approach is nevertheless dominated by a pronounced emphasis on lexical questions.

> Observing usage is the proper task of the grammarian, whose art consists primarily of carefully investigating what every word by a particular author, in a particular period, ultimately means in a particular form of speech and a particular discipline.[185]

Ernesti then constructs his method of hermeneutics from this.[186] It is based exclusively on these [grammatical and lexical] observations. From them, one arrives at decrees, that is, general propositions about the nature of meaning, words, and interpretation. These, in turn, yield hermeneutical rules. Ernesti also polemicizes against using dialectical subtleties as a basis for hermeneutics.[187] Rather, the formal principle of his hermeneutics lies in the consistent pursuit of a purely empirical standpoint in grammar and lexicography. The works emanating from Ernesti's school also reflect this principle. Fischer, in particular, developed a lexicography of the New Testament and also partially its grammar, by adopting Ernesti's approach.[188] The inherent deficiencies of the method are obvious: It is

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word is used in one way in common life, in another in religion, and in yet another in philosophical writing, and these different usages are not in accord with each other."⟩ (D)

[184] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, p. 27: "whence arise what we call the peculiarities of authors." (D)

[185] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, p. 11. (D)

[186] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, p. 26. (D)

[187] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*. ⟨"not by dialectical arguments."⟩ (D)

[188] *Animadversionum ad Jac. Velleri Grammaticam Graecam. Autore Joh. Frider. Fischero* (Lips., 1798 sq.). (D)

a pure empiricism that does not get beyond the category of substitution in the realm of grammar, nor the category of relation in lexicography. The abstract may be substituted for the concrete at will, composites for simples, and one grammatical mood may be con-
643 fused for another by the author. Such substitution neglects essential aspects of individual usage. In his eagerness to reduce the theological emphases that quibbled about every syllable, Ernesti vastly exaggerated the synonomy of composite verbs and simple verbs. To move beyond this point, hermeneutics would require a much better grounding of grammar. Reitz[189] and Gottfried Hermann[190] made the first effort to provide it.

The Genesis of Hermeneutical Rules according to Ernesti's Principles. Two additional features of Ernesti's hermeneutics deserve mention. First, it is based on generalizations derived from observation. The starting point of these generalizations is the abstract concept of sense underlying the grammatical approach. Second, these general principles, the observations from which they are derived, and the rules that follow from them are all clearly distinguished from one another. Ernesti values these distinctions highly because they serve to demonstrate exegetical procedures. In his own explanation of the plan of his *Institutio interpretis* in his theological journal,[191] he argues that in ordinary hermeneutics, canons are confounded with observations. As a result, observations about particular words are found right in the midst of rules; moreover, such observations are themselves often products of insufficient observation and tend to be presented without proof. The correct procedure for developing hermeneutics is, rather, to collect observations that make clear "the customary usage of languages and the peculiarities of the one in which the book is written," insofar as such customary usage may have a bearing on exegesis.[192] Rules are then developed out of these observations. The important thing is to formulate them with sufficient precision to make their application easy.[193]

[189] Friedrich W. Reitz (1733–90), [German philologist.] *De prosodiae graecae accentus inclinatione* (Leipzig, 1791); and *Chrestomathia graeca poetica et prosaica* (Leipzig, 1780). (H)

[190] Johann G. Hermann (1772–1848), [German philologist.] (H)

[191] *Neue theologische Bibliothek*, III 1, pp. 11–40 (Leipzig, 1762). (D)

[192] *Neue theologische Bibliothek*, III 1, p. 12. (H)

[193] See *Neue theologische Bibliothek*, III 1, p. 12. (H)

The organization of hermeneutics into its parts now follows from this. The first part—call it hermeneutics in the narrow sense—contains two divisions. One deals with precepts, the other with rules. The precepts, which are fundamental, are arrived at by abstraction from the observations. They deal with the ultimate concepts of hermeneutics: meaningful words, parts of speech, and usage. In the part that gives rules, on the other hand, hermeneutical operations are described in specific detail proceeding from the more abstract to the more concrete.

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The Relationship of This Compendium of Rules to the New Testament. How, then, is New Testament interpretation related to this first general part of Ernesti's work? He subordinates it entirely to the precepts that we have just sketched. Although he was often led to compromise with orthodoxy, he refused to bargain with it in this case. He more or less banished allegorical interpretation from the realm of grammatical interpretation, in order to keep the path clear for the latter. To this end, he employs a distinction between the sense of words (*sensus verborum*) and the sense of things (*sensus rerum*), a distinction that had already been made in antiquity.[194] At the same time, he eliminates the similarity between grammatical explication and explication based on parallels, by restricting the latter to the exegesis of passages whose grammar is doubtful. When confronted with a contradiction between different passages in secular writings, one should assume an error on the part of the author. In the case of Scripture, however, one should ascribe the difficulty to the weakness of one's own understanding.

The part of Ernesti's work that presents the precepts addresses the special exegesis of the New Testament only occasionally, and even then, with a polemical focus. The part that develops the rules, on the other hand, goes into more detail, because it marks the transition from the most general principles to concrete cases. Thus, as far as the treatment of sense is concerned, we may divide the work into two parts: a general one, and a section dealing with the New Testament. Tropes, emphases, and harmonies bring the general and special parts together.

The decisive importance of Ernesti's special hermeneutics rests on the way it applies his general perspective, which had already guided him, to a correct conception of the language of the New

[194] See Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, pt. I, sec. I, ch. 1, p. 9f. (D)

Testament. He subsumes it under the general category of the language of the Hellenistic period. His knowledge of classical Greek enables him to make an excellent judgment about its relationship to the Hebrew elements in the Hellenistic idiom:

> The speech of the New Testament may be classified as a mixture of pure Greek speech patterns and of words and expressions that refer mostly to Hebrew idioms; and it is evident to anyone who knows enough Greek that whoever claims that everything here is good Greek deserves to be pitied.[195]

The book's contribution to hermeneutics on points of detail, such as tropes, emphases, and the like, will be dealt with later in the comparative discussion. The second major division deals with hermeneutical aids and their uses; it is comprised of things that belong only in part to hermeneutics. For one thing, the very important discussion of historical interpretation, some of which had already appeared in the second section of chapter C,[196] is merely tacked on to the last section. Morus[197] already complained about the inadequacy
645 of this. For another, it contains a detailed assessment of earlier interpretation from the standpoint of grammatical exegesis. The remainder of it falls, at least in part, under the heading of criticism, but also belongs, in part, to the introduction. Still, the question remains whether some of what Schleiermacher excluded [from the subject matter of hermeneutics], for example, Ernesti's famous and stimulating chapter on the use of translations, should not be taken up again, as Lutz[198] has already done. The answer depends on how the introduction to the discipline is to be constructed. If, for example, it is to be a literary history of the New Testament, similar to the one Renn developed following Hupfeld's[199] suggestion, then a scientific discussion of these topics would fall within its purview, whereas hermeneutics can content itself with general suggestions about the usage of Jewish writers, translators, and so on.

Ernesti's School. Ernesti's school treated his *Institutio interpretis* as a classical work, and was very cautious in proposing modifications to it. Morus, for example, sought to give it a more conspicu-

[195] Ernesti, ⟨*Opuscula philologica critica* (Leiden, 1764)⟩ "De difficultate interpretationes grammaticae Novi Testamenti," §XII, ⟨p. 263f.⟩ (D)

[196] Ernesti, "De sensus reperiendi rationibus usus subsidiariis," p. 33f. (D)

[197] Samuel F. N. Morus (1736–92), German theologian, student of Ernesti.

[198] Johann Ludwig Lutz (1785–1844), professor of theology at Bern.

[199] Hermann C. K. F. Hupfeld (1796–1866), professor of oriental languages and theology at Marburg and Halle.

ous order without affecting the principle of division. Both he and Eichstädt[200] sensed the deficiencies of the discussion of historical interpretation. In their supplements they tried to combine Semler's approach and materials with Ernesti's. But in essentials they left the work intact. Their additions merely underscore the remarkable unity of scientific spirit that prevailed in this school.[201]

Actually, the very organization of Ernesti's work serves as a good illustration of the hermeneutical principles that were first articulated there. Its mode of presentation is relaxed; it displays an almost ostentatious indifference to the logical taxonomy that the old school had prized so highly; it confines itself to what is useful for grammatical interpretation alone, a restriction that borders on superficiality; finally, all this is put forward with the Ciceronian elegance that was so characteristic of Ernesti and his disciples. These, then, are the marks of a hermeneutics whose modest aim was to counter the earlier comprehensive systems with the demands of philological precision. Ernesti's lectures also reflected the same simple, largely suggestive style. One of his students described it: "The blessed Ernesti was accustomed to illuminating those authors whom he wished to discuss with brief commentary; and, for the most part, he merely pointed out the path to follow, instead of actually leading us down it."[202]

Karl August Keil: Historical and Grammatical Interpretation. A System of Rules as a Reconstruction of the Operations Themselves 646

The grammatical-historical approach to interpretation culminates in Keil's textbook. He finished the work, begun by Morus and Eichstädt, of integrating Ernesti's purely grammatical standpoint with Semler's approach, albeit in the spirit of the latter. In the *Institutio interpretis*, Ernesti had equated grammatical exegesis with historical interpretation[203] because it rests, like all history, on a knowledge of the facts.[204] While Eichstädt presented grammatical and histori-

[200] Heinrich K. A. Eichstädt (1772–1848), German philologian, student of Morus.

[201] The basic theses of this school, which placed so much emphasis on the concept of sense, are entirely responsible for the distinction between sense (*sensus*) and meaning (*significatio*), which Morus developed in his remarks and in a special treatise. It was instrumental in furthering this particular part of hermeneutics. (D)

[202] *Recitatio de D. Sam. Frid. Nathan Moro Habita a Christiano Daniele Beckio* (Lipsiae, 1792), p. 13. (D)

[203] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, p. 11: "Whence the literal sense is called the grammatical sense . . . but, by the same token, also the historical sense." (D)

[204] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, p. 11. (D)

cal interpretation as two quite different approaches, Keil did not share this view. Rather, he regarded interpretation as historical only in this sense: The thoughts of an author are facts; so understanding them is a historical task.[205] For this reason, one cannot saddle Keil with the kind of distinction between grammatical and historical interpretation that was imputed to him in the Stäudlin controversy.[206] On the contrary, he began with a conception of interpretation as a coherent and orderly series of operations. But he did not base this coherence on a factual unity such as the unity of language and thought. It consists, instead, of the coherence of a procedure. When Keil promised to give hermeneutics a scientific organization, he had in mind a historical-grammatical procedure that ascends from individual words to the parts of a work and the representations of the author. "I missed," he declares in his preface, "in the existing textbooks a genuine, scientific arrangement of the topics that ought to belong there, an arrangement that would take account of the variety of operations that occur in interpretation."[207] He stresses that the principle of classification in the earlier hermeneutics had consisted, for the most part, of the various aids to interpretation, and not the actual operations themselves. Perhaps the most important contribution of Keil's textbook lies in its conception of organization, for this conception completes the system of grammatical interpretation that had concentrated on re-creating exegetical procedure itself. Each section is devoted to a particular operation, and starts with the implicit direction or purpose that underlies this operation.

647 **The Form of a System of Rules.** There are several possibilities for solving the problem [of formulating rules], depending on the nature of particular passages. Each possibility is traced separately. Aids to interpretation, such as parallels and context, and the like, which earlier writers had dealt with separately now appear in various combinations as the means of responding to the needs of individual passages. Such a method inherently degenerates into a full-fledged formalism. Entire sections repeat the same aids over and over again in somewhat different contexts. For example, the section on recognizing the meaning of individual words, and so on, invokes context,

[205] K. A. G. Keil, *Lehrbuch der Hermeneutik des N. Testaments, nach Grundsätzen der grammatisch- historischen Interpretation* (Leipzig, 1810), preface, viii–x. (D)

[206] Carl Friedrich Stäudlin (1761–1826), professor of theology in Göttingen. For controversy, see n. 214.

[207] Keil, *Lehrbuch*, vii. (D)

parallels, and prior acquaintance with the ideas of the author. Thereby interpretation is reduced to calculation, and hermeneutics, even as it aims to describe living operations, becomes purely mechanical. Just as the peculiarity of the author tends to be ignored, so spontaneity and congeniality are not expected of the interpreter. What could pass unnoticed in Ernesti's freer and looser treatment of hermeneutics, namely, the lifelessness of a method that claims to recapture the free play of the spirit in an adequate form, is now exposed in its most naked and logical form. Keil's hermeneutics bears the same relation to the process of reproduction as the logic of the Wolffian School bears to the nature of thought.

Historical Interpretation and the Grammatical and Logical Context of Sentences. Keil's textbook goes beyond Ernesti on a second important point. As we noted, it supplements the hermeneutical operation, which the latter had confined to the grammatical, by appealing to logical context and to the ideas of an author. This is a return to the path of earlier hermeneutics, and away from the monolithic rigor of Ernesti. Keil's section on determining the logical context[208] leads straight back to the logical operations that Flacius had appropriated from Melanchthon's rhetoric. It constitutes substantial progress, however, because Keil wants to banish "the rules of technical logic and rhetoric"[209] from this procedure. The search for the logical context must proceed from the grammatical context. By following the author from sentence to sentence and by concentrating especially on the occasions for the transition from one 648
thought to another, the interpreter will grasp the intrinsic coherence of the work itself. Thus Keil points us to the totality of sentences that belong together. Once again, however, things become exceedingly mechanical as he attempts to classify the types of contexts. His classification is, nonetheless, far superior to the efforts of Flacius and Wolff in both its flexibility and its sense for what is individual. This concept of a totality of sentences that belong together is as far as he can get on the way to a logical context. The concepts of composition and of the intention of the whole, which Flacius already had possessed, are not mentioned. Indeed, they cannot be attained by calculation.

The other area in which Keil substantially expanded Ernesti's work is located in the section, "On correctly defining and elucidat-

[208] Keil, *Lehrbuch*, pt. I, ch. III, §2, pp. 60–81. (D)
[209] Keil, *Lehrbuch*, §64, p. 70. (H)

ing the respective content of a passage in accordance with the ideas of the author and his first readers."[210] The preceding section on the search for related circumstances is also found in Ernesti.[211] Here Keil merely repeats the old inherited categories that appeared in Ernesti's chapter on circumstances. But in the chapter under discussion, there is a summary of what was taken to be the essence of historical interpretation at the time: explaining individual passages by appealing to opinions that the author and his contemporaries might have expressed elsewhere. Keil reminds us that the ideas of the New Testament authors were diverse,[212] and he recommends comparing them with the writings of related contemporaries.[213] He also cites variations in individual writing style and character, which were already leading to the creation of a special hermeneutics for individual authors.

The Significance of Keil's Work in its Own Time. By embracing the aforementioned elements and by completely eliminating all alien material from the subject, Keil's textbook formulates a hermeneutics of grammatical-historical interpretation that is, in its own way, an admirably coherent whole. It also clearly exhibits the preferences and deficiencies of the period. It often happens that the culminating theory comes too late. By the time this long-awaited textbook finally appeared, Schleiermacher had already worked out his own system of hermeneutics in his lectures, and Ast's hermeneutics had already applied the basic tenets of the philosophy of identity concerning spirit and history to this discipline. This textbook had, then,
649 no real impact other than the value that may always be ascribed to the paradigmatic expression of a scientific orientation.[214]

C. The Göttingen School and Its Opponents: Eichhorn, Koppe, and Herder

Quite independently of the philosophical movement that originated with Kant, there arose within the historical approach itself an intensified scientific focus on the field of interpretation. It came from the Göttingen School. We venture to speak of such a school because the

[210] Keil, *Lehrbuch*, pt. I, ch. IV, pp. 98ff. (H)
[211] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, p. 33f. (D)
[212] Keil, *Lehrbuch*, p. 106. (D)
[213] Keil, *Lehrbuch*, p. 104. (D)
[214] Keil's earlier program was inaccessible to me. But from what I could glean from the exchanges in the *Analekten* of 1812 (I, 1) and the *Kritischen Journal* of 1814 (I, 4), as well as the announcement of Boehme's polemic in the *Analekten* of

University of Göttingen staked out a very definite direction from its very inception. Münchhausen[215] had declared that this university should not be dominated by the theological faculty. Even philosophy took a back seat. Instead, the new movement in the historical and literary disciplines found its true home there. Political conditions fostered a continuing relationship with England. Michaelis and Heyne were in close contact with German literature, particularly with Herder and Lessing. The leading figures of the university in addition to Gesner, that is, Michaelis and Heyne, both represented an interest in a universal-historical outlook. Just as Michaelis had introduced factual interpretation into Old Testament exegesis, Heyne did the same in philology. Eichhorn,[216] who started from Michaelis's position, combined Heyne's aesthetic sense with the former's historical perspective. His work both in history and exegesis embodies the general tenor of the university. Koppe, one of Heyne's favorite students, who tried to relate his works on exegesis back to Grotius, was unable to complete them. The synopsis of his hermeneutical principles that appears in the first volume of his commentary develops the same combination of grammatical and historical interpretation that is already to be found in Eichhorn's treatise. Herder, who came closer to true hermeneutics than anyone else before Schleiermacher, was in close touch with these two men. He, too, was first inspired by the Englishman, Lowth. However, his sense for the characteristic spirit of the Old Testament writings far 650
exceeded Lowth's. He was the first to direct interpretation to the totality of a work, to its inner spirit, and to the sphere from which it came forth. But he was not able to express this inner spirit except in the form of general aesthetic impressions. It would take a philosophical movement to truly master the concept of such a totality by means of an elaborate method of reconstruction. As Herder explains in his commentary on the New Testament,

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1816 (III, 2), this controversy did not produce any essential advance in hermeneutics, especially when we consider the state of the discipline at the time. For Stäudlin's objection to Keil that the interpreter ought to bring a religious interest to Scripture was certainly nothing new in Schleiermacher's circle, nor in the school of Fichte and Schelling, even when we except the approach that prevailed in Tübingen. In any case, it does not appear that Stäudlin succeeded in developing this view scientifically. (D)

[215] Hieronymus von Münchhausen (1680–1742), chancellor of the University of Göttingen.

[216] Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752–1827), German Protestant theologian, orientalist, and historian.

> I hurried [therefore] as fast as I could to the totality; but no one is more acutely aware than I am that all my elucidations and citations cling like dust to the sun, or clumps of earth to a body that should be light and simplicity itself. So forgive me, reader, and share my regret that I had to do it. But do not tarry among the rinds and husks, but hasten to the juice, the meaning, the truth.[217]

This is the hallmark of an aesthetic sensibility that grasps the whole in feeling, but finds itself incapable of reproducing it intelligibly, and which, accordingly, must settle for arousing a reproductive, emotional frame of mind in the reader. From this perspective, Herder distinguishes his own vague notion of the business of the interpreter from the work of Michaelis, whom he acknowledges only as a virtuoso in languages. "A virtuoso of language and an interpreter are two entirely different creatures, as we can see from the new breed of language virtuosos. They can understand the language, but an author not at all. They have no inkling of his plainest sense, let alone intricacies [of meaning]."[218] When later combined with the constructive method in philosophy, this congenial sensitivity of Herder would become the basis for a sound method of interpretation and a genuinely scientific hermeneutics.

651 ## 4. *The Origins in Kant of a Hermeneutical Method Aimed at the Unity of Scripture*

There is a famous section in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* that has been called a "powerful diversion" or "episode"[219] in the history of hermeneutical viewpoints.[220]

Kant and Semler

But that judgment is misleading. For one thing, scholars of the Enlightenment had already linked the religion of Jesus to moral improvement. For another, Semler had also drawn a distinction be-

[217] Johann G. Herder, *Sämtliche Werke, Zur Religion und Theologie* (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1829), pt. II, p. 22. (D)

[218] Herder, *Sämtliche Werke, Zur Religion und Theologie*, pt. 13, *Briefe, das Studium der Theologie betreffend*, First Letter, p. 16. See also Schleiermacher's discussion in *Sämtliche Werke* III, vol. 3, p. 375. (D)

[219] J. L. S. Lutz, *Biblische Hermeneutik* (1849), p. 149f. His account also contains other errors. (D)

[220] See the section on "Ecclesiastical Faith Has Pure Religious Faith as Its Highest Interpreter," in Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. T. M. Greene and Hoyt M. Hudson (New York and Evanston, 1960), pp. 100–105.

tween private (moral) religion and public statutory religion. He had pursued this distinction with a such a vengeance that it became monotonous even by the standards of that century. How much this view excluded from religion as accommodation, as ephemeral opinion of no relevance to morality! Kant seems, then, merely to be drawing its consequences in his principle that the historical system must be reduced without remainder to the moral system of reason, and that its legitimacy rests entirely on such a reduction. Certainly, anyone acquainted with the theological writings of the period will immediately recognize the various strands of thought that are woven into this principle.

Moral Idealism

Nevertheless, this view captures only one aspect of the significance of Kant's book. In actuality, the work is a decisive turning point in the conception of Scripture. Facts, dogmas, and articles of faith are nothing in themselves; they have significance only insofar as they manifest the moral-religious idea. When this principle is taken most seriously, then also the content of Scripture has no value except in this relation. Accordingly, it is the business of the teacher of religion to link every passage to the moral idea; indeed, such a link must be established. Nevertheless, as Kant proceeds to establish it, as the most powerful mind after Leibniz wrestles with the Bible, he also 652
comes to develop the first fundamentally new conception of it since the Reformation: an idealistic Biblical theology based on the contrast between radical evil and the holiness of the moral law. Now, once again, all Scripture will be explained as the expression of a single, omnipresent spirit pervading the whole. And this approach to exegesis, which treats Scripture as an organic totality springing from the unity of a single substance, constitutes a second view, equal in importance to the philological approach to individual writings. Kant, therefore, deserves an epoch-making place in the history of hermeneutics, not as the founder of the unhappily named "moralistic interpretation," but as the one who revitalized it.

The Contrast between Moral and Positive Religion

To explicate Kant's basic views on hermeneutics, it is essential to trace them out of his philosophy of religion for ourselves. For, although one can hardly express the major points more clearly than Kant does himself, there are also places where he is merely suggestive. To follow him here as well, one should bear in mind his theory

about the limits of knowledge. Otherwise, it will be hard to avoid the ubiquitous misunderstandings of exegesis that were linked to this question in the noisy polemics of the time.

It is well known, of course, that Kant found the basis for a positive knowledge of the supersensible in practical reason and its postulates. This implies, in turn, that religion should be grounded in [moral] practice. It is a great mystery that encompasses all other mysteries in a single formula:

> That, through the moral law, man is called to a good course of life; that, through unquenchable respect for this law lying in him, he finds in himself justification for confidence in this good spirit and for hope that, however it may come about, he will be able to satisfy this spirit; finally, that, comparing the last named expectation with the stern command of the law, he must continually test himself as though summoned before a judge—reason, heart, and conscience will teach this and urge its fulfillment. To demand that more than this be revealed to us is presumptuous, and were such a revelation to occur, it would not rightly be reckoned among man's universal needs.[221]

But the positive religions exist nonetheless, and they contain far more than this religion of reason. This is a problem similar to the one posed by the ideas of theoretical reason. And we see immediately that Kant's solution to that problem carries over to our field:

653 > Reason, conscious of her inability to satisfy her moral need, extends herself to high-flown ideas capable of supplying this lack without, however, appropriating these ideas as an extension of her domain. Reason does not dispute the possibility or the reality of the objects of these ideas; she simply cannot adopt them into her maxims of thought and action,[222]

as, indeed, she cannot adopt anything supernatural.

When we attribute a surrendering love, a self-sacrifice, to God, this is

> the schematism of analogy, with which (as a means of explanation) we cannot dispense. But to transform it into a schematism of objective determination (for the extension of our knowledge) is anthropomorphism that has, from the moral point of view (in religion) most injurious consequences.[223]

[221] *Ibid.*, p. 135.
[222] *Ibid.*, p. 47.
[223] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

Thus he accounts for the "visible representation (schema) of a god on earth." By the same token, in accordance with a psychological law, the religious mind transforms the intelligible moral antithesis of good and evil human dispositions into the antithesis of two kingdoms of good and evil. "Holy Scripture sets forth this intelligible moral relationship in the form of a narrative."[224] Christ becomes the personification "of the good principle, that is, of humanity in its moral perfection."[225]

The ideas of heaven and hell represent "the complete dissimilarity of the basic principles"[226] of good and evil. In the representation of an evil spirit the unfathomable nature of radical evil becomes visible.[227]

How the Fundamental Moral Outlook of Christianity Unifies Both while Appearing Solely in a Dogmatic Guise

It is apparent that interpretation must now set out in a new direction in light of these principles. Kant agrees, of course, with Semler in locating the value of Christianity exclusively in its moral element. But while Semler sought to explain away the positive surplus as an accretion of contemporary thought patterns, and so ended up juxtaposing it to the moral element without any natural connection, Kant transforms the surplus into the centerpiece of a cohesive explanation of the entire Scripture by deriving it from certain forms of representing moral ideas inherent in spirit. He explains the entire dogmatic content of Scripture partly as the representation of moral principles in the form of powers and persons external to man, and partly as a schematism of analogy deriving from the unity of the fundamental moral idea. Accordingly, moral religion is universally 654
present; but it is transformed, manifesting itself in the guise of positive religion. The fundamental moral idea can be grasped everywhere, indeed, it must be grasped, because it and it alone confers value on all religious forms.

One only needs to place these scattered and somewhat overshadowed discussions in the foreground to recognize that this work lays the groundwork for approaching the Bible as mythology. Georg Lorenz Bauer[228] was the first to approach the entire Old Testament from the perspective of myth, an approach based both on Eichhorn's and Heyne's research in mythology and on a philosophical treatment of Scripture. There are several reasons why the mytholog-

[224] *Ibid.*, p. 73.
[225] *Ibid.*, p. 77.
[226] *Ibid.*, p. 60.
[227] See *ibid.*
[228] Georg Lorenz Bauer (1755–1806), theologian at Heidelberg.

ical approach to Scripture was overshadowed in Kant's religious-philosophical system. For one thing, his metaphysical skepticism—moral criteria can go only so far—also furnishes a sound basis for criticizing the positive element in religion. In this connection, Kant's vacillation over the Resurrection is noteworthy—an attitude that Schleiermacher shares with him for similar reasons. But it was not just this skepticism that kept Kant from pursuing a mythological approach. Some of his positive ideas also got in the way. His epoch-making work reveals a peculiar struggle between the old Enlightenment and the new; the idea of the accidental character of mutable dogmas is pitted against the notion of a necessary connection between such dogmas and the moral ideas underlying religion. The contrast between the moral religion of reason and statutory religion is, in fact, just Semler's contrast between private moral religion and public ecclesiastical faith. In any case, ecclesiastical arrangements are mentioned in passing and at random, and serve only to introduce the moral faith.[229] The aversion to Judaism that runs from Semler to Schleiermacher also turns up here. Indeed, Kant describes with some bitterness how the first promulgators of Christ's teaching were forced to compromise with Jewish conceptions. In view of this, the interpreter must be content to make the best of the positive doctrines; he must settle for merely possible interpretations provided that they substitute moral ideas for dogmas. For such ideas are the only things of value; historical facts are of no consequence.

Kant's Hermeneutical Theory

"Ecclesiastical faith," says Kant, in his famous chapter ⟨on hermeneutics⟩, "has pure religious faith as its highest interpreter."[230] For statutory faith is only a "vehicle"[231] for the religion of reason; it
655 lends itself to such a use because of the relation obtaining between the two elements that we described above. "Something from the nature of ⟨the⟩ supersensible origin" of moral religion is stamped upon the statutory faith.[232] However, in the case of those passages where exposition must settle for a purely literal possibility, Kant declares:

> Nor can we charge such interpretations with dishonesty, provided we are not disposed to assert that the meaning that we ascribe to the symbols of the popular faith, even to the holy books,

[229] See Kant, *Religion*, p. 156.
[230] *Ibid.*, p. 100.
[231] *Ibid.*, p. 97.
[232] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

> is exactly as intended by them, but rather allow this question to be left undecided and merely admit the *possibility* that their authors may be so understood.[233]

One notices a confusion here between logical and historical modes of proof. Nevertheless, I am able to find only one example where Kant himself actually applies this hermeneutical principle as pedantically as his disciples formulated it. Michaelis's remark concerning Psalm 59:11f. to the effect that "we should have no morality holier than the Bible"[234] entices Kant into suggesting that the passage should either be taken symbolically, in which case the enemies it refers to will be sought in the inclinations of one's own heart, or construed as a petition of a plaintiff to God, the judge, who may tolerate its ferocity but does not on that account approve of it.[235] With this one exception, Kant was so profoundly attuned to the whole of Christianity as to be immune to such pedantic applications.

The Influences of Kant's Work on Hermeneutics

In assessing the influences of this work, we should not confine ourselves to rationalism alone. Schleiermacher's system of dogmatics and Hegel's philosophy are both based on it. In the unconditioned idealism of its conception of Christianity, the book marks an epoch in the history of the philosophy of religion, and, for that reason also, in the history of Biblical interpretation. For exegesis the following ideas are of signal historical import: The Bible presents a living nexus of ethical and redemptive thoughts that plumb the depths of human nature; indeed, even the extremes of dogma, such as demonology, and the juridical formula of satisfaction or redress, have their roots in the totality of moral ideas; and finally, the goal of all interpretation of Scripture is to apply this moral perspective. And here, too, lies Kant's kinship with Schleiermacher. In any event, one should not base a judgment about Schleiermacher's relation to Kant and Fichte merely on his severe polemical remarks about these two men. It would be interesting to pursue the close connections 656
between Schleiermacher's theology and Kant's philosophy of religion. Here we can only call attention to one point. One aspect of Schleiermacher's unique significance for Biblical hermeneutics is the way he related the canon to the core of Christianity. Kant preceded

[233] *Ibid.*
[234] *Ibid.*
[235] See *ibid.*, p. 101.

him in this. In fact, the understanding of the New Testament as a totality of major concepts and basic teachings is more prominent in Kant than in Schleiermacher. This is the conception that gave rise to Biblical theology, which can be viewed as the supreme product of the creative impulse of modern exegesis. On the other hand, in an age when, for all practical purposes, historical observation meant fragmentation, Kant could only succeed by resorting to an inflexible idealism that attempted to impose unity on Christianity from the outside, rather than immersing itself in the heart of Scripture, and thereby coming to grips with its true roots.[236]

657 ## 5. *The Hermeneutics of Schelling's Philosophy: Friedrich Ast*[237]

Philosophy and Philology

The philosophy of identity, which pervaded the aesthetic period from the very beginning, possessed a sense for the inner construction of spiritual productions that was far better developed than Kant's. Schelling's school gave rise to the first theory of reconstructive understanding, if one is willing to regard the enthusiastic stances of Ast as such a theory. Echoing the passage we cited from Herder,[238] Ast says of his task: The philologist should "not be a mere language virtuoso, nor an antiquarian, but a philosopher and aesthetician"; only through the philosophic spirit can philology become a science worthy of the name.[239] To usher in this new period, Ast presented a philosophical theory of grammar, hermeneutics, and criticism, in a sketchy style that combined the obvious with the philosophical terminology of the day. His primary concern was the foundation of hermeneutics, that is, the possibility of understanding in general. Following the famous hypothesis of the original unity of thought and being, of subject and object, Ast contends that no understanding is possible "apart from the original unity and identity of everything spiritual, apart from the original unity of all things in spirit."[240]

[236] In this account, and also in the section on Semler, I have focused almost exclusively on that aspect of their activities that has advanced hermeneutics. The other aspect is stressed often enough, for example, in Tholuck's writings. (D)

[237] Friedrich Ast (1778–1841), German philologist, influenced by Schelling.

[238] See above, n. 218.

[239] Friedrich Ast, *Grundlinien der Grammatik, Hermeneutik und Kritik* (Landshut, 1808), preface, p. iv. (D)

[240] Ast, *Grundlinien*, p. 168. (H)

Accordingly, our spirit must be essentially one with the spirit of antiquity; the differences are merely temporal and relative. The task of philology is to overcome these differences. Philology must rise above the temporality and relativity of changing appearances into the realm of identity, which makes up the sphere of philosophy. "It is only the temporal and the external . . . that posits a difference of spirit."[241] "And precisely this is the goal of philological education: to cleanse the spirit of the temporal, the contingent, and the subjective."[242] Entirely in keeping with the spirit of this philosophy, philology and history become fused. As philology is being elevated to the sphere of identity, it is also being cancelled.

Historical Construction

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The essential unity of antiquity and modernity must now, however, also be manifest in the course of history. This identity is not just in itself, but it also exists in history. For the oriental mentality, humanity was still one; paganism and Christianity, pantheism and theism, were still undifferentiated. Then individual elements of this unity took shape as periods in the education of humanity, in order finally to seek reunification in our own time. Because this differentiation exists only to be raised to a higher unity, spirit obviously could not remain at rest in the world of antiquity, which is, after all, just a one-sided moment of modern consciousness. Clearly, we are witnessing an absolutely unphilological temperament undertaking to establish a philological method. A mind completely insensitive to form, pattern, and concrete life has blundered into a discipline whose essential requirement is precisely an inner passion for form, tone, and appearance. Having forsaken the clear boundaries of historical periods and the sciences, we are now lost in a shadowy unity of philology, history, and philosophy, and of East and West.

The Idea of Totality

In addition to this abstract unity, however, Schelling's philosophy contained another element that gave it a stake in the realm of appearance. The romanticists, and Friedrich Schlegel in particular, had already seized upon it, as we shall see; and they had already conceived the idea of basing a science on it.

[241] Ast, *Grundlinien*, p. 168. (D)
[242] Ast, *Grundlinien*, p. 168f. (D)

The element in question was the aesthetic concept of a totality. If, as Schelling's intuition would have it, the world is a work of art, then every production of the human spirit must also be conceived as a work of art. The concept of totality, in turn, acquires its content through the well-known logical procedure that the philosophy of identity applied to all appearances. Ast never grows tired of pursuing it:[243]

> All formation begins with a mythical, veiled point of origin, from which the elements of life develop as factors in the formative process. These are the genuinely formative elements, which reciprocally limit one another and yet amalgamate to form a product by means of finite, reciprocal interpenetration. In this product the idea that remained undeveloped in the point of origin while giving direction to the life factors, is objectively presented and fulfilled.[244]

> The origin of formation is unity, the formative process itself is a plurality (opposition of elements), the culmination of formation, or the completely formed interpenetration of unity and plurality is a totality.[245]

659 This process is repeated as reconstructive understanding. At first it encompasses the whole in a premonition or presentiment until it raises itself from the knowledge of particulars to a conscious unity of the whole informed by all such details.[246] Inasmuch as individual components can only be understood from the perspective of the totality and vice versa, the circle implicit in this concept of interpretation is resolved: "With the first particular one also divines the spirit and idea of the whole."[247]

This is a kind of aesthetic mysticism that contains only this grain of truth: All interpretation starts with a very flexible hypothesis, which embodies a range of possibilities that will be narrowed down as the interpretation proceeds. However, just as each part of a work is only a moment of the whole, so the work itself, in turn, is also only a part of an even more inclusive totality, namely, the spirit of a determinate period in world history, which differentiates itself as sketched above.

[243] See Ast, *Grundlinien*, pp. 170, 184f., 197. (D)
[244] Ast, *Grundlinien*, p. 187f. (D)
[245] Ast, *Grundlinien*, p. 188. (D)
[246] See Ast, *Grundlinien*, p. 188f. (D)
[247] Ast, *Grundlinien*, p. 188. (D)

Survey of the Movements of Interpretation That Are Based on This View

Consequently, all reconstructive understanding moves through three moments. "Particularity, considered for itself in its mere external empirical life, is the letter; considered in its inner essence, in its meaning and relation to the spirit of the whole, is the sense; and the completed conception of the letter and the sense in their harmonious unity is the spirit."[248] This total conception is again only a relative unity, at a higher level a national unity. It can only be completed by a conception that submits to the standards of truth, goodness, and beauty as such. Thus, in order to grasp a particular work, this hermeneutical method passes through all these intermediate unities until it reaches the ultimate and highest unity. Schleiermacher aptly dubbed this idealism "nebulous and ethereal."[249] He was the first to rescue the concepts of totality and reconstructive understanding from the enthusiastic obscurantism of Ast's utterly unoriginal mind, and to work out their implications in a lucid system that typifies the true philological spirit.

[248] Ast, *Grundlinien*, p. 191. (D)

[249] "Nebelei und Schwebelei," ⟨Schleiermacher, *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 3, p. 381.⟩

1. Fichte and the Origin of the Mode of Thought That Transformed Hermeneutics

The Genetic Method and Its Philosophical Background

We need not sanction the derivation of all scientific laws from ultimate principles—and the abrogation of the Aristotelian *oikeion*[250] of the individual sciences—in order to acknowledge that we are often led to look at the ultimate principles of metaphysics itself in the course of the history of the sciences.

Thus, as we trace the roots of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics, we are led back to Fichte's *Science of Knowledge*. Fichte's system is the culmination of subjective idealism. This means simply that it completes the attempt to explain the world through the I, and to derive the nexus of all sensations and intuitions, of all that is given and exists, from the spontaneous, productive subject. The essence of this system consists in raising all givenness, all beings, into something active, or more precisely, into the active I. This givenness or reality is not sought for "out there" in the world. For Fichte there is no "out there." Rather the "out there" exists only for consciousness itself, and the task is to account for it solely as a modification in and of consciousness. "Idealism explains the determinations of consciousness on the basis of the activity of the intellect. The intellect, for it, is only active and absolute, never passive; it is not passive because it is postulated to be first and highest, preceded by nothing that could account for a passivity therein. For the same reason, it also has no *being* proper, no subsistence. . . . The intellect, for idealism, is an *act*, and absolutely nothing more; we should not even call it an *active* something, for this expression refers to something subsistent in which activity inheres."[251]

The task of the *Science of Knowledge* is to explain everything that exists in consciousness as due to the action of the intellect. It is, thus, a construction of the system of representations according to a priori laws of thought, a construction that will demonstrate and

[250] *oikeion* = the unique, or that which individuates. (H)

[251] Johann G. Fichte, "First Introduction to the Science of Knowledge," in *Science of Knowledge*, ed. and trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 21.

exhibit the becoming involved in the being of all representations 661
and the manner in which the I acts spontaneously to bring the representations into being. "The only sure sign that our philosophizing is on the right track is when we no longer are concerned with finished, objective being, but only with becoming; when everything that is (i.e., all representations of beings) is first inwardly constructed. Only in this way does one achieve insight into becoming and being, into the inner, authentic life of the spirit."

The Genetic Method and the Pragmatic Mode of Explanation in Preceding Periods

This line of thought, which gave a completely new impetus to philosophy, was also to have epoch-making consequences for the understanding of the spheres of human thought and intellectual productivity.

Because there is nothing ultimately existent or permanent in the human spirit, everything spiritual must be conceived as proceeding from the productive I as the result of the spontaneity of spirit, and it must be explained genetically. The essential difference between the pragmatic and the genetic mode of explanation and interpretation emerges directly from this fundamental outlook. The pragmatic mode of explanation treats each thought as a fixed thing, and explains it as due to the external impact of another fixed thought-thing. Thus it collapses into a chaotic search for causal connections. The genetic mode of explanation, by contrast, does not view a thought as something existing in its own right; rather, it exists only in the subject and is to be explained through the latter's spontaneity.

At this point we need to guard against a misunderstanding. The import of the Fichtean theses that we have outlined—and, as we shall soon see, their historical influence on interpretation—extends, of course, beyond this law of genetic method. The standpoint of subjective idealism explains the world of representations simply and exclusively by reference to the productive I. For this standpoint, external influences do not exist. While the genetic method does not follow idealism in this, it does reject any simple transference of representations. For it the I is, in fact, productive in the sense that all action from without is simultaneously an activity of the subject. That is to say that even the representations that press in from without can be produced only by the active I and are thus determined by it. There is no law for measuring the extent to which incoming representations influence the mind. At this point, the genetic method must allow free play to the subjectivity of the person explaining or

interpreting. It is nothing but the simple hermeneutic law that every idea of a system or of an author must as product (assimilating reproduction) be referred to the unity of an active subject.

662 **Fichte and Schleiermacher's Ethical Idealism**

While the age in general was indebted to Fichte for the impetus toward the genetic method, Schleiermacher's historical-philological standpoint was even more closely related to ⟨Fichte's⟩ system. The latter had proceeded from the absolute spontaneity of the I. This idea, whether it was originally prompted by ethical considerations or by the principle of philosophical form, was first conceived and applied metaphysically. But the mere postulation of a plurality of I's was to undermine the consistency of this subjective idealism. The extreme metaphysical tension between this philosophical position and the ordinary outlook on reality was difficult to endure for anyone but the author himself. So it was natural that subjective idealism should be modified by Schelling, Herbart, and even a dilettante like Friedrich Schlegel. Nevertheless, it was possible to cling to the ethical-psychological part of the system and to take Fichte's world of spontaneous intellects as a point of departure. If someone who did this also accepted the ordinary view of the existence of things, he would have to say: The world exists, but compared to the luminous points that are dispersed throughout it as productive intellects, it is insignificant. The world exists—and here Schleiermacher comes very close to Fichte's theory of the non-I—merely as the obscure limit where the rays emanating from the intellects intersect.[252] The intellect alone is valuable, the world is completely nugatory. The active I produces the whole content of its intuition from its own depths. It is its own end. To will itself, to display itself, to intuit itself—these are its highest activities.

Transition to the Concept of Individuality

If the principle of individuality arose from [Schleiermacher's] ethical form of subjective idealism, there was already an impetus toward it in Fichte's philosophy itself. Indeed Fichte had taken the first steps. In his first ethical work, the lectures *Über die Bestimmung des Gelehrten* (On the Vocation of the Scholar) (1794), we

[252] Even Schleiermacher's *Monologen* fall back into subjective idealism at times, most clearly in the first edition, p. 15f. Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher, *Sämmtliche Werke* (Berlin: Reimer, 1836), III, 1., pp. 356ff.: "By virtue of its will is the world there for the spirit." (D)

already see him moving in this direction. Man exists; he is unconditioned; he is, accordingly, his own end. But he also is something. His end can thus only be: to be what he is, "simply because he is it."[253] He derives from himself his vocation and its only law is that of selfsameness, so that it can also be thought of as everlasting.[254]

Schiller took this thesis, which he had found in the just published 663
essay by his "friend Fichte," as his point of departure for his own treatise on aesthetic education. There he summed it up as follows: "Every individual human being, one may say, carries within him, potentially and prescriptively, an ideal man, the archetype of a human being, and it is his life's task to be, through all his changing manifestations, in harmony with the unchanging unity of this ideal."[255]

"I am," says Fichte in *The Science of Ethics*, "that individual that I make myself to be with freedom, and I am it because I make myself it."[256] "That voice within my soul in which I believe, and on account of which I believe everything I do believe. . . . This voice of my conscience announces to me precisely what I ought to do, and what leave undone, in every particular situation of life. . . . To listen to it, to obey it honestly and unreservedly, without fear or equivocation: this is my true vocation, the whole end and purpose of my existence."[257] But this demand for unconditioned and completely autonomous self-determination always led back for Fichte to a universally valid moral law. This law was subjective only in respect of its free origin, not in respect of its content. And this is the point at which Schleiermacher's innermost nature intervenes to transform the Fichtean system. The I becomes individuality, and subjectivity of origin becomes that of content. It sounds Fichtean when Schleiermacher speaks in his *Soliloquies* of a communion with one's innermost self and of the act (*Tathandlung*) from which the ethical

[253] Fichte, *Sämmtliche Werke*, [ed. I. H. Fichte (Leipzig: Mayer & Müller, 1845)], VI, p. 296. (H)

[254] Fichte, *Über die Bestimmung des Gelehrten. Erste Vorlesung: Über die Bestimmung des Menschen an sich*, *Sämmtliche Werke* VI, pp. 293–301. (D)

[255] Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, ed. and trans. Elizabeth Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 17: ["I refer to a recent publication of my friend Fichte, *Lectures on the Vocation of a Scholar*, in which illuminating deductions are drawn from this proposition in a way not hitherto attempted."] (D)

[256] Fichte, *The Science of Ethics as Based on the Science of Knowledge*, trans. A. E. Kroeger (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd., 1907), p. 233f. (D)

[257] Fichte, *The Vocation of Man*, ed. R. Chisholm (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956), p. 93f. (D)

springs: "From within came the exalted revelation, produced by no theories of virtue and no system of wisdom; the long quest, satisfied by neither the one nor the other, culminates in one dazzling instant. Freedom dissolves dark doubts through the deed."[258] But what we really encounter here is Schleiermacher's idea of his individuality, the ideal that was alive in him.

The Aesthetic World-View and the Principle of Individuality

Because individuality constitutes the only thing of value, the only end-in-itself, like the luminous points in the dim, impersonal world of things, the human intellect must spiritually appropriate, as it were, the truth of Leibniz's beautiful dream of an interplay of monads mutually representing each other, so that each mirrors the
664 whole universe. The intellect must have this universe of individualities present in itself. It is fulfilled only when it recognizes its own idea and displays it through self-intuition, and when it complements this with the intuition of other individuals, thus expanding itself into the idea of humanity. For the Fichtean I, all other intellects existed only as pure material for the actualization of an immanent moral law. This was the case because the Absolute manifested its universal and necessary form in the moral law. But for Schleiermacher other intellects are a necessary complement to individuality, pointing beyond the limits of this idea to the idea of humanity. The idea of humanity can appear only in a cosmos of individualities. This expresses an aesthetic intuition of the human world. Here the ethical is nothing in itself, nothing transcendent, nothing universal, but merely an idea manifested in individuality. Accordingly, it can only be a beautiful form—for we use the term "form" to designate the phenomenal structure of the idea, and the term "beautiful form" to denote a form that is constituted by an absolute, pure, and all-determining idea.

But this intuition of the ethical is purely aesthetic only to this extent, for when Schleiermacher sees the revelation of the ubiquitous idea of humanity in the infinite plurality of individuals, his aesthetic intuition is linked to a speculative or religious idea. "Act upon individuals, but in contemplation soar higher on the wings of religion to infinite, undivided humanity." According to Schleiermacher the genius of humanity is like an artist, producing countless

[258] Schleiermacher, *Monologen*, 1st ed., p. 35f., ⟨*Sämmtliche Werke* III, 1, p. 365.⟩ (D)

forms.[259] And humanity, in turn, cannot be thought of apart from an intuition that loses itself in contemplating the immeasurable realm of all the shapes and stages of spirit.[260] This intuition is fulfilled in the idea of a spiritual universe that is the realization of all possibilities and hence of all ideas. Schleiermacher expresses what he finds most edifying here as follows: "Every person displays humanity in his own way,"[261] so that in the fullness of space and time everything possible may be actualized.[262] For the abundance and variety of ideas cannot be regarded as being subject to chance; they must stem from an inner law of the world.

This formulation contains two moments: "Everything possible" means only that in this system of the ideal–real, the infinite is the subject. The peculiarity of this notion is that nothing is ascribed to the Absolute except the actualization of what is already implicit in it; it transfers the explication involved in artistic formation to the action of the Absolute. Thus the aesthetic intuition of things even extends its effect to a first apprehension of its own source. Poetry aims, at least through the spontaneous elaborative tendencies of the imagination, to suggest a totality of forms—a totality, as opposed 665
to a mere abundance or boundless plurality. Similarly, aesthetic intuition, when it attains the level of a religious or speculative idea, aims to intuit the whole world as constituted by the same law that operates spontaneously in aesthetic intuition, which seems to produce shapes and forms as if by an inherent unfolding drive. The totality manifests itself to this intuition as animated, so to speak, by a poetic or creative inner power, a power activated neither by external laws nor transcendent ends, but solely by the drive to unfold and explicate itself, and by an infinite that will thereby actualize everything possible.[263]

It takes a deep religious nature to cultivate this intuition, which requires a sense for the mystical and an overwhelming drive to see and possess the divine in the world. For it seems that this force, which unconsciously produces the possible by a process of differen-

[259] Schleiermacher, *Reden*, p. 90. (D) Partially trans. as *On Religion*.

[260] See Schleiermacher, *Monologen*, 1st ed., p. 42, ⟨*Sämmtliche Werke* III, 1, pp. 368ff.⟩ (D)

[261] Schleiermacher, *Monologen*, *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 1, p. 367. (H)

[262] See Schleiermacher, *Monologen*, *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 1, pp. 368ff. (H)

[263] In Schiller's *Aesthetic Education*, p. 75, we read that the "absolute manifestation of potential (the actualization of all that is possible) and the absolute unity of manifestation (the necessity of all that is made actual)" is a "most characteristic attribute of the Godhead." (D)

tiation, can only approach the fullness of the human mind by also encompassing its lowest aspects. But artistic natures have always loved to conceive of the infinite on the analogy of the highest impulse that moved them; and Schleiermacher, too, had his share of artistic inner life. So every intuition of the idea in the world becomes religious, and religion becomes essentially faith in and submission to the presence of the ideal in the real. To seize it in that moment when it first differentiates itself from the divine and comes forth and to feel with reverence the power of the infinite in the totality of forms and in the depths of the Absolute—that is the essence of religion ⟨for Schleiermacher in his⟩ *Reden* (*On Religion*), a work that originates from the same world-view that we find in the *Monologen* (Soliloquies).

Relation to a General Movement

Even though I have shown the connection of this world-view with the concept of the aesthetic—and this connection is absolutely essential for understanding the origins of Schleiermacher's philological method—I would nevertheless prefer that the concept not be associated at first with what is currently discussed as aesthetic culture. For we are dealing here with a fully articulated world-view of epoch-making proportions for the development of thought. This world-view emerged from the relation between the most intense philosophical excitement generated by the appearance of Fichte's *Science of Knowledge* in 1794 and the national literature inspired by Herder and Winckelmann; the great names of Wilhelm von Humboldt, Schelling, Goethe, and Schiller may be added ⟨without
666 reservation⟩ to this epoch, which extends into the beginning of the nineteenth century. If the narrow scope of the present study permitted more than a hurried review of the general movements of the time, it would be easy to provide a mass of textual evidence to show how the distinctive standpoint of Schleiermacher, as it has been presented in relation to Fichte's, can be fit into the larger whole of a general scientific and artistic movement. For Schleiermacher's teaching should not be dissolved into the general concept of the movement we have called "aesthetic intuition." Such an independent and original spirit resists being subordinated to a "spirit of the times" as seen from the viewpoint of the philosophy of history. Rather, all history and human activity rests on the endless interplay between the more general features of intellectual life and the individual. And this is what we mean when we classify Schleiermacher together with a group of kindred minds who focused on the intui-

tion of the inner form of things. But he is immediately distinguished from a number of them through his essential concern with the inner form of the human spirit. Besides the relation to Schlegel, Schleiermacher's world-view stands indisputably in a special, close relationship to Wilhelm von Humboldt, which can only be assessed in the further course of this study when the analogy between Schleiermacher's endeavors in hermeneutics and Humboldt's in the philosophy of language can be surveyed. Like Humboldt, Schleiermacher occupies a distinctive, almost ambiguous position that verges on artistic production by virtue of his aesthetic intuition. For the intuition of the essential forms of the human spirit strives for artistic explication, but one that is at the same time concerned essentially with contemplating inner life.

Application of This Principle to Life and Scholarship

During this period Schleiermacher was long occupied with the idea of a novel to communicate his religious ideas about love, marriage, and friendship—ideas that [he believed] could only be explicated in this form.[264] As late as 1800 he speaks very confidently about this novel, "which is to contain everything that I think I understand about humanity and human life."[265] This indicates that he, like Humboldt, takes the intuition of humanity very seriously. Like the explication of the I in one's own individuality, the intuition of it in others is an ethical activity. Only in this way can the I attain its completion in an intuition of humanity. Therefore, we find besides an infinite reflection about one's own inner life an insatiable, nearly religious yearning in this circle of friends to intuit each others' innermost nature. For it is that great artistic force, the idea of humanity itself, which manifests one of its countless modifications in this inner core of the individual. Individuality unfolds like an organic 667
being from the seed of this idea. "In dealing with actual and true human beings, I always work from the assumption that what is in them also belongs to their natures."[266]

Schleiermacher felt that he was a virtuoso in friendship, for its essence rested for him on this insight. He took ironic pleasure in the fact that Schlegel was trying to find his "center." Occasionally,

[264] *Aus Schleiermachers Leben in Briefen*, vols. I–IV, ed. W. Dilthey and L. Jonas (Berlin: Reimer, 1858), I, p. 241. Dilthey refers to p. 230, apparently in reference to his own proofs, and speculates that chronologically this project appears to go back to before his first works.

[265] *Ibid.*, p. 264.

[266] *Ibid.*, p. 294.

when speaking to friends about Schlegel, he did exactly the same. Nothing can illustrate this better than the way he defended Schegel: "I have come to know the center of his whole being, of all his poetic activity and striving only as something very great and rare, and, in the true sense, beautiful. Accordingly, I know how nothing can be altered in his attitude toward the world without destroying a part of him, and how all that appears faulty, contradictory, and wrong in him naturally coheres. . . . I cannot do otherwise than love the ideal that lies in him."[267] This focus on the intuition of individuality and the idea inherent in it led him inevitably into a middle zone between ethical philosophy and art, as exhibited in the *Reden* and the *Monologen*. He was also captivated by the Platonic dialogue as an art-form, and for a long time he considered the idea of explicating his ethical views in this form, after he had abandoned the form of the novel. In fact, a monument to these efforts is preserved for us in the dialogue "Über das Anständige" (On Decency).[268] But so rich and earnest a spirit could not possibly restrict itself to the narrow line of connection between these two elements.

The Turn to Genetic Reproduction in Philology

From his own elaboration of artistic forms, with which his early works are adorned, Schleiermacher turned energetically to reproduction. In his literary remains we find countless efforts to translate, for example, from the Greek Anthology.[269] Not only is translation treated as a mode of reproduction, but also criticism, which, in agreement with Schlegel, was regarded as a philosophical artistic mode of reproductive understanding. The *Briefe über die Lucinde* (Letters on *Lucinde*)[270] and an advance notice for *The Vocation of Man* in the *Athenäum* are excellent examples of reproduction. The method, for which he was later to show such a predilection in his *Platon*, is already dominant here. It consists of delineating the whole by considering it from a variety of perspectives, so that a total intuition emerges from a synopsis of the parts.[271]

[267] *Ibid.*, p. 349.

[268] "Über das Anständige," *Zwei Gespräche*, *Aus Schleiermachers Leben in Briefen*, IV, p. 503–35. See also III, p. 177f. (D)

[269] [*Aus Schleiermachers Leben in*] *Briefen*, III, p. 364. (D)

[270] Schleiermacher, *Vertraute Briefe über Friedrich Schlegels Lucinde* (1800), in *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 1, pp. 421–506. *Lucinde* was a controversial novel published by Schlegel in 1799.

[271] He feels his gift for reconstructive criticism so strongly that he makes plans to do this with A. W. Schlegel. See [*Aus Schleiermachers Leben in*] *Briefen*, III, pp. 182ff. (D)

He himself underlines the slowness of the interpretive process 668
that aims at an intuition of the whole as the characteristic feature of his reproductive understanding. "How could my slowness in interpreting," he writes to Willich,[272] "have made you fear one-sided interpretation? On the contrary, it is precisely this slowness that furnishes my best protection against that; for it is after all nothing but [an expression of] the maxim that all particulars are just parts, and that one must first have several parts in order to understand any of them aright. It [requires] the quiet anticipation of a completed intuition."[273] For him, what is essential is this moment in which a whole takes shape in the soul on the basis of the parts. "It is deplorable to try to understand a book with the intellect alone, and this usually means that there is either not much to the book or not much to the reader. But whoever possesses the greater imaginative kind of understanding can easily utilize or dispense with the more limited kind, if he chooses."[274]

The extreme opposite of this method was the psychological mode of explanation of the eighteenth century. Consequently, Schleiermacher attacks it vehemently: "Explanative psychology, the masterpiece of that type of understanding, first exhausted itself through excesses and fell almost completely into disrepute; thus in this area the calculative intellect has abandoned the field to pure observation again."[275] He compares a self-characterization such as Garve's to a lecture on anatomy in which the individual elements are extracted from the inner connectedness through which alone they can be beautiful and intelligible. "Inner life disappears under this treatment. . . . Man should offer himself like a work of art" (Fragment in *Athenäum* I, 2, p. 96. This magnificent fragment has been established to be Schleiermacher's, See *Briefe* I, p. 332).[276] In his note on Garve he complains about a fragmentation, which nevertheless retains the complexity that was to be resolved in each of the supposedly simple parts. By contrast, he gives his view of the true reconstruction of the

[272] Ehrenfried von Willich (d. 1807), a theologian with whom Schleiermacher was in correspondence. His widow later married Schleiermacher. See also Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften* XIII, 2, pp. 10–12.

[273] *Aus Schleiermachers Leben in Briefen*, I, p. 293.

[274] *Aus Schleiermachers Leben in Briefen*, I, [p. 329]. See *Briefe über die Lucinde*, p. 1, *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 1, p. 423: "You know how timidly, carefully, and deferentially I deal with anything that announces itself as a self-formed being, be it a person, a thought, or a work of art; how long and insatiably I remain in the intuitive mode before risking anything that looks like a summary or a judgment." (D)

[275] Schleiermacher, *Reden*, *Sämmtliche Werke* I, 1, p. 299f. (D)

[276] *Athenäum* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1960), vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 272. (H)

inner life, referring to a favorite idea in the fragments about the chemistry of ideas: A characterization should "separate the internally differentiated components from one another and present them in their quantitative relations; it should then search out the inner principle of their connection, the deepest secret of individuality, so as to artfully reconstruct the individual. This can, of course, only
669 happen when one combines the various aspects of a person, and has reflected beforehand about how, in general, various aspects can be combined in a human being."[277]

From our consideration of this well-elaborated method of intuiting individualities and works on the basis of their ideas, let us cast a glance backwards to the development that gave rise to this new hermeneutical principle. Kant's *Critiques* and Fichte's *Science of Knowledge* are the bronze gates, as it were, which lead to all those efforts in our century to establish the sciences of spirit. We have shown how Schleiermacher's ethical mode of thought took its departure from these works—especially from the latter—and that he then developed this intuiting of individuality as a sphere of ethical activity. His view that this intuition needed only energetic and persistent practice on a scientific subject matter in order to become a method of systematic reflection, that is, a hermeneutical principle, also seemed to us to require a detailed exposition. For although the main key to a system is its principle, its value and implications can only be shown by an inquiry into its genesis.

The next step was for Schleiermacher to try to apply this method of intuition to philological reproductive understanding.

670 2. *Friedrich Schlegel and the Application of These Ideas to Criticism and Philology*

Friedrich Schlegel as the Leader of Romanticism

Schleiermacher found an incomparable stimulus for the development of his method into a philological art through his personal association with a man whom we have only mentioned in passing until now, and whose much misunderstood historical significance lies in that association. Like his more imposing contemporary, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and far more than his brother, August Wilhelm, Friedrich Schlegel represents the transition from philosophical and aesthetic production to reproduction.

[277] Schleiermacher, *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 1, p. 512f. (D)

Accordingly, Friedrich Schlegel takes up the tendency of the philosophical writings of Schiller; he wants to further the endeavors of Winckelmann and Herder. Like them he hopes through reproduction to evoke production anew. In fact, however, he brought this period of fresh production to an end and provided a powerful stimulus for a new, imitative, philologically reproductive enterprise in aesthetics and the history of literature. He was the leader of the romantic movement, from which such figures as Creuzer,[278] Savigny,[279] Grimm, and Bopp[280] were to receive their first inspiration. Schlegel founded the history of literature, provided the first impetus to Indian studies and comparative linguistics in Germany, and enriched mythology with oriental materials. Moreover, in many ways he provided the stimulation for the history of painting and architecture, and the history of German medieval poetry and culture. An inexhaustible mental agility and facility for combination led him to develop a remarkable eye for the veins of ore that run beneath the surface of workmanlike scientific productions. But this very talent and literary attitude contained a fatal flaw. For they also excluded that consistent depth of penetration that is alone capable of exploiting the discovered ore.

His Relationship to Schleiermacher

Schleiermacher had need of such a man. During this formative period, he developed himself in close association with Schlegel, participating in his fundamental ideas and striving like him for the kind of universality of spirit that was also practiced by Hegel. Schlegel affected him most decisively, however, through his notion of a comprehensive philology, which was to proceed from new intuitions and whose ingenious basic idea presaged a science that would furnish a theory for the art of critical philology. Here we confront the 671
beginnings of Schleiermacher's own hermeneutical art and theory. And we also encounter the second mediating factor between Schleiermacher and the older hermeneutical systems, just as Fichte was

[278] Georg Friedrich C. Creuzer (1771–1858), author of *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen*, 4 vols. (1810–12).

[279] Friedrich Karl von Savigny (1779–1861), German jurist; a founder of the historical school of jurisprudence who influenced the modern study of medieval law with his *Geschichte des römischen Rechts im Mittelalter* (1815–31).

[280] Franz B. Bopp (1791–1867), founder of comparative linguistics in Germany and Sanskrit scholar.

the first.[281] As he was developing his philosophical standpoint beyond Fichte, Schleiermacher had let the ethical necessity of hermeneutical activity emerge as a way of explaining the individuality of others on the basis of their ideas. He now found in Schlegel an articulated method of aesthetic interpretation, which was just on the point of becoming a theory of production. Consequently, Schlegel's hermeneutical thoughts mediate essentially between that universal world-view and Schleiermacher's hermeneutical theory.

Literature as a Totality

Literature—this was the main premise—is "a great, thoroughly coherent, organically structured, total, and united work of art, which embraces many art-worlds."[282] The idea of beauty appears in several principal forms, which constitute a whole as each form actualizes the idea of beauty from a special perspective. Thus aesthetic ideas permit us to grasp the various periods. As early as his essay, "Über das Studium der griechischen Poesie" (On the Study of Greek Poetry) (1795–96),[283] Schlegel tries, under the influence of Schiller's just published work, "On Naive and Sentimental Poetry," to characterize this contrast as the dichotomy between ideal beauty and the interesting, as that which inclines toward the characteristic and philosophical.[284] But soon after in the "Fragments" in the *Lyceum* this ⟨contrast⟩ is shifted. He now jokes about "the revolutionary mania for objectivity" of the earlier work,[285] and concludes that nothing of a thoroughgoing nature has yet been written against the
672 ancients.[286] Romantic poetry now opens itself to him, and a trichot-

[281] As interesting as it would be to pursue the course of Friedrich Schlegel's development, from his departure from Friedrich August Wolf's Homeric studies and from Schiller's aesthetic treatises to the subsequent shaping of his distinctive task and method under the influence of Fichte, Schelling, and Goethe, it would nevertheless take us too far afield. Thus we elect to present his view here as a finished whole. (D)

[282] Friedrich Schlegel, *Lessings Geist [aus seinen Schriften, oder dessen Gedanken und Meinungen]* II, 2 (Leipzig: Junius, 1804), p. 13. (D)

[283] F. Schlegel, *Sämmtliche Werke* (Vienna: Mayer, 1822), vol. V. (D)

[284] Schlegel, *Sämmtliche Werke* V, pp. 56ff. (D)

[285] F. Schlegel, *Lyceum der schönen Künste* (Berlin, 1797), vol. I., pt. 2, p. 150. (D)

[286] Schlegel, *Lyceum*, p. 134: ⟨"My essay on the study of mannered Greek poetry is a hymn in prose to the objective in poetry. The worst thing in it, it seems to me, is the complete lack of indispensable irony, and the best, the confident assumption that poetry is infinitely valuable, as though this were a foregone conclusion."⟩ P. 135: ⟨"Nothing really first-rate, which would possess thoroughness, force, adroitness, has been written against the ancients, especially against their poetry."⟩ (D)

omy emerges. And so the aesthetic construction of the literary whole proceeds apace, unfortunately rather nebulously toward its unclear conclusion in his history of literature.

The Schools

Each of these main parts is in turn an "art-world" by itself, which realizes its distinctive aesthetic idea in an articulated sequence of particular forms. "Nature herself, which generated Greek poetry as a whole, also divided this whole in a few large subdomains that can be readily reunited." In order to designate "these distinctions and connections," Schlegel declared his interest in borrowing "the term 'school' from the visual arts." This expression "denotes here, as there, a regular uniformity of style, by which a genre or sequence of artists distinguishes itself from the rest, and forms an artistic whole."[287] Especially in his first writing concentrating on ancient Greece, he enthusiastically generalizes this thesis about "schools" first advanced about ancient Greek epic poetry by his great teacher Fr. A. Wolf.

The Individual Work

The ultimate whole arrived at by this analytical route is the individual work. The more Schlegel turned to a consideration of modern writers, the more prominent became the consideration of the individual as a whole. His only works that approximate perfection, such as the "Nachricht von den poetischen Werken des Johannes Boccaccio" (Report on the Poetical Works of Boccaccio) (1801)[288] and his characterization of *Wilhelm Meister*, are attempts at such a [holistic] consideration. This is because the task of penetrating to the core of the works of spirit must concentrate on [them as wholes]. Schlegel's relentless efforts to push this consideration are truly admirable and of far-reaching influence. His point of departure is that "the first condition of all understanding, and a fortiori of understanding a work of art, is the intuition of the whole."[289]

On this basis, understanding means "to pursue reconstructively the thinking of another into the subtle distinctiveness of its totality. . . . This has been hardest in philosophy up until now. . . . Nevertheless one can say that one only understands a work and the

[287] Schlegel, *Sämmtliche Werke* IV, p. 6. (D)
[288] Schlegel, *Sämmtliche Werke* X, pp. 3–36. (H)
[289] Schlegel, *Lessings Geist* I, p. 29f. (H)

spirit of an individual when one can reconstruct their dynamic un-
673 folding and articulation."[290] This reconstruction must be directed to the inner unity of the whole, to its idea, or, as he prefers to call it, its tendency. Like a native instinct, the creative, organizing unity is alive in the work, forming all of its larger and smaller parts into a whole.[291] The whole stands before us like a magnificent plant, and the deeper we search the more we feel "the personality and the distinctive living spirit"[292] of every true and significant work.[293] If a work, like organic life itself, is so structured that every part of the whole is in turn a system in itself, and these different systems coalesce into the unity of a whole, then artistic reconstruction will "divide the whole into members, parts, and pieces, but will never dissect it into its original components, which are dead in relation to the work itself."[294] This sort of dissolution of a work into its elements, undertaken by ordinary critics in the hope of repossessing organic life, destroys what they seek right in their hands, leaving them with mere masses of atoms.[295]

The Perspective of Inner Form

The aim of this method becomes quite clear at this point. It is not concerned with the elements or contents of thought, if we may for an instant be permitted this artificial division.

The wealth of ideas that stirs the ages does not matter to it. Rather it focuses exclusively on the whole that is formed from these ideas by significant people, that is, on unique modes of construction, in a word, on form. A literary work is viewed here as Schelling views an organism: Its being consists in its form. This is reflected in a noteworthy passage by Schlegel in *Lessings Geist* (Lessing's Spirit), a work that is thoroughly saturated with the drive to attain clarity about these concepts. Lessing's genius is under discussion. It is said to consist essentially in his form. "In spite of the apparent formlessness" of Lessing's writings, "we may speak legitimately of form in another sense, namely, to denote that which expresses the spirit of the whole through a distinctive way of connecting the individual parts, something which would remain unaffected even if the

[290] Schlegel, *Lessings Geist* I, p. 40. (D)
[291] See Schlegel, *Sämmtliche Werke* X, p. 131. (D)
[292] Schlegel, *Sämmtliche Werke* X, p. 135. (D)
[293] See Schlegel, *Sämmtliche Werke* X, p. 134f. (D)
[294] Schlegel, *Sämmtliche Werke* X, p. 144. (D)
[295] Schlegel, *Sämmtliche Werke* X, p. 144. (D)

parts were different."[296] Schlegel explains further that for "a prose work, especially of the freer type," form in this sense is essentially "the sequence of its thoughts."[297] He gives an example of such a 674
thought-sequence in a hasty characterization of the internal structure of a Platonic dialogue. He then immediately attempts to analyze the movement of thought in Lessing's writings, "the inner form of his thinking."[298]

But it must be granted that this attempt is not very felicitous inasmuch as it lacks precision of thought. In view of his lack of real methodological means, the turn this effort takes in his well-known and otherwise masterful review of Jacobi's[299] *Woldemar* is highly notable.[300] Because his observation of style focuses on the categories of movement and form, Schlegel attempts through spatial imagery to achieve a more determinate intuition. "I could adduce philosophers," he says, "for whom everything is circular; others who can only construct according to the schema of triplicity; I might also demonstrate ellipses, and much else that would appear to you to be a mere play of my wit."[301]

The "primitive form" of Lessing's spirit and works was "a kind of transcendent line."[302] "Plato has precisely the same form and you will not be able to interpret any single dialogue nor any collection to them intelligibly except in terms of this symbol."[303] Here already we find the germ of those schematic musings that were found in the margins of his notebooks in his literary remains.[304]

[296] Schlegel, *Lessings Geist* I, p. 14. (D)

[297] Schlegel, *Lessings Geist* I, p. 14. (H)

[298] Schlegel, *Lessings Geist* I, p. 14. (D)

[299] Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743–1819), German philosopher and writer who played a central role in the debate on Lessing's Spinozism.

[300] August W. and F. Schlegel, *Characteristiken und Kritiken* I, ⟨(Königsberg, 1801), pp. 170ff. The general train of Dilthey's thought and specifically the quotations he adduces here do not refer to Schlegel's review of Jacobi's *Woldemar*, but rather to Schlegel's essay, "Über Lessing." Therefore we cite this essay, which appeared in *Characteristiken und Kritiken* on pp. 170ff. and 281ff. Likewise the passage from *Characteristiken und Kritiken* cited by Dilthey himself belongs to the essay "Über Lessing."⟩ (D)

[301] A. W. and F. Schlegel, *Charakteristiken und Kritiken* I, p. 268. ⟨"Is there any more beautiful symbol for the paradox of the philosophical life than curved lines that, with visible constancy and regularity, can only appear in fragments because their center lies in infinity?" (Schlegel, *Charakteristiken und Kritiken* I, p. 269).⟩ (D)

[302] Schlegel, *Charakteristiken und Kritiken* I, p. 269. (D)

[303] Schlegel, *Charakteristiken und Kritiken* I, p. 270. (D)

[304] A. W. Schlegel's letter to Windischmann, *Sämmtliche Werke*, ⟨12 vols., ed. E. Böcking (Leipzig, 1846–47) (reprint Hildesheim, 1971–72)⟩, VIII, p. 287. (D)

However, this path necessarily had to steer him to the idea of a theory of production as the presupposition of these accounts [of inner form].

The Plan of a Theory of Production in Relation to Schleiermacher's Hermeneutics

"A perfect legislation of the beautiful" had already seemed to Schlegel as necessary for the "rebirth of art."[305] He found "in what passes
675 for philosophy of art that either the art or the philosophy or both were lacking."[306] In the aforementioned review of *Woldemar*, he conceives the idea of a theory of production. "This theory of formation, this physics of imagination and art, ought certainly to be a science of its own."[307]

This idea is carried further in his work on Lessing. He subordinates this science, which he calls "encyclopedia" and places beside polemics, to the science of criticism. The latter is to become an organon of literature, explaining, preserving, and even producing. As unclearly thought out as it is, this science still contains among other elements a theory of production. We shall see, moreover, that the essential uniqueness of the scientific form of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics consists precisely in fusing a theory of reproduction with a theory of production. Herein lies the link [to Schlegel] and the reason why Schleiermacher from the very beginning conceived the plan of this discipline as a reconstruction of the construction of the whole even before he was acquainted with any of the textbooks in hermeneutics.

Schlegel's Hermeneutical Method as Preparation for the One Used in Schleiermacher's Translation of Plato

The dream of this science would have less of an impact on the theory of reconstructive understanding than did several excellent efforts by Schlegel actually to employ these general notions in individual cases. What splendid and deeply penetrating observations on form are contained in his characterization of *Wilhelm Meister*![308] Its method involves conceiving the individual parts in relation to the

[305] F. Schlegel, *Kritik und Theorie der alten und neuen Poesie*, *Sämmtliche Werke* V, p. 96. (D)

[306] F. Schlegel, *Charakteristiken und Kritiken* I, Eisenfeile, p. 227. (D)

[307] F. Schlegel, *Charakteristiken und Kritiken* I, p. 259. (H)

[308] F. Schlegel, *Sämmtliche Werke* IV, p. 6. (D)

idea of the whole, following out the progressing interrelations, and tracing all anticipations, intensifications, and pauses according to their distribution. It constitutes—with the exception of Wilhelm von Humboldt's work on Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*—the first model of a hermeneutical treatment of a work of art that is controlled by an articulated concept of form. Humboldt may, to be sure, be decidedly superior to Schlegel in the acuteness of his division and classification of the elements of form. Yet it is Schlegel who searches out all the relations of the particulars to one another, with a talent for combination that overflows into playful abandon. He surrounds this work of art with a web of tendencies and ingenious inner connections that owe their origin in no small measure to the genius of the interpreter alone.

Whereas in his essay on *Wilhelm Meister* the individual work is treated as a self-contained whole, in the "Nachricht von den poetischen Werken des Johannes Boccaccio,"[309] the entire range of his 676
hermeneutical concepts was applied. Thus we may gain a synoptic view of his hermeneutical method as it is reflected in this short, but highly ingenious essay, which grew out of the most penetrating study of romantic poetry. With a view to comparing it with the plan of Schleiermacher's Plato translation and the parts of it that he actually completed, we find that this treatise may shed a desired light on Schlegel's own plan for a Plato translation as well as on the question of what Schleiermacher's approach owes to it.

Criticism, as Schlegel understands it, must grasp the work of an important figure from the following standpoint: "Not only the thing formed, but also the one who forms it is an organic whole."[310] Therefore to trace the inner history of his works is to trace the inner history of the author's own self-formation from his initial efforts to his attainment of perfect mastery.[311] As in the case of the Plato translation, the external task is to determine the sequence of the works from evidence and clues contained within them, as well as to determine the style and method of treatment from internal reciprocal relations. Here the corresponding inner task is to trace the gradual beginnings and exhibit the various stages of Boccaccio's distinctive, favorite form, which consists of weaving a crown of love stories into a thoroughly precise, almost geometrical description of his circle of companions. Among the juvenalia, *Filopono* appears to

[309] F. Schlegel, *Sämmtliche Werke* X, pp. 3–36.
[310] F. Schlegel, *Sämmtliche Werke* X, p. 3. (H)
[311] See F. Schlegel, *Sämmtliche Werke* X, p. 3f. (D)

contain the earliest seed of the inner form of *Decameron* in a single episode. What is here only an episode becomes in *Ameto*, which can be shown to be later from independent internal evidence, the content of the whole. Schlegel follows this process into Boccaccio's mature period. Here there are two works of immediate interest: one that deals with a single short story, and another that embraces a whole series of them. Did the poet, before writing the series of short stories, write the single story or did he—after having written the whole series—embark on the particular one with the intent to unfold it more elaborately?[312] We see how similar these questions are to those that are to be addressed in the work on Plato. In addition, an occasional work of Boccaccio, his life of Dante, contains a view of poetry that sheds an explanatory light on the production of its author himself.[313]

An author, however, can be understood only when the sphere of literary history to which he belongs has been discovered, when the larger whole of which he is a member is found. Our interpreter attempts this construction at the end. He first defines the character of Italian poetry as explicating what is most subjective in terms of clear
677 symbols. He then relates this concept of the tendency of the artist to the nature of the story, thus connecting form and initial tendency. Finally, he tries on this basis to comprehend Boccaccio's various forms of the short story according to their innermost tendency. This attempt has many affinities with the plan for the last expository part of his own Plato project, which unfortunately never came into being. With this background, I hope that the origin of the common Plato project can be made clear, as well as the hermeneutical method that governs this ingenious and gifted work that contains all of the main ideas of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics.

678 3. *The Plato Translation*[314]

If it has not entirely failed in its purpose, our account should have clarified two points that are decisive for Schleiermacher's hermeneutics. First, Schleiermacher, in virtue of his system that derived

[312] Schlegel, *Sämmtliche Werke* X, p. 21. (H)

[313] Already here the excellent idea is formed of pursuing the history of particular short stories in depth as well as those that have undergone a number of transformations. (D)

[314] For the following, compare Dithey's lecture of 1898 to the Berlin Academy of Sciences on Schleiermacher's Plato translation. It was published in the second edition of the first volume of Dilthey's *Leben Schleiermachers* (pp. 645ff.) by H. Mulert, 1922. (H)

from the transformation of Fichtean ideas, focused on the aesthetic construction of individuals and works from a central point. Second, the literary criticism of Friedrich Schlegel, which progressed as far as attempting to describe the development of the intrinsic tendency of literary individuality in an ascending line of closely related works, each of which assimilates the results of the preceding one, led Schleiermacher from his initially ethical endeavors into philology. The Plato translation marks the introduction of this new direction in the realm of strict philology.

A decisive step! For what had hitherto been mere efforts and small experiments thereby became a hermeneutical technique. The success of the effort to fathom the riddle of the most artful and complex form of Greek antiquity and to comprehend its author's development established a mode of interpretation that focuses on understanding the inner form of a work and its inherent relation to its author and to the whole of his works. Thus, in intrinsic significance, if not yet in influence on philology, this undertaking may be ranked boldly alongside any of the endeavors that usher in the modern era in philology.

The Beginnings of the Project Together with Friedrich Schlegel

In the *Reden*, Plato was already viewed as the ideal embodiment of philosophical-religious enthusiasm. While working on this work, Schleiermacher found his sole source of refreshment in reading Plato's writings. A few days after Schleiermacher completed the *Reden*, Friedrich Schlegel presented him with his *ergodioktes* or proposal for a joint translation of Plato. Schleiermacher accepted it with enthusiasm.[315] After finishing the *Monologen*, he devoted all his energies to preparing for this project. During this time he often worked together with Schlegel on it.[316] It inaugurated the period of his life in which he turned away from displaying his own inner life to exclusively hermeneutical-critical work.[317] To this new task, he brought an already fully developed capacity for the artistic and hermeneutic treatment of every kind of material. 679

In the solitude of Stolp, this technique was perfected by means of his work on the *Kritik der Sittenlehre* (Critique of Ethical Theory).

[315] *Aus Schleiermachers Leben in Briefen*, I, p. 227. (D)

[316] *Aus Schleiermachers Leben in Briefen*, I, p. 292. (D)

[317] Schleiermacher's *Kritik der Sittenlehre* also belongs here because it is a critique of form; also *Platon* and ⟨the essay on⟩ First Timothy; finally, the lectures on hermeneutics belong here. (D)

Relation between His Hermeneutical Efforts and the *Kritik der Sittenlehre*

Both involve similar reconstructive procedures. The task of practical philosophy is the following: The ethical idea, which develops as a composite idea, should be analyzed into ethical concepts.[318] On the basis of this fundamental idea a closed system should be formed. The object of ethics is a system, because every particular [claim] can be understood only by reference to the whole, which is precisely the concept of system.[319] Every real system, such as a work of art or organic life, can only be reconstructed by means of another system. And it, in turn, can only be articulated on the basis of the idea of the whole as it differentiates itself in its application to a particular area. It follows that the critical approach to ethics is concerned with reconstructing form in these three moments, whose completeness guarantees an exhaustive treatment of the subject itself.[320] "Anything that deserves to be called philosophy" must appear in a scientific form "in which knowledge and art intermingle."[321] Schleiermacher himself calls this point of departure the vantage point of his *Kritik der Sittenlehre*. And he summarily dismisses the opposing viewpoint of ethical realism, which finds the essential in the gradual development of moral concepts from ethical reflection, and the ever ascending abstraction that is based on it, rather than in the form that is organized or articulated on the basis of the idea. He opposes it on the grounds that even these concepts become ethical only by virtue of a connection
680 with the idea,[322] an objection that is rooted in confusing a science-in-the-making with a finished one, and implies that the entire value of thinking is ultimately placed in the completed form. However that may be—and it is useful to be aware of the possibility at least that an arbitrary restriction on this method of reconstruction exists here and will make its presence felt again—this masterful work brought his method to maturity in the related area of philosophical critique.

Contrast between Schlegel's and Schleiermacher's Treatment of Plato

Schleiermacher's method could not fail to part company with Schlegel's. Both agreed that the task was to present Plato as a philosoph-

[318] See Schleiermacher, *Kritik der Sittenlehre*, p. 120. (H)
[319] Schleiermacher, *Kritik der Sittenlehre*, p. 246. (D)
[320] See Schleiermacher, *Kritik der Sittenlehre*, p. 252. (D)
[321] Schleiermacher, *Kritik der Sittenlehre*, p. 4. (D)
[322] See Schleiermacher, *Kritik der Sittenlehre*, p. 120f. (D)

ical artist. This interpretation of the task originated from their common romantic inclination to see the essence of philosophy as consisting in the connection between art and knowledge.[323] Accordingly, both wished to know what is distinctive about the inner form of the Platonic dialogue, something that had never been attempted before.[324] In several of his writings Schlegel had already made enthusiastic starts in this direction, but they are too imperfect to repay the trouble of discussing them here. Finally, both men hoped, by means of the character and internal development of this form of philosophizing according to different stages, to discover a more decisive basis for ordering and authenticating these works than a mere general impression or the historical relations from which their predecessors, and more recently, Tennemann had proceeded. But it is hard to imagine two men more diverse in their philological techniques. Schleiermacher speaks, not without irony, of Schlegel's manner of going through Plato's text again and again from beginning to end.[325] Thus here, just as in most other cases, it happens that he is left with only strong general impressions, which, as his brother so excellently puts it, he then manipulates like "hypostatized concepts."[326] Even the form of Plato's writings was such an hypostatized concept for him. Because of this he was inclined to deny Plato's authorship of the *Symposium* and to declare that not only the *Parmenides*[327] (on which point Schleiermacher agreed) but also quite a few of the other more important dialogues were fragments.[328] This shows plainly how little 681
of the true inner form of these works, as Schleiermacher was to disclose it, had dawned on him. Finally, only after much negotiation with Schlegel and with the definite feeling that even without Schlegel's hesitancy a common effort would not be likely to end happily, Schleiermacher very reluctantly began the task by himself in Stolp.

[323] See Schleiermacher, *Kritik der Sittenlehre*, p. 4. (D)

[324] Admittedly, Friedrich August Wolf (*Platons Gastmahl* [Leipzig, 1782], preface, p. xxii) speaks of the "most beautifully artistic and well-conceived plan in the dialogues." But it lay beyond his talents to go beyond a mere aesthetic feeling for it to an articulation of it. On the other hand, his effort does touch another essential aspect that Schleiermacher, given his perspective, did not wish to pursue: the literary and social relations that affected the origins of these works of art. (D)

[325] *Aus Schleiermachers Leben in Briefen*, I, p. 345f. (D)

[326] A. W. Schlegel, letter to Windischmann, *Sämmtliche Werke* VIII, p. 287. (D)

[327] *Aus Schleiermachers Leben in Briefen*, I, p. 371. (D)

[328] In Schlegel's literary remains there are two badly damaged pages in female handwriting that are doubtless to be classified as two of his introductions to Plato. An unfortunate turn of events prevents me from making any exact use of them as well as of the letters that belong to this period. (D)

Schleiermacher's Plato

If we try, through a study of the various introductions, to enter into the hermeneutical standpoint of this work, as far as it was completed, it appears to the inquirer to relate to its subject as though it were an imitation, in which, while the exposition itself progresses in smooth and artful steps, the basic overall vision is constantly presented with an enticing economy in a very few significant characterizations. Thus one does not weary of comparing these characterizations in order to gain a presentiment at least of the magnificence of the whole of this intuition, as it must have existed in Schleiermacher's soul. While thus engaged, one may well be led everywhere to continually combine the character of the Platonic mode of philosophizing with the artistic form of the works. One senses strongly the sustained effort at penetration as it strives to reach the primary nucleus or seed of this unity.[329] There are two features of this philosophy that lead to the heart of form. Schleiermacher was on very familiar terms with both of them due to the inner affinity of his own mind with Plato's.[330] First, philosophy is still part of life here and coalesces completely with social intercourse among friends. It is, in the first instance, dialogue, living communication, and only in the second instance an exposition in writing, and then only in relation to the first. Thus it cannot possibly content itself with merely expounding ideas, but has a pressing need to beget them in others, and to beget them with certainty and in their fullness. This yields an artistic form of the dialogue that forces every reader to make his own connections. Because—and this is the second feature—this philosophizing is by nature a monism of a systematic nature in which everything relates to everything else, one is urged wherever possible to connect what is most heterogeneous in each dialogue and to de-
682 velop its relationship to the others thoroughly. This yields the type of the Platonic art-form that two passages by Schleiermacher present so unsurpassably well in a few lines that any attempt to paraphrase it here would be outrageous.[331]

This overview yields the method that Schleiermacher applied. All the efforts of the exegete are focused on that original unity of a train

[329] See also the psychological part (in the narrower sense) of the hermeneutics. [The idea of the nucleus or seed is to be related to that of the seminal decision.] (D)

[330] Again see the psychological part of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics. (D)

[331] Schleiermacher, *Platon* I, p. 20; I, p. 41 in the 2d ed. (D)

of thought and a form of thought from which the whole develops as if from a seed. In seizing upon this point, we solve the secret of the whole, which consists in the correspondence between the direction and the form of thought. To pursue this correspondence by divination throughout the whole of a corpus is the further task. From this hermeneutical standpoint, the content exists only for the form, the form only for the content. Both are, as it were, the same substance conceived as two different attributes. The unending task of interpretation is to ferret out the parallelism obtaining between the intention and the form in every minute detail. This also defines the approach to each individual dialogue. We may add that, because they failed to comprehend this typology, previous modes of interpretation were forever latching onto only one of the components that are bound together in what is, for the most part, an unarticulated unity, and taking this component for the tendency of the whole work. By contrast, most of Schleiermacher's important introductions to the Platonic dialogues yield a dialectical form that progresses from the parts of the whole, or from various viewpoints, through the proof of their incompleteness, to an intuition of the whole.

Here, if anywhere, the individual work cannot be understood in isolation, but only in terms of the total literary production of the author. With the acumen of a seer the interpreter is attuned to the faint signs by which one work refers to another and to the historical relationships that are dispersed here and there. Of course, all would be well with these dialogues if this were sufficient. But whoever wishes to put them in sequence requires a bolder tool. At this point someone else might have followed the trail left by the gradual incorporation of alien elements or clues that manifest the development of particular concepts. But Schleiermacher disdains all this. The order of the dialogues is to emerge solely from an intuition of the philosophical-artistic form of the individual dialogues. Following his earlier approach to particular works, he now considers all the works as a totality produced by the inner tendency of the author, which is constituted as a series of interconnected individual works, both anticipating and referring back to each other. They also fall into distinct groups, whose sum is the realization of this tendency. The characteristic feature of this approach—and this is a very important vantage point—is that design and art as manifested in a body of works can only be separated from the internal development of the author at the most extreme points, while they constantly coalesce in other respects. For the artistic genius creates a

beautiful totality of works that is profoundly thought through and yet unconscious for the author. Consequently, the works of Plato's
683 three periods present the whole of his philosophy: those of the first develop the possibility and form of knowledge; those of the middle period attempt to apply this to both real sciences; those of the last period finally proceed toward a systematic presentation. There are masterful hints strewn throughout all the introductions as to how three forms of the dialogue as an art-form correspond to these three stages.

Here the inner tendency of the author realizes the whole of this production in a sequence of stages. But at each stage the seminal decision may have a different relationship to the whole, and this in turn gives rise to a second division between the principal works and those of a secondary order, the latter being either studies or occasional writings.

We see here the establishment of a complete ideal inner order that begins with the canonical writings. Without denying the uncertainty of the order and authenticity of the remaining works, it arranges them according to their affinities and relations to the canon, and so repeats, in all its parts, the basic form in which a tendency elaborates itself into a whole. Philology knows of no other work that is so exclusively the product of an idea, indeed, of one idea. And the brittle uniformity of the form that progresses without new starts, without deviation, without asides, as though it were poured in one piece, is, as it stamps itself upon the artistic construction and logical connections of the individual sentences, like a copy of this dominant drive to grasp the ideal form of the whole.

Perhaps never before had any philologist worked according to such an explicit, omnipresent hermeneutical principle that permeates all his work like a self-formed soul. Indeed, the only comparable scholar even among his successors is the noble Dissen,[332] who viewed his works merely as tests and examples of his method and who would willingly sacrifice them provided that his method of interpretation, which he regarded as the very flower of philology, were comprehended and developed further. It was natural that Schleiermacher should, like him, be propelled by the consciousness of his hermeneutical method and the special value he imputed to it to establish a hermeneutical theory as soon as a good opportunity arose.

[332] Georg L. D. Dissen (1784–1837), professor of philology at Göttingen.

4. *The First Draft of Schleiermacher's Hermeneutical System* 684

The Conception of Hermeneutics Expressed in His Letters of 1804–1805

That opportunity came with his call to the University of Halle in the fall of 1804. The kind of exegesis taught by Nösselt[333] and practiced by the pious Knapp[334] must have underscored the need for him to lecture on his own fundamental hermeneutical viewpoint, if he still had any doubts. So, as early as 1804, he drafted an outline for a course on exegesis, with a crowning emphasis on hermeneutics, in order to communicate the whole of his theory and practice. His letters clearly reflect the two major vantage points he brought to the elaboration of hermeneutics. To consider the essence "of the great hermeneutical rules, and to accustom the students to pay attention to the context in its entirety (in the actual reconstruction of a book)"—this is what he declares to be the task, even before starting his work.[335] He reads Ernesti's *Institutio interpretis* in order to see whether he might use it as a guide.[336] Prior to this time he had concerned himself very little with the hermeneutical theories of others, because he was very much like Fichte in spinning all the basic threads of his thinking out of his own inner nature. But the unusual arrangement of the book repels him. If only it did not take so much time, he complains, to draft a textbook of one's own! He would have to incorporate "the entire art of understanding, of analytical reconstruction"[337] in such a text. Only then would the whole arrange itself—and in quite a different manner than in Ernesti's account! For "grammatical explanation (even if I take the word in its broad sense) always remains one-sided. Another element must be added to it that is related to the art of composition and of style precisely as the former is related to grammar."[338]

As he read through Ernesti's book with this principle in mind, how he must have been struck by the glaring lack of any unifying

[333] Johann August Nösselt (1734–1807), German theologian at Halle.

[334] Georg Christian Knapp (1753–1825), the last representative of Pietism at Halle.

[335] [*Schleiermachers Briefwechsel mit Joachim Christian] Gaß*, [Berlin, 1852], p. 6. (D)

[336] See Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*. (H)

[337] [*Schleiermachers Briefwechsel mit] Gaß*, p. 14. (D)

[338] [*Schleiermachers Briefwechsel mit] Gaß*, p. 14. (D)

idea. What counted—and this is the second vantage point that is emphasized in his notes from that time—was to give hermeneutics a scientific formulation on the basis of this principle, by grounding
685 it in a scientific treatment of the object of interpretation itself. A very important turning point in the history of hermeneutics! It was to be based on a penetrating intuition of language and form, that is, on the theory of production itself, as well as on the corresponding theory of reproduction. It thus acquired an object amenable to scientific treatment, while it had hitherto only collated the end-results of hermeneutical operations. "I am giving lectures on hermeneutics," he writes to Willich, "and trying to elevate to the level of a science what has hitherto been a mere collection of unconnected and in part very unsatisfactory observations. It will embrace all language as an intuition and make an effort to penetrate its innermost depths from without."[339]

The First Draft, Which Was Occasioned by His Reading of Ernesti

We are now in a position to trace the first conception of hermeneutics that arose from these notions with a precision that is rarely possible for a genetic account of scientific productions. In his aforementioned reading of the *Institutio interpretis*, which he evidently supplemented with the work of Morus,[340] Schleiermacher made several pages of notes, which he numbered with a view to transforming them into a first draft of his system. Lücke did not print them [in his edition of Schleiermacher's *Hermeneutik und Kritik*],[341] despite their relevance not only to the history of hermeneutics, but also to a correct understanding of Schleiermacher's own system.[342] They show the relationship between Schleiermacher's first conception of his system and the older hermeneutics. They show us exactly how he formed the outlines of his own system by relating his fundamental intuition and a number of particular hermeneutical observations

[339] *Aus Schleiermachers Leben in Briefen*, II, p. 26f. (D)

[340] See S. F. N. Morus, *Super hermeneutica Novi Testamenti, acroases academicae*, ed. H. C. A. Eichstadt (Leipzig, 1797). (H)

[341] [See Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik [und Kritik, mit besonderer Beziehung auf das Neue Testament*, ed. Friedrich Lücke (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1838)], p. viii. (D)

[342] For our task it was highly desirable to be permitted to use them since they deal more or less with the subjective aspect of it. [These notes have now been printed in Schleiermacher's *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts*, ed. Heinz Kimmerle and trans. James Duke and Jack Forstman (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977), pp. 41–65. See also p. 22.] (D)

deriving from his work on Plato to this older system, both polemically and by means of assimilation. Whoever knows Schleiermacher knows that these outlines, the initial construction of a principle and scientific form, thoroughly determined the entire later process of construction, protracted as it was over many years, in a remarkable way. The self-contained unity of his sphere of ideas and the predominance of the formal element in their detailed development, confer upon this first draft a preponderant role in his own production: It is just this preponderance that finds its distinctive reflection in the doc- 686
trine of the seminal decision and its development as formulated in his hermeneutical theory.

We will arrange this collection of ideas, which are unorganized because they stem from sporadic hours of reading, according to their internal order. After the first note narrows down the realm of hermeneutics by eliminating the second part of Ernesti's work, his principle of opposition to Ernesti surfaces immediately.[343] In the most important part of his introduction, just where the act of interpretation was to be dealt with, Ernesti had shown the customary unconcern about any principle, by discussing applications of grammar, hermeneutical rules, and practice, as though these things had some relevance to the essence of interpretation.[344] Schleiermacher wants to see them replaced by a sense for the necessary and an ability to construe. Accordingly, for the old account that explained a lack of understanding as a conceiving of words without sense,[345] thereby demanding rather too little of understanding, he substitutes the following explanation: A lack of understanding results when one fails to construct the whole schematic intuition of a word.[346] For him the constructive process of a writer is very different from the usual construction of writings on the basis of their subdivisions. Accordingly, he states his opposition to the previous methods of hermeneutics as follows: Previous treatments of hermeneutics assume the artlessness of understanding, which never appeals to art until it comes upon nonsense. Thus all its rules seem arbitrary and mere stopgap measures. They must appear inappropriate for the most part, because they refer to earlier errors of interpretation, as

[343] See Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, prolegomena, §4, *subtilitas explicandi*. (D)

[344] See Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, §6. (D)

[345] See Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, §6. (D)

[346] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics*, p. 42: "One does not comprehend the entire schematic view [*Anschauung*] present in a word-sphere, but is satisfied with only one of its facets."

for instance, explaining isolated passages by reference to the purpose of the author.[347]

The psychological presupposition of Schleiermacher's hermeneutical principle appears to be that "thought is to be treated neither as something objective, nor as a thing, but as an act [*factum*]."[348] Thus here again the connection between this hermeneutical principle and Fichte's *Science of Knowledge*, which we have already discussed, will be readily transparent to the expert. Now how can this principle be further articulated? We have already mentioned Schleiermacher's statement, in a letter dating from the time of this reading, referring to the superiority of this principle of construction over grammatical explanation.[349] The sixth note provides the necessary information.[350] It proves that [this statement] was merely an amplification of the dichotomy between grammatical and historical interpretation, giving us a clear picture of the actual progression of the
687 drafts of the hermeneutics. When grammatical and historical interpretation were first subjected to a more detailed assessment, they came to seem like two separate standpoints. Their old connection was taken up again and elaborated by Morus. Schleiermacher in turn takes his point of departure from Morus's classification.[351] He transforms it, on the basis of his principle, into a distinction between objective [or grammatical] interpretation and subjective [or technical] interpretation.

"Seen from the perspective of construction, grammatical interpretation plays a negative role, marking the boundaries; technical interpretation is positive. These two sides of interpretation cannot always coincide, for that would presuppose both a complete knowledge of and completely correct use of the language."[352] Provisionally, Schleiermacher experiments with yet another construction of this science based on the assumption that the task of interpretation is to place oneself in the immediate situation of the reader, an idea that likewise stems from the historical direction of interpretation. Proceeding thus, his draft reads as follows: "Introduction. Explanation of Hermeneutics. Narrowing the extent of hermeneutics as Ernesti sees it. Extending its scope. Difficulties that arise from the treatment."[353]

[347] See Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, pp. 28–30. (D)
[348] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics*, p. 43.
[349] *Aus Schleiermachers Leben in Briefen*, II, p. 26f. (H)
[350] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics*, p. 42.
[351] See Morus, *Super hermeneutica* I, p. 7. (H)
[352] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics*, p. 42. Trans. revised.
[353] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

"Division (1) Understanding what the author and the reader have in common. (2) Understanding what is peculiar to the author when the interpreter, as a reader, reconstructs him."[354] According to a subsequent note this part may be further divided as follows: "The general task is to investigate (1) the idea, the combinatory unity, the individuality." "The special task is to investigate (2) the combinatory multiplicity, the psychological and the personal aspects";[355] and (3) what is distinctive about the reader. This also is clarified by a following note: "The essence of the third part is the true notion of accommodation. This notion is not universal and is appropriate only for speeches, occasional writings, and certain didactical pieces."[356]

It is evident how deficient ⟨this draft⟩ is, because the grammatical aspect also contains peculiarities of an author that cannot be separated from the other common elements. Likewise, the psychological aspect contains a common element. The last part, despite its seeming logical connection, was to be merely a sort of appendix where he would take account of historical circumstances. Certainly, the effort to assimilate the scope of the doctrine of accommodation into this system, as it comes to the fore in this draft, would have added to his hermeneutics, had he pursued it further, a very essential and by no means negligible element of the older hermeneutics, which is now- 688
adays completely neglected. As it is, there is no trace of any further influence of this draft on his hermeneutics.

On the basis of his hermeneutical principle, he very energetically penetrates the older observations with the new focus on reconstructing the work from the author, and thus on a scientific intuition of the process of producing language and form. On the subject of language, he remarks that Christianity produced language. It possessed an empowering spirit of language from the beginning. Everything that is conceptual as opposed to intuitive in language has retreated into reflection. Words with a very precise sense and narrowly determined meaning are, of course, technical. In fact, every word has but one meaning and one certainly cannot understand multiple senses without reducing them to their original unity. So-called synonyms really go back to different intuitions: hill, mountain; valley, gorge.

As subtle as these remarks may be, we still cannot manage to see in them a fundamental systematic view of the nature of language. And this points to a deficiency that prevents the initial great tendency toward comprehending style on the basis of the deep systemic

[354] *Ibid.* [355] *Ibid.*, p. 45. Trans. revised. [356] *Ibid.* Trans. revised.

connection between it and language from being more than partially realized. The excellent remarks on tropes and figures of speech, which Ernesti and Morus evoked, go much deeper. Here again the psychological presupposition of Schleiermacher's principle constitutes the point of departure. A "false conception of tropes derives from an objective conception of words."[357] By contrast, he develops his own view of tropes and figures of speech, which will be dealt with in the expository section because it contains significant additions to the content of the published notebook. Another note shows how he wishes to relate all the essential parts of hermeneutics to his principle. Against Morus (p. 16), who establishes a series of *principia vel propositiones*, he observes: "The principles for the use of language and of parallels . . . are by no means axiomatic but need to be demonstrated."[358] But [Schleiermacher's] notes stop with the grammatical part, because his reading of Ernesti did not lead him on to the second part.[359]

The special hermeneutics of the New Testament is considered only sparingly in occasional remarks—a new proof, if one were required, that universal hermeneutics is primary and essential in this system.

It emerges from this draft that the leading idea from which Schlei-
689 ermacher's hermeneutics grew is the following: The essence of interpretation consists in reconstructing a work as a living act of its author. Accordingly, it is the task of the theory of interpretation to place this reconstruction on a scientific footing by anchoring it in the nature of the productive act, taken both as it is in itself and in relation to language and artistic form. When this principle came into contact with the older system, both as a polemic against it and a transformation of it, Schleiermacher's system of hermeneutics came into being.

We have now arrived at the entrance to this system. We have refused to adorn our path with those manifold and engaging relations between Schleiermacher's work and other excellent writings of the same period that claim the attention of the expert at so many points. They include Schiller's aesthetic writings, Humboldt's essay

[357] *Ibid.*, 46: "focus rosea planto serpens scandens." Revised to agree with the original.

[358] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

[359] Right in the middle of the remarks on grammatical interpretation, there is a note that "the classification of texts into works, studies, and occasional writings, is also important for hermeneutics," as though he were struck by an incidental recollection of his Platonic studies [*ibid.*, p. 43.] (D)

"Über Goethes *Hermann und Dorothea*," and A. W. Schlegel's aesthetic investigations. For it seemed most important to describe the straight historical course of the development of thought from Fichte to Schleiermacher's hermeneutical system undistracted by secondary influences and relations. We would have preferred to have gone into these relations more thoroughly than we did. For the significance of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics simply cannot be understood, indeed no single aspect of it can be comprehended in its uniqueness, apart from its total relationship to the grand movement that completely transformed historical studies and in whose train we are still caught up today. How fortunate were those men to whom it was granted to establish linguistics, mythology, the history of systems, religious studies, aesthetics, and hermeneutics on the foundation of the great philosophical discovery of the productive I. Even the one-sided power and idealistic self-assurance that every powerful intellectual movement imparts to its products is integral to the nature of every creative age and individuality.

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Section Three
Comparison of Schleiermacher's Hermeneutics to the Earlier Systems

Principles and Fundamental Questions

1. Universal Hermeneutics

A. Its Place in the System of Sciences

After the first draft, which was discussed above, the developing thread of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics is lost.[360] Lücke's edition belongs to Schleiermacher's last period. By that time Schleiermacher, with his logical bent, had worked out an infinitely fine, reticulated system, which, despite its intricacy, was held together by only a few basic principles. Anyone familiar with Schleiermacher's approach to systematizing will immediately surmise that all the principles of his hermeneutics are derived from higher sciences.[361] His system is one of those philosophies that have established a logical classification as the working out of the real connection of thought and being. This tendency of his philosophizing is closely allied with what we call the aesthetic standpoint.

692 **Aesthetic Intuition and Logical Classification as Explaining the Real.** Both aesthetic intuition and logical classification reflect the metaphysical idea of a continuous series of things that collectively constitute the cosmos: The world is seen as a single, necessary totality founded on its own inner law. On the one hand, we have the intuition of the world as a work of art and the attendant extension of this perspective to all parts of the totality; on the other hand, the logical classification of concepts as an explanation of the world. The problems presented by the sensory world and the contradic-

[360] The further development of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics from 1809 to 1819 is evident in a draft of the *Hermeneutics* that covers the years from 1810 to 1819. Schleiermacher refers to this as "the first draft." H. Kimmerle published this manuscript, which contains an introduction and a first part bearing the title "Grammatical Interpretation," as "Manuscript II." Lücke used another, later manuscript from around 1819 as the basis of his edition while incorporating from earlier lectures "whatever seemed to be worth preserving and to fit the context" without separately identifying this earlier material. (H)

[361] On other major points (*Hermeneutik [und Kritik*, ed. Lücke], p. 16, §10, Concerning Language) it was necessary to probe deeply into the details of the relevant technical part of the *Dialektik*; accordingly, the above account had to be couched in general terms. (D)

tions attending the effort to think that world are not felt by Schleiermacher: They are completely alien to him. As a result, the inner world formed by the mind in representation and concept, and articulated in language, cannot, by any means, be taken as a subjective product produced spontaneously from sensory stimuli. Its content cannot involve a philosophical transformation needing to be traced back and compared to original stimuli. Rather, Schleiermacher attempts to secure the reality of appearances by arbitrarily presupposing the unity of thought and being. These appearances, just as they are, form the presupposition of thought. Thus the whole task of philosophy is to impose a philosophical form—the form of inner necessity and unity—on a world of appearances that is already present in a complex of concepts; for this philosophical form is at the same time the content of the world. In a remarkable passage in the *Dialektik*, Schleiermacher admits that his double antithesis method of system building, which uniformly pervades his whole system, is a pure hypothesis rather than a necessary [condition] without which the world of appearances could not be explained. He is satisfied that the world of appearances can be made to conform to such a schematism at all.[362]

The Predominance of Concept Formation.[363] In explanative systems the emphasis falls on judgment formation, while in classificatory systems the accent falls on concept formation. Correspondingly, the latter transforms the flux of things into a totality of static forms. In Schleiermacher's thought, becoming and the infinite variability of the sensory world manifest themselves only in the interplay of positive antitheses. For his intuitive viewpoint the life of humanity is arranged in a fixed pattern of eternally identical, static forms, an arrangement analogous to a taxonomy of plants and animals. A simple law of form governs the formation of this pattern.

Transformation of [Historical] Process into Static Forms. Following this method, Schleiermacher tries in his *Ethik* to embrace all human existence. Ethics is to history what speculative and empirical natural science are to each other. Here we move from becoming to being; we move from the temporal flux to the intelligible realm of concepts where there is no change. The image of the historical genesis of human culture is transformed into that of static, timeless forms. The historical process is viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*. All 693

[362] See [Schleiermacher], *Dialektik*, §209f., esp. §218f. (D)
[363] Reading *Urteilsbildung* as *Begriffsbildung*.

efforts to explain culture by appealing to the multifarious motives that appear in the course of history give way to a mode of explanation that is grounded in the Absolute and its antitheses.

This point cannot be stressed too strongly. This transformation of historical variety and movement into timeless conceptual categories, this favoring of the principle of classification over the principle of explanation, is the underpinning of Schleiermacher's ethics. And, because hermeneutics is a branch of ethics, it is the foundation of his hermeneutics as well.

The Place of Hermeneutics within the System of Ethics

a. The Identical and the Distinctive. What place does hermeneutics occupy in the system of human activities encompassed by ethics? We know that Schleiermacher's hermeneutics was based from the very beginning on the intuition of distinctiveness as a form of the universally human. The question then becomes: How does ethics develop this antithesis [between the distinctive and the identical] as the foundation of hermeneutics? Ethics starts with the developing union of reason and nature. This leads directly to the relation between the distinctive and the universal.

> Since reason, by virtue of its original union with human nature posited as a species, is also posited in the form of particular human existence, and since from the speculative point of view nothing is posited as a particular existence merely for being a particular in space and time, every ethical particular must also be internally differentiated, that is, it must be something distinctive.[364]

It follows that every product of an individual must contain both universality and distinctiveness.[365] Both are essential characteristics of the individual.[366]

694 Now, every particular activity of reason stands in a dual relation: first to the overall system of identical rational activity and its organs and symbols and second to the individual being itself.[367] The first aspect, of course, relates to the identical—something existing in the same way in all others; the second means that the results of a function in one individual cannot be transferred to any other individual.

[364] [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, §130 (b), p. 94. (D)
[365] See [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, §158. (D)
[366] See [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, §132, p. 96. (D)
[367] See [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, §157, p. 117. (D)

b. Knowing and Feeling. Let us now pursue the implications of this antithesis for the symbolizing activity associated with hermeneutics. "The activity of signifying nature is the same in everyone" despite the fact that nature "is fragmented into a multiplicity of particular beings." [This is possible] insofar as innate concepts, laws, and procedures of consciousness are the same in everyone.[368] As such the process of signification is necessarily communicable. The expression of this identity and communicability is the coexistence of thought and speech.[369] The communal character of knowing is upheld most strongly when Schleiermacher says that in this area it is a matter of complete "indifference whether the same thought is actualized by this or that particular being; every thought that is determined by its content is the same for everyone."[370] The identification of thought with speech corresponds to this unconditioned communicability. All knowing that is not an inner speaking is simply confused.[371]

Symbolizing activity in the form of identity stands opposed to symbolizing activity in its individual form. One should remember that the difference is not quantitative but qualitative. Because the forms and laws of consciousness are the same, the difference can only lie in the way in which these manifold functions are connected into a whole, that is, "in the differentiations of this relation to itself in the unity of life."[372] The term for this kind of connection is feeling. It is the specific expression for reason's mode of existence in a particular nature. It follows that just as knowing is inherently communicable, feeling is inherently untransferable. Without this untransferability, the essential difference between one individual and another would be cancelled.

[Symbolism as] a Double Antithesis. Let us now dissolve this antithesis that is possible, after all, only as an abstraction. Just as every act of reason can be thought of only through the coexistence of the identical and the individual, so too every act of signification. "The requirement, accordingly, that sameness and difference should always ⟨be together⟩ is satisfied in the case of symbolic activity through the universal coexistence of thought and feeling."[373] Feeling is in 695

[368] See [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, §168, p. 129. (D)
[369] See [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, §170, p. 131f. (D)
[370] See [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, §170, p. 132. (D)
[371] See [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, §170 (d), p. 133f. (D)
[372] See [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, p. 136. (D)
[373] See [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, §176, p. 142. (D)

itself speechless and ineffable; thought is the identical speech of all. But in reality both are one, with a preponderance of one or the other; they form a double antithesis.[374]

c. Analytic and Synthetic Progression: Science and Art. What is the pattern of the activity of spirit within this double antithesis? If one looks at its elements, perception is preponderantly identical, while feeling is preponderantly differentiating. The former exhibits the objective, the latter the subjective aspect of spiritual activity. However, spirit takes the form of a progression within these elements. Accordingly, the distinction must carry over to this progression as well. Analysis, the progression from a unity to its parts, is preponderantly identical; synthesis, the progression from one unity to another, is preponderantly differentiating and expresses distinctiveness.[375] If we look at the production of symbolizing activity insofar as it is predominantly directed toward the identical or toward knowing, their distinctiveness must be coposited through combination, which is based on synthesis. Both as a heuristic and as an architectonic, this combinatory procedure is an art, that is, it contains the element of a distinctive progression, so that the architectonic procedure, the zenith of system building, can be separated from the dialectic, depending on whether the objective or subjective aspect of combination predominates.[376] By contrast, synthetic combinations belong to the sphere of the individual to the extent that they do not become analytic, that is, do not want to become a knowing. The production of an individual combination is art in the narrower sense, and its faculty is the imagination. In all knowing there is art and in all art there is knowing.

696 **Summary: The Task of Hermeneutics Is to Reconcile These Antitheses.** Let us summarize the results for hermeneutics. Hermeneutics presupposes the antitheses between the distinctive and the identical, between feeling and knowing, and between art and science. It follows that every work is a mixture of the ineffable and the intelligible. "The unity of life and the identity of reason as it is distributed among individuals, would be eliminated, if the ineffable could not once again become something communal and communicable."[377] This sets the problem of hermeneutics: to reconcile the identical or objective aspect of a given discourse, which belongs to language and

[374] See [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, §§171ff. (D)
[375] [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, §§245, 246. (H)
[376] See [Schleiermacher], *Dialektik*, pp. 305ff. (D)
[377] [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, §175 (d), p. 141. (H)

analytical thought, and the ineffable individual aspect, which belongs to the realm of free synthesis.[378] We noted above that every act of reason possesses a dual general relation to the objective system of identical acts and to the subjective nexus of the distinctiveness of its author. The problem, then, is that an individual work must be comprehended in terms of these two unities.

The *Ethik* takes us up to this question. If hermeneutics has an answer, then it must be its material principle.[379] For it will sum up the approach that, when elaborated, will become a full-fledged system of hermeneutics.

The Shifting of This Position in Schleiermacher's *Ethik, Dialektik, and Hermeneutik*. Let us first eliminate a difficulty. It stems from nothing less than Schleiermacher's own explication of the relation between hermeneutics and the other sciences in the third paragraph of the *Hermeneutik*. In this passage, a rather curious argument is used to minimize the relation between hermeneutics and ethics: "Now, however, language has its natural side; differences in human spirit are also conditioned by the physical aspects of man and the earth."[380] One could ask, in this connection, whether the forms of ethical life dealt with in the *Ethik*, which include agriculture, commerce, and so on, are not also conditioned by the physical; and, further, whether the conclusion Schleiermacher draws concerning the technical sciences that deal with these forms of ethical life really follows, the conclusion, namely, that ethics and physics lead back to dialectics as a science higher than them.[381] Now in addition to this 697
indirect argument for [the primacy of] dialectics, there is a more direct one: "Language is the way in which ideas become real." It is "the means of mediating the communal character of thought." Thought has "no other tendency than to produce knowing as something common to all." "As a result, grammar and hermeneutics share a common relation to dialectics."[382] That would mean that the subject matter of both dialectics and hermeneutics is the kind of thinking that aspires to be a knowing. Just as dialectics is the technique of constructing such thinking, hermeneutics would become the art of reconstructing it from language. In that case, hermeneutics would not cover the whole realm of discourse, because

[378] See [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, p. 306, n. 4. (D)
[379] Here we did not agree with Redeker's interpretive insertion.
[380] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 11. (D)
[381] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 11. (D)
[382] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 11. (D)

the *Dialektik* expressly excludes what belongs to art in the narrow sense.[383] The *Dialektik* does, indeed, go on to confirm this—albeit much more cautiously. The discussion of how the relativity of thinking is overcome in the realization of the idea of knowing[384] may also be applied to understanding works of art insofar as such understanding is a realization of the idea of knowing. The note in the *Ethik* that is devoted to hermeneutics vacillates in a similar way.[385] One can almost feel the uncertainty. Is hermeneutics really a technique in the sphere of knowing, to be excluded from the sphere of signification? The phrase "from the perspective of language"[386] would appear to protect it from such a restriction. And this surely is the controlling perspective, because it is emphasized both here and in the previously cited paragraph of the *Hermeneutik*. If we identify language with thinking and if both fall under the heading of knowing, then the position assigned to hermeneutics here as a technique of knowing follows necessarily. It seems we have arrived at the point where we can gain some insight into the reason why no amount of hermeneutical skill can remove the ambiguity of these passages taken together. Schleiermacher viewed language as a system of concepts, and this places it in the sphere of knowing. As a result, he was inclined to shift hermeneutics to that sphere as well and make it dependent on dialec-
698 tic, the technique of knowing. In the *Hermeneutik*, reference to works of art sometimes takes a back seat to a focus on the production of those thought processes aimed at knowing. At any rate, this is my conjecture about this peculiar uncertainty over the relation of hermeneutics to the technique of knowledge production and to works of art in the more narrow sense.

The Earlier Systems

These artificial problems are of further interest only to those who wish to theorize about a total unity of the sciences. We are happy to leave them behind and to explore instead the unique significance of the presuppositions that we have derived from [Schleiermacher's] ethics as well as the overall relation of ⟨hermeneutics⟩ to ethics and

[383] See [Schleiermacher], *Dialektik*, p. 305. (D)

[384] See [Schleiermacher], *Dialektik*, p. 260f. (D)

[385] [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, p. 306, n. 4, Braun, p. 356, §189: "From the perspective of language, the technical discipline of hermeneutics is based on the fact that discourse can count as an objective presentation only if it is derived from language and is understood on that basis; on the other hand, however, discourse can only arise as the action of an individual and, as such, its less essential elements will contain a free synthesis, even if its content is analytic. The need to balance both moments makes understanding and interpretation arts." (D)

[386] See [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, p. 306, n. 4. (D)

dialectics. Concerning this relation, we can draw only negative results from a comparison to other systems. A genuinely fruitful integration of the various sciences did not really begin until the eighteenth century.

Anticipations: Leibniz and Vico. Leibniz, whom we cannot praise too highly, was the first to point out the link among language, mythology, and history. His younger contemporary, Vico, whose prescient *New Science* is one of the greatest triumphs of human thought, was the first to arrive at a most fruitful relationship between history and philosophy—albeit by other routes. The method of interpreting ancient poets as established in his "poetical metaphysics"[387] and "poetic logic" contains a conception of the art of interpretation as a speculative-historical science that is similar to Schleiermacher's, even though Vico's approach differs by focusing on poets as representatives of an epoch of the human spirit. After [Leibniz and Vico] the effort to connect philosophy and history disappeared, and with it any basis for a true, universal hermeneutics of the sort that Schleiermacher was later to establish. [Early versions] of so-called universal hermeneutics are hardly worth mentioning in this regard. For example, in his dismally inadequate pamphlet,[388] the older Ernesti limited hermeneutics to the theory of the philological treatment of works of all languages according to the precepts of the philology of the day. The Wolffian school then jumped from the 699
frying pan into the fire by turning hermeneutics into a subdivision of applied logic.[389]

Subsumption of Hermeneutics Under Philosophy (Logic, Psychology). Chladenius's approach was more fruitful in subsuming hermeneutics under psychology and defining it as the art of interpreting discourse and writing—thereby already extending it in the direction that Schleiermacher was to value so highly.[390]

[387] *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, [abridged form of the 3d ed. (1744), trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970)], bk. II, chs. 4 and 6. (D)

[388] Ernesti, *Compendium hermeneuticae profanae* (1699). (H)

[389] See the several polemics of Ernesti against "analytical method," *Compendium* II, c, 10, §§33ff. For the rest, he speaks of the use of philosophy just like Flacius, *Compendium*, §27. Keil agrees fully with his pronouncements in the *Hermeneutik des Neuen Testaments* (1810), §23. (D)

[390] See Chladenius, *Einleitung zur richtigen Auslegung vernünftiger Reden und Schriften*. In §177 he shows that the place of hermeneutics should be determined by the theory of the soul, not by the theory of reason. ⟨§177, p. 97: "Thus hermeneutics is not a part of the theory of reason. Rather, it is a discipline in its own right, whose place depends on the theory of the soul."⟩ (D)

Chladenius's effort to derive hermeneutical theory from psychology offers a number of splendid ideas, including, for example, his doctrine of a "perspectival point" [*Sehepunkt*] in historical writings. He was—true to his school—also a forerunner of Schleiermacher in his predilection for mixing logic into psychological considerations. Hereafter "psychological interpretation" often showed up as a slogan in hermeneutical proposals, but this subsumption of hermeneutics under psychology was not really worked out.[391] The efforts made by Spinoza's friend and then by Kant to define the relation between hermeneutics and philosophy did not have a beneficial impact on the conception of this relation.

The Subsumption [of Hermeneutics] Under History. While all these initial efforts to subsume hermeneutics under philosophy in a scientific manner remained virtually without success, the attempt to subsume hermeneutics under the historical disciplines did not even reach the point of being formulated clearly. Semler, a mind continually in ferment, was simply incapable of developing this sort of organized arrangement. Eichhorn, in his remarkable proposal for a hermeneutics,[392] speaks of the transformation of the reader into a contemporary of the author as also the basic movement of historical
700 interpretation. But in practice his position between studying history and the Bible led him to subordinate the latter to the former. Keil expressed the principle of this subordination quite clearly,[393] but he had such an impoverished notion of history that it would be a joke to say that he subsumed hermeneutics under the laws of historical science.

The dream of deriving all the sciences from principles of the highest generality may certainly be excused when we look back to the sterile isolation of the sciences at that time. Hermeneutics shows that whatever its excesses, this aspiration would ultimately bear fruit. Like grammar, linguistics, aesthetics, and the study of mythology, hermeneutics acquired its scientific form only after philosophy had penetrated its historical subject matter.

Ast and Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher's claim to the title of founder of a scientific hermeneutics, that is, one grounded in a philosophical approach to history, is challenged by a man who arrived

[391] Keil, *Hermeneutik*, p. 29; [see] Beck, *Observationes crit. exeg.*, pt. V, 15ff., which offers a reflective, subtle account of this relationship. (D)

[392] [Eichhorn], *Allgemeine Bibliothek der biblischen Literatur* (Leipzig, 1792), vol. 4, pp. 330ff. (D)

[393] Keil, *Hermeneutik*, p. 7f. According to this [passage], discovering the sense of a discourse or text is evidently a historical inquiry. (D)

there before him and who also crossed his path in another way, although this man brought little to his work other than the conceptual frenzy of the philosophy of identity. That man was Friedrich Ast. Although his ultimate contribution to the discipline was minor, we may use him to illustrate the antitheses that philosophical constructions of history imported into hermeneutics from the outset. Like Schleiermacher, Ast began by assuming the dominion of philosophy over the empirical sciences. Both made their way to hermeneutics through philosophical speculation about history, and both finally used the method of construction. But for Schleiermacher, being was the essence of things; for Schelling's disciple, becoming. Thus Schleiermacher developed a classification of forms as the presupposition [of hermeneutics], while Ast developed a classification of stages. Ast related the particular work to its world-historical stage as a higher totality,[394] while Schleiermacher related it essentially to individuality and language.[395] Schleiermacher developed his basic principles in that dialectical form that he alone, among all the Germans, had mastered by testing the propositions of F. A. Wolf and Friedrich Ast. He polemicized against Ast as a "nebulist,"[396] but it would not be fruitful to discuss this polemic here. For, although he certainly attacks the unscientific form of Ast's thought, he does not come to grips with his general theory of the philosophy 701
of history and its application to hermeneutics. Quite apart from his manner, Ast's view must be placed beside Schleiermacher's, at least provisionally, if only because they both sprang from the same characteristic trait of the time. But they can stand side by side only as long as we focus on the arbitrary way they construct a philosophical-historical system. For in its application to hermeneutics Schleiermacher's perspective produced an epoch-making achievement in the history of philology and grounded hermeneutics as a science. The pompous language of our Schellingian philosopher could make no such contribution to either discipline.

Schleiermacher and Wilhelm von Humboldt. Another figure must be considered in our comparative examination of Schleiermacher's ethical presuppositions. I refer to Wilhelm von Humboldt. His kinship to Schleiermacher is apparent from the notes that Wolf added to Humboldt's account of the study of classical antiquity. A philo-

[394] Ast, *Grammatik, Hermeneutik und Kritik*, pp. 170ff. (D)

[395] "On The Concept of Hermeneutics," see [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 363. (D)

[396] [Schleiermacher], *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 3, p. 376, *Nebulisten*; p. 381, *Nebelei und Schwebelei*. (H)

sophical knowledge of the Greek nation is claimed to be the goal of philology. Humboldt's views on the relation of individuality to language and nationality are very similar to Schleiermacher's. Humboldt treats not only individuals, but also nationalities and languages as unities.[397] Neither approaches them in a purely historical way, however. Such an approach would have to trace causes and effects on the level of the whole and the parts. Their perspective treats every sphere, be it individuality or language, as an artistic whole formed by its own creative idea: We are never shown a pure causal sequence, but merely articulated systems.[398]

702 *B. Exegetical Procedure and the Material Principle of Hermeneutics*

The Presuppositions of Exegetical Procedure. The conclusion that hermeneutics depends on a philosophical approach to history may also be reached by the opposite route that starts from exegesis. For one thing, the procedures of interpretation depend on the views of the age concerning the human spirit and its history, even if most interpreters have not been aware of it. Beyond that, however, they also depend on the techniques that arise in response to and in the service of these views of the age. Accordingly, the task of hermeneutics is to bring such assumptions to consciousness and to demonstrate the form that particular exegetical operations take on as instruments of this purpose. The scientific expression of this correctly apprehended relation is the dependence of hermeneutics on a philosophical treatment of the historical sciences. The expression of this dependence within hermeneutics is its basis in a material principle.

The Awareness of These Presuppositions also Arose Apart from the Material Principle. It is apparent that the material principle can only originate from an explicit intuition of the relation among language, spirit, and history, and thus only from an application of more general sciences to hermeneutics. Accordingly, the principle only attains full scientific clarity when the above dis-

[397] "[E]very nation, quite apart from its external situation, can and must be regarded as a human *individuality*, which pursues an inner spiritual path of its own." Wilhelm von Humboldt, *On Language: The Diversity of Human Language-Structure*, [trans. Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 41]. (D)

[398] If one does not want to abandon all hope of discovering coherence among human phenomena, one must necessarily fall back on some independent, original cause that is not itself conditioned or a fleeting appearance. But one is thereby led to a principle that operates from within. (D)

cussed place of hermeneutics among the totality of related sciences is grasped. The scattered reflection that aims at this intuition can at best arrive at an intimation or assumption about the material principle. Even so we need to pursue how the material principle turns up here and there with increasing clarity in interpretation and in specific rules as the inner and invisible unity of both, until we finally arrive at the point where the sciences converge to give it clear expression.

The Mechanistic-Teleological View of Spirit in the Earlier Stages [of Hermeneutics]. The earlier period is virtually devoid of insight into what a system of production is. It approaches a work simply as so many ideas that an author intends to communicate. Language, 703
which common agreement has molded into an instrument of communication, is simply a means to an end. The same can be said of the logical and rhetorical aids that arrange ideas in such a way as to attain the purpose of comprehending them. Composition and language possess a merely instrumental interest for an author. Where the intention is fulfilled, that is, where one has come to grasp the particular ideas that the author sought to convey, the instrument becomes superfluous.[399]

Rhetorical Interpretation. Even in Melanchthon's otherwise excellent *Rhetoric*, a fine work based on close study of Aristotle and Cicero, which also has a hermeneutical purpose, any internal order discovered by rhetoric and logic is seen as the mere result of the intention of achieving a discourse that is intelligible, memorable, and forceful. The influence exercised by rhetorical form in determining this view should not be overlooked. It is evident in the mass of material that Flacius appropriated from rhetoric, and it will gradually disappear only when the rhetorical perspective is completely transformed. This perspective views everything in a work through the schema of an external teleology, nothing as the explication of

[399] Definitions also rest on this [ideational] foundation up until Ernesti and beyond. "If anyone wants to understand a book, be it historical or dogmatic, he must connect the same ideas with the words that the author connected with them." ⟨See Christian Wolff, *Logik*, "De viribus intellectus humani" (1735), p. 143ff.⟩ "If the understanding of a discourse concurs with the thought of its author, and is, consequently, in accord with its purpose, it is called true and correct" (Baumgarten, *Biblische Hermeneutik*, §6, p. 22). "Interpretation, however, is the faculty of showing what the underlying meaning of someone's discourse may be, or of bringing it about that another person may think the same thing as the writer" (Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis Novi Testamenti* [1761], p. 4). See Morus, *Hermeneutica Novi Testamenti*, p. 6f. (D)

something inner. It sees deliberate intent everywhere, never a spontaneous self-formation of thought. It concentrates on particular ideas and their logical relations by first dissolving all complex psychological connections. We see the consequences of this rhetorical intent in considerations about the purpose of texts, about composition, tropes, and so on.

Logical Interpretation. The logical method of interpretation, developed by Christian Wolff, is merely an extension of this outlook. Wolff emphasizes, however, that the logical coherence of a work is
704 not something external to it, an idea already found in Flacius. However, the conception of an inner human nature here is the most impoverished imaginable. It is treated as a logical mechanism. When the mechanism gets stuck one may occasionally help it out by inserting definitions and improving its syllogisms. Such a view is, of course, unsuited to historical texts. Therefore, it never gets beyond the obvious requirement that one must understand sentences. Even so, Wolff's school spawned some efforts at psychological interpretation, inasmuch as his system contained remnants of the stimulating ideas of Locke and, especially, Leibniz. We have already paid tribute to Chladenius in this connection. Pietism also contributed something to this psychological approach through its classification of the affections, however unpsychological this classification was.

As hermeneutics and exegetical efforts branched out in the second half of the eighteenth century, three approaches to interpretation emerged, although they were not developed with any consistency.

The Methods of Grammatical and Historical Interpretation: The Dissolution of Their Unity. The most widespread and fruitful of these approaches was the [kind of] historical interpretation that was connected with grammatical interpretation. Ernesti regarded these two terms as identical.[400] For him grammatical interpretation was a historical inquiry directed at the sense of words. Keil expresses the same view virtually in the same words.[401]

[400] See Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, p. 11: "Whence the literal sense is also called the 'grammatical' sense; indeed, the word 'literal' is the Latin translation of the word 'grammatical.' It is called no less rightly the 'historical' sense, because it is restricted, like the others, to what is in fact in the testimonies and authorities." (D)

[401] See Keil, *Hermeneutik des Neuen Testaments* (1810), p. 8: "According to this, the investigation of the sense of a discourse or a text is obviously a historical inquiry; on this account, the explanation of an author and also of the books of the New Testament may properly be called historical." Against C. F. Stäudlin, *De interpretatione librorum Novi Testamenti historica non unice vera* (Göttingen, 1807), *Göttinger Pfingstprogramm*. (D)

Eichstädt, in contrast, regarded historical and grammatical interpretation as two separate things; indeed, he gives the interpreter the option of adding a third approach: philosophical interpretation.[402] The complexity increases further when we find historical and psychological interpretation being mixed. We place no value on either the former unity or the latter plurality. The former is purely formal and unable to really permeate hermeneutics, while the latter highlights the incapacity to grasp the overall coherence of the intertwining strands of a work. 705

However, the concept of history underlying this so-called historical interpretation is important. It corresponds to the sensualism of the age. The exegete traces the same constellation of ideas through all related authors and writings, without believing in the productive and transformative power of spirit, and without any sense for individual contexts and individual forms. In his hands, the fabric of ideas in every text of an age unravels into the same old motley threads; spirit is simply the indifferent and virtually selfless medium in which opinions intersect. One is reminded here of Locke's blank tablet. How fortunate that everyone had the same capacity for natural theology, and that even morality, as Semler thought, was inscribed on this tablet before time began to etch its bewildering marks upon it. Here the interest of the exegete goes beyond the work to its age: It is historical; or rather, pseudohistorical, for true history is indifferent to the whirl of motives and influences. If that were all there is to it, history would not be worth the telling. True historical interest is based on a genuine and coherent history of ideas where each progression can only be grasped through a relatively creative act. When, on the other hand, pseudohistory came to be linked with a corresponding psychologizing that scattered the motives of inner life, it gave rise to the ideal of conceiving history pragmatically. This pragmatic perspective thinks it has comprehended the world of ideas when it has split it into its atomic parts.

Initial Steps[403] to Develop a Synthetic Procedure in Aesthetic Interpretation. In opposition to this mere analysis of what has been thought, the principle of synthetic or re-creative interpretation emerged even before romanticism and Schleiermacher gave it clearer expression. It surfaced first in aesthetic discussions. Lowth[404] origi-

[402] In *Acroases des Morus*, ed. Eichstädt, p. 7. (D)

[403] Reading *Beisätze* as *Ansätze*.

[404] Robert Lowth, *Praelectiones de sacra poesi hebraeorum* (London, 1753); 1758–62 introduced to Germany by Michaelis (1769–70). (D)

nated it. In Germany its appearance coincided with Heyne's endeavors and the movement of literary criticism. Georg Lorenz Bauer, from the school of Heyne and Eichhorn, worked in this manner to
706 connect it with historical interpretation.[405] Koppe likewise followed Heyne's lead and took up where Grotius left off.[406]

Herder, whom we briefly characterized above as the great representative of this aesthetic, re-creative approach, exercised an incalculable influence on the initial development of a synthetic interpretation in romanticism. But this movement toward a synthetic treatment of exegesis first acquired a firm reference point in Fichte's philosophy, whose epoch-making influence we have already noted. We further showed how the romantic [idea] of aesthetic reconstruction arose from this system, from Herder's example, and from the poetic movement [centered in] Goethe, and how all these elements influenced the formation of Schleiermacher's hermeneutical principle. Let us now look at Schleiermacher's hermeneutics from the other side by referring to the results of his ethics in order to come to the realization that his hermeneutical principle only seems to derive from it by an illusion produced by systematics.

The Material Principle of Schleiermacher's Hermeneutics. Reconstruction. Hermeneutics is the Theory of an Art or Technique. We saw that, according to the *Ethik*, the task assigned to the general science of hermeneutics is to reconcile what is identical as exhibited in language with what is distinctive as contained in the synthetic elements of construction. This task moves between two poles: the individuality of the author—which accounts for the synthetic elements of a work—and language as a system of concepts. If we were to think of the language of a work as purely identical, then the business of the interpreter would be to furnish a purely mechanical analysis. And if we were to think of the combination of ideas as purely individual, the task would be completely insoluble. But language comes into being continually through individual acts; a genius produces new expressions, new linguistic combinations; therefore, even language can be understood only by means of an inner recreation of this process. On the other hand, the synthetic elements are linked to the analytical elements: that means that a synthetic combination can be attained through reconstruction. On both [the linguistic and the individual] sides we have a free activity, which

[405] Georg Lorenz Bauer, *Hermeneutica sacra V. T.* (1797). (H)

[406] Wolf also distinguishes among grammatical, historical, and rhetorical interpretation (*Museum der Altertumswissenschaft* I [1807]). (D)

attempts to reach the author through reconstructive synthesis. However, it can never be explicated into rules. "Every ordered production whereby we are conscious of general rules whose application to particulars cannot be reduced to still other rules"[407] we call art. Hermeneutics is thus a theory of rules, namely, the theory of the 707
rules of reconstruction, because this method manifests itself on both its sides.[408]

This method is reconstructive only insofar as it reproduces the constructive process itself. The theory of reconstruction, accordingly, consists of rules for reproducing the total process through which a work comes into being. A hermeneutical theory exists only insofar as the precepts form a system whose premises directly and clearly reflect the nature of thought and language. We can draw the following conclusion from this: The material principle of hermeneutics is the theory of reconstructing a work from the language and individuality of the author. It is based on understanding the production of language and thought in their unity.

The Formula: Understanding an Author Better Than He Understood Himself. The interpreter should understand an author better than he understood himself.[409] Schleiermacher's principle of reconstruction finds its most characteristic expression in this formula, which stands in direct contrast to the modest claims made by earlier hermeneutics on behalf of understanding. Because we have both voluntary and involuntary, conscious and unconscious representations—and a disciple of Fichte would never forget this doctrine[410]—the interpreter will, if he steadily follows the process of thought in an author, necessarily become aware of much that the author was unaware of, and thus understand him better than he understood himself.[411] It is the triumph of constant reconstruction to also pene-

[407] [Schleiermacher], *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology*, [trans. Terence Tice (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1965)], §132. (H)

[408] [Schleiermacher], ⟨*Sämmtliche Werke* III, 3, p. 366⟩: "A theory of the art" of interpretation "can only arise when language, both as an objective process of thought production and as a function of the spiritual life of the individual, is so clearly understood in its essential relation to thought that a completely coherent account of the process of connecting and communicating thoughts will also furnish the procedure for understanding them." (D)

[409] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 32. (D)

[410] This doctrine is a cornerstone of Fichte's *Science of Knowledge*. Leibniz had already anticipated it in his theory of "petite perceptions." (D)

[411] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, pp. 32, 45; and *Sämmtliche Werke* III 3, p. 362. (D)

trate to the darkest unconscious representations of the author, to re-create his linguistic sphere even where he himself was not conscious of it,[412] and to explain his thought processes, where, be-
708 cause of their rapidity, he remained unaware of them. Here again it is a matter of seizing upon the inner form, the coherence of the whole, in order to find the means of grasping the most intricate details.

The Circle in This Procedure: Ast. Ast had already noticed the apparent circularity of this undertaking.[413] The particular is to be understood with reference to the whole; and yet the understanding of the whole is first mediated through the understanding of the particular. Here an important hermeneutical law becomes apparent: All understanding begins with a presentiment,[414] as Ast called it, namely, with a shiftable hypothesis about the overall coherence of a work, just as all production begins with a seminal decision.[415] This leads to a procedure that may be regarded as the [principal] technique of this method, particularly because Schleiermacher never tires of refining it. The sole purpose of the first reading of a work should be to identify tentatively the main idea in its essential relations; at this stage understanding is still provisional. A second reading then reproduces the whole. This is the basis of the method that Schleiermacher tended to apply in exegesis. He begins with a notion of the articulation of the whole; this not only furnishes its organization, but also gropingly surveys, like a cursory reading, its "overall coherence";[416] he then notes difficulties and pauses thoughtfully over all those passages that appear to furnish insight into the inner core of the composition.[417] Only after all this can interpretation itself begin.

The Meaning of the Material Principle in Relation to the Hermeneutics of Observations. Schleiermacher's method, which focused on the inner form of a whole, stands in stark contrast to the then
709 prevailing hermeneutics of observations. As early as the first draft of his *Hermeneutics*, Schleiermacher had attributed the origins of this

[412] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 45; Schleiermacher here restricts this formula to the psychological area only because of the immediate purpose of the passage. (D)

[413] See Ast, *Grammatik, Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 185. (D)

[414] *Ahndung*. See Ast, *Grammatik, Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 186f. (H)

[415] *Keimentschluß*.

[416] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts*, p. 69.

[417] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, pp. 36–37. (D)

hermeneutics to the fact that interpreters were concentrating primarily on difficult cases. Their procedure, he thought, was the result of an artless practice that was aimed solely at avoiding misunderstanding.[418] To go beyond this predominantly formal explanation, we have indicated how differences in method arose from the various views of language, spirit, and history—the one view being based on empirical details, the other on the tendency to make philosophical connections. But to repeat the most important point, the principal achievement of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics appears to have been that it was based on a coherent, philosophical-historical view of language and spirit and insofar explains the process of production and accounts for reproduction. This achievement, in turn, can be considered in two ways: first, as transforming the method of exegesis, and second, as establishing a scientific form for hermeneutics. But active in both there is the one fundamental idea of Schleiermacher's philosophy. To be sure, it may appear differently like a beam of light being refracted by various planes. All of which is to say that Schleiermacher was the first to develop the philological and hermeneutical implications of the idea of creative individuality and correspondingly the method of synthetic interpretation that concentrates on the form of the whole.

C. The Scientific Method

Summary. We have distinguished two elements that somehow coexist in every hermeneutics: (1) the explication of the process of construction as that side of the material principle that ties it to the philosophical study of history, and (2) the codification of rules that connects this side to the practice of exegesis. The emergence of the latter points to Schleiermacher's substantial contribution. This contribution was influenced by the establishment of a general scientific material principle that demands that everywhere the explication [of principle] must ground the codification [of rules]. It can now be shown that even from the perspective of rules, the drive for scientific method had to push hermeneutics too into this path of explicating 710
the process of construction.

The Arrangement of the Rules as Re-creating the Process of Exegesis. One can hardly imagine a more imperfect scientific form than a mere concatenation of rules, however subtly and acutely this might be done. Rules, typically, arise as follows: Exegetical operations are derived from simple, irreducible procedures; these are then com-

[418] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 29f. (D)

pared and related to each other in the course of practice and reflection. A certain unity is then imposed on these operations by grouping them together under some rubric or other, such as a purpose or an object. Here the least adequate form, undoubtedly, consists of relating a series of rules to some object such as a trope or a historical circumstance.[419]

Rules are formulated to serve as an instrument for elucidating the purpose of guiding an artificial re-creation of the normal exegetical process. These fragmented elements are, of course, inadequate to represent such a re-creation. Still, because the exegetical process ultimately derives its unity from a purpose, codification may approximate it by making this purpose its unifying point. By explicating the possible manifestations of the purpose and the various ways of achieving it, codification approximates, as much as its logical rigidity permits, the supple movement with which the exegetical process seems to intuitively comprehend all possibilities and cases in a single moment. In this respect, Keil is definitely the best representative of the rule-giving hermeneuticists, and also the last of that line.

The Inadequacy of This Form Prompts an Explication of the Constructive and Reconstructive Process Itself. No matter how subtly an arrangement of rules re-creates the actual way in which the possibilities are integrated, the fact remains that such rules relate to an exegetical operation the way an automaton relates to a living body. Any effort to get at the inner life of interpreters and authors thus strengthens the need for an explication of what goes on in an au-
711 thor or interpreter. And inasmuch as construction and reconstruction are related as reality and copy, hermeneutics prefers to pursue reality rather than its shadow. Such a development is found in hermeneutics, aesthetics, and other disciplines, with due allowance for their differing forms; indeed, Lotze even attempted to transform formal logic into an explicative science.[420] To be sure, those other disciplines have been far more successful in discarding the residual concern with codifying rules than hermeneutics has been to this day. But how can an explicative treatment succeed in giving a scientific account of all the various processes that contribute to a work? We are dealing exclusively with formal conditions here; the scien-

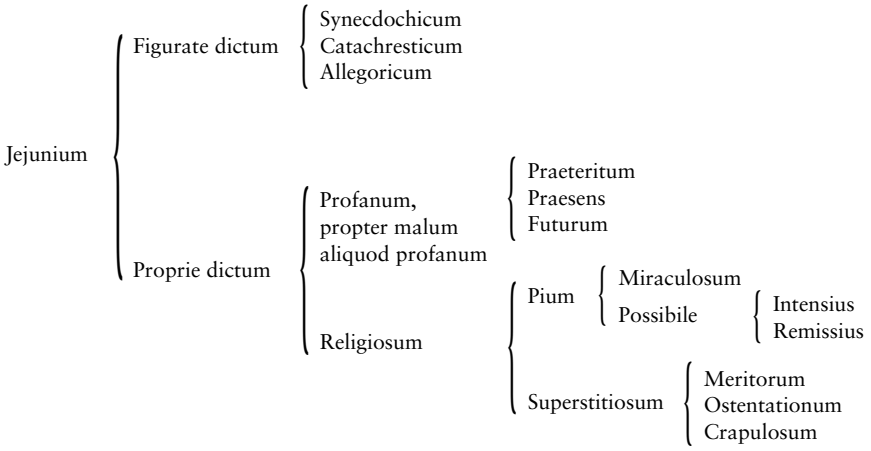
[419] One finds this frequently in Flacius and Glassius. However, Flacius also often arrives at the perfect form, especially in the parts that stem from the superbly developed rhetoric of the ancients, for example, on the purpose of a work. (D)

[420] See Rudolf Hermann Lotze, *Logik* (1843). (H)

tific basis for the material principle and its correct execution were discussed above (B). And even with this limitation, the most we can do is allude to differences in scientific approaches. Because these differences concern the philosophical treatment of the entire realm of experience, they are much too general to demonstrate them through such remote and isolated details.

Classification in Earlier Hermeneutics. We begin with an analogy between Schleiermacher's method and that of the earlier systems of hermeneutics. Both established systems of classification. Now it would be unfair to the earlier systems to say that their classifications were intended to establish a purely external ordering of observations. For, in fact, [the proponents of] the earlier hermeneutics believed that classification captures something of the essence of things. This certainly applies to Flacius's division between rules derived from Scripture and rules derived from human nature, as well as to Glassius's once celebrated division of tropes. Flacius's incessant schemata and tables are rooted in his powerful logical impulse and the drive to grasp the inner nature of things. Yet his classifications did not get beyond the accidental grasp of what are often inessential characteristics as criteria of division. So for us they retain value only as a collection of examples arranged under arbitrary rubrics.[421]

[421] For the sake of illustration, here is a genuine schema of Flacius. (*Clavis* II [Basel, 1629], p. 349), 712. (D)



Now alongside this scientific method, a very different method of explanation was beginning to appear. In the last century this method was cultivated both in empirical psychology and in hermeneutics. Chladenius was its proponent.

712 **The Value of Schleiermacher's Method as an Explanation of the Process with Which a Work Begins.** How, then, is Schleiermacher's method related to this earlier one? We have shown that Schleiermacher equates his method of classification with an explanation of the process itself. In other words, the methodological assumption of his hermeneutics is that the process of thought and language production unfolds in the form of an antithesis. It is, to be specific, a positive antithesis, which has its antecedents in Schelling and ultimately harks back to Plato's *Theaetetus*. We saw, further, that, as far as the process is concerned, the original and crucial antithesis is between the distinctive and the identical. Schleiermacher goes on to superimpose a whole network of antitheses on hermeneutics.[422] Now compared to the earlier classifications, the new form is superior in two respects. First, it really establishes an explanation of the process that gives rise to a work, an explanation based on a coherent view of the human spirit and history. We have already discussed this point. Second, while such simple antitheses carve up the inner continuity of the process into rigid, isolated concepts that are not at all capable of getting at the relations of particulars, the positive antithesis does a superb job of logically reproducing the inner relations between the antithetical elements and everything lying between the rigid extremes.[423]

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Nevertheless, a system of hermeneutics cannot simply be content to include these relations *virtualiter*. Nor does it suffice to view these relations in the form of a simple, logical schema of an antithesis. Natural and artificial tropes, organic and mechanical connections of sentences, subjective and objective sequences of thought, form, and image as the seed of the formative process—such antitheses reveal wide variations in the thought processes and language—yet is not this process governed everywhere by the same laws? Is not our main concern in every case to understand the relations of these antitheses in accordance with their own sources and to trace them back to an inner law or, at least, a universal inner mode of action of spirit? Our interest must be directed to the real explanation of what these impoverished and uniform antitheses merely purport to ex-

[422] One has only to compare [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, pp. 11, 14, 71, 79ff., 95, 96, 176, 202, 152, 154, etc. (D)

[423] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 245. (D)

plain: the inner relations among these different kinds of spiritual process. Such a real explanation must be based on the specific character of the mental processes involved.

Schleiermacher's discussion of the double triangle of the positive antithesis is one passage we would like to see elaborated by means of real explanative grounds. It is not that we expect it to be easy to capture these phenomena on the basis of the innermost laws of spiritual life. The least ⟨we⟩ can do is to become aware of method: Arbitrary schematisms that offer hasty solutions and the promise of a premature scientific satisfaction should not be allowed to hamper the course of our inquiry.

The Relation Between the Codifying and Explicative Elements in Schleiermacher: The Technical and Critical Sciences. Now how did Schleiermacher define the relation between codification and explication? According to his peculiar systematics, the important point is the position of hermeneutics in the realm of the disciplines that border on ethics. Where they encounter the uncharted territory of history, the four main fields of ethics are, so to speak, encircled by a double row of sciences, in which the meditative and the experiential interpenetrate in two ways. One group, the critical, consists of philosophical treatments of particular disciplines. Philosophical grammar is an example. The procedure of the others, the technical, he describes as follows: "For purposes of active intervention in a given area, it seeks to ascertain, through comparative observation, the circumstances and conditions under which one can 714
most easily and surely overcome resistance."[424] It is as such a technical discipline that hermeneutics takes its place beside rhetoric for Schleiermacher.

We do not want to dwell on the confusion that [this] systematic change seems to cause in the relation of hermeneutics to the discipline that was first called "rhetoric," then, following the practice of Wolf, "grammar," which is finally divided into didactics and grammar in Schleiermacher's *Ethik*. This is the inevitable result of an arbitrary construction that deals with fields of knowledge as though they were unclaimed territory that philosophy should apportion. Only two further points need attention here. First, the distinction between the critical and the technical must become problematical when one recognizes that Schleiermacher abandons it himself in the *Aesthetik* (Aesthetics). And if in the *Hermeneutics* itself, one compares the amount of material that explicates the process of production with that which codifies rules, then here too a connection between the

[424] [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, §109, p. 69. (D)

critical and the technical can be found. Second, the relation between hermeneutics and grammar or rhetoric, as Schleiermacher presents it, does not appear to be defensible because the theory of composition, and so forth, certainly does not belong to grammar, and was never dealt with under that heading. The explanation that one cannot really deal with style—which properly belongs to grammar—without touching on composition, appears to ignore the fact that one can approach style in two ways: either through the grammatical relation or through the inner form of the work. Bearing this in mind, one might prefer to relinquish the subject matter of the old rhetoric to hermeneutics as a scientific explication of inner form, and follow Humboldt's excellent approach in confining the grammatical treatment of style to the role played by language in determining style.[425] Meanwhile, this question may be left to the history of these disciplines. The age of interest in encyclopedic constructions is over.

D. The Organization of ⟨Universal⟩[426] Hermeneutics

Recapitulation of the Distinctive Significance of Schleiermacher's Hermeneutics. We have shown how Schleiermacher proceeds from
715 the art of exegesis and its re-creative roles to grasp its material principle by means of a conscious conception of the underlying views of spirit and history that are presupposed in all interpretation.

When this material principle is explicated it turns out to be nothing more than a conscious, scientific formulation of the presuppositions of the art of exegesis (see B above). However, the possibility of incorporating these presuppositions into the unity of a principle required that hermeneutics be brought into a scientific relation to philosophy and philosophical history (see A). It follows that the explicative part of hermeneutics takes priority over the part that deals with the codification of rules (see B, C). Now as Schleiermacher develops this first explicative part of his hermeneutics in accordance with his material principle, and defines its form and method with respect to related sciences, he turns hermeneutics into a science in the strict sense for the first time (see A, D). This seems to me to be the general significance of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics compared to the earlier systems, at least up to this point in our study, a significance that is not diminished by its debatable, and by my lights, scientifically untenable components.

Schleiermacher's material principle was consistently linked to another constellation of important ideas that had great impact on

[425] See von Humboldt, *On Language*, §19 and §20. (D)
[426] See Dilthey's table of contents. (H)

his entire system. These ideas are so intimately bound up with his philosophy as a whole that no independent assessment of them is possible. They include the formal conception of the principle of reconstruction (see B), the relation between ethics and dialectic, the relation between the critical and technical sciences (see A, C), the stress on articulating the whole based on the codification of rules in the first part (see C), and finally, the method of classification that treats antitheses as real powers in things (see C).

These fundamental ideas furnish a perspective for evaluating each step taken by Schleiermacher's hermeneutics. The first step, and a very important one, consists of the first division in the material principle.

The Organization of Earlier Hermeneutics. What were the existing divisions of hermeneutics available to Schleiermacher? Despite its logical organization, it is not easy to find one's way in Flacius's system. Its divisions are based on all possible criteria, and, in the final analysis, particular clusters of rules simply stand side by side without rhyme or reason. There is a very curious double encapsulation that introduces the brief table of rules;[427] every rule can appear under three headings. To be sure, the narrowest heading, the 716
division between Scripture and subjective rules, is based on a correct idea, however obliquely and superficially it may be expressed. The other points that fall under more general headings[428] were arranged, initially at least, in a correct order, which, by the way, also managed to endure;[429] but, beyond that, they inject alien issues into hermeneutical operations. As a result, the three methods of the prevailing theology were elaborated in a veritable bestiary of schemata.[430] Franz was the first to try to improve upon this formlessness by simplifying the organization. But his simplifications ultimately amount to an impoverishment. His second rule,[431] for example, preserves, in no particular order, the most diverse operations, including historical interpretation, purpose, context, and the like. The orderly Baumgarten was the first to eliminate most of this alien ma-

[427] This set of rules is found under the third main heading *Regulae cognoscendi sacras literas* [of Flacius], *Clavis* II, p. 7. (D)

[428] See [Flacius], *Clavis* II, pp. 1–228; *De ratione cognoscendi sacras literas*. (D)

[429] See [Flacius], *Clavis* II, pp. 26ff.: *De variis difficultatibus in verbo, phrasi, sentitia aut tot habitu orationis*. Also [Flacius], *Clavis* II, pp. 38ff.: *De conciliatione pugnantiam dictorum*. See also [Flacius], *Clavis* II, p. 44: *De locutionibus et vocibus, ad ingenium naturamque hominum et locorum alludentibus*. (D)

[430] See [Flacius], *Clavis* II, p. 53: *De multiplici divisione sacrarum literarum*. (D)

[431] See W. Franzius, *De interpretatione Sacrarum Scripturarum secundum praeceptum pro intelligendi Sacris Bibliis*, pp. 39–124. (H)

terial.[432] He was compelled to retain the conclusions and the useful applications, but he went on to develop a number of hermeneutical operations that had only been hinted at earlier, especially that "concerning the historical circumstances of the passages to be interpreted."[433] By ranking these operations as of equal importance, he could place them all in proper sequence for the first time.[434] The similarity of Keil's drafts to Baumgarten's arrangement is evident. Keil was the first to transpose the order that we identified as the essence of rule making (see C) onto the organization [of hermeneutics]: [He] coordinates the simple operations that work together in interpretation. This represented an advance beyond Baumgarten, whose analytical method led him to divide the subject matter into a similar structural order based on ascending from simple to more complex operations.[435] Ernesti preserves this advance, even though his division itself is rather incomplete. In fact, his division is comparable to the incomplete division of Glassius, which relates to Ernesti's as Baumgarten's to Keil's.[436]

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[432] "Other treatments that appear in many textbooks of this type belong to other sciences and parts of theological scholarship." The doctrine of Holy Scripture belongs in dogmatics, and the doctrine of the various representations belongs to the theory of reason. ⟨Baumgarten, *Biblische Hermeneutik*, 16n⟩. (D)

[433] Baumgarten, *Biblische Hermeneutik*, pt. 3, pp. 134ff. (D)

[434] On Understanding Holy Scripture, On the Meaning of Words and Types of Discourse, On Historical Circumstances, On the Coherence and Analysis of Passages to be Interpreted, On the Purpose of Passages to be Interpreted, On the Explanation of the Truths Contained in Scriptural Passages (Dogmatic Interpretation of the Emphases in Passages, Aesthetic Interpretation, etc.). (D)

[435] Johann August Nösselt offered a similar arrangement in his overview of philosophical hermeneutics (*Anweisung zur Bildung angehender Theologen* [1786], I, §§77ff.). (D)

[436]

Glassius lib. II	**Ernesti**
I. de scripturae sensu dignoscendo	— de interpretatione universa
1. de scripturae sensu in genere	
2. in specie de sensu literali	— de sensu verborum
3. de sensu mystico in genere	— de verborum generibus et vario usu
4. de allegoriis	
5. de typis	
6. de parobolis	
II. de scripturae sensu eruendo	— sectio praeceptiva de sensu recte quaerendo
1. de primo interpretationis medio quod est loquelae et literaturae sanctae consideratio	— de usu loquendi reperiendo
2. de altero medio, quod est rerum ipsarum et contextuum consideratio	— de sensus reperiendi rationibus usus subsidiariis

Schleiermacher's Principle of Division: The Double Antithesis of the Distinctive and the Identical in Relation to Construction and Reconstruction. Schleiermacher's division [of hermeneutics] had to differ substantially from those of his predecessors. Neither the various aids nor the differences among operations could furnish him an adequate criterion for organizing hermeneutics. His material principle was based, rather, on the organization laid down in the *Ethik*; it was thus natural that his hermeneutics should take over the focus on the unique relation contained in the antithesis between the distinctive and the identical.

Moreover, inasmuch as interpretation is a coherent act, we are dealing with a double antithesis here. That is, reconstruction, as the reconciliation of the distinctive and the identical, may be one of two things. First, reconstruction may be the kind of antithetical combination in which the identical predominates. The realm where the identical predominates most, besides ethics, is language. The first aspect of exegetical procedure is, accordingly, to grasp the relation of speech to the whole of language. Second, reconstruction may be a combination in which the distinctive predominates, a combination that characterizes synthetic acts. Here it is a matter of the work arising from those acts, as they stem from the distinctiveness of the author. Schleiermacher calls this psychological explanation.

The totality of language and the entire thought of the author are, accordingly, the two encompassing unities that furnish a basis for 718
explaining a particular work. The first of these—language—cannot be superseded, for Schleiermacher considers any science that treats the systems of ideas of nations as [pure] objects of philosophical reflection, in the manner of his own ethics, as a merely beautiful dream for the time being. By contrast, the second unity—of the author—points beyond itself to "the totality of the surroundings determining his development and continued existence." "Thus, every speaker is intelligible only through his nationality and the age in which he lives."[437] Each of these unities, when enacted, explains the whole author; accordingly, if they were perfectly thought out, each would replace the other.

Completing this process would amount to a perfect reconstruction of language in its distinctive particularity: The particular would be made intelligible through language just as language would be made intelligible through the particular. The talent for hermeneutical reconstruction would be a unifying talent, just as the construction of a work itself is a unifying process. But interpreta-

[437] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 13. (D)

tion depends on a dual predisposition involving a talent for language and a knowledge of particular human beings.[438]

The Antithesis Involved in the Process of Interpretation. Corresponding to the two foci of interpretation, there are two possible procedures. We know from the *Ethik* that the individual is grasped through intuition. Thus intuition is at first active in all interpretation. It amounts to guessing at an author's individual manner of combination. Schleiermacher's favorite term for it is "divination": One places oneself immediately inside the author.[439] Based on one's own productivity, yet with an original focus on assimilating from others, divination apprehends an author through the same creative act—albeit conceived as receptivity—that generated the work in the first place.[440] Schleiermacher never tires of depicting this philological attitude, which Otfried Müller[441] has so aptly called "congeniality." It should be contrasted with the comparative procedure, which is more of an effort to grasp the unfamiliar from without, as it were, by comparing it to something related and familiar. This procedure is just as essential as the intuition [of congeniality] for assimilating what is individual. "Because what is produced with the character" of the distinctive "has merely personal validity, it can be
719 treated as a product of reason only to the extent that its known characteristics form a system. . . . Each distinctive trait, accordingly, presupposes all others."[442] Where the focus is on language, the procedure is predominantly comparative. "For all grammatical difficulties are overcome by a comparative procedure, as we continually relate something we already understand to a cognate that we do not yet understand, and so continually reduce the boundaries of misunderstanding."[443]

The Intersection of Antitheses. It is becoming clear that these antitheses are closely related without being quite congruent. Beyond all grammatical interpretation, the art of divination is required for those passages where "an original author has created for the first time a new turn of phrase, a new combination of language."[444] But

[438] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 16f. (D)
[439] See [Schleiermacher], *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 3, p. 354. (D)
[440] See [Schleiermacher], *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 3, pp. 362ff. (D)
[441] Karl Otfried Müller (1797–1840), classical scholar, professor in Göttingen. (H)
[442] [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, §253. (D)
[443] [Schleiermacher], *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 3, p. 361f. (D)
[444] See [Schleiermacher], *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 3, p. 362. (D)

the converse also holds. These antitheses permit an intersection that yields a fourfold gift of interpretation: an extensive and intensive linguistic talent, and an intensive and extensive talent for recognizing human individuality.[445]

A Shift in This Construction. The *Hermeneutics* published from Schleiermacher's literary remains presents a different version of this intersection, which seems to lead the reader down a false path.[446] It offers a divergent account of divination that identifies it with the prophetic. But this ⟨version⟩ has every earmark of having been a unique experiment in which even the best of minds can get led astray. ⟨If "the subjective-divinatory⟩ means divining how the ideas contained" in a speech "will continue to affect the speaker,"[447] even the most dedicated of enthusiasts for the intuition of individuality will sense the artificiality of this sort of exegesis. Moreover, this version disappears completely in both his lectures and the addresses [to the Berlin Academy], which contain the most extensive discussion of the issue. The two versions cannot coexist. It is evident that we are dealing with a single, experimental, divergent construction, 720
which is surely not on a par with the others, nor to be given preference over ⟨them⟩.[448]

The Ultimate Basis of What is Distinctive and New in These Constructions. The development of these antitheses resulting from their form [means that] whatever is viewed through them will appear as either classical or original, but when considered in their unity, as a product of genius.[449] With reference to the interpreter they show Goethe's schematic contrast between the pedantic and the nebulous to be an extreme application.[450] But we do not want to pursue this in further detail, for whatever the ingenious uses to which these two antitheses may be put, the special significance of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics can only concern the two more fundamental antitheses. We have already shown that they are nothing but the result of the positive antithesis of Schleiermacher's ethics, the antithesis between the distinctive and the identical. It is the very foundation of the hermeneutical system. We must now ask: How

[445] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 17. (D)
[446] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 31f. (D)
[447] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 32.(D)
[448] Reading *ihr* as *ihnen*.
[449] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 18. (D)
[450] See [Schleiermacher], *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 3, p. 376. (D)

does the view of literary products furnished by this antithesis compare with that of the earlier systems?

We have arrived at another crucial point in assessing the distinctive achievement of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics. Our exposition thus far has focused on formal points: the relation between philosophical history and hermeneutics, the scientific foundation of hermeneutics that develops from this relation into a material principle. The explanation of the process that gives rise to a work was still tied to an inadequate framework of classification and was therefore primarily descriptive rather than prescriptive. Now we must confront these ideas of Schleiermacher's ethics, which form the basis of his hermeneutical construction (and which were progressively elaborated in the principal points of our exposition and comparison) on their own terms without any admixture of methodological questions.

The Significance of the Basic View Underlying this Antithesis. We have come to the most significant historical point. We will describe the relation of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics to the earlier systems, as he himself saw it in its last accessible version. It seems that just
721 as with the method of classification as an explanation of a real process, there is also an epoch-making advance over the earlier systems in the way Schleiermacher's system is rooted in content. But he establishes such sharp contrasts as to at the same time call his results into question. Schleiermacher shares with Schelling and Hegel a strong opposition to the empiricism and lack of coherence characteristic of earlier science, at least as far as the method of classification is concerned. But he also finds other kindred souls because of his vehement rejection of an atomistic approach to mental life, and of what he calls the "suicide,"[451] which turns inner life into an aggregate of impressions that rush in from without. He is especially close to Wilhelm von Humboldt in his preoccupation with individuality as the innermost workshop of all historical life.[452] Like Humboldt, he emphasizes two forces that generate the particulars of history: first, nationality, from which there develops, as from an individual, a coherent totality of concepts; and second, distinctiveness, which, by means of synthetic acts, transforms the

[451] *Athenäum* I, 2, p. 272: ⟨"Inner life disappears under this treatment; it is miserable suicide. Human beings should exhibit themselves as works of art."⟩ (D)

[452] See Wilhelm von Humboldt, *On Language*, [pp. 41ff.]. (D)

ensemble of concepts to which language confines it into something individual.[453]

Now Schleiermacher tries to go beyond this view in two ways. First, he sees that the purely individual dimension in languages is cancelled by the rise of a language of scholars.[454] Here at least the idea of an encompassing unity of a common scientific movement is at hand, even if it is immediately absorbed into the concept of the identical. Second, he claims a development of forms that is supposed to influence both authors and language. It is noteworthy that this idea, which should have led him almost inevitably to a comprehensive history of form that moves beyond national borders toward unities deriving from the nature of things, is announced only to disappear again as the notion of form is tied to the inner law of individual languages. Those who have traced such forms as medieval morality plays or the epics of chivalry will agree that no conception of language can support the curious proposition that all forms of composition derive solely from the nature of a particular language and the communal life that grows up around it and is connected with it.[455] Indeed, as though he wanted to expose the specious alternatives underlying his own judgment, Schleiermacher goes on to add: "Here the individual personal element in what has become most commonly accepted is also the least prominent factor."[456] Thus the relentless consistency of his hermeneutic system turns his effort to compensate for its one-sidedness into an even cruder one-sidedness. 722

The Idea of Distinctiveness and Historical Development. We have seen that the schema of the identical and the distinctive transforms a sequential historical process into a juxtaposition of powers simultaneously at work in human existence. The course of history is contracted into a schematic line, into the uniform manifestation of reason in nature. However, what concerns us is precisely what is lost in this contraction. The crucial question is how the forms and ideas of religious world-views develop. Here the alternative, either identical

[453] While Humboldt tries to comprehend the mystical ground of the unity from whose unfathomable depths national individuality and the creative power of the individual emerge (*On Language*, p. 38), Schleiermacher's dialectical mind looks to ethics for a division of the essential forms in which this productive power, the unity of the identical and the distinctive, presents itself. (D)

[454] See [Schleiermacher], *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 3, p. 141. (D)

[455] See [Schleiermacher], *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 3, p. 375. (D)

[456] See [Schleiermacher], *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 3, p. 375. (H)

production or synthetic formation on the basis of individuality, simply will not do. At every level we find a multiplicity of synthetic elements that constitute the neutral base of every process occurring in the individual. His work must be accounted for in terms of these synthetic elements. The work's objective value is determined by its relation to these elements. For man is not here to be, but to act. The value of his work is determined not by its place in the overall scheme of his individuality, but by its place in the course of the development on which it has an impact. And what is true for its value is also true for its genesis. Man not only possesses ideas that are creatively at work in him, but he is also possessed by these ideas. And the circumstances within which his activity occurs are primarily responsible for the impulses that give it its distinctive cast.

All of this sheds a more favorable light on the foundations of historical interpretation and of construction in Ast. But it would be superfluous to spell out the implications of what we have established for Ast's basic hermeneutical ideas.

723 *E. The Limits of Universal Hermeneutics and Its Relation to Special Hermeneutics*

The Earlier Systems. The delimitation of the sciences is of interest only as an expression of an underlying principle. Flacius used the first formulation of this principle to expand the scope of hermeneutics to include whatever knowledge might be necessary for adequate interpretation. Special hermeneutics, which he treats separately, he calls praxis, a theory of rules leading to mastery of a whole subject matter. This distinction was lost, and only gradually did grammar, criticism, and the introduction to Biblical theology become separated from hermeneutics, for early systems of hermeneutics ⟨had drawn⟩ many elements from Biblical theology. Keil drew the boundaries that have since become customary.

Exclusion of the History of Interpretation. It is difficult to regard Schleiermacher's delimitation of the subject matter [of hermeneutics] as an advance. Keil had already reduced to the barest minimum the emphasis on the history of interpretation that is so pronounced in Ernesti and Flacius. And Schleiermacher banished it from hermeneutics altogether. What he adds to the proposition that there is "no other diversity in the method of interpretation" than the distinction between the grammatical and the psychological[457] cannot even

[457] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 20. See *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 3, p. 385. (D)

begin to furnish the simplest orientation to the history of interpretation for those who are strangers to it. Schleiermacher's exclusion of history, which appears in his treatment of every discipline, is quite indicative of his basic inclination to spin the whole of any discipline out of his own head and to rely as little as possible on its previous course. Anyone who takes a contrary view will approve of the fact that Schleiermacher's successors returned to the history of the discipline again, even if Lücke[458] and especially Clausen[459] may have overdone it.

Eliminating the Method of Exegetical Explication. Next Schleiermacher excluded the method of exegetical explication from hermeneutics. According to him development involves nothing other than an explication of the genesis of understanding: communicating the way one has arrived at understanding. Interpretation is distinguished from understanding only as speaking aloud is distinguished from inner speech, a view that follows from his conception of the relation between thought and speech. But quite apart from this, this contraction was influenced by the way he expanded hermeneutics at another point. For if interpretation is to include every fleeting mode of speech, that is, anything that requires to be properly understood, there will be so many forms of communication, ranging from the most ephemeral of jokes exposing an unspoken association of ideas in someone else's speech to our mighty commentaries, that the resulting proliferation will mock every effort to classify it. 724

How Schleiermacher Extended the Art of Interpretation to the Entire Sphere of Symbolic Action. Schleiermacher's principle led him to place special value on this expansion of hermeneutics. His justifications of it, in the first [address to the Berlin Academy],[460] all converge on a single point: The art of hermeneutics is not something isolated, but permeates all of life; it is present in all conversation, and matures considerably through such playful exercise. Here Schleiermacher appears to have been seduced into a fallacious argument due to a tendency to not put the true ground at the heart of his system to the test, and to instead attempt an indirect proof in cases where the whole cannot be given. In the same vein,

[458] F. Lücke, *Grundriß der neutestamentlichen Hermeneutik und ihrer Geschichte* (1817). (H)

[459] H. N. Clausen, *Det nye Testaments Hermenevtik* (1840, [German trans.] 1841). (D)

[460] See [Schleiermacher], *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 3, pp. 344ff. (H)

one could easily discover the historical outlook and the art of the historian in the telling of the simplest anecdote or in a critical examination of yesterday's news, and so extend all science into the general ethical realm. Once again Schleiermacher's systematics is the culprit, with its insistence on relating particular technical and critical sciences to the spheres of ethics. Still, anyone who rejects this particular systematic form will still have to acknowledge that specific disciplines are not artificial creations, but arise with inner necessity from processes or activities of spirit, and must be nourished by continuous contact with the ground of the latter. It was Schleiermacher's contribution to prove this to be true of hermeneutics. Nevertheless, the discipline does not need, contrary to Chladenius's psychological interpretation and to what Schleiermacher defends here, to incorporate this foundation into its very subject matter.

725 **The Relation Between Universal and Special Interpretation.** The most important question about the limits of universal hermeneutics concerns its relation to special hermeneutics. Here Schleiermacher initiated the reconciliation between the leveling effect of historical interpretation and the isolation of orthodox hermeneutical systems from the larger totality of the sciences. In paragraph 137 of his *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology* Schleiermacher sums up the contrasts as follows: "The special hermeneutics of the New Testament can consist only of more precise determinations of the general rules [of hermeneutics] with reference to the special relations of the canon."[461] First, this presupposes the proposition, the development of which we owe to grammatical-historical interpretation of Grotius and Turretini,[462] namely, that the hermeneutics of the New Testament is an application of universal hermeneutical rules to the special area of the New Testament. The rules of hermeneutics, however, are universal insofar as understanding of discourse is derived from the nature of the sentence, and insofar as human life is everywhere one and the same.[463] But because the treatment of the sentence in various languages and the form of the act of thinking vary for different genres and spheres, the scope of universal hermeneutics is limited. "To be sure, the scope of the universal is not very

[461] [Schleiermacher], *Brief Outline*, §137, [p. 57]. (D)

[462] Jean Alphonse Turretini, *De Sacrae Scripturae interpretendae methodo tractatus bipartitus* (1728). (D)

[463] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 25. (D)

large; for this reason hermeneutics has always begun with special hermeneutics and has not gotten beyond it."[464] No universal hermeneutics can be conceived that would not at least draw its examples from special hermeneutics. No less can we think of a special hermeneutics that is not based on a universal hermeneutics. Consequently, hermeneutics may take one of two forms: The universal can be emphasized to such an extent that special hermeneutics is only its corollary; or, conversely, special hermeneutics can be coherently organized on its own and then be referred back to universal principles.

The Relation Between Both Elements in Schleiermacher's Hermeneutics. As a result of this, one of these two types of hermeneutics must be subordinated to the other in Schleiermacher's system; we cannot assume that the two elements are on an equal footing. This 726
confirms what we have been assuming all along: Schleiermacher's hermeneutics is essentially universal, and his special hermeneutics is intended merely as commentary and a guide for theological application. No one will wish to deny this who keeps the approach of the introduction [of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics] in mind.

What, then, is the reason for establishing a special hermeneutics of the New Testament? The only reason Schleiermacher puts forward is the uniqueness of its language,[465] but we will do well to remember how broadly he conceives the concept of language. This will lead us to a detailed examination of Schleiermacher's view of the uniqueness of the canon.[466]

2. The Special Hermeneutics of the New Testament

A. The Canon and the Place of Biblical Hermeneutics in the System of Theology

The hermeneutics of the New Testament has two points of departure: It is subordinated not only to universal hermeneutics but also to theology. Therefore, both perspectives are required for a complete understanding of it. The peculiar difficulties involved in this dual relationship must be grasped at their root from the very outset if New Testament interpretation is to proceed on a sound footing.

[464] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 26. (D)
[465] See [Schleiermacher], *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 3, p. 27f. (D)
[466] See [Schleiermacher], *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 3, p. 27. (H)

The Conception of the Earlier Systems. How do the earlier systems conceive this relationship? Flacius juxtaposed rules derived from Scripture and rules derived from reason. So he kept both perspectives in mind. This was natural enough, because he had based his science on these very elements. But for him rules based on reason were merely scientific instruments for rules derived from Scripture. Christian Wolff and his disciples appear to have conceived the relation rather differently. Wolff himself thought up the idea of conferring demonstrative certainty on Biblical hermeneutics by basing it on universal hermeneutics. In his theory of [rational] thought, he let Biblical hermeneutics follow universal ⟨hermeneutics⟩—curious in this context—and worked out the relation between the two [accordingly]. Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten subsequently pursued the mutual relation of the two disciplines through all the parts of hermeneutics.[467] He everywhere applied the special characteristics of Scripture to the principles of universal hermeneutics. Now the special [Scriptural] characteristic, as contrasted with legal and philological interpretation, is none other than total, perfect inspiration. Naturally, from such a characteristic it is easy to derive such notions as mystical sense, analogy of faith, and an emphasis on parallels in hermeneutical technique. Here, then, a whole collection of dogmatic propositions about the inspiration of Scripture lurk beneath the concept of universal interpretation, which had surfaced [in Baumgarten] only to be submerged again.

727

Inspiration and the Teleological Treatment of Scripture. Baumgarten's conception of inspiration or of the canon amounts to a complete suspension of the universal rules of interpretation. These serve, as Baumgarten correctly notes, to explain every work by reference to its historical circumstances, purpose, and doctrines. ⟨The concept of inspiration⟩, on the other hand, transports everything into a single intelligible space, containing a pure, atemporal, relationless message of a truth for the whole world transcending all times and places. The consistent pursuit of this approach would require that all the characteristics of Scripture be referred to its essence, namely, its perfection. In fact, Glassius came remarkably

[467] A universal hermeneutics is indispensable to the special rules of Scriptural exegesis, but it does not make such rules superfluous or unnecessary. Each kind of speech or writing must presuppose a definite sort of rule of exegesis, but may contain more and go beyond what is necessary and useful for universal rules of interpretation. (D)

close to this. He established a complete classification of the perfections of Scripture with nine main divisions.[468] All classes of tropes and figures, for example, fall under the heading of *evidentia*; abbre- 728
viated expressions are collected under the heading *brevitas*. There is no more revealing example of the arbitrariness to which such teleological classifications can lead.

Accommodation. But even such blind idealism can be forced to compromise with reality and develop a second mediating tendency. After all, the divine purpose of Scripture is not accomplished purely in an ideal realm of absolute perfection; it also enters into the accidental forms of the world, which is, in the final analysis, where it is now present. This divine ingression constitutes a restriction, an adaptation, an accommodation. An ominous resolution of the contradiction! For, with the rise of the historical outlook and the ever increasing knowledge of reality furthered by ⟨improvements⟩ in philology, this vague and nebulous general notion of divine accommodation was soon transferred to individual Biblical authors. This led to the preposterous notion that there were ideals hovering in Judea engaged in a continuous inauthentic accommodation—a hermeneutical notion that soon enough became an accommodation itself for many authors.

Complete Elimination of the Concept of Inspiration in Any Form. At any rate, the hermeneutics that was based on the canon soon encountered an opposing development whose aim was to achieve an unqualified unity of method for general and Biblical hermeneutics. Its first representatives were the Remonstrants. This was the so-called historical method, that is, the effort to explain every idea in terms of the analogies of the age, the so-called ideas of the times. The purest expression of this approach is found in Keil, and he is, in his own way, as consistent and as misleading as his antipode, Glassius. The Bible [became] a conglomeration of writings that were brought together through mechanical accidents: Every book of the Bible is completely shot through with ideas of the times that had combined accidentally in the author. There is no trace of a sense that any new power might inter-

[468] *Liber I Tractatus II De integritate et puritate graeci N. T. codicis.* ⟨The titles of the nine chapters of the third treatise are as follows⟩: [(1) On Certitude and Clarity, (2) On Simplicity, (3) On Efficacy, (4) On Evidence, (5) On Plenitude, (6) On Brevity, (7) On Coherence, (8) On Reverence, (9) On Uniqueness]. (D)

vene in history. The underlying historical outlook is openly at war with Christianity.[469]

729 **Schleiermacher's View of the Creative Power of the Christian Spirit.** Now what is Schleiermacher's relation to the tension that had developed between the theological view of the Bible as a canon and the prevailing method of universal hermeneutics? While it is worth mentioning only as a sign of the times, Schleiermacher certainly spoke clearly enough in the controversy between Keil and Stäudlin, who, in any case, was very far removed from the old, strict view of the canon.[470] Schleiermacher's universal hermeneutical outlook differs totally from so-called historical interpretation. He recognizes, to be sure, that it offers a correct view of the relationship between the New Testament authors and their age. But he regards the expression "ideas of the times" as insidious. He takes the historical outlook itself to be erroneous wherever it seeks to deny to Christianity the power to form new ideas and attempts to explain everything by appealing to what was already on hand. Even from the perspective of general hermeneutics, Schleiermacher was keenly aware of the creative power of the Christian spirit permeating the New Testament. The idea of the creative personality, the very soul of his thought, was bound to have the effect of reforming the prevailing view of Christianity. The impact of ⟨this idea⟩ on the theology of the time is well known.[471]

The False Position of the Old Testament in Schleiermacher's Theology and in That of His Contemporaries. Schleiermacher's idea [of the creative personality] contributed to his rather restricted approach to the question of the canon. The cold acerbity and almost paradoxical severity of his pronouncements concerning the Old

[469] Ernesti's rules are also mostly based on philosophical interpretation, the most general kind of interpretation. However, because they deal almost exclusively with grammar, they avoid points of conflict between general and special hermeneutics; where they do happen to touch such points, they manage to slip felicitously and elegantly between the contradictions. (D)

[470] See C. A. G. Keil and H. G. Tzschirner, *Analekten für das Studium der exegetischen und systematischen Theologie* (1812–13), vol. 1, pp. 47ff. (D)

[471] Indeed, the point that the creative power of personality is the driving force of history was certainly the most relevant one in the polemic of his school against Strauss. And more recently, Hase has successfully maintained this position against Baur, along with the related point about the power of nationalities in history that was such an authentic part of Schleiermacher's outlook. It is also well known that Neander's historiography, which was the first to stress the meaning of individualities and the new formative power of Christianity, was dependent on Schleiermacher. (D)

Testament in ⟨*The Christian Faith*⟩ are well known. "Christianity does indeed stand in a special historical connection with Judaism; but as far as concerns its historical existence and its aim, its relations to Judaism and heathenism are the same."[472] "The combining of the Old Testament writings with the New in one Bible" derives "more from considerations of historical coherence" and is "primarily grounded in the ecclesiastical use of the former writings before the latter were collected."[473] This historical connection appears ⟨in Schleiermacher⟩ as something almost accidental. Christianity bears exactly the same internal relation to Judaism that it bears to heathenism. The relationship really reduces to the fact that the New Testament contains references to the Old. Indeed, Schleiermacher can even declare it permissible to exclude the Old Testament from the canon.[474]

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In this antipathy toward the Old Testament, one of Schleiermacher's deepest traits coincides with the theological outlook of the age. At first, it looks as if one recognizes here the old attitude of Halle, Schleiermacher's alma mater. Semler had been the first to express this antipathy against Judaism. In the midst of his intense preoccupation with the Old Testament and related languages and peoples, ancient artifacts, and texts, he remained amazingly indifferent to its basic world-transforming idea. Moreover, Gabler, Eichhorn, and Schelling, among others, were beginning to examine the Old Testament from the standpoint of comparative mythology. Georg Lorenz Bauer,[475] the forerunner of Strauss, was the first to approach the Old Testament in terms of comparative mythology in his remarkable *Hebräischen Mythologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments* (1802) (Hebrew Mythology of the Old and New Testaments), which combined the work of Eichhorn and Heyne, both of the Göttingen School. People were only too glad to divorce the subject matter of the Old Testament from the New. An enterprise such as Paulus's *Leben Jesu*[476] (Life of Jesus) would have been im-

[472] [Schleiermacher], *The Christian Faith*, [2d ed., ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), vol. I, §12, p. 60]; see also vol. II, §132. (D)

[473] *Der christliche Glaube*, 1st ed. (1821), I, §22, p. 23. (H)

[474] [Schleiermacher, *Brief Outline*, 2d ed., §115, p. 53; ⟨see *The Christian Faith*, vol. II, §132.⟩ (D)

[475] Georg Lorenz Bauer, *Hebräische Mythologie des AT und NT, mit Parallelen aus der Mythologie anderer Völker, vornehmlich der Griechen und Römer*, pt. 2 (1802). (H)

[476] Heinrich E. G. Paulus (1761–1851), German rationalist theologian who denied the supernatural.

possible had it occurred to him that the continuity of both Testaments requires them to have the same principles. In this climate, one generally followed the lead of Christoph Wolle,[477] a disciple of Wolff, in separating Old and New Testament hermeneutics. Thus Georg Lorenz Bauer, who wrote a hermeneutics of both Testaments, treated them separately, though admittedly his primary aim was to apply the new hermeneutical principles to the New Testament. Inspired by Hamann's profound understanding of Scripture, the incomparable Herder stood alone in proclaiming the unity of the Old and New Testaments; he stressed the unfathomable profundity of the Old Testament in his sharp polemic against the "archangel" Michaelis.[478] But Schleiermacher, who was Herder's disciple in so many other things, did not follow him in this fundamental characteristic of his theology.

731 **This Position Is Anchored in the Ultimate Concepts of Schleiermacher's System.** Still, it was not merely a characteristic of the times, nor his so-called Hellenic nature, which prevented Schleiermacher from recognizing the unity of the Old and New Testaments. It was, rather, his basic theological outlook. The special construction of *The Christian Faith*, in which Kant's and Herder's views combined with the notion of creative individuality and feeling, led from the idea of the people of God and the doctrine of the realization of the Messianic Kingdom to relating all Christian religious emotions immediately and exclusively to Christ.[479] Schleiermacher does not regard Christ as the culmination of the Old Testament revelation, but rather as the proper historical point of origin of Christianity.[480] To pursue this doctrinal issue further would take us to the ultimate concepts of the *Dialektik* and the *Ethik*. But because Schleiermacher's separation of the Old Testament from the New is, unlike his concept of synthetic construction, neither crucial nor unique, we shall forego further discussion of it.

[477] *Hermeneutica Novi Foederis acroamatico-dogmatica* (1736). (H)

[478] The only use of the designation "archangel" for Michaelis that the editor could verify comes from a letter that Heyne wrote to Herder; it describes Michaelis as "an archangel in a gaudy fool's costume." In *Von und an Herder. Ungedruckte Briefe aus Herders Nachlaß*, ed. Heinrich Düntzer and F. G. von Herder (Leipzig, 1861), vol. II, p. 141. I could find no corresponding pronouncement by Herder himself. (H)

[479] [Schleiermacher], *The Christian Faith*, I, §11, 4. (D)

[480] [Schleiermacher], *The Christian Faith*, I, §12, 2. This is a very instructive passage for understanding the relation of this view of Christianity to Schleiermacher's organic construction of all innovation as deriving from a concentrated seminal point. (D)

The Relation Between Philological and Dogmatic Interpretation. With this limitation in mind, we may now ask: What is the relation between philological and dogmatic interpretation, between universal rules of interpretation and the concept of the canon? Schleiermacher, fond of narrowing down a question gradually, begins with a new delimitation of the point at issue. Just as he rejects, on the one hand, the standpoint of historical interpretation, so, on the other, he now rejects the old validation of the canon. For he recognizes a "normative dignity" only in Christ, which, however, appears in the New Testament writings only in an imperfect and therefore in a merely contingent way.[481] He thus rejects [the assumption of] the absolute unity of the ideas in the various books of the New Testament.[482] He acknowledges neither a purely determinant inspiration—because without knowledge of this hypothesis the writings of the New Testament would have been unintelligible to their original readers—nor a delimiting inspiration, because this seemed to him to be even less acceptable given his philological standpoint. The efficacy of the Spirit remains "only the inner impulse"; every different view starts with the definite personality 732
of the Holy Spirit as an author, a position that Schleiermacher rejects.[483]

Thus the antithesis is no longer absolute. The dialectical method will now mediate by demonstrating the duplicity of the antithesis! The task is that of "balancing and combining these two modes of treatment, [i.e., the New Testament canon is to be handled as one whole, while each individual writing regarded in and of itself is nevertheless a separate whole.]"[484] It had been common to construe the antithesis to mean that the philological approach isolates each book of each author, while the dogmatic approach sees the New Testament as the work of one author. Schleiermacher replied:

> The philological view contradicts its own principles when it rejects common dependency in favor of individualistic development. The dogmatic point of view goes beyond its own requirements when it rejects individualistic development in favor of dependency, and thus destroys itself.[485]

We see that we are here dealing with a positive antithesis. The only remaining question is ⟨on which side⟩ is Scripture to be placed? This

[481] [Schleiermacher], *Brief Outline*, 2d ed., §108, [p. 51]. (D)
[482] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 81. (D)
[483] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 23f. (D)
[484] [Schleiermacher], *Brief Outline*, §136, [p. 57]. (D)
[485] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics*, p. 138f.

question focuses the whole problem of the relation between the canon and interpretation, between philological and dogmatic exegesis, and between unity and variety in Scripture. The difficulty becomes even more acute when we remember that Schleiermacher accepts the relation between Christianity and the ideas of the times as a subject for inquiry, but divorces Christianity so strictly from the whole course of Old Testament revelation that he does not ever mention its relation to the history and theology of the Old Testament in his *Brief Outline*. Yet the latter relation alone could have furnished a basis for recognizing Christ's attitude toward the earlier stages and toward the tensions stemming from them that reached into his time, thereby affording some—albeit inadequate—reference point for dealing with the question.

In keeping with his basic ethical outlook, Schleiermacher attempts to find his way even here by invoking the antithesis between the purely individual and the identical. The same relation that holds in the sphere of knowing between an author and a language applies in the religious sphere to the relation between Biblical authors and an identical Christian spirit. Given this presupposition, the point is to define this relationship directly without invoking the mediating link of any inclusive historical perspective. And Schleiermacher really does attempt to do this. Here are his words, curious even for the state of historical-critical questions in his day: "This is so partly because the individuality of the writers was itself a product of their relationship to Christ and partly because special consideration is due the more individualistic writers. . . . But Paul was so entirely
733 changed that it is better to interpret him by reference to the other New Testament writings than it would be to interpret him from any pre-Christian writings of his own. Because John evidently began to follow Christ as a young man, he was already a Christian when his individuality began to unfold."[486] He concludes that the philological approach itself must grant that the common dependency of the several authors preponderates over their individuality. For anyone who is not impressed with this peculiar demonstration, there is happily a footnote to the next paragraph: "For if dependence on Christ was of no significance for one's personal character and for the shortcomings of one's upbringing, then Christ himself is of no significance."[487] But in that case, Christianity itself would be nullified, with the result that we are once again brought back to the very

[486] *Ibid.*, p. 139.
[487] *Ibid.*

presupposition that all these contortions were designed to avoid. It would have been better to have been explicit about it. In any case, this positive antithesis, with a predominance of identity, is not a suitable foundation for a canon of exegesis. To assume it probable[488] that, wherever a passage differs from all the rest, a misinterpretation exists is, at best, a tentative hypothesis, of value only if it leads to a more precise justification. Schleiermacher goes on to adduce an analogy to the Socratic School and claims to know that "the kinship among the New Testament authors was greater than that among the Socratics, because the unifying force emanating from Christ was greater"[489]—a method of argument that we can no more adopt than the above.

Frankly, Schleiermacher's vivid imagination appears to have deceived him about the basis of historical certainty, a deception that shows up in the strangest way on several occasions in his investigations of Luke. If we cannot approve of either the approach or the result, then we may appeal, on the one hand, to what was said in the general introduction, namely, that the antithesis between what is identical and what is distinctive is simply too vacuous and too general to do justice to the concrete content of history. On the other hand, Schleiermacher should have related the Old Testament to the New in his hermeneutics, if not through a comprehensive hermeneutical treatment of both, then at least through an account of the connecting threads. This connection can only be factually proved and established by those accounts that succeed in some way or other in expressing the inner unity of the two. Related to this we will find that there is no formula for this unity. "The sense of any passage," says the only recent person who has revived the old form of hermeneutics for the entire Bible with some success, "is not fully explicated until the nature and basis of both its agreement and difference with all other already explicated passages is understood in a way that does not nullify the unity of the spirit that reveals itself in 734
Scripture."[490]

The Presuppositionlessness of Theological Exegesis. This is the place to add something about the freedom from dogmatic presuppositions. Our general exposition has shown that all interpretation begins with a shiftable hypothesis. For that reason alone, one cannot speak of presuppositionlessness. Nor can anyone credit this no-

[488] See *ibid.*, p. 140.
[489] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 82. (D)
[490] S. Lutz, *Biblische Hermeneutik* (1849), p. 176. (D)

tion who has learned from hermeneutics that philosophical, historical, and psychological patterns of thought have dominated interpretation in every period. To want to be free of this is to forego all understanding of inner life. Presuppositionlessness, accordingly, can only mean the pure resolve to be guided exclusively by historical inquiry, rather than by a mood or a tendency; this resolve must, in fact, become a second scientific nature. The capacity of reliving the religious life of Biblical authors develops on the basis of one's own religious orientation, and is at bottom what makes interpretation possible. The other side of the ideal of presuppositionlessness is, of course, that it enjoins one to become conscious of one's presuppositions; in that sense, a developed hermeneutics is the only scientific corrective for the fully justifiable and unavoidable influence that the distinctive orientation of the interpreter exercises on exegesis. To this extent Schleiermacher is also correct in saying in his *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology* that hermeneutics is "the proper center of exegetical theology,"[491] though we would prefer to give it this place alongside Biblical theology.

B. The Relation of Hermeneutics to Dogmatics, Biblical Theology, and Criticism

In looking at the place of Biblical hermeneutics in systematic theology, we need to be concerned not only with its presuppositions, but also with the purpose of interpretation and its relationship to the system of Christian doctrine.

735 **Hermeneutics and Dogmatics.** For the earlier hermeneuticists the purpose of Scriptural interpretation was to lay the foundation for dogmatics. They understood the sufficiency of Scripture to mean that it contains a clear system of Christian doctrine,[492] and the unity of Scripture to be a perfect identity. They were virtually forced into this ruinous position by the Jesuit challenge to Protestantism not to attempt any consistent account of doctrine that might go beyond Scripture. In this situation, all that seemed necessary was a logical treatment; the Biblical writings could be unified by applying the technique of parallels to individual passages. Thus both Rambach and Baumgarten[493] included a special chapter on the procedure necessary to explain the truth of Scriptural passages.

[491] [Schleiermacher], *Brief Outline*, §138, [p. 58]. (H)

[492] S. J. Baumgarten, *Ausführlicher Vortrag der biblischen Hermeneutik*, p. 295: "Especially because the doctrine of the completeness and sufficiency of Scripture demands, as its proper purpose, a coherent doctrine of its revealed truths," the explanation of every passage should be sought in Scripture itself. (D)

[493] See Baumgarten, pp. 284ff. (H)

Isolation of Hermeneutics. Inasmuch as the unity of theology and of Scripture were both lost from view in this fragmentary approach dictated by the spirit of the age, any reference to a comprehensive theology also disappeared from hermeneutics. It is characteristic of this period that Nösselt glides over this critical point in his introductory course[494] by invoking Semler's admonition to consider, in dogmatic application, how much a doctrine might contribute to our comfort. What Hufnagel (1785) and Zachariä (1786) called Biblical theology did not get beyond this fragmentation either.

Schleiermacher's Vacillation Over This Question. We have already discussed Kant's profound notion of a comprehensive Biblical science. However, Schleiermacher's view of the New Testament as a totality, whose unity lies in referring everything to Christ as the productive source, is most in need of supplementation here. To be sure, he was keenly aware of the awkwardness of using Biblical passages as a basis for justifying doctrine in dogmatics. Stubborn insistence on immediate and specific supporting texts has spawned two different methods, one of which constituted a handicap for dogmatics (the Biblical dogmatics of Schleiermacher's times), while the other was a handicap for Biblical exegesis (an ecclesiastical dogmatics appealing to Biblical passages). Thus it appears that the relation of Scriptural passages to particular [dogmatic] propositions would have to be indirect: The same religious emotion that underlies the former is also expressed in the latter.[495] This view follows naturally from his system. For if the religious emotions emanating from Christ are the source of the common characteristics of the New Testament writings, while all differences are attributable to divergent individualities, it is futile to try to assimilate such individualities into a comprehensive Christian theology. This also accords with the fact that Schleiermacher's hermeneutics demands a complete separation between philological and dogmatic interpretation; the former supports the latter, without doing more for it than securing its own proper mode.[496] 736

Thus Schleiermacher did not incorporate into his own theology the nascent Biblical theology that was, for example, already present in De Wette's inspired Biblical dogmatics.[497] Here once again we see

[494] Johann August Nösselt, *Anweisung zur Bildung angehender Theologen* (1786–89). (D)

[495] [Schleiermacher], *The Christian Faith*, I, §27, 3, p. 116. (D)

[496] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, pp. 82, 83. (D)

[497] *Biblische Dogmatik Alten und Neuen Testaments* (1813, 3d ed., 1831). (D)

the shortcoming of his hermeneutics as it moves between the poles of the individual and the identical, without being able to grasp the continuous development of the ideas and facts of history and revelation. Yet the knowledge ⟨of this development⟩ is the foundation of modern Biblical theology, which has since given adequate form to the relation between exegesis and a doctrinal account of Christianity.

Hermeneutics and the Introductory Discipline. On the other side, hermeneutics and exegesis go back to the literary history and criticism of the New Testament and they in turn presuppose the form. Schleiermacher brought this relationship into sharp relief, for it is characteristic of his criticism that it derives from hermeneutics. Although he made use of external testimonies with some virtuosity, his criticism is essentially an internal one. Moreover, as was already evident in ⟨his⟩ Plato translation, his approach centered on form. As far as internal criticism is concerned, it is hard to imagine a sharper contrast than the one between Schleiermacher and the newer critical school; it is expressed in Baur's harsh judgment on Schleiermacher's critical undertaking.[498] While that school regards each book of the Bible as the product of a [general] approach, Schleiermacher sees it
737 above all as the product of an individuality. While ⟨Baur and his disciples⟩ define the place of a book in the dogmatic-historical process solely with reference to its dogmatic content, the deciding factors for Schleiermacher lie in the ineffable expression of individuality and the formative spirit. Therefore Baur is quite correct in saying[499] that Schleiermacher still based his judgments about authenticity and inauthenticity on impressions about particular passages and books of Scripture. But impressions about a thought process, a style, or individual phrases, when they can somehow be expressed—and Schleiermacher did this masterfully in his *Sendschreiben über den ersten Brief an Timotheos* (Open Letter on the First Epistle to Timothy)—provide one of the most compelling motives for criticism in such an infinitely uncertain area. Schleiermacher's own criticism was governed by an exaggerated ideal of form and coherence. Thus the unity of the three Synoptic Gospels eluded him; and he even introduced the idea of approaching the Epistles by

[498] See Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien* (Tübingen, 1847), p. 35: ⟨"Schleiermacher's criticism of the Gospels is arbitrary, artificially acute, pedantic, and, generally, merely destructive." (D)

[499] See [Baur], *Die sogenannten Pastoralbriefe [des Apostels Paulus, aufs neue kritisch Untersucht* (Stuttgart], 1835), p. 134. (D)

means of mechanical constructions.[500] John became his standard of organic form in the question of the Gospels, as did Paul for all the Epistles. Schleiermacher's criticism was erosive because of an excessive concern for the whole. Moreover, a certain skeptical vacillation was bound to accompany any criticism based on the inner form of individual works. Here one hypothesis does not support and demand another, as it would in the kind of criticism that is based on the history of doctrine. Rather, the only uniformity in Schleiermacher's approach consists in applying a single view of composition to a variety of Biblical texts, and in the extensive use of the mechanical construction of individual pieces.

Schleiermacher's linking of theological hermeneutics and criticism is, however, extraordinarily fruitful, because it furnishes a first insight into the presuppositions that govern criticism. In the same vein, Gieseler called for a "theory of historical criticism" for the history of primitive Christianity.[501] By tracing the entire historical-critical procedure back to the ultimate presuppositions of exegesis, one can hope to gain an overview of the reasons for the differences between critical viewpoints. This is the only way to protect one's research from erroneous influences.

C. Allegorical Interpretation 738

Discussion of the allegorical method of interpretation now virtually disappears, first in Keil, and then in Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher's comments contribute so little to this not altogether simple question that we touch on the subject here merely for the sake of completeness.

Ernesti adopted the old distinction, "the sense of things, not of words" [*sensus rerum, non verborum*], which developed in opposition to Catholicism, and used it to exclude all allegorical interpretation from hermeneutics.[502] We have shown how Semler went to the root of the question, but dealt with it one-sidedly because he had no conception of the nature of the Old Testament. The confusion among tropes, parables, and allegorical interpretation per-

[500] See [Schleiermacher], *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, p. 428. Thus, for him, the book of James is "a veritable concoction," put together from memories and from the speeches of James. (D)

[501] Johann K. L. Gieseler, *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, 5 vols. (1824ff., vols. I and II in the 4th ed., 1844ff.), vol. I, 1, preface, p. v. (D)

[502] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, pt. I, sec. I, ch. 1, §10. The "sense of things" that Ernesti rejects is the typical sense (*sensus typicus*); the things intended are signs of things to come (*signa rerum futurarum*). The rejection of the typical sense is also the rejection of allegorical exegesis. (H)

sisted until the distinction between sense [*sensus*] and meaning [*significatio*] was established. Subsequently, it became prevailing doctrine that every speech has only one sense and that this sense is not susceptible of further applications as the old hermeneutics had assumed.

Schleiermacher qualifies these propositions by offering an apt parallel between allegorical interpretation and allusions in general: "Every allusion is a second sense."[503] He defines allusion as the weaving of one or a series of accompanying representations into a main series of thoughts so as to reproduce them in the listener just as they existed in the writer. For this to occur there needs to be some indication of this in speech. But these indications need not immediately strike the eye; it is sufficient to show that the first readers had to grasp them within their own frame of reference, and that the author intended it. Showing this involves a purely historical investigation in each particular case, and an assessment of the allegorical modes of speech of the Israelites in general. Allegorical interpretation is permissible only where an original allegorical intent is definitely demonstrable.

With this line of thought Schleiermacher has performed the service of preparing the way for a more just assessment of allegorical interpretation.[504] But Schleiermacher's strict historical standpoint about the question has, of course, nothing in common with the enthusiasm for superimposing the kind of unclear typology on Scripture that some recent writers have wanted to reimport into interpretation.

739 ***The Grammatical Part***

1. The Foundation of the Grammatical Part of *Hermeneutics: On Language and the System of Concepts*

The General Significance of Schleiermacher's View of Language for His Hermeneutics

A look at the basic construction of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics shows the importance of his view of language for the entire system. That we can say this of Schleiermacher at all points to enormous progress in the history of hermeneutics. We have already shown how Schleiermacher's view of language influenced the second part

[503] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 21. (D)
[504] See Lutz, *Biblische Hermeneutik*, p. 163f. (D)

of his hermeneutics by contributing to its restricted focus on the relation of a work to individuality. Now we shall see how it thoroughly determines the entire grammatical part. The treatment of such hermeneutical concepts ⟨as⟩ sense, meaning, and usage loses the air of complete arbitrariness that it still had in Ernesti and Keil. The dichotomy between etymology as hermeneutical criterion and linguistic usage as such is here first being resolved. The possibility—to be sure, merely the possibility—of a ⟨scientific⟩ treatment of tropes and periods is here first being opened up. Ernesti had laid the empirical and philological groundwork for the grammatical part of hermeneutics. Now Schleiermacher introduces a philosophical view of language into ⟨this science of hermeneutics⟩ that takes its grammatical part beyond the mere appearance of coherence and provides it with a unified foundation.

The Earlier Systems on Words and the Meaning of Words

The earlier view of language is presented with greater clarity by Baumgarten than by any other hermeneuticist. He establishes as his philosophical ⟨premise⟩ the basic presupposition that all meanings of a word arise through an initially arbitrary relation between a 740
restricted representation and an expression, which, through subsequent usage, becomes a constant connection. This arbitrary usage is the invention of those who first hit upon the idea of a language. Baumgarten does not want to claim that the inventors had no grounds for their choices, but just that they were rarely conscious of them. The subsequent preservation of their choices is to be viewed as merely a contract. Indeed, Baumgarten unintentionally satirizes this contract by claiming that sign language and similar phenomena stem from an agreement.[505] Ernesti, too, as has been shown, does not stray from this perspective, when he says: "Words are not natural or necessary signs of things; rather a certain connection is introduced between words and the ideas of things by human institutions and custom."[506] Here we see the same opinions about language that are reflected in the prevalent views of the age concerning the origin of the state, and which Kant applied with greater profundity to religion. Now as early as Morus, we find doubts expressed whether Ernesti ⟨is completely correct on this score⟩. Morus reminds us of onomatopoeic expressions, but he is also unwilling to dismiss other expressions as simply arbitrary: "Without a doubt, the reason lies hidden in some natural conjunction of things with the same words,

[505] See Baumgarten, *Biblische Hermeneutik*, § 5, p. 17f. (H)
[506] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis* (1775), p. 8. (D)

even if it is now difficult and arduous to recover it."[507] Meanwhile Herder and Monboddo[508] had published investigations that completely overcame this antithesis [between the arbitrary and natural origin of words]. For its part, Keil's empiricism simply exempts itself from all such questions.

The Earlier Systems on Grammatical Forms

In the very nature of the case, all these thinkers confined themselves to the problem that spearheaded the issue of the origin of language, namely, that of the origin of words and their meaning. No one so much as addressed the question of the origin of grammatical forms. Here again a false opposition reigned that was not to be overcome until much later: the distinction between analogy and anomaly, already established by the Alexandrian grammarians. Even Gottfried Hermann's grammar was still based on it. This was natural enough, for in all realms of the spirit that reason undertakes to impose order on things and recognizes itself as the law by which all forms of life are to be measured, it first sets its a priori nexus of ideas in opposition to the irrational reality of things. However, the intellect does not master the irrational in this way; logic is as incapable of explicating tropes and figures as ambiguous meanings. Concerning this it has been shown that dogmatic assumptions about allegorical in-
741 terpretation were compounded by scientific confusion. Just as from the historical side Semler's account of the general Jewish practice of citation first undermined the credibility of allegorical interpretation, so from the grammatical side the false opposition between the rational and the irrational was overcome by the explication of multiple meanings and tropes.

A correct view of language was bound to transform the grammatical part of hermeneutics. It is an essential part of our task to understand the roots of this transformation. Schleiermacher's view is distinctive and has, by dint of its logical character, a suggestive relation to the later philosophies of language developed by the other identity systems, especially to Becker's;[509] it also stands in an interesting relationship to the linguistic investigations of Wilhelm von Humboldt, owing to his view that identical reason in the form of nationality is a system-building subject. Because of all this, it is fascinating to trace the development of Schleiermacher's view of lan-

[507] Morus, *Hermeneutica* I, p. 29. (D)

[508] James Burnett (Lord Monboddo) (1714–99), Scottish jurist and anthropologist, wrote *Of the Origin and Progress of Language*.

[509] Karl Ferdinand Becker (1775–1849), author of *Organism der deutschen Sprache*.

guage even where it becomes arbitrary. Our retrospective study can, of course, only allude to these relationships, and we shall not allow ourselves to become lost in an account of Schleiermacher's relationship to more recent views in the philosophy of language.[510] On the other hand, because the very possibility of grasping the real foundation of the first part of Schleiermacher's *Hermeneutics* depends on a precise understanding of his view of language, we must offer a thorough account of it.

Bernhardi's Attempt at a Philosophy of Language from Fichte's Perspective

We cannot address Schleiermacher's view of language without at least casting a glance at a philosophy of language that came from the same intellectual circle in which Schleiermacher moved. I refer to Bernhardi's theory of language. It is the first meaningful attempt to explain language on the basis of its unity with thought. Fichte is its self-acknowledged point of departure.[511] Bernhardi renounces subjective idealism with respect to language—how could he otherwise elucidate the material aspect of language? But he retains the idealistic idea of the spontaneous and unconscious production deriving from the ego, and fuses it with the aesthetic views of the period. Our interest centers on those points of Bernhardi's system that tie it to Schleiermacher's, primarily, the struggle between its logical 742
approach to language and the psychological approach. Bernhardi holds that the task of linguistic science is to discover a fixed point "internal to man from which we can see the particular parts of speech in their entirety and show how they and their combination into the form of a sentence are necessary."[512] To solve this problem, Bernhardi turns to the concept of explication in its aesthetic mode of presentation. However, he equates the realm of presentation with that of representation. Thus the theory of explication presupposes representational theory, that is, a "psychology, of which logic is a part."[513] The two modes of explaining language, the logical and the psychological, are naively placed side by side here. In the most pre-

[510] As, for example, Lotze, whose view of language developed in his *Logik* comes closer to Schleiermacher's than any other. (D)

[511] August Ferdinand Bernhardi (1770–1820), *Sprachlehre* (Berlin, 1801), I, p. 28: "A higher science, of course, destroys the present account [of psychic life], and teaches us that originally nothing external exists, but that everything is merely an optical illusion as it were and that everything objective proceeds from something subjective and returns to it." (D)

[512] Bernhardi, *Sprachlehre*, p. 10. (D)

[513] Bernhardi, *Sprachlehre*, p. 16. (D)

cise definition of its task, the book vacillates noticeably between the two. The task is "to explicate language as a totality whose forms have arisen necessarily from the highest power of the human spirit, a totality that is formed with necessity by the faculty of representation and the forces associated with it; and, further, to demonstrate how this applies to all the parts of speech including the combining of these parts into sentences."[514] In fact, the explanation moves between both principles. We move first into the domain of psychological explanation when Bernhardi defines imitation as a means of presentation, and elucidates the process by which the formation of language goes beyond mere imitation. But we enter the domain of the purely logical, in the worst sense of a purely logical mode of explanation, when he concludes that substantives were the earliest parts of speech because the substantive represents substance, which is primordial. With exactly the same justification, Becker was later able to employ this logic to accord the place of honor to the verb. In Bernhardi, however, the verb is the "form of the acting accident"[515] and takes a back seat to the substantive. Bernhardi's system, accordingly, establishes an approach to the philosophy of language that concentrates on psychological understanding. But because it remains totally dependent on the systems of Fichte and Schelling, inevitably it everywhere falls back on the logical standpoint.

The Logical Character of Schleiermacher's View of Language

The principle of Schleiermacher's philosophical view of language is based on the parallelism of knowledge and language. Just as the individual symbolizing activity of religion finds the possibility of its presentation in art, the identical symbolizing activity of knowing finds its explication in language. "Thus art is related to religion as
743 language to knowledge."[516] Now this logical principle of language falls into a dilemma. The parallelism requires either that the community of knowledge be defined by nationality, or that the community of language be comprised of humanity as a whole. Given the nature of language, however, we cannot accept the second alternative. Only the use of Latin approximates this sort of identity. "Communication in the cultural area, where it is strongest, is made much easier by a common language of scholarship."[517] Nevertheless, even here the ⟨invention of an⟩ artificial language of scholarship would not help at all, because individual languages would still exist for the

[514] Bernhardi, *Sprachlehre*, p. 17f. (D)
[515] Bernhardi, *Sprachlehre*, p. 87. (H)
[516] [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, §255. (D)
[517] [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, p. 291. (D)

layperson and they would remain national languages. Accordingly, the community of knowledge must be conceived in national terms. "The same measure of family and nationality both separates and binds the identical, symbolizing function in a similarly interconnected scientific whole."[518] But how can [Schleiermacher] account for the scientific advances of the past century, which are the product of all the scientific nations taken collectively?

Schleiermacher replies that scientific communication among different peoples proves nothing. "In part this is because most [results] are taken only as material, which is then assimilated in distinctive ways, something that is true even of mathematics."[519] It is arbitrary enough to assume that the relation between Agassiz[520] and Alexander von Humboldt or Werner[521] differs from the relation between the latter and Buch.[522] But the remark about mathematics strains credulity. "In part, [results] are accepted immediately, but only [if they stem from] a nation that is more advanced [in science], and that is only temporary."[523] As if a discovery in physics were something temporary! And where does such acceptance come from anyway unless someone achieves something superior, or is, at least, believed to have done so? After all, a difference in nationality scarcely protects us from error.

There is, to be sure, one area that shares national boundaries with language, namely, literature. But for science the contrast of language is but one among many, and is by no means the most important, which is why Schleiermacher attempted to overcome the one-sidedness of his view in an essay on the idea of a universal language.[524] A detailed account of his logical view of language is found in the *Dialektik*. For it follows from the parallelism of language and knowledge that their origin and elements must correspond to each other. Just as "thinking is a communal product of reason and the organization of the thinker,"[525] so, too, is language. Explaining language is, accordingly, simply a special case of explaining thought.

[518] [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, §278. (D)

[519] [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, p. 291. (D)

[520] Louis Agassiz (1807–73), Swiss paleontologist.

[521] Abraham Gottlob Werner (1750–1817), German geologist and minerologist; proponent of Neptunism, the theory that all of the rocks of the earth's crust were formed by the agency of water.

[522] Freiherr Christian Leopold von Buch (1774–1853), German geologist and paleontologist; disproved Neptunist theory, proving basalt to be of volcanic origin.

[523] [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, p. 291. (D)

[524] [Schleiermacher], *Sämmtliche Werke* III, 3, pp. 138ff. (D)

[525] [Schleiermacher], *Dialektik*, §92. (D)

One should, however, pay careful attention to what Schleiermacher means by explanation here. For Schleiermacher, concept formation involves the unity of deductive and inductive processes, that
744 is, a deduction that recurs at every point of experience. What is the starting point of this deduction?[526] It is the unity of reason and "organization" in thought, whereby every movement of sense corresponds to an activity of the drive of intelligence. To apply this to language is simple enough. We proceed from the presupposition of the unity of sound and representation. Thus, instead of beginning with the problem of language, we begin with something presupposed by it. It is hardly surprising, then, that, instead of laws of language and of its formation, we find merely a psychological description of concept and judgment formation as they bear on the forms of language. At any rate, the first part of the *Hermeneutics* should have investigated the laws ⟨of language formation⟩. For they determine how useful any view of language will be in explaining grammatical-hermeneutical phenomena such as tropes, figures, and periods. Proof of this will be supplied later. Our primary concern here has been to explain the reason for the deficiencies at the heart of Schleiermacher's philosophical view of language.

The Schematic and Deductive Process

The unity of reason and organization in thought is thus our presupposition. "The first fixed point in consciousness prior to all concept formation is the presence of reason as a drive and the receptive fullness of the senses."[527] The organic function generates nothing but a chaotic mass of impressions. Consequently, any determination of the undetermined can only proceed from the intellectual function. But where is the origin of its disjunctive activity? As yet no determinate, external impression is present. However, consciousness itself contains the organic and the intellectual functions, the one predominantly passive, the other predominantly active, and both are simultaneously posited and opposited to each other.[528] Here, then, is the first disjunction. It follows that the determination of the undeter-

[526] That linguistics looks for such laws is stated by von Humboldt in *On Language*, §13, p. 90: "Because language, in direct conjunction with mental power, is a fully fashioned *organism*, we can distinguish within it not only *parts*, but also *laws* of procedure, or rather (because I would sooner pick terms here throughout, which do not even seem to prejudge historical research), *directions* and *endeavors*." (D)

[527] [Schleiermacher], *Dialektik*, §255. (D)

[528] One easily recognizes how close this deduction is to Fichte's constructions. Compare especially the *Grundlagen der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*, *Sämmtliche Werke* I, pp. 157ff. (D)

mined, as it proceeds from the intellectual function, is active in the 745
direction of both subject and predicate concepts. For this is the conceptual-linguistic form of the antithesis.

Close scrutiny of this outcome would lead us to the ultimate concepts of philosophy of language. But we may say in passing that, following Fichte's method, Schleiermacher derives two basic forms of the proposition from the principle of antithesis. The same result could already be found in Bernhardi, who calls only the predicate attributive. Becker, by contrast, who proceeds from another system of logic, finds verbs, as concepts of activity, to be the only root-words, and treats all other parts of speech as derivative.[529] And Lotze, who likewise assumes that the genesis of different parts of speech may be traced back to metaphysical roots, recognizes three principal forms: the substantive, the adjective, and the verb, to which correspond the three metaphysical concepts of substance, accident, and inherence.[530] Accordingly, even among advocates of this sort of connection between logic and grammar, Schleiermacher could not have established his view without a debate over the principles of logic.

Let us continue our account of the process of concept and language formation. The determination of the chaotic mass of impressions proceeds, as we see, by means of the disjunctive intelligence. But if we have only a discrete mass here, and only a formula and a classification there,[531] where is the mediating link that would connect both into some kind of continuous measure? In the concept! For this is the becoming one of both. But whence the concept? Here we encounter the psychological idea of the schema,[532] which has important implications for language: Every sensory representation is simultaneously a representation of genus and species. This point is decisive for the possibility of concept formation. The particular image taken as a species, that is, taken in universal terms, is the schema. "Taken in universal terms" means taken in its flexibility, which is to say that the image can change "without moving beyond its species."[533] Here we see the unity of the two functions, intelligence and organization. The whole question of how words and concepts are possible reduces to one question: How is the schema possible? The schema cannot be explained by the repetition of particular

[529] Karl Ferdinand Becker, *Organism der Sprache*, §28, pp. 83–89. (D)
[530] Lotze, *Logik*, 2d ed., pp. 19ff. (D)
[531] See [Schleiermacher], *Dialektik*, p. 214. (D)
[532] [Schleiermacher], *Dialektik*, p. 206f., pp. 211ff. (D)
[533] [Schleiermacher], *Dialektik*, p. 213. (D)

images, for it contains the moment of the species in itself. With the first image the possibility of similar images is posited in consciousness. How could it be otherwise? The only answer we get to our very specific question presupposes the whole, the amazing and mysterious tendency of reason to leave its mark on the chaotic mass of impressions at every point.

746 *The Origin of Language*

Schleiermacher's view of language is, thus, founded on a problem, or, rather, on a mystery. The process of schematization designates the first period of language formation. Indeed, for Schleiermacher just as all psychological acts are combinations of antitheses, so the formation of language is the simultaneous result of two processes, schematizing and deduction. But the former predominates and the latter is secondary. Thus the whole realm of ordinary knowledge is essentially determined by the process of schematization and the judgment formation that coincides with it.[534] The question then becomes: Because we must simply accept this process of schematizing as a necessary hypothesis, how does that process lead to the formation of language? We shall be only too happy to agree that the relation can be made intelligible by considering the points of identity and difference between language and the schema, if only it can be made intelligible! Difference and unity emerge at two points: "Schema and word can be distinguished as follows: The schema is a sign generated from a predominant passivity; the word a sign generated from a predominant activity." Compare this with the antithesis in the ego that Fichte used for his construction: "And so we now see how both belong together: the one complements the other, and the process of concept formation is not completed until the latter is added to the former, just as people are in a very uneasy and anxious condition before they find the right word."[535] This uneasiness, when it is not otherwise attributable to some pressure that inhibits communication, shows us indeed that language arose from some need; but is this need correctly characterized here? I can think of no reason why passivity necessarily evokes activity in the same subject. Indeed, if that were so, activity would continually evoke passivity in the same subject, and each opposite its other. But even if we grant this, why must this activity express itself in language? If language is something active, does it then follow that the activity of the subject must be language? Indeed! Let us then turn rather to the second difference

[534] See [Schleiermacher], *Dialektik*, §268. (D)
[535] [Schleiermacher], *Dialektik*, p. 227. (D)

between language and schema that is to be resolved into unity. Schleiermacher himself calls it "a much more obvious one."[536] It turns out to be just the old appeal to the necessity of communication. "Reason, as a drive that is the same in all, and which, according to an ancient doctrine, is only unwillingly enclosed within a personality, is always directed toward community and is therefore always seeking mediation; it breaks through the restrictions in the area of our concern by virtue of the intimate connection between speech and the ear."[537]

The Etymological Sense of a Word and Its Meaning 747

Because, as we have shown, Schleiermacher's method of logical construction keeps us in the dark about the relation between language and the schematizing process, we know in advance that we can expect no significant clarification from hermeneutical investigations of words and their meanings that depend on that relation. What the earlier hermeneutics had to say on this topic belongs in the paragraph on grammatical-hermeneutical rules, not here, because it neither contains nor presupposes a view of language, but is purely formal. The proposition that interpretation should focus on usage and make use of etymologies only when necessary reveals some awareness of the relevant distinction. Still, a clear grasp of the distinction depends on understanding the origin of words. A sound does not present the entire complex of sensations that are combined in an intuition; only a single impression is expressed[538] in the sound or apperceived by means of an earlier intuition at the characterizing stage of linguistic development. But when this happens, language merely fixes a moment of intuition that was already present. In the course of time this moment will recede into the series of all the others, as its derivation is forgotten. We have already indicated that, at the characterizing stage and at the third stage of the inner form of language, finely intertwined psychological processes are at work. These processes, which are controlled by a very active imagination, govern the deployment of an entire language from relatively few roots—Pott finds barely a thousand of these in Indo-European stems. We have ⟨already⟩ seen how Schleiermacher's effort to explain language made use of an impoverished psychological apparatus, the same one he now had to use to try to understand this complicated process. His schema of deduction completely mechanizes a

[536] [Schleiermacher], *Dialektik*, p. 227. (D)
[537] [Schleiermacher], *Dialektik*, p. 228. (D)
[538] Substituting Dilthey's own term *ausgedrückt*.

free and mobile process. "If the stem is certain and the derivation known, then the procedure" for finding the linguistic kinship "is one of calculation; for the stem furnishes what is common to all instances, the unity, while the derived forms contain the law of differences."[539]

Theory of Meaning

Leaving the etymological content of words aside, we may now turn to the issue of the definiteness of the meaning of words. Here we move from the linguistic aspect of a word to its ideational aspect. In his hermeneutics, Schleiermacher draws the conclusion of the line of
748 thought in his ethics and dialectic that we traced above.[540] "A living, naturally growing language proceeds from perceptions and fixes them. This is the source of variations in usage, because perception always contains diverse references."[541] Schleiermacher tirelessly elaborates the role of the schema in this aspect of meaning. Given the unity of a word, he says, a "multiplicity of usages should be possible." He notes, further, that several spiritual products must "be connected in a manner that is flexible within certain limits."[542] No word, accordingly, can be presented as a unity; each word is from the start a combination of a manifold of relations and transitions. But how should this mobility of meaning be described? A lexicon can only fix meanings by means of contrasts. This leads to such antitheses as the difference between universal and particular meaning.[543] The task of exegesis is to again overcome such antitheses, so that "the word" may be grasped "in its unity as something capable of changing in different directions."[544] Thus the form of the schema emerges in its purity. But even though language comes into being in the first instance, as we saw, through the process of schematizing, a process of deduction is also involved. "Words standing for concepts that are derived from the same more general concept and are coordinated with one another are related. This presupposes that representations can be formed by an antithesis from a common ground."[545] And insofar as this formative process is at work, the drive that was already implicit in the schema completes itself. Lan-

[539] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 101. (D)

[540] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 50f. (D)

[541] [Scheiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 51. (H)

[542] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 48. (D)

[543] The distinction between the authentic and the inauthentic, as well as the distinction between the original and the derivative, should be thoroughly discussed in the case of tropes. (D)

[544] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 51. (D)

[545] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 102. (D)

guage becomes a system of kinships and oppositions. Schleiermacher distinguishes between qualitative, mutually exclusive oppositions and quantitative differences or distinctions with transitions; the noun, which describes the determinate forms of sense, is the region dominated by the antithesis; the verb, which designates activity, belongs primarily to the other region of transitions.[546] Schleiermacher's *Dialektik* clears up the meaning of this distinction. It is clearest in the version of 1811, where Fichte and especially Plato (with the concept of "the more and less") are still more influential.[547] Noun and verb are identities of the universal and particular, that is, concepts. But in the verb, action is placed under the power of the concept; in the noun, being is so placed. In the case of concepts that signify action, the quantitative predominates; they admit of "the more or less," of degree. But in the case of concepts that represent a being, "the process of subordination goes through many stages from a determinate multiplicity down to the particular."[548] For those concepts that express action, subordination recedes while 749
coordination comes to the fore in the form of indeterminate multiplicity; for as expressions for the conjunction of a function of the subject with another object, they necessarily possess the vagueness of gradation, and thus not every one of them can form a particular species. [Concepts] derived from being are a unity with a determinate cycle of antitheses. The familiar relativity of antitheses that also finds application here needs no further elaboration. When the deductive process gains the upper hand over the process of schematizing in language formation, language that is conscious of itself as pure thought distinguishes itself, at this highest level, both from the poetic and the vernacular, and forms a system of concepts.

> A people's view of nature is a natural function of its place in nature, just as ethical knowledge is a function of social relationships, and vice versa; thus the two relate to each other as the ideal and the real. The difference is most clearly manifest in those languages that vary so much (not only in tone, but also in meaning) that the difference runs through all their material and formal elements; each of these languages lays down a unique system of concepts and methods of combination.[549]

[546] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 104. (D)

[547] [Schleiermacher], *Dialektik*, p. 340; see also pp. 198ff. (D)

[548] [Schleiermacher], *Dialektik*, p. 341. (H)

[549] [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, p. 291f.: The hermeneutical significance of this view of an internally coherent system of concepts has, I think, never been so magnificently expressed as in a passage from Wilhelm von Humboldt: "As the individual sound

The System of Concepts

We have already shown how important this system of concepts is in Schleiermacher's hermeneutics with respect to the formation of the individual work. It reveals the power of the universal over the individual in his ⟨system⟩. To be sure, historical circumstances also exert an influence on individuality, but only in language and the system of concepts contained in it does Schleiermacher see a cohesive universality, an encompassing whole, which might account for an individual work. This represents an important advance in hermeneutics. It is not simply the case that once the antithesis between the rational and the anomalous based on arbitrary agreement is banished from the fundamental grammatical outlook, it must also be
750 banished from the understanding of the meaning of words, figures, and tropes. For this involves a radically transformed approach to linguistic phenomena. Despite the inadequacies of Schleiermacher's view that the linguistic process in general is grounded in the opposition between intuition and deductive capacity, despite the arbitrariness of his account of the formation of subject and predicate, which is based on the antithesis of spontaneity and organic impressions, according to the mythology of [Fichte's] *Science of Knowledge*, despite the fact that he succeeds at best in stating the problem of explaining language in terms of the duality of our existence, because a false psychology prevented him from penetrating those psychological processes that might have eventually provided a solution—despite these deficiencies, Schleiermacher is serious about an involuntary linguistic process that is not produced by the individual but proceeds from a universal spiritual mode of action, an idea that Herder had developed earlier without any impact on hermeneutics. Nations are conceived as productive totalities; the period of language formation expresses a coherent way of viewing things. On these points, Schleiermacher's view coincides with Wilhelm von Humboldt's.

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stands between man and the object, so the entire language steps in between him and the nature that operates, both inwardly and outwardly, upon him. He surrounds himself with a world of sounds, so as to assimilate and process within himself the world of objects. These expressions in no way outstrip the measure of the simple truth. Man lives primarily with objects, indeed, because feeling and acting in him depend on his presentations, he actually does so exclusively, as language presents them to him. By the same act whereby he spins language out of himself, he spins himself into it, and every language draws about the people that possesses it a circle whence it is possible to exit only by stepping over at once into the circle of another one. To learn a *foreign language* should therefore be to acquire a new standpoint in the world-view hitherto possessed" (Wilhelm von Humboldt, *On Language*, §9, p. 60).

At the same time, these assumptions about language contained crucial deficiencies for hermeneutics. The philosophy of identity presupposes the unity of spirit and body as a consequence of its concept of God, and with it, the unity of thought and sound. Naturally, this view can only carry out this schematic parallelism in specific cases; the laws of language formation, however, which can only be formulated by research directed to fundamental presuppositions about this point, lie outside its scope. It becomes possible to get at phenomena such as tropes, periods, and the like, not by setting up a mere antithesis as the basis for an explanation, but by an explanation that focuses on the psychological laws that are active in the phenomena. Furthermore, for the philosophy of identity, being goes over into appearance without remainder, and thought similarly goes over into language; and, taken as a whole, the emphasis these systems place on the formation of concepts, as opposed to the formation of judgments, fosters the view that language contains a system of concepts that can fully capture the thinking of identity. But this is not the case. Herder had already raised the question, "How far can one think without language, and what must one think with it?"[550] In fact, only a part of psychological processes is expressed through the mechanism of language. There is an essential difference between the inwardness of the world of representations and those conceptual unities that make up the thinking of 751
identity for Schleiermacher. Moreover, the effort to explain the conceptual world by taking unity and opposition as powers that operate on intuition, instead of focusing on the sublime interplay of the many mental laws that govern our human world, leads to a poor and utterly inadequate schema. In support of this judgment, we prefer not to appeal to Herbart, who was probably not justified in wanting to reduce this interplay of the higher mental activities and sensory stimuli, which is expressed in this schema, to a process that is derived entirely from the latter. On the other hand, Lotze's account, which, like Schleiermacher's, is based totally on antithetical activity, makes plain the discrepancy between Schleiermacher's explanations of the spiritual world and this one. In any case, as far as hermeneutics is concerned, Schleiermacher's approach inevitably produced an overweaning emphasis on such categories as antithesis, transition, and parallelism; they give his hermeneutics its distinctive logical cast.

[550] Herder, *Über den Ursprung der Sprache*, *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. W. Suphan, vol. V, p. 47, 1st ed., 1789, p. 72. (D)

2. The Ordering of the Grammatical Part

What, then, is the arrangement of the account of grammatical interpretation that reflects the foregoing view of language? This part differs noticeably in form from the second [psychological] part. Because identity predominates in language, the business of understanding language is more mechanical. While in the second part only rules of operation can be given that accompany the descriptive account, in the first [grammatical] part rules prevail that reconstruct operations. We can conclude from this that Schleiermacher was closer to earlier hermeneutics in the first part than in the second.

Flacius's rules display a pronounced focus on the word; they pay scant attention to sentence formation. Within these confines, Flacius describes the sequence of operations in grammatical interpretation in the course of dealing with the meaning of words and tropes. Franz[551] emphasizes the same two canons that Schleiermacher uses to encompass the grammatical part except that for Franz the treatment of the whole and its parts also falls under the heading of context. In line with his method, Schleiermacher intersects this division with another division, that between formal and material elements of language. However, nowhere in his lectures does he elaborate this formal element (the relation of linguistic forms and usage). At any
752 rate, there are three major fields here: (1) discovering the material aspect of usage; (2) using context to discover the material aspects of the local value of a word; (3) discovering the formal aspect of local value.

Each of these divisions of universal grammatical interpretation is accompanied by a special application to the New Testament, so that this part is arranged in six sections. The important departures from the otherwise customary arrangement of the material consist of the insertion of a division among principal and secondary ideas and means of presentation in the second part, and the reintroduction of the rhetorical classification of sentences in the third part, something that goes back to Flacius. But inasmuch as his purpose here is not to describe grammatical relations but to show how to discover them, he does not appeal to the results of the universal view of language discussed above. Rather, he narrows down the problem by dividing the process of discovery into three moments: the search for meaning, sense, and import.

[551] [Franz], *De interpretatione Sacrarum Scripturarum*, 1. A. Wittenberg, 1619, pp. 24ff., 2. A. Wittenberg, 1634, pp. 19ff. (D)

3. Sense, Meaning, Import as [Ways of] Determining the Indeterminate

When hermeneutics designated the task of interpretation to be the discovery of sense, this obviously entailed something different at each stage of interpretation. I find that the relevant distinction had already occurred to Flacius: "Sometimes a single word produces obscurities because it . . . means various things. In this difficulty, you consult first the sources, then the sense and context of the passage, . . . finally, also an accurate understanding and differentiation of the meaning."[552] This division was elaborated by Baumgarten as follows: "(1) Words are signs that awaken certain representations in others; (2) The connection of such representations with words is their meaning; (3) If thereby representations of entire judgments or of many connected sayings are awakened in someone, that is called import."[553] It is possible, as Baumgarten recognizes, for a word to have a variety of meanings, but there is only one way to understand a speech.[554] Morus went on to apply this distinction to particular 753
expressions in his treatise, *De discrimine sensus ac significationis* (On the Distinction between Sense and Meaning).[555] This finally put an end to the confusion. Without the distinction, it would have been impossible fully to dispel the notion that because a sentence consists of many words, it can, like each individual word, have several meanings.

Once this distinction was clearly formulated, however, Schleiermacher advanced to a livelier conception of the process of interpretation by subsuming it again under the general formula of determining the indeterminate, which can begin at any number of points.[556]

4. The First Canon: Discovering the Material Aspects of Usage

In order to determine the indeterminate, as the idea was developed in the school of grammatical interpretation,[557] the field must first be delimited to the linguistic field common to the author and his origi-

[552] Flacius, *Clavis* II, p. 27f. (H)

[553] Baumgarten, *Biblische Hermeneutik*, p. 17f. (D)

[554] Baumgarten, *Biblische Hermeneutik*, p. 36. (D)

[555] In his *Dissertationes theologicae et philologicae*, I (Leipzig, 1787). (D)

[556] See Keil, *Hermeneutik*, p. 41. Glassius had already spoken of "the primary means of interpreting Scripture, which is to be used in considering sacred passages and literature" (bk. II, p. ii). (D)

[557] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, pp. 41ff. (D)

nal audience, or to the usage of the author. We must briefly spell out the implications of our earlier account of Ernesti's school and Schleiermacher's view of language.

Linguistic Usage

Obviously, Schleiermacher shares the philological method of the Grammatical School; it consists of understanding an author on the basis of his usage. However, his basic principles lead him to place stronger emphasis on a point that had by no means escaped the earlier hermeneutics, namely, the power of the individual to create language and to originate a new realm of thought.[558] His studies of Plato and Paul were bound to have impressed this on him.

Classification of Meanings and the Beginnings of Etymology

How did the earlier hermeneutics approach the normative aspects of usage? They collected the different meanings of a word in an
754 author and classified them by subsuming them under rubrics such as authentic and inauthentic meaning,[559] or the concrete and the abstract.[560] In the face of such precision in conceiving differences, interest in the unity of the word waned, and the empirical approach to the meaning of words more or less eclipsed the etymological approach, which the Dutch School, under Valkenaer[561] and Schultens,[562] was the first to develop into a system.

When grammatical interpretation first made its appearance, it stood strongly opposed to all etymology: "The true meaning of words and phrases is not so much to be sought from etymology or from single words taken separately, but rather from usage and examples."[563] Ernesti's comments reflect some uncertainty about the relation between the etymological meaning of a word[564] and its linguistic usage, an uncertainty directly attributable to his empirical standpoint. His view hovers vaguely in the middle: He speaks, on the one hand, of considering the meanings acquired through

[558] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 44. (H)

[559] Keil, *Hermeneutik*, p. 50 (§43); Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, p. 17.

[560] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, pt. I, sec. I, ch. 2; §23, p. 24.

[561] Lodewijk Caspar Valkenaer (1715–85), Dutch philologian, successor of Hemsterhuis at Leiden.

[562] Jan Jacob Schultens (1716–78), Dutch orientalist and theologian; his first dissertation was entitled *De utilitate dialectorum orientalium ad tuendam integritatem codicis hebraei* (Leiden, 1742).

[563] Wettstein, *Libelli ad crisin atque interpretationem Novi Testamenti*, ed. Semler (Halle, 1766), p. 120. (D)

[564] See Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, p. 36f. (D)

etymology;[565] on the other, he warns against applying etymology to determine usage.[566]

Keil already has a more precise conception of the matter. He wants to see etymology employed "in the case of particular words, to recognize the transitions from one idea to another in the different meanings."[567] But neither Keil nor Ernesti gets beyond mere classification of meanings to focus on the unity of a word, and neither is able to offer a rational account of the relationship between the etymological content of a word and its usage. When Ernesti writes, "The fact that the meanings of words change often and easily is due to the inconstancy of speech that dominates all languages,"[568] he is appropriately expressing his uneasiness about a lawlike transformation that makes no apparent sense.

Schleiermacher's Definition of the Problem

Schleiermacher counters this empiricism with the most comprehensive approach to linguistic usage. Interpretation "includes knowledge of the entire language, its history, and the author's relation to it."[569] It also includes the linguistic content of the word as it was present in the act of production, and the degree of vivacity with 755
which "the speaker has brought forth his expressions and what they really inwardly mean to him."[570] Now this amounts to nothing less than reconstructing the entire spiritual world as it is manifest in language. It shows that the grammatical task, just like the psychological task, encompasses a whole. Schleiermacher characterizes this task as the problem of achieving a better understanding than the author had of himself.[571] For a particular word, the task is to grasp the unity in which its meanings are conceived. We have discussed Schleiermacher's conception of this unity. He saw it as a flexible unity, containing a variety of relations produced by the process of schematizing. Here Schleiermacher's hermeneutical view of the word runs counter to a purely lexical view, where opposed mean-

[565] See Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, pp. 57ff. (D)

[566] See Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, p. 38. (D)

[567] Keil, *Hermeneutik*, §33, p. 39f. (D)

[568] See Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, ch. 2, §11, p. 37. (D)

[569] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 52. (D)

[570] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 52. (H)

[571] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 32; p. 45. ⟨There are various formulations by Schleiermacher. See Kimmerle, *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts*, p. 64: "understanding an author better than he understands himself" (1805); p. 112: "to understand the text at first as well as and then even better than its author" (1819)⟩. (D)

ings cancel the unity of the word. The use of such oppositions is at best an ancillary construction. "As far as the hermeneutical task is concerned, such oppositions merely provide an interim understanding; however, they do serve to help us recognize the original combination, of which the other uses are modifications."[572] Now while this procedure belongs more to grammar and lexicography, overcoming the oppositions belongs more to hermeneutics.

Apparently, the most difficult opposition to get rid of is the contrast between authentic and inauthentic meaning. To begin with, Schleiermacher rejects the hasty conclusion that all spiritual meaning is based solely on the figurative use of sensory words. The view that he is here opposing had become the etymological canon of the Dutch Philological School. Thus, Lennep says: "The meanings of individual words are exclusively corporeal or such things as may be referred to by the senses."[573] Schleiermacher prefers to explain this unity of spiritual and corporeal meaning by appealing to a "parallelism" that "is one in the idea of life."[574] This follows necessarily from his basic view of language; for, given this parallelism between body and spirit, language at its second stage already delineates the conceptual system of a nation. In the same way, remaining lexical oppositions such as universal versus particular meaning, abstract versus concrete meaning, and original versus derived meaning are
756 all shown to be relative. Schleiermacher insists that the hermeneutical task is to bring these oppositions back to the unity of the word.

The Formal Elements of Usage

The same approach that was used to deal with the material elements of usage also applies to the formal elements: They constitute a unity. While, on the material side, this unity is a unity of meanings, on the formal side, it is a unity of modes of connection. Yet Schleiermacher appears never to have attempted to work out this perspective for these parts of language. Indeed, the formal conception of a flexible unity might have proved inadequate for this most difficult problem in the theory of meaning.

However, it was accomplishment enough to have incorporated the outlines of a theory of meaning into hermeneutics. The task of

[572] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 50. (D)

[573] *Valkenaerii et a Lennep de analogia linguae Graecae*, ed. Scheidius (1805), pp. 253ff. (D)

[574] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics*, p. 120. "It is undeniable that there are nonliteral words that at the same time signify sense-objects, but a parallelism governs these cases in that both, as they present themselves to us, are included in the idea of one living whole." (H)

extending these scientific underpinnings to the area of grammar would await Reisig[575] and Haase.[576]

5. Linguistic Usage in the New Testament

Schleiermacher now brings his general view of language to bear on the special area of New Testament grammar in an outline of New Testament idioms. He explains that hermeneutics impinges here on the territory of New Testament grammar, which is permissible only as long as no scientific development of it is available. However, even after the publication of Winer's grammar, he was apparently unwilling to eliminate this survey and characterization of New Testament language from New Testament hermeneutics, which would have been proper.

The General Condition of the Field of New Testament Grammar at the Time of Schleiermacher's Hermeneutics

Schleiermacher's grammatical investigations of the New Testament idiom, whose scientific foundations were laid as early as his Halle period, certainly did not earn him a distinctive place in the history of the field. Accordingly, it would not be productive to relate his conclusions in this area to those of his predecessors (which might include, for example, the first sketch of such a grammar in Glassius); nor would it be helpful to go into the debate between the purists and the Hebraists. In any event, this is one of the few topics for which a well-known scientific treatment of the history of hermeneutics is available. We refer to the basic outlines projected at the outset of Winer's grammar.[577] While Schleiermacher was working out his hermeneutical system, a scientific approach to New Testament grammar was being developed in opposition to the dominant Hebraists, notably Storr[578] and his disciple, Gaab.[579] This approach was based on an examination of the *Koine* of which New Testament language is but one particular instance. While the original efforts of

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[575] Karl Christian Reisig (1792–1829), German philologian with a special interest in the grammatical-critical aspects of meaning.

[576] Friedrich Gottlob Haase (1808–67), German philologian at Breslau, best known for his work on syntax.

[577] J. G. B. Winer, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms* (1822). (H)

[578] Gottlob Chr. Storr (1746–1805), German theologian, attended lectures in Leiden by Schultens on Greek and by Valckenaer on Hebrew, defended revelation against Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*.

[579] Johann Friedrich von Gaab (1761–1832), German theologian whose work focused on Old Testament exegesis, followed the Dutch School in finding Arabic sources for Hebraic words.

Salmasius[580] had little influence, Fischer,[581] Sturz,[582] and especially the younger Planck[583] were laying the foundations of New Testament grammar with their research. The latter was preoccupied with the idea of a grammar of this idiom. After he had published a sample of it, his contemporaries awaited the definitive scientific foundation of New Testament grammar. But he was condemned too early to a sad inactivity, so the task was passed on to Winer. In any case, Schleiermacher's account clearly reflects the influence of his two immediate predecessors, Planck and Winer. However, his own scientific treatment appears to be distinctive in two respects.

The Distinctive Features of Schleiermacher's Treatment

First, there was Schleiermacher's synthetic method. Beginning with the *Koine* in general, this method ⟨narrows down⟩ the field by describing the bilingual background. It then proceeds to the special realm of the Hebraic idiom in the *Koine*, and identifies as its two extremes the Septuagint, on the one hand, and Philo and Josephus, on the other. Finally, it adds the positive language-forming element of Greek culture as a special criterion. This is a perspicuous reconstruction of the field of New Testament language. It offers a sample of his synthetic treatment of a particular grammatical area to go
758 along with the one in his more polished ⟨account⟩ of *Timothy*. The second point of uniqueness comes from the very heart of his view of language and Christianity. We have discussed his identification of language and thought, as well as his emphasis on the distinctively dominating hold of Christianity on the New Testament authors. Taken together, these doctrines account for the special stress he lays on the language-forming power of the New Testament.[584]

[580] Claude de Saumaise (Salmasius) (1588–1653), French Huguenot, taught at Leiden, studied the affinities of Near Eastern languages.

[581] I. F. Fischer, *Prolusiones de versionibus graecis libr. V. T.* (Leipzig, 1779). Sometimes he calls the idiom Macedonian, because it was formed after the mixture of dialects that began with Alexander, at other times he calls it Alexandrian because it was used by Alexandrian writers. (D)

[582] Fr. W. Sturz in *De dialecto Macedonia* (1808), calls it the common Greek dialect [*diálektos koiné Hellenikḗ*], reflecting a not quite correct understanding of the usage of the ancient grammarians. That he mistook this popular idiom for a dialect was a pervasive error in his otherwise rather significant investigation.

[583] Heinrich Ludwig Planck, *De vera natura atque indole orationis graecae N. T. commentatio* (Göttingen, 1810). It is well known that Planck objected especially to the conclusions Schleiermacher reached about the language of Timothy; he demonstrated that it did not occupy a more favorable position than the other two Pastoral Epistles.

[584] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, pp. 64–68. (D)

"Apart from any theological presuppositions one must concede the language-forming power of Christianity, insofar as it is an individual whole; accordingly, the New Testament must contain linguistic forms that cannot be derived either from Greek or from Hebrew."[585] "Every spiritual revolution is language-forming, for it generates ideas and real relationships that, because they are new, cannot be talked about in the language as it was."[586] Planck had not dealt with this point at all, and Winer had relegated it to lexicography; indeed, it is not likely to carry much force for the grammarian because the linguistic forms and word formations that reveal the internal form of a language are not really affected by such changes in the meanings of words. They have that much greater weight for [hermeneutics],[587] but in this sense, Ernesti had already called attention to it: "There are in these books a number of new expressions due to the novelty of the things. . . . The work possessed new words and forms of speech, in which there are many accommodations to traditional material because of a certain similarity."[588] Indeed Ernesti had, as Winer recognized, already found the correct middle ground in his view of language, in opposition to both the purists and the Hebraists.

6. The Second Canon

The Relation of the Second Canon to the First

We have shown that Schleiermacher defined the task of the first part of his hermeneutics as the determination of the grammatical aspects of an indeterminate text. Every element, be it a word or a grammatical form, has, quite apart from its specific context, its own relatively delimited value within the usage of the whole. The first canon[589] contains the rules for discovering this value. In adopting this natural arrangement, Schleiermacher followed the Grammatical School, which had established the legitimacy of the analytical approach to interpretation. However, he characterizes this canon as 759
merely negative or restrictive.[590] It delimits the meaning of words and forms to a narrower range. But within this range, a positive determination is required, for which the second canon[591] furnishes

[585] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 68. (D)
[586] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 64. (D)
[587] Reading *Hermeneutik* for *Grammatik*.
[588] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis* I, sec. 2, ch. 3, §27, p. 51. (D)
[589] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 41. (D)
[590] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 94. (D)
[591] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 69. (D)

the rules. The first canon appeals to usage as the basis of philological operations; the second now appeals to context. The first canon could only determine words and forms within the confines of a shiftable meaning. The second canon emphasizes the unity in this multiplicity by linking the shiftable meaning to all the relationships associated with the specific placement of a word or form.

Grammatical interpretation is comprised of these two operations. As simple as the distinction seems, we shall see that a whole series of mutually related advances will be required to rescue the coherence of hermeneutical operations expressed in this second canon from a confusing multiplicity and a variety of mistaken connections. The real difficulty in the formal structure of the grammatical part of hermeneutics derives from the way the second chapter is constructed.

Survey of the History of the Subdivisions of This Canon

Flacius, following his synthetic method, erroneously placed themes properly belonging to the second canon almost exclusively under the first, because he adopted two different hermeneutical starting points. One started with the ⟨New Testament⟩ as a whole, the other with the analysis of particular Scriptures. Flacius assigned priority to the first, and used the second as an auxiliary construction. The main thing, according to the Holy Spirit, declares Flacius toward the end of the first part, is to use parallels, "which are similar to words, phrases, or things. They are a collation of the parts of one passage, an accurate examination of what precedes and what follows so that the context itself may illumine the sentence that is obscure to us."[592] By contrast, the distinction between primary and secondary ideas and the conception of the articulation of a work, which are essential in further determining the use of context and parallels, fall on the other side, that of rhetorical treatment. Just as Flacius here divorces elements that belong together, so he mixes tropes with allegorical interpretation, and is then unable to relate them to anything else. Baumgarten did not fare much better. He also separated parallels from a consideration of the articulation of particular Scriptures, and was then unable to do justice to either operation.

760 We have noted that Franz, who introduced the analytical method into hermeneutics, had already established both of Schleiermacher's canons. But because he still confused meaning, sense, and import, his discovery remained without issue; he was simply unable to do anything with the two canons.

[592] Flacius, *Clavis* II, p. 15. (D)

It fell to Ernesti to develop a more adequate combination of individual operations for this part. To be sure, they were largely overshadowed by the operations of the first part, because a major goal of his *Institutio interpretis* was to legitimize explanation based on usage as opposed to what he calls explanation based on things. "Therefore the matter and so-called analogy of doctrine are helpful for the interpretation insofar as they dominate the mode of interpretation, lead us to the meanings of the words to be defined or to the choice of the meaning, in cases where words are ambiguous either due to a multitude of meanings or due to structure or for some other reason."[593] One sees that he assigns the correct place to these operations: To determine what usage still leaves as a delimited but linguistically shiftable value of a word or grammatical form. He is also correct in designating the following aids to this operation: Using the purpose of Scripture to gain knowledge of its context, appealing to preceding and succeeding passages to explicate, and [establishing] relations between parts of speech and sentences, and real parallels.[594]

But the place Ernesti assigned to this group of exegetical operations, as aids to determining the sense derived from usage, masks their independent importance. The passage we cited overestimates usage, as though usage alone could always determine the sense of a linguistic form or of a word. Moreover, Ernesti's way of juxtaposing the two modes of interpretation from context and from parallels completely leaves them without any relation to each other apart from their common purpose of determining a shiftable meaning. Meanwhile the rules for detecting tropes and allegories are not connected up either. Morus's distinction between meaning (*significatio*) and sense (*sensus*) divorced the two operations, and clearly established that using these shiftable meanings of words and forms to detect the sense is an independent operation. Morus, then, adopted the correct division, even though he retained Ernesti's old expression, "on methods for finding the sense through subsidiary usage" (*de sensus reperiendi rationibus usus subsidariis*),[595] and preserved the division between a theoretical and a practical part. In any case, Morus's division inspired Schleiermacher's distinction between the two canons. A further division between findings based on the material and formal elements is developed by Morus as well.[596] By refining this distinction, Keil was led to separate the two elements totally.

[593] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis* I, sec. 1, ch. 1, §19, p. 13. (D)
[594] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis* I, sec. 1, ch. 2. (D)
[595] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis* I, sec. II, ch. 2. (D)
[596] Morus, *Hermeneutica*, pp. 59ff. (D)

761 *Schleiermacher's Attitude toward These Subdivisions*

In articulating the part [about the second canon], Schleiermacher drew on the work of Ernesti and Morus, who had correctly defined the purpose of this group of operations relative to the previous operations, as well as the combination of elements that belong to it. He then introduced a second division between formal and material determinations. He probably took this over from Morus also, because it was already present in Morus's drafts, which antedated Keil's ⟨treatise⟩. Finally, Schleiermacher also inherited the tendency to incorporate psychological interpretation into grammatical interpretation as far as this group of operations is concerned. He made use of both divisions and included applicable points of psychological interpretation here as presuppositions governing the material aspect of the operation that determines [sense] on the basis of context. They include the distinction between primary and secondary ideas, means of presentation, and the antithesis between the subjective and the objective flow of ideas. All this accounts for the rather complicated form of the second canon. We have already shown that this artificial form conceals gaps in hermeneutics, which have not been filled in to this day.

7. The Local Value of a Word in Light of the Distinction between Principal and Secondary Ideas and Means of Presentation. The Trope.

We saw how the use of parallels became the principal technique of the earlier hermeneutics that served as the organon of dogmatics. Baumgarten restricted their use by the canon that they are related to the time and linguistic sphere of the author.[597] Ernesti[598] then restricted their application to passages containing ambiguities [*ambiguitas sensus*]. In Keil[599] they appear among the determining grounds of sense. But none of these hermeneutical systems made a positive effort to determine their varying degrees of applicability to different cases.

For that a psychological view of the origin of a work was required. It alone could furnish a way of assessing the importance of each particular idea and its comparative value. But this meant that grammatical interpretation would now encroach upon the territory of psychological interpretation.[600] Schleiermacher's fundamental construction permitted this, because the two types of interpretation

[597] See Baumgarten, *Biblische Hermeneutik*, §89, p. 32. (H)
[598] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis* I, sec. 2 c, p. 35. (H)
[599] See Keil, *Hermeneutik*, §36. (H)
[600] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik*, p. 100. (D)

formed a positive antithesis. Accordingly, he took over from the second part an abbreviated form of [his] psychological view about the different values of particular ideas in the whole of a work. The distinction between principal and secondary ideas and means of 762
presentation,[601] as we find it here, may, in fact, serve as an abbreviated expression of the whole applicable theory.

Classification Based on the Antithesis between Free Combination and Scientific Form as the Basis of This Connection

We have already discussed what role the antithesis between free, synthetic combination that expresses individuality and scientific form plays in the foundation of Schleiermacher's system.[602] In accordance with this distinction, the objects of hermeneutics are then arranged in a positive antithesis. There are two extremes. First, there is the lyrical, where free combination that expresses individuality is an end in itself, and a particular idea is simply a means to an unconstrained synthesis. Second, there is scientific form, which is governed by a deductive progression in which all particular parts are either subordinated or coordinated. Between these two extremes, all the other forms are governed by the antithesis between poetry and prose. In poetry the particular seeks a value of its own, whereas in prose the value resides in the whole. Schleiermacher established a veritable array of antitheses: first, lyrics and letters, both of which, as the self-moving, self-consciousness of the subject, represent a free concatenation of ideas that lack unity; then, epics and historical narratives, each of which, in their different ways, form a kind of middle ground; finally, drama and didactic forms, which best exemplify strict order.[603]

For Predominantly Scientific Writings, the Distinction between Primary and Secondary Ideas Is Necessary

The effort to determine the local value of a word cuts across all these antithetical gradations. The more a work approximates scientific form, the easier it will be to differentiate between primary and secondary ideas; the more it approximates to the lyrical, the more the idea will simply become a means of presentation, while the difference between primary and secondary ideas will tend to fade. This results in hermeneutical rules for the treatment of the local value. For a scientific sequence, it follows that whatever belongs to the main idea of a complex is used with the same meaning for as long as

[601] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik*, p. 95. (H)
[602] See [Schleiermacher], *Dialektik*, p. 306. (D)
[603] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik*, pp. 96ff. (D)

763 the same context persists. For secondary ideas, however, a determination of local value should be sought where they appear as primary ideas, and so forth.[604] Findings thus arrived at will not only be subjected to positive comparisons but also to oppositions, based on the logical connection among concepts. We have already dealt with this connection under the heading of language.

This is by no means the first time that the distinction between primary and secondary ideas appears in hermeneutics. Flacius already wrote: "The first and preeminent concern of the reader should be to weigh those primary and substantial sentences in which the entire determination of the propounded question most powerfully resides; then to weigh the secondary ones as those that are adduced externally and accidentally."[605] And in the same vein, for ideas that are referred to in an incidental fashion, Christian Wolff advocates searching for passages where they appear in their proper context with a definition.

For Loosely Constructed Texts an Understanding of Ideas as Means of Explication Is Required.

For texts that approximate the scientific form, the central task is to distinguish between primary and secondary ideas. But for writings that move primarily in the realm of individual construction, ideas are to be understood as a means of explication.[606] Where words and ideas do not appear for their own sakes, but explicate or present an inner feeling seeking expression in a combination, the aim of understanding will be to differentiate those passages where this occurs from all the others.

Schleiermacher insightfully includes maxims under this heading; they are a means of presentation for the historian.[607] The most important and most difficult class of such means of presentation are figurative expressions.

Hermeneutics took over the treatment of tropes from rhetoric, but this treatment, along with its approach to the closely related

[604] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik*, p. 99. (H)

[605] Flacius, *Clavis* II, p. 24. (D)

[606] The term *Darstellen* [to explicate, present] in contrast to *Mitteilen* [to communicate] was already used by Friedrich Schlegel in distinguishing poetry from prose. Already in Bernhardi the term "means of explication or presentation" appears in this sense. It is noteworthy that Baumgarten also came close to the idea: "Where . . . many secondary discussions occur, and are not merely permissible but indispensible to the embellishment of a speech, they must be carefully distinguished in the analysis." (Baumgarten, *Biblische Hermeneutik*, §64, p. 216.) (D)

[607] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik*, p. 105. (H)

topic of figures, consisted of a merely external classification. Melanchthon's is a case in point: "The Greeks called it a trope when a word is turned from its own meaning to one similar or close to 764
it."[608] The earlier hermeneutics labored endlessly on the framework of classification; Glassius grounded the categories in his rhetoric, and he managed to erect a rather interesting system in accordance with them. However, he confounds allegorical interpretation and figurative speech, which leads to curious guidelines for discovering tropes. Something should be assumed to be a trope only where the text demands it, that is, where a ⟨literal understanding would⟩ be contradictory. Ernesti retains this. Even though he correctly observed that tropes often become authentic expressions and that etymology discovers tropes in the meaning ⟨of words⟩[609]—a remark that should have stimulated further inquiry—he paid too little attention to tropes to draw the implications of his own observation. He attributes their origin, in part, to the need to assign several meanings to one word, and, in part, to the need for variety and ornateness in discourse, without reflecting that the task is [to explain] the how and why of such connections. He is much more concerned with the rules for detecting tropes. And what rules they are! They do not exhibit the slightest insight into the essence of tropes. If there is a conflict between a subject and a predicate or with reality, indeed, if something goes against established usage, then interpretation should appeal to the trope. But this applies only to those parts of Scripture that contain no divine laws, because no one is accustomed to state these in inauthentic expressions.[610] Morus also does not advance the topic. Keil, however, harks back to the classification of Glassius, just then available in Dathe's new edition,[611] by calling attention to several of Glassius's main kinds of trope in a completely arbitrary and unexplained way. This was the null outcome of a chapter that had dragged itself through the whole history of rhetoric and hermeneutics. The best were those classifications,

[608] [Melanchthon], *Corpus Reformatorum*, ed. Bretschneider (Halle, 1846), XIII p. 463 (*Elementa rhetorices*). (H)

[609] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, pt. I, sec. II c 4, p. 60, p. 64. ⟨"Trope"(*tropos*) in earlier hermeneutics means unauthentic expression, figurative usage, or metaphor. Schleiermacher uses the term "trope" only occasionally in his aphorisms of 1805 and 1809, and in the first draft of the *Hermeneutik und Kritik* (1810–18). Normally, he speaks of metaphors and figurative expressions. See *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 105.⟩ (D)

[610] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, pt. I, sec. I, ch. 4, §10. (D)

[611] Glassius, *Philologia sacra*, ed. J. A. Dathe (Leipzig, 1776). (D)

such as Glassius's, that came with examples and belonged to the old form of rhetoric. For they, at least, furnished an overview of the range of tropes.

765 *Vico on Tropes*

The work of the Italian, Vico, entitled *The New Science*,[612] which makes up for all the earlier systems of hermeneutics, contains the beginnings of a scientific treatment of tropes that has not been utilized to this day. "All . . . tropes, which have hitherto been considered ingenious inventions of writers, were necessary modes of expression of all the first poetic nations."[613] Vico connects tropes to two phenomena—language and myth—one of which, in fact, contains their explanatory ground, while the other at least furnishes an ingenious and superb analogy. "In such a logic . . . the first poets had to give names to things from the most particular and the most sensible ideas. Such ideas are the sources, respectively, of synedoche and metonymy."[614] And like myth, metaphor lends sense and passion to senseless things. If what Schleiermacher has to say about tropes is not quite up to the great standard of this discussion, it is nevertheless certainly the first account of tropes in a hermeneutics from a universal viewpoint. Once again, he starts with the antithesis between articulation or inner connectedness and external juxtaposition, which, like the antithesis of the organic and the inorganic in Becker's grammar, permeates all parts of his hermeneutics. There are, Schleiermacher says, such close affinities between certain representations that one automatically offers itself as the means of presenting the other.[615] But what does he mean by these affinities? It is a parallelism between particular members of a unified sequence of concepts. Accordingly, this form of the trope is based on a purely logical affinity among concepts that makes it possible to interchange them. But it is obvious that nothing is explained by such an affinity. The closer the concepts are to each other, the more unintelligible does the effect of interchanging them become. The other form of trope for Schleiermacher is that of accidental relations. But even this type should be derivable from an

[612] *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, abridged trans. of the 3d ed. (1744), trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970).

[613] Vico, *The New Science*, p. 90.

[614] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

[615] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 107. (H)

"objective analogy."[616] Thus Schleiermacher is on the verge of eliminating a distinction that was hardly intelligible in the first place.

From the logical point of view, all tropes are the same. They all arise from certain classes of interchanges or substitutions, which were systematized in rhetoric. These substitutions may be obvious 766
or remote, but the kind of antithesis that Schleiermacher attempts simply does not apply. Tropes simply do not originate from the sort of logical substitution that implies an awareness of parallelism; rather they come from the same impulse to present or explicate our innermost attitudes that is found in language and are formed in accordance with the same laws. A series of tropes arises when the more determinate, sensible intuition involved in linguistic apperception, which produced the word originally, is evoked by the word again, after it has already faded from ordinary language. Thus there is nothing more here than the renewal of the original linguistic process as instigated by a word. All true brilliance of diction is based on this, and real talent for linguistic expression manifests itself in a feeling for this original conception of language as well as in a feeling for synonyms and the distinctions among them. But the human spirit is also independently productive in this area, and any account of tropes, wherever they are not merely artificial, but express the true gift for appropriate figurative speech, must treat them as a continuation of linguistic creation. The same drive to overcome the lack of an adequate expression and to articulate an intuition completely must be present here. In later stages of language this drive generates no new root-words, but only an apperception of a new intuition by means of the old root-word. Here also the intuition is apperceived by means of a kindred intuition that is adequate to its strength and intensity. But we must distinguish this kind of trope from those that arise artificially. The latter are mere imitations of a natural process that strive for the same effects.

We have not strayed from our task. For whether anyone approves these suggestions or wants to take a different path, he will surely not want to start anywhere other than with language and the linguistic process. The important points in coming to terms with Schleiermacher's hermeneutics are that the lack of an explanation of the linguistic process affects the whole first part of his hermeneutics; that this part, in turn, substitutes classifications for explanations; and that Schleiermacher does not, consequently, arrive at a com-

[616] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 108. (H)

plete, continuous, internally coherent view of the process.[617] The same deficiency will show up just as clearly in his classification of sentences and parts of sentences.

767 *Application to the New Testament*

We will confine ourselves to a brief description of the special application of this part of the ⟨hermeneutical⟩ canon to the New Testament. Apart from introducing the hypothesis that the first three Gospels originated by mechanical patchwork, which is simply an assumption drawn from the psychological part of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics, it contains nothing that is not a straightforward application of the general part and of the canon we have described. A major issue is the use of parallels. They are admissible, in the case of an individual author, after careful investigation of whether he remained the same; and, in the case of a complex of different [texts], only after a compilation of all particular expressions. Such a compilation is the only way to make an approximate determination of their general relationship to each other, a determination that embodies Schleiermacher's epoch-making attention to the whole of a work and all the works of an author.[618]

8. Determination of the Formal Element. Sentences and Periods.

Schleiermacher's treatment of sentences and periods illuminates, as few other aspects of his thought can, both the significant advance represented by the grammatical part of his hermeneutics and the deficiencies of his method of logical classification.

The earlier hermeneutics was beset by totally vacuous injunctions to determine the predicate on the basis of the subject, and the like, to search for the coherence of sentences even where none is explicitly available, and other such trivia. Keil was the first to distinguish between the grammatical and logical coherence of sentences—a point he does not fail to claim in his preface as his contribution to hermeneutics. A clear grasp of this distinction is essential to any discussion of this topic.

Beyond this, Keil speaks of the presence of a logical coherence even in cases where it has not found grammatical expression,[619] but he has no inkling of the underlying problem here, namely, to under-

[617] Another explanation for the undeniable shortcomings of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics seems to us to be the lack of feeling for the roots of sensuous intuition, which are the source of the sensuous elements of speech. (D)

[618] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 121f.

[619] Keil, *Hermeneutik*, §60. (D)

stand the relation between thought and speech in such cases. He does, however, notice something the earlier hermeneutics had also dealt with rather thoroughly, namely, that the Apostles, who were accustomed to Hebrew linguistic forms, did not know how to make the most of the wealth of connectives of the Greek language. Once again Flacius appears to be one of the more modern predecessors of Schleiermacher, this time by virtue of his historical proximity to the flowering of rhetoric. He had already introduced the Aristotelian distinction between dangling and connected speech [*oratio pendens* 768
aut connexa][620] into hermeneutics. But Flacius reproduces the distinction in a very vague way, adorns it with examples, and is largely preoccupied with the way Paul advances from one set of ideas to another: "His discourse appears to tumble from one topic to another."[621] He is unable to offer more than this. Schleiermacher takes this distinction up again.

The Relations between Parts of Sentences

Schleiermacher deals with the differences between the parts of sentences very briefly and in formal propositions. His suggestions here are animated also by the distinction between relatively inflected and uninflected languages, which underlies the general grammatical classification of languages into form languages and formless ones.[622]

The Relation between Sentences: Aggregative and Organic Connections between Sentences

Schleiermacher immediately begins his account of sentence connectives with the antithesis between aggregative and organic sentence connections.

Aristotle makes the same distinction in terms of free-running prose (*lexis eiromene*) and compact prose (*katestrammene*).[623] For the term "organic," in which one might want to find more, is only a generalization of what he says so well: that free-running prose has no purpose (*telos*) in itself, and is unsatisfying because of its indefiniteness (*apeiron*). For everyone wanted to see a purpose, and they did not rest until they came to it. Compact prose, however, has its purpose in itself: "Language of this kind is satisfying and easy to follow. It is satisfying, because it is just the reverse of indefinite; and

[620] See Flacius, *Clavis* II, p. 502f. (D)
[621] Flacius, *Clavis* II, p. 503. (D)
[622] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 118. (D)
[623] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, [trans. W. Rhys Roberts, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 2248], 1409a. (D)

moreover the hearer always feels that he is grasping something and has reached some definite conclusion."[624]

This Aristotelian division, however, which, according to its author, was to designate two periods of Greek style, causes difficulties as soon as one seeks to apply it to the whole course of the development of style, as Schleiermacher does. Aristotle inherited a development, which, with the rise of sophistry and Isocrates, and the influ-
769 ence of philosophy on rhetoric, had formed the period, and had achieved unsurpassable perfection in the thought of his teacher, Plato.[625] But what happened after that? Aristotle himself must be regarded as ushering in the age of the decline of rhetoric, an age when the logical form of an idea was no longer expressed in the corresponding grammatical form, an age that culminates in the style of Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus, when *kai* came to take the place of all connectives. This form of speech ⟨evokes⟩ the question: How should the distinction between the logical form of an idea and its grammatical expression be formulated? It furnishes the context for understanding why the arrangement of ideas into periods is the result of thoroughly artificial definitions. How, then, does Schleiermacher deal with these questions that arise from this expanded view of the development of style? He certainly recognizes the difficulty. It must be possible to think "that a purely aggregative form could produce the same effect as an organically connected form."[626] The positive antithesis must at least schematically embrace the variety of phenomena to be explained. Just as the foregoing possibility has to be entertained, one also has to entertain the other: "that the particular connectives of a language sometimes acquire a purely aggregative value."[627] Corresponding to Schleiermacher's system, however, there are two movements in language. These parallel possibilities mix up things that are quite heterogeneous. For "if an organic connecting element is used only for aggregation,"[628] then it is a case of changing the value of a word, that is, of a mere *material* element of language. A word will be associated with a weaker representation than usual. In the other case, there is the problem of grammatical *form*. For, contrary to Schleiermacher's account, it is not possible that a [mere] "adjoining element can display an organic connec-

[624] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III, 9, 1409b. (D)

[625] See on this point A. F. Bernhardi's introduction about the scientific syntax of the Greek language (1829). (D)

[626] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 117. (D)

[627] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 118. (D)

[628] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 118. (D)

tion," through which an "emphasis" might arise.[629] Rather, there is a distinction between the inner logical form of connection, as it exists in the speaker and is awakened in the listener, and the overall grammatical form. The latter really manifests, but the former only seems to, a difference in the logical and grammatical coherence of the formal element. Schleiermacher's view of language makes it impossible to pursue this question further. His theory of meaning com- 770
pletely passes over the formal element. But the relation to the general view of language, which this part of the theory of meaning was meant to bring about, does furnish a possibility for pursuing it. If this is to be successful, the distinction between logical and grammatical coherence will first have to be formulated with the utmost clarity, so that the question can be phrased with precision. But this very distinction must be alien to a view of language that starts from the premise of the unity of thought and speech. Such a view cannot get beyond the notion of the one form representing the other, but this very scheme obscures the problem of how this difference is to be conceived despite them being substitutable. Schleiermacher elaborates his classification further by intersecting a positive–negative framework with subjective and objective conceptions of connection. This has, of course, exactly the same basis as the classification itself. Aristotle's[630] further detailed definitions seem to me preferable to Schleiermacher's because they penetrate much more deeply into the rhetorical composition of the sentence. Nevertheless, it is Schleiermacher's distinctive contribution to have brought into hermeneutics the beginnings of a more thorough treatment of the formal elements of language. This and his account of primary and secondary ideas, and of means of presentation, helped him introduce a scientific form into the grammatical part of hermeneutics.[631]

9. Formal Aspects of Determining Local Value in the New Testament

The Style of the New Testament

The general chapter on the local value of the formal and material aspects of language could not be approached on a purely grammatical basis, for, as Schleiermacher recognized, "conducting grammati-

[629] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 118. (H)

[630] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III, 9, 1409b. (D)

[631] Here we could not, of course, go into the necessary distinction between composite sentences and periods, nor into the rhythmic elements of the latter. Heyne deals with them best: *Ausführliches Lehrbuch von der Sprache* II, 746. The conclusion of his grammar is also very suggestive.

cal interpretation in isolation is a mere fiction."[632] Similarly, the special application [of hermeneutics to the New Testament] also requires one to bring the findings of psychological interpretation to bear on this area. Accordingly, in the hermeneutical treatment of
771 style, general and special views of linguistic usage, psychological insights into the nature and origin of the different types of discourse, and conclusions of critical research on the New Testament writings all intersect.

Flacius and Glassius on the Style of the New Testament

The efforts of the earlier hermeneutics to understand the style of New Testament writings had, not surprisingly, remained incomplete. Because they approached the different types of discourse and the individual Scriptures as stylistic wholes, taking no account of their actual origin, they could not fathom the genesis of New Testament style, let alone grasp it with psychological precision. Thus Schleiermacher correctly perceives the advance of later hermeneutics when he says: "First, it aspires to insight and a clear command of the details of language; second, it attempts to make more precise the connection between hermeneutical operations and historical criticism."[633] Still, these earlier accounts of New Testament style are the only coherent ones within the framework of systematic hermeneutics. We have noted that when Flacius introduces his fifth treatise, *De stilo Sacrum Literarum* (On the Style of Holy Scripture), he is aware that he is attempting something new and that the attempt is inadequate. His perspective is the broadest possible. "The reader . . . sees in what manner and for what reason the synthesis and composition of the entire corpus was made."[634] He deals first with the general characteristics of New Testament style, and then with the special features of the Pauline and the Johannine. This general treatment already contains the teleological categories of efficacy, richness, and brevity [*efficacia*, *plenitudo*, and *brevitas*]. Still Flacius is much freer here than Glassius. He compares Biblical discourse with that of Thucydides on six points:

> Scholars tend to praise six points in Thucydides's discourse because he is short in words, and erudite and intense in things; so that the number of words approximately follows the abundance of things. They say that he is sublime and efficacious and vivid;

[632] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 142. (D)
[633] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, pp. 128ff. (D)
[634] Flacius, *Clavis* II, p. 459. (D)

> that he uses strongly emphatic words, the sentences are compact, and the composition rough. These six points are also correct for the most part. They may be applied to sacred books.[635]

In dealing with the style of Paul, Flacius adopts the Augustinian theme that "Paul was dialectical," although he concentrates more on the internal form of Paul's thought than on his grammar. In this respect, he clearly emphasizes the transition from the individual to the universal and, conversely, the relative progression in the connections among Paul's ideas. "Sometimes he mixes the main ideas, so that he deals with many things simultaneously."[636] His treatment of 772
the simpler Johannine style is more adequate: "Many epexegeses, illustrative and supporting contrasts, repetitions, compact epanalepses, asyndeta, appendices."[637] But, of course, neither he nor Glassius, who develops ⟨these thoughts⟩ further, has any inkling of the connection between grammatical form and style. As we already indicated, in Glassius the distinctiveness of the Scriptures floats off into indeterminate ideality due to his teleological classification of the perfections of Scripture. However, his collection of examples remains useful even today as an overview of the distinctive thought patterns of Paul and John. These examples are arranged, for the most part, in accordance with the schema of Flacius.[638]

Ernesti Suggests the Connection between New Testament Style and Grammar

There are a few words in Ernesti's *Institutio interpretis* that signal a revolution in New Testament rhetoric.[639] He was the first to connect a correct conception of New Testament grammar with rhetoric. Morus pursued this further, relying on Michaelis's preface to Lowth's famous book. Keil, in his way, lost sight of the topic again amid the variety of hermeneutical operations.[640]

By indicating how all the relations that influence New Testament style work together, as we have mentioned, Schleiermacher established the highest hermeneutical perspective on style: an understanding of style in relation to composition based on language, type of discourse, and the individuality of the writer. In this approach, the universal antitheses contained in the different forms of dis-

[635] Flacius, *Clavis* II, p. 462. (D)
[636] Flacius, *Clavis* II, p. 515. (H)
[637] Flacius, *Clavis* II, pp. 528–30. (H)
[638] See Glassius, *Philologia sacra*, pp. 239ff. (D)
[639] See Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, pt. I, sec. II, ch. 3, §18. (D)
[640] Keil, *Hermeneutik*, pp. 66–72. (D)

course, which range from the Epistles to the didactic writings and include the antithesis of sentence formation, intersect with the distinctiveness of the New Testament. Schleiermacher attributes this distinctiveness partly to the fact that the authors were bilingual, partly to what he takes to have been the origin of the first three Gospels, and partly to what is communicated in the didactic writings, insofar as they derived from oral discourse. They account for the variegated style of the New Testament, as he summarizes it in a
773 brilliant overview. The antithesis between the organic and the aggregative style runs through this summary and is applied both to the composition of the whole and to particular sentences. The first three Gospels, for example, originated through aggregation, while the fourth is an organic whole. The Epistles likewise exhibit this dual character, depending on whether they are directed to a particular purpose or are free-flowing. The antithesis even applies to individual Epistles, because in most of Paul's letters the first part displays an organic articulation, while the second part, which is not governed by so definite a purpose, progresses by free aggregation. If one examines the inner form of the individual speeches of Christ contained in the historical narratives, they may likewise be viewed in terms of a dual hypothesis—fully the counterpart of the relation of John to the Synoptics—either as an aggregate of various materials or as a coherent whole whose inner form is not properly made manifest. The same antithesis appears again in the discussion of grammatical form, to the extent that the inner linguistic form of Hebrew inclines to aggregation, while Greek inclines to connection. Consequently, the Apostles are caught in a tension between grammatical thought and grammatical material; they adopt various attitudes toward this tension, but none of them quite overcomes it.

We have already indicated the importance of this antithesis for Schleiermacher's hermeneutical outlook in general. It bears on his principles in two ways. In the first place, his principle of form, just like what Schleiermacher considers its equivalent, namely, the principle of the organic among the grammarians of the philosophy of identity, necessarily leads to the antithetical notion of formlessness. The more he strains this principle, the more the realm of the formless will expand. Moreover, the antithesis of the identical and the distinctive leads to a corresponding distinction between a form of presentation that strives for a specific goal and another form of presentation whose law lies exclusively in individuality. When he also calls this principle of composition "irrational," according to which each part has a value of its own, we see how much these two antith-

eses must have in common. For as soon as the conception of form approaches a logical ordering, the two antitheses become identified. But this must always occur in the didactic realm. Here too the two antitheses become congruent, while they move farthest apart in relation to artistic forms. If in light of this we survey the [grammatical] part [of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics], it becomes clear that the rules formulated there, however artful their construction may be, merely conceal the lack of a more fundamental link among theories of meaning, of tropes and figures, of sentences and sentence structures. These rules cannot produce such a deeper link, but until ⟨this⟩ is firmly understood, it would be idle to speculate to what extent it might place limits on rule making, or whether hermeneutics can go beyond the foundation laid by Ernesti and Keil without forgetting its proper task or without being confused with [mere] grammar. 774

Psychological Interpretation 775

1. Psychological Interpretation in General: Overview of the Earlier Systems in This ⟨Respect⟩

In our general discussion we commented in detail on the relation between psychological and grammatical interpretation. Psychological interpretation approaches a work as the unity of an individuality, and its goal is to grasp the whole of a work as a single act, that is, to understand all its parts genetically.[641] As we saw, the task of hermeneutics, as Schleiermacher first defined it, consisted of furnishing a genetic explanation based on the distinctiveness ⟨of the author⟩. This definition is the cornerstone for his subsequent development of the discipline and anchors his unique place in it.

The Systems of the Earlier Period

This [psychological part] was certainly an innovative direction in hermeneutics. Now this part ⟨of⟩ Schleiermacher's ⟨work⟩ has closer affinities to rhetoric than to any other hermeneutical system, especially in its distinction among meditation, composition, and the purpose of speech.[642] Flacius was the only one before Schleiermacher to have attempted to assimilate the elements of rhetoric into a hermeneutics. For that reason, he appears to be the most important predecessor of Schleiermacher in this area, as we have shown. As for

[641] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 143f. (D)

[642] See Melanchthon, [*Elementa rhetorices*], *De dispositione*, ⟨*Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. XIII, pp. 455ff.⟩ (D)

Glassius, he merely mentions in an out-of-the-way place that "the goal of discourse is the coherence of antecedents and consequents and the harmonies and analogies of Scripture."[643]

Baumgarten, who revived Flacius's approach to this topic, defines the task as follows: to analyze "the passages to be interpreted into their paragraphs, propositions, and concepts so as better to
776 determine their inner relations, how the intent of the author is based in it, and the meaning of the expressions used."[644] His approach is exclusively logical: The various principal truths should be noted and their mutual relations examined. How? In part, by attempting to see whether they can all be subsumed under a universal concept and principle, and, in part, by determining which and how many of such principal truths belong more closely together, and so on.[645] A short summary of Baumgarten's main theses is found in Griesbach's hermeneutics.[646]

Ernesti and Keil

Ernesti's *Institutio interpretis* devotes but a few words to this topic [of the author's intent], and he discusses it solely as an aid to grammatical interpretation. The distinction he draws between "things" and "words"[647] completely obscures their correct relation. Moreover, he seems to want to apply the purpose of a discourse—a necessary hypothesis about the work of any author—directly to particular passages.[648] By including the grammatical and logical relations among sentences, Keil expands grammatical interpretation to the whole of a discourse and the transitions among its components.[649] On the other hand, he moves from historical interpretation to the purpose of discourse; but he does not connect the two, nor does he know how to breathe life into his formal propositions with the results of rhetoric, as the earlier hermeneuticists had done.

Stäudlin and Paulus

Stäudlin and Paulus were the first to grasp that psychological interpretation concerns an understanding of the inner life of the author. Stäudlin attempted to show that grammatical interpretation had

[643] Glassius, *Philologia sacra*, liber II, p. 338. (H)

[644] Baumgarten, *Biblische Hermeneutik*, fourth chapter on the coherence and analysis of passages to be interpreted, p. 187; see also pp. 187ff. (D)

[645] Baumgarten, *Biblische Hermeneutik*, fourth chapter, §60, n. 3. (D)

[646] Johann Jakob Griesbach, *Vorlesungen über die Hermeneutik des N. T.*, ed. Johann Karl Samuel Steiner (Nürnberg, 1815), "Vom Zwecke des Autors," pp. 91ff. (D)

[647] Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, pt. I, sec. II, ch. II, §§13ff. (D)

[648] See Ernesti, *Institutio interpretis*, §2, p. 34. (D)

[649] See Keil, *Hermeneutik*, §54f. (H)

had a deleterious effect on the treatment of the Bible because it excluded religious, philosophical, and moral interpretation. The sense furnished by grammatical interpretation is to be understood with the help of meditation and one's own inner religiousness. In his 777
commentary on the Gospels and his life of Jesus, Paulus investigated the standpoint, tendency, and approach of the original witnesses, and tried to determine the structural connection of the whole. As paradoxical as it sounds, Schleiermacher's examination of Luke stands closer to Paulus than to any other of his predecessors.

However, as we have shown, all of these efforts were based on a view of the human spirit that is utterly unable to grasp the inner unity of a work. A general change of world-view occurred and made possible the approach of psychological interpretation.

Schleiermacher's Relation to His Predecessors on This Question

Two issues—and here we come back to what we have already said about Schleiermacher's principles and method—are central to a correct assessment of the psychological part of Schleiermacher's *Hermeneutics*. Expressed historically they are: First, was he right in banishing historical interpretation from hermeneutics?[650] Second, was he successful in using rhetoric to transform the logical-aesthetic approach to a work into a psychological approach?

How Historical Interpretation Recedes behind That Based on the Individuality of the Author

There are not different kinds of historical interpretation. [Yet] the question whether there is such a thing as historical interpretation has been much debated. The operations of historical interpretation sometimes interpenetrate and sometimes go their separate ways; certainly, no unity can be found in the course they take. It must, rather, be sought in its object. Here too the overall unity of exegetical operations lies in a unitary view of the genesis of a work. Therefore, Schleiermacher commits himself to the following position in the debate: "The claim of historical interpretation amounts to the claim to have correctly identified the link between the New Testament writers and their age."[651] But, because he wanted to do justice to both this link and its contrary, the "new conceptual power of Christianity,"[652] his explanation immediately fell back on the uni- 778
versal antithesis of hermeneutics: "The whole thing boils down to

[650] Schleiermacher does this by presenting knowledge of the history of the age as a presupposition of interpretation under the heading of the principle of identity with the author (*Hermeneutik und Kritik*, pp. 32ff, pp. 145ff.). (D)

[651] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 20. (H)

[652] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 20. (D)

the relation between psychological and grammatical interpretation."[653] His procedure here then is exactly like his approach to the art-forms, which he also subsumed under language. In fact, he states his view only in the most abstract and general terms; he never really attempts to develop the theory in detail by tracing either the art-forms or the dominant ideas [of texts] back to language. Thus we see that the place he assigns to historical interpretation is once again a consequence of the fundamental construction taken over from his ethics.[654] That construction leaves no room for historical development. To be sure, because everything that happens falls under the schema of the distinctive and the identical, ⟨that⟩ schema may, of course, appear to be adequate, assuming the identification of language and the conceptual system. The task of the psychological part of hermeneutics is to try to use this antithesis as the basis for understanding the process of the production of ideas. I stress that this antithesis is merely the basis. It forms, along with the related ⟨antithesis⟩ between the connecting and aggregative forms of presentation, the foundation of all the oppositions that animate this part.

Rhetorical and Psychological Conceptions

This brings us to the second main thesis, which furnished Schleiermacher the scientific means for advancing beyond the rhetorical view that a work is a static mass of ideas, exhibiting certain principal forms, to the psychological view that a work is the unfolding of a spiritual act. The first draft provides an especially vivid statement of this approach: "The unity of a work, or a theme is viewed" in psychological interpretation "as the principle that moves the writer." "The goal of psychological interpretation is . . . the whole of the act in its parts."[655] Just as the first part of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics
779 is based on a general view of language, this psychological part is based on the theory of the production of ideas. However, the account of this in his hermeneutics is not identical with the one developed in his dialectics. For even though the dialectics also covers the antithesis between subject and object and between formula and image, it excludes artistic production in the narrow sense.[656]

[653] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 21. (D)

[654] A noteworthy hint, which presupposes another attitude to historical interpretation, is found on p. 216: "The object must be seen within the entire framework of the literary life of the people and the age, then within the area of the mode of its composition, and, finally, within the framework of the peculiarities of the individual author." (D)

[655] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 143f. (D)

[656] See [Schleiermacher], *Dialektik*, pp. 305ff. (D)

The Fundamental Idea of the Psychological Part

Psychological interpretation projects a theory of production in general. Here all that we have said concerning the principle of individuality and of the identical, of analytic and synthetic acts, comes together. Our only remaining task is to survey how these principal propositions are worked out into a developed theory, in order to establish its decisive advance, along with its one-sidedness that appears to require reintroducing themes of the earlier hermeneutics. The survey in the earlier draft expresses the basic idea of this part very clearly. One must grasp the whole act in its parts and view "in each part, matter as the moving force, and form as the nature that is moved by the matter."[657] Such a unity of matter and form in the whole of a work is characteristically called style; the overall task of psychological interpretation is to comprehend it.[658] This agrees with his most general determination of the object of hermeneutics: "Certain complexes of ideas that become the object of interpretation have a unity that consists in the relation between object and form. That is the objective unity in all three areas [of science, practice, and art]."[659] This idea of the unity contained in the relation of matter to form takes us back once again to Plato's fundamental idea, which we discussed earlier. Just as language and idea are taken to be identical, so now too are matter and form; for the world-view of ideal-realism sees the inner everywhere manifesting itself in the phenomenal realm without remainder. In both cases, however, the difference between the appearance of a thought and ⟨its inner content⟩ must be 780
emphasized. Neither in genesis nor in content are form and matter one. Only psychological interpretation in the narrow sense can provide the range of possibilities needed to illumine this relation between matter and form.

Aggregation and Connection

Psychological interpretation displayed itself in a positive antithesis. In this case, the antithesis amounts to the Aristotelian distinction between aggregation and connection, or as Schelling would say, the distinction between the organic and the inorganic. A self-enclosed or innerly connected complex of ideas is formed for a definite purpose, to which everything refers. The aggregated complex "is like the infinity of a river, an indeterminate transition from one idea to

[657] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 144. (H)
[658] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 144f. (D)
[659] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 165. (D)

another."[660] While the former has its unity in a definite "will-to-express,"[661] the latter has its unity in the totality of the life-moments of the individual. Individuality and the variety of art-forms confer this dual character on works in the sequence of a double antithesis. Not one of these elements ever appears by itself in the conversational and epistolary forms, and the antithesis ranges from such forms to the internally necessary order of a scientific work and the strict composition of drama. Now because every work is a mixture of these dual elements, there must be a dual psychological procedure: first, the psychological procedure in the narrow sense, which focuses on those moments of a work that arise freely from the totality of the life-elements of an individual,[662] and, second, a technical procedure, which includes the other moments that can be derived from a definite "will-to-express."[663] We shall deal briefly with both.

2. Psychological Interpretation in the Narrower Sense

In accordance with the distinction between primary and secondary ideas that already is found in grammatical interpretation, psychological interpretation can be divided in the respective searches for the seminal decision or basic thought and for secondary thoughts. The crux of the whole theory of psychological interpretation is the doctrine of the seminal decision.

781 *The Doctrine of the Seminal Decision*

In his Plato translation, Schleiermacher began with the unity of matter and form that exists in the seminal decision. We also saw that this conception of a work as a totality developing from a seed through the duality of matter and form, or as autotelic, was derived from his basic aesthetic position. The notion of the inner necessity of the development of individual works merely extends this earlier view to a larger whole. Schleiermacher's theory, then, is based on these ideas. Let us examine its underlying presuppositions. Schleiermacher himself indicates that not every text is such a unity.[664] So it would have been natural for him to formulate this distinction and define it. That Schleiermacher did not do so is not without reason. For if distinctiveness even in the freest sequence gives rise to a unity, and if, at the same time, a genre allows distinctness everywhere, so

[660] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 148. (D)
[661] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 152. (H)
[662] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 152. (H)
[663] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, pp. 148ff. (D)
[664] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 145. (H)

that this is, in fact, inherent in the very concept,[665] then it is impossible to see at what point a work could arise that would lack unity.

But another presupposition also lurks behind the basic idea of the psychological part. Subsequent observation recognizes cohesive unity in a work. But what requires one to suppose this unity is productive, the seed of the whole, rather than the result of a uniformly advancing process of formation that may have several points of origin? Obviously nothing but the presupposition of the unity of purpose and cause, or the idea of entelechy. We cannot explore the question of first principles here. Instead, we shall have to rely on the observation that the unity could just as easily be ⟨produced⟩ by a subsequent factor able to connect parts that are [already] similar due to some inner unity of spirit, as by a productive drive of the whole. But would that undermine the whole idea of psychological explanation? Not at all. At least not where hermeneutical criteria are available for determining in which of the two ways a work originated. However, it does cast doubt on the possibility of establishing any schema for hermeneutics, even a very flexible one.

Lifeworks, Studies, and Occasional Writings

Corresponding to three different values of the seminal decision, psychological interpretation introduces a convincing distinction among studies, lifeworks, and occasional writings.[666] Schlegel had already 782
brilliantly worked out this division in arriving at the idea of development in an author's work, an idea that was to play such an essential role in Schleiermacher's reconstruction of the Platonic corpus. But he had neglected the relation between the value and context of a seminal decision and any broader unity of orientation and outlook. It would be unproductive to rehearse the various artificially constructed forms of the seminal decision here. Certainly, a theory whose goal is to account for all the details of a work of art in terms of the unity of matter and form, that ascribes anything that cannot be accounted for within that framework to the inner purpose of the author,[667] merits special mention as a very fine, critical insight. Still, Schlegel had already suggested such a theory, and, in any case, the emphasis we find here on the artistic element in all productions of the spirit was one of the slogans of romanticism.

The second major issue for psychological interpretation concerns secondary ideas. The effort to explain them psychologically

[665] See [Schleiermacher], *Ethik*, pp. 60ff. (H)
[666] See [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 160. (H)
[667] See[Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 159. (H)

by invoking the free play of representations, distraction or diversion, and memory is not the happiest chapter in these lectures. The notion that one can have "representations without actually being master of them" only restates the ultimate question here without answering it. Even worse, Schleiermacher refers to "the will-to-be of such disperse representations."[668] Because this explanation, which, in turn, requires a theory as to how representations can be unconscious yet excitable did not succeed, Schleiermacher was able to entertain, but unable to develop, the notion that secondary ideas may furnish an important and sometimes surprisingly profound way of reaching the individual intuition of an author.[669]

3. Technical Interpretation

The task of technical interpretation "is to consider how a work progresses from the vital seminal decision according to content and form, and how, taken as whole, it is the further development of that
783 decision."[670] The act of producing the content is meditation; the act by which form is developed is composition. The former is governed by the psychological laws of thought production, the latter, by "the general laws of order in thought."[671] Because both are one in the seminal decision, and each involves the other, their separation in [the process of] explication is only relative. In fact, Schleiermacher focuses on their interrelations. As he takes his bearings from the special characteristics of the seminal decision, it will be dominated either by [a particular] image or [a general] formula, by the subjective or the objective. This, in turn, paves the way for a variety of classifications. First, if the image in the seminal decision predominates over the formula while the development of thought is [objective],[672] "then the particular [content] will overshadow the composition, to be sure, in the form of thought; if, however, the development is more subjective, then tone will be dominant. If the formula, however, preponderates in the impulse, then the composition will predominate, while the particular content recedes. This is the general scheme, which expresses the relationship of the dual

[668] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 191. (D)

[669] Both in his recognition that secondary ideas are to be understood psychologically, rather than logically, and in the emphasis he places on finding concealed secondary ideas, Schleiermacher comes close to Chladenius.

[670] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 200. (D)

[671] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 201. (D)

[672] Substituting *objektiv* for *subjektiv*. See Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik und Kritik* p. 202. Cf. sec. II, n. 86.

process to an act of will. Just as the latter classification rests on the distinction between intuitive and conceptual thinking, the other antithesis is based on the difference cited above between starting with the particular and starting with the whole. But in a certain sense, it is incapable of development due to the presumption of a closed unity, a presumption that permits, at most, a glance at the particular within the unity of the seminal decision.

The Relation between Meditation and Composition

The classification takes on a different form in light of the distinction between meditation and composition. In poetry, the two are completely separate; in prose, their unity predominates, yet in such a way that the more prose approximates to poetry, the more the two acts also diverge. This antithesis is not likely to be of great importance for hermeneutical application. By contrast, the other ⟨distinction⟩, which centers on the various values of the impulse to meditate, contains guidelines for explaining different types of style, even though the classification is one-sidedly logical. The imperfection of this impulse manifests itself either in the simple sovereignty of the original schema, or in its purely formal treatment; in neither case is the impulse to represent content given the proper life, a circumstance that gives rise to sterility or to exaggerated logical subtlety. The opposite occurs when the determining force in the impulse is too slight; in that case, the alien elements of meditation overwhelm 784
the form. At any rate, the character of the first impulse modifies from the outset that of the [will to] present or delineate.

Comment on This Classification

We confess that we can detect no progress in technical interpretation due to this classification. Far more significant are Wilhelm von Humboldt's investigations of style and composition, which, free of the prepossessions of a system, aim at genuine explanation.[673] Similarly, it seems to us a positive sign of tact that Schleiermacher at least did not attempt to explicate the forms of composition in terms of his schemata, but was content to make the general claim that word placement and expressions are the key factors. He presents different types of composition only for the special case of the New Testament. Where the task is to survey the whole domain of production, everyone will surely want his own classifications. Psychological-aesthetic explanation can begin either with very concrete questions such as about the history of poetic forms and the condi-

[673] von Humboldt, *On Language*, pp. 195ff.

tions of prose literature in given periods, or, if anyone chooses to venture into such regions, with very general and dubious questions concerning the inner forms of thought that characterize various periods. For such explanation, classifications such [as Schleiermacher's] can offer only some rough and ready categories. Their usefulness is not to be underestimated, but Schleiermacher had something rather different in mind. He intended to explain by classifying. Whether we can follow him turns on two issues. The first concerns the soundness of the general methodological principles that we have discussed and are decisive here. The other involves their relation to his theory of the organic. And that, too, has already been discussed.[674]

The Philological Impact of These Questions: Schleiermacher's Influence

It was easy for Schleiermacher, who was, by nature—shall we call it logical or aesthetic?—so much given to spinning things out of his
785 own head, to generalize observations that he drew from his own inner life. However, whether one starts with his system or with his personality, the same affinity will be evident. After all, Dissen, a man with a very similar concern with the overall inner form of a work of art, also went down this blind alley of schematization. Not that he was influenced by Schleiermacher's hermeneutics—he only came to know it through Lücke. But he was certainly influenced by ⟨Schleiermacher's⟩ Plato translation, which was the decisive impetus for him as well as for Boeckh and others. Dissen's schematic approach to Pindar led to a controversy in which these questions were broadly aired in philology. In this way, Schleiermacher became a very powerful influence on technical interpretation in philology. There are still numerous open questions in this area of technical interpretation, and Schleiermacher's technical theory, with its many specific and fruitful ideas, possesses the merits characteristic of a vigorously conceived complex of ideas.[675]

[674] The comparison of heuristics and architectonics to meditation and composition is also interesting. One recognizes here a general trait of the system.

[675] Here, too, Fichte's ideas prepare the way, even though they focus primarily on the philosophical interpretation of poetic works. It is merely that Fichte, like Humboldt, always supports the subjective conception of aesthetic ideas, while Schelling, Schlegel, and Schleiermacher easily transformed these views into an objective perspective. See Fichte, *Über Geist und Buchstaben in der Philosophie* (1794), *Sämmtliche Werke* VIII, pp. 270ff. (D)

4. The Application of the Psychological Part of Hermeneutics to the Bible

We have already examined the general principles of Schleiermacher's New Testament hermeneutics and their relationship to criticism. This area of special hermeneutics depends on those principles and on psychological interpretation in general. Schleiermacher centers his Biblical exegesis on three main points. First, every book of the New Testament should be taken on its own terms. Second, one should advance from a general view of the whole to the details. With these his method seeks to connect the contrasting approaches of earlier systems. The synthetic method of earlier hermeneutics and the analytical method of the grammatical-historical school were linked in these two canons. He thus does justice both to the earlier period's preoccupation with the overall coherence of Scripture and to the detailed psychological approach to each individual book. The third main point is the requirement that interpretation develop a coherent picture of the unity of early Christianity based on the contemporary conditions. "The idea of the overall state of Christianity in the Apostolic Age"[676] should not only be the starting point of 786
interpretation but also its ultimate purpose; it is the highest unity that hermeneutics can attain. This passage emphasizes, perhaps more strongly than any other, the relationship between New Testament interpretation and historical presuppositions. Schleiermacher's specific conception of the historical life that produced the Scriptures is expressed in another passage: "We can easily reconstruct the two elements in the Apostolic Age on which historical description was based. The Church had an interest in keeping alive the details of the life of Christ and in fixing the memory of its own beginning."[677] Once again the principle of the unity of the Christian spirit is used to explain the essential nature of his hermeneutics.

The Gospels

Schleiermacher now proceeds to use this to explain the origin of the Gospels. Criticism and hermeneutics simply cannot be separated here; historical criticism is based on an understanding of composition. Here also Schleiermacher's investigation starts with form. The vividness of the Gospel narrative proves that it comes from primitive elements. But the ⟨way⟩ the elements are connected requires a

[676] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 255. (H)
[677] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 234. (H)

new investigation. He starts with the contrast between biography and the mere aggregation of particular narratives, in which we recognize once again the much repeated distinction between the organic and the inorganic. ⟨Because the Synoptics lack a detailed chronology and even a determining idea, in contrast to John, Schleiermacher takes them to be an essentially external patchwork of separate narratives, and takes them to have originated as an aggregate of details.⟩ Thus an exaggerated emphasis on the principle of form has a destructive effect on criticism. It is reminiscent of the way Schlegel was impelled by much the same motives to his view that the most important Platonic dialogues were fragmentary. In his predilection for psychological hypotheses, which try to explain every sentence in the narrative on the basis of its origin, Schleiermacher occasionally displays affinities with ⟨his contemporary⟩, H. E. G. Paulus.[678]

787 *The Pauline Epistles*

Schleiermacher exercised a far more felicitous influence on the understanding of Paul's letters than on criticism of the Gospels. He is certainly the first to have understood not only Plato's form of writing, but also the Pauline form in their full depth. After all, he had the same sort of spiritual affinity for the dialectical manner of Paul that he had for Plato's.

Here he begins with the antithesis between a form that is determined by a purpose and a form of free aggregation. In a manner reminiscent of his treatment of Plato, he locates the essence of the Pauline form in a synthesis of two intersecting elements, and claims that the job of exegesis is to discover the point where these two elements meet. Thus he says in a notebook on Galatians:

> Two relations are connected in this letter: the Pauline doctrine of Christ's relation to Judaism, and Paul's own relation to the Galatians. An understanding of how these topics are mutually related, and how Paul moves from one to the other, furnishes the key to the way the ideas are connected and enables one to get a handle on the shape and dimensions of the details.

Schleiermacher offered various classifications of Paul's letters. The ⟨classification⟩ in his hermeneutics is generated by a further division in the antithesis between the didactic and the personal elements. The didactic element aims, in part, at communicating the Christian content, in part, at relating it to earlier content, while the

[678] Schleiermacher, *Sämmtliche Werke* I, 2, pp. 47, 56, 66, 76; see also Paulus, *Kommentar zu den Evangelien* I, pp. 387, 153, 527, 634, 416. (D)

individual element serves as a picture of the [author's] own state as well as of the reader. Other divisions of the letters appear in his introduction ⟨to the New Testament⟩[679] and in his investigations of Timothy.[680]

Schleiermacher attaches a conclusion to all this, which provides a brief summary of the principal forms of interpretation. They are the *historical*, as practiced by Semler and Keil; the *aesthetic*, as it appeared in Herder and Eichhorn; and finally, the *speculative* and the *religious*. As both speculation and the Church have become actual through language, they are both preserved by interpretation and require it for their existence. However, it is science that grasps the deepest roots of interpretation.

> It is of the highest scientific interest to know how man operates in forming and using language. Likewise, it is of the highest scientific interest to understand man, the appearance, in terms of man, the idea. The two are most closely related, because language both leads and accompanies human beings in their development.[681]

[679] [Schleiermacher], *Sämmtliche Werke* I, 8, pp. 133ff. (D)
[680] [Schleiermacher], *Sämmtliche Werke* I, 2, p. 276. (D)
[681] [Schleiermacher], *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 261. (D)

2. ON UNDERSTANDING AND HERMENEUTICS: STUDENT LECTURE NOTES (1867–68)[1]

Translated by Rudolf A. Makkreel

[. . .] We want to understand human beings. Regarding all other objects there is an interest to explain; regarding human beings, an interest to understand. With other objects I seek explanations, which do not give me an inherent likeness of things. We do not understand the processes of nature. We are aware of the effects of a [physical] force, but the nature of its agency we do not know. It is different in the domain of the moral world. Here I understand everything. What does it mean to understand something? Let us ask, What does it mean when I do not understand myself? I have a deep aversion for someone. I am familiar with the phenomenon of aversion, but I cannot re-create its cause. This is even more clear when I consider the past. I cannot re-create the motives of my past actions. When I do not understand someone else, I cannot relive the state of the other in myself. Thus all understanding involves a re-creation in my psyche. Where is this human capacity of re-creation to be located? Not in the capacity for abstract thought, but in an imaginative process. Scientific operations have their basis in the creative imagination. Imagination is an intuitive process in which I add to intuitive moments that are given some that are not. The intensity of the human imagination will differ. The power to complete what is given varies greatly in different people; even for the same person it will vary in different circumstances. The imagination is limited to a certain sphere. It is an illusion to think that nothing human is alien to me.

Let us apply this to literature. The poetic capacity must contain a sympathy with everything human. This sympathy is also essential for the historian. Reconstruction is a moment in the poetic capacity. The greater the range of what he can re-create, the greater is the poet. In this regard Shakespeare is the greatest writer. But even the

[1] This is a translation of parts of one of Dilthey's Basel lectures entitled "Die Intuition" from his course "Logik und System der philosophischen Wissenschaften" given in 1867–68, first published in *GS* XX, 98–110. Because Dilthey's own lecture notes are no longer available, student notes were used.

greatest has his limits. A human being who understood everything would not be human—he would not be a real individual.

101 It has been noted that a person who can transpose himself into anything is not a moral person. For instance, actors who could transpose themselves into everything and historians who treated everyone impartially are said to be without an inner core. This [moral charge] is not our problem here. But something between transposition and impartiality is required. Sympathy with a class of characters. The poet, the actor will have a superior understanding of certain groups.

Concerning morality Schleiermacher has observed that if sympathy is the basis of all understanding, then the highest understanding requires love. Elsewhere he says that this understanding is necessary for the highest form of the ethical.

Let us try to consider the problem of how understanding comes about. Understanding arises when a series of inferences from particular to particular is placed in the service of intuition. When something external is given to me, I must supplement it with an inner thought process. Such a task I can fulfill only by means of analogous cases. I thus need (1) to have experienced a series of similar cases, where similar exteriors are found to have such and such inner states as their ground. Given this initial analogy, (2) an inference from analogy is then applied to one such case. (3) Thus, I obtain a reconstruction.

This is the schema of the process, but it displays itself quite differently in particular instances. It may be my task (1) to understand an event; (2) to structure it historically (the task of the historian); (3) to freely reconstruct life and action. The latter is always accompanied by processes of exclusion and generalization. Poetry expresses a universal.

These processes are artistic and scientific because a universal is grasped. How can we explain on the basis of the above processes that we arrive at a universal without any concepts? All other universals are given in concepts. Here we have particular intuitions permeated by a universal. They always involve inferences from analogy. [. . .]

107 In early modern times, we see the formation of a discipline of hermeneutics, whose basic idea belongs to logic. According to the Council of Trent, the Bible cannot be understood without tradition. Flacius wrote a manual for reading the Bible without appealing to tradition. This generated a hermeneutical literature. Semler introduced the idea that one must understand the times of an author.

A whole should be understood on the basis of the particular and the particular on the basis of the whole. This contradiction generates the procedure of the hermeneut. He operates with hypotheses.

When we apply this to a work, it becomes obvious that we never understand a work on a first reading. It only gives us a general idea; we must then understand the particularity [of the work]. Two basic operations are involved here.

Every word has various possible senses. When these possibilities are juxtaposed in consciousness the understanding of a sentence, or of a work, comes about. We can divide ideas into three classes: dominant, subordinate, and expository ideas. In an entirely logical text the dominant ideas will be the real ones and the expository ideas will recede.

Among expository or explicative devices, comparison assumes the highest place. What is the meaning of a simile or metaphor? Far 108
from being a mere artistic device, we are forced by the nature of the linguistic process to use metaphors. All expressions for spiritual operations are metaphors. Metaphors are also used in science. What has first been narrated is then put forward as an instance, another instance is placed beside it, and through them a universal is to be exhibited. One event is compared with another, for example, a medieval with a contemporary.

It is different again when the science of history explicates how the same causes produce different effects at different times. Gervinus[2] and Schlosser love such comparisons. Whenever Schlosser speaks of the artificial Greek culture of the Romans, he has in the back of his mind the French culture of the English and Germans. Then there is the case where cause and effect converge by means of comparison, as when he demonstrates that in all states aristocratic forms of government have had the same effect. Here an analogy approximates a lawful connection.

Another expository device of historians is the generalization. The historian arrives at maxims that are not at all his own; they are generalizations from facts, but incomplete.

The task is to understand the whole of a text, including its dominant and subordinate ideas, in a flashlike instant. Both content and form are rooted in the individuality of the writer. Because we call the reciprocal link of content and form "style," it is a matter of

[2] Georg Gottfried Gervinus (1805–71), German historian and literary critic, author of *Geschichte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts seit den Wiener Verträgen* (1855).

grasping the style-relation. When we read a lyrical poem or a letter, we only have an aggregate of ideas. When we read a drama, we have a connection. As a rule we discern two constituents of a work, that is, the volitional act [called] composition and those parts that refer beyond it. If we designate the one constituent "technical" and the other "psychological," then we can separate out from the writer's volitional act those psychological constituents that permeate it here and there. We must follow a coherent methodical course, refer what we have read to the circumstances under which a poet wrote, to the subordinate intentions, and so forth. Such, for example, are those expressions in *Hamlet* about drama that do not fit with the plot. The volitional act varies in importance in different texts. Accordingly, Schleiermacher distinguishes among lifeworks, studies, and occasional writings.

The process of executing a work falls into two parts, meditation and composition. If we call a piece sketchy or formal, this is because there was too little meditation. Formlessness arises from a fullness, from too much meditation, as in the case of Hegel's *Phenomenology*
109 *of Spirit*. Ultimate validity is achieved when the volitional impulse is able to execute the entire content in a strict sequence. Such works we will be able to understand again. Classical works are thus the most easily understood.

At this point, divinatory and comparative interpretation come to the aid of understanding. We can understand an author better than he understood himself. Kant was the first to express this.

The last of these fundamental processes is to understand history, to move beyond a sphere of works and come to know the inner nexus of history. The method that inquires into this nexus is the theory of history.[3]

To what extent did the ancients possess historians? Although Thucydides perfected Greek historiography, it, unfortunately, did not follow him and Aristotle, but Isocrates and rhetoric. Polybius also was unable to found a school in the age of the Scipios, although the age was conducive to it. With Polybius we already find the idea of a universal history. Then came pragmatic history, which restricted itself to political matters.

Livy's way of writing history manifests a quite different character, that of rhetoric, which is the enemy of all true history.

In the Middle Ages one was content to imitate the style of ancients, namely, to compose chronicles. It was like a revelation when

[3] *Historik*.

the problem of the *Donation of Constantine*[4] awakened criticism; but once again rhetoric triumphed. Only through the natural sciences was history liberated from rhetoric. Until then one had only been concerned about the destiny of great men. Since Hume and Voltaire we have become interested in the progress of the culture of the human race. That is Voltaire's greatest contribution.

It is the achievement of the school of Göttingen to have improved on the results of the English and the French, and to have founded a universal history. Political economy became the vehicle for this. Schlosser was the first to have taken the full measure of the domain of universal history. Two great historical perspectives resulted from his work: (1) He used history for the education of nations; he wanted to cultivate in the middle class an understanding of the contemporary political situation. (2) He connected literary and cultural history with history [at large]. This has become standard ever since.

The Schlegel brothers were influenced by the Göttingen School. Through them the histories of early medieval and of modern literature were developed. The Germans founded literary history (Friedrich Schlegel, August Boeckh, Otfried Müller: the history of Greek literature). A. W. Schlegel translated Dante and Shakespeare. Then came the work of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. Ranke is the master of modern historical narrative.

Our task is to elucidate how we obtain a [historical] picture from 110
the [still available] materials; this leads us to a new field in the theory of history: criticism. A human being is allotted only a small portion of time; how can he make the past present? We understand the past only through the present, that is, only so much of the past as is congenial to our present. The result is that very different ages preserve the experiential world in quite different ways.

What is available to us is remnants, parts of the historical events of the past. We have heaps of ruins, fairy tales, customs, and a few reports about political affairs. If speeches were not art-works, they would be more useful. However, we have private documents from which the historian can begin to make inferences about administrative and constitutional systems.

A second form of material involves records kept for future generations.

[4] The *Donation of Constantine* is a document in which Emperor Constantine is said to have granted Pope Sylvester I (314–35) supremacy in spiritual and church matters as well as temporal dominion over Rome and the Western Empire. It was shown to be a forgery by Lorenzo Valla in 1440.

Oral tradition distorts everything, including basic ideas. With written records the deviation is only quantitative.

The intentions of the author are very influential on this score. A sense for truth was first cultivated through the theory of history. Partisan texts are especially dangerous. There is no source that we can accept simply as given to provide history with facts. Even the works of Polybius and Thucydides are not history for us; we must transform them into history.

Then it becomes necessary to test the relation of the given material to the past, and to assert what this relation between material and event is.

The first question about this is: Do we have only one source? We analyze sources into original sources. This was the case with a unified medieval history, where there was one chronicle based on previous ones; it was also the case with the Pentateuch and with Livy. It is necessary to inquire whether oral or written sources existed, as in the case of the Gospels. Only from all this can we obtain an insight into the value of sources.

Finally, the goal is to understand the past.

This act of understanding is that of the historian. Three levels can be distinguished. The chronicler has only an epic interest; the pragmatic historian, a political interest; the universal historian has the task of reconstructing the whole of inner life, so that something like a second self-consciousness of history is achieved.

3. THE RISE OF HERMENEUTICS (1900)[1]

Translated by Fredric R. Jameson
and Rudolf A. Makkreel

In an earlier essay[2] I have discussed the representation of individuation in art and particularly in poetry. We have now to deal with the problem of the *scientific* knowledge of individuals and indeed the main forms of singular human existence in general. Is such knowledge possible, and what means are at our disposal to attain it?

It is a problem of the greatest significance. Action everywhere presupposes the understanding of other persons; much of our happiness as human beings derives from being able to feel the states of mind of others; the entire science of philology and of history is based on the presupposition that such reunderstanding of what is singular can be raised to objectivity. The historical consciousness developed on this basis has enabled modern man to hold the entire past of humanity present within himself: Beyond the limits of his own time he peers into past cultures, appropriating their energies and taking pleasure in their charm, with a consequent increase in his own happiness. And when the systematic human sciences go on to derive more general lawful relations and more inclusive connections from this objective apprehension of what is singular, the processes of understanding and interpretation still remain basic. Thus, these disciplines, like history itself, depend for their methodological certainty upon whether the understanding of what is singular may be raised to the level of universal validity. So at the threshold of the human sciences we encounter a problem specific to them alone and quite distinct from all conceptual knowledge of nature.

Human sciences have indeed the advantage over the natural sciences that their object is not sensory appearance as such, no mere

[1] This essay was first published in the *Festschrift: Philosophische Abhandlungen, Christoph Sigwart zu seinen 70. Geburtstag 28 März 1900 gewidmet* (Tübingen, 1900), pp. 185–202. Reprinted in Dilthey, *GS*, V, 317–38. Pagination in the margins refers to *GS* V. This is a revised and expanded version of a translation by Fredric Jameson originally published in *New Literary History*, volume 3, no. 2, 1972, 229–44.

[2] "Die Kunst als erste Darstellung der menschlichgeschichtlichen Welt in ihrer Individuation," in "Beiträge zum Studium der Individualität (1895–96)," *GS* V, 273–303. See also *SW* 2.

318 reflection of reality within consciousness, but is rather first and foremost an inner reality, a nexus experienced from within. Yet the very way in which this reality is given in inner experience raises great difficulties for its objective apprehension. It is not the purpose of the present essay to deal with those difficulties. Moreover, the inner experience through which I attain reflexive awareness of my own condition can never by itself bring me to a consciousness of my own individuality. I experience the latter only through a comparison of myself with others; at that point alone I become aware of what distinguishes me from others, and Goethe was only too right when he said that this most crucial of all our experiences is also one of the most difficult, and that our insight into the extent, nature, and limits of our powers remains at best incomplete. But the existence of other people is given us at first only from the outside, in facts available to sense, that is, in gestures, sounds, and actions. Only through a process of re-creation of that which is available to the senses do we complete this inner experience. Everything—material, structure, the most individual traits of such a completion—must be carried over from our own sense of life. Thus the problem is: How can one quite individually structured consciousness bring an alien individuality of a completely different type to objective knowledge through such re-creation? What kind of process is this, in appearance so different from the other modes of conceptual knowledge?

Understanding is what we call this process by which an inside is conferred on a complex of external sensory signs. Such is ordinary usage; and the precise psychological terminology that we so desperately need can come into being only if such carefully defined, clear, and usefully delimited expressions are equally respected by all writers. The understanding of nature—*interpretatio naturae*—is a metaphor. Even the apprehension of our own states can only be called understanding in a figurative sense. To be sure, I say: "I can't understand how I could have acted thus," and even, "I don't understand myself anymore." Yet what I mean by this is that an objectification of my own being in the external world now stands before me as that of a stranger and that I am unable to interpret it, or alternatively that I suddenly find myself in a state that I stare at, so to speak, as something alien to me. We therefore call understanding that process by which we recognize, behind signs given to our senses, that psychic reality of which they are the expression.

Such understanding ranges from grasping the babblings of children to *Hamlet* or the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Through stone and
319 marble, musical notes, gestures, words, and texts, actions, economic

regulations and constitutions, the same human spirit addresses us and demands interpretation. Indeed, the process of understanding, insofar as it is determined by common conditions and epistemological means, must everywhere have the same characteristics. It is thus the same in its essential features. If, for instance, I wish to understand Leonardo, my interpretation of his actions, paintings, sketches, and writings coheres as a single homogeneous and unified process.

Understanding has various degrees. These are determined first of all by interest. If our interest is limited, so also is our understanding. How impatiently do we listen to many arguments, merely extracting the point that happens to be important to us practically, without any interest in the inner life of the speaker; at other times we passionately attempt to seize the innermost reality of a speaker through his every facial expression, his every word. Yet even the most attentive concentration can develop into a rule-guided procedure—one by which a measurable degree of objectivity can be reached—only where the objectification of life has been fixed, so that we can return to it again and again. Such *rule-guided understanding of fixed and relatively permanent objectifications of life is what we call exegesis or interpretation*. In this sense there is also an art of interpretation whose objects are statues or paintings, and Friedrich August Wolf[3] already called for archaeological hermeneutics and critique. Welcker[4] agreed with the need for such a hermeneutic, and Preller[5] tried to work it out. Yet Preller himself had already pointed out that such interpretation of mute works is everywhere dependent on literature for its elucidation.

That is indeed the immeasurable significance of literature for our understanding of spiritual life and of history, for only in language does human inner life find its complete, exhaustive, and objectively understandable expression. That is why the art of understanding centers on the exegesis or interpretation of those remains of human reality preserved in written form.

The interpretation of such remains, along with the critical procedures inseparable from it, constituted the point of departure for *philology*. Philology is in its essence a personal skill and virtuosity in dealing with what has been preserved in writing. Other types of

[3] Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1824), classical philologist and educational theorist; author of *Prolegomena ad Homerum*.

[4] Karl Theodor Welcker (1790–1869), liberal politician and professor of public law.

[5] Ludwig Preller (1809–61), German philologist and historian.

interpretation of monuments or historically transmitted actions can prosper only in association with philology and its findings. We can always make mistakes about the motivation of the agents of history;
320 they themselves can spread misconceptions about their own motives. But the work of a great poet or discoverer, a religious genius or an authentic philosopher can never be anything but a true expression of his psychic life; in a human society filled with lies, such a work is always true, and unlike every other objectification registered in signs, it is capable of complete and objective interpretation; indeed, it is only in the light of such works that we begin to understand other artistic monuments of an age and the historical actions of contemporaries.

This art of interpretation has developed in a manner as slow, gradual, and lawlike as the experimental investigation of nature itself. It originated in the personal and inspired virtuosity of the philologist, where it continues to flourish. Thus its tradition is predominantly handed down through personal contact with the great practitioners of exegesis or with their works. At the same time every art is conducted according to rules, which teach us how to overcome difficulties. They bequeath the results of the personal skill. Hence from early on there developed from the art of exegesis the exposition of its rules. And from conflict about these rules, from the struggle of various tendencies in the interpretation of fundamental works and the subsequent need to establish a basis for such rules, the science of hermeneutics itself came into being. Hermeneutics is the theory of the rules of interpreting written monuments.

Because hermeneutics determines the possibility of universally valid interpretation on the basis of an analysis of understanding, it ultimately arrives at a solution to the quite general problem with which the present essay began. The analysis of understanding takes its place beside that of inner experience, and both together demonstrate the possibility and the limits of universally valid knowledge in the human sciences, to the extent that these disciplines are conditioned by the way psychic facts are originally given to us.

I would now like to demonstrate this lawlike evolution through the history of hermeneutics: how philological virtuosity developed out of the need for insightful and universally valid understanding, whence a promulgation of rules, and the ordering of those rules toward a goal further defined by the development of the sciences at any given time, until finally an adequate foundation for the formation of rules was discovered in the analysis of understanding itself.

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In Greece the art of interpreting (*hermeneia*) the poets developed out of the requirements of the educational system. In the age of the Greek enlightenment, spirited interpretations and critiques of Homer and other poets were a favorite intellectual pastime wherever Greek was spoken. A more solid foundation arose when interpretation came in contact with rhetoric among the Sophists and in the schools of rhetors. For rhetoric encompassed the general principles of literary composition insofar as they pertained to eloquence. Aristotle, the great classifier and dissector of the organic world, of political states, and of literary productions, taught in his *Rhetoric* how to divide a literary whole into its parts, how to distinguish the various stylistic forms, how to judge the effects of rhythm, periods, metaphor. The *Rhetorica ad Alexandrinum*[6] expresses these fundamental definitions of rhetorically effective elements in yet simpler form, under the headings of example, enthymeme, aphorism, irony, metaphor, and antithesis. And Aristotle's *Poetics* took as its express subject matter the inner and outer form and the effective elements of poetry. These are derived from poetry's substantive or final purpose and from its varieties.

The art of interpretation and its codification in terms of rules took a second important step forward with Alexandrian philology. The literary heritage of Greece was gathered in libraries, reviews of texts were prepared, and critical results were inscribed therein through an ingenious system of critical notation. Inauthentic texts were removed, and inventories of all the remaining ones made. Philology had now established itself as the art of textual verification based on intimate linguistic knowledge, higher criticism, exegesis, and evaluation. It was one of the last and most characteristic creations of the Greek spirit, for from Homer onward joy in human discourse had been one of its mightiest impulses. The great Alexandrian philologists already began to become conscious of the rules inherent in their intuitive practice. Aristarchus[7] consciously followed the principle of establishing Homeric usage in as strict and thoroughgoing a fashion as possible and basing his textual deter-

[6] Aristotle, *Rhetorica ad Alexandrinum*, with an English trans. by H. Rackham (London/Cambridge [Mass.], 1957).

[7] Aristarchus (ca. 217–145 B.C.), founder of a grammatical and critical school in Alexandria.

minations and clarifications upon it. Hipparchus[8] deliberately grounded objective interpretation upon literary and historical research by discovering the sources of the *Phaenomena* of Aratus[9] and interpreting that poem on the basis of that research. Inauthentic poems were recognized among those traditionally attributed to He-
322 siod; a great number of verses were excised from Homer's epics as was the last book of the *Iliad*; and, even more unanimously, parts of the penultimate and the last book of the *Odyssey* were found to be of more recent origin; all of these findings were made possible through the virtuoso use of the principle of analogy. According to that principle, for a given work, a canon of usage, intellectual content, inner coherence, and aesthetic value was established, allowing everything that contradicted this canon to be excluded. The application of such an ethico-aesthetic canon by Zenodotus[10] and Aristarchus can be clearly seen from the way they gave reasons for some of their antitheses,[11] derived from them: "dia to aprepes" ["because it is unfitting"], or in other words, "quid heroum vel deorum gravitatem minus decere videbatur" ["if something seemed to be less suitable to the dignity of heroes or gods"]. Aristarchus also appealed to the authority of Aristotle.

This methodological awareness of the proper methods for interpretation was strengthened in the Alexandrian School by their opposition to the philology of Pergamum. An opposition of hermeneutic tendencies that had world-historical significance! For it returned again in a new form in Christian theology, and two great historical views of poets and religious writers were influenced by it.

Crates of Mallus[12] introduced the Stoic principle of allegorical interpretation into Pergamene philology. The lasting influence of this interpretive method came first and foremost from its ability to resolve the contradictions between inherited religious texts and more abstract and purely [philosophical] world-views. Hence the need for [the allegorical approach by] the interpreters of the Vedas, Homer, the Bible, and the Koran—an art as indispensable as it was futile. This approach was nonetheless based on a profound insight

[8] Hipparchus (fl. 160 B.C.), Greek astronomer, wrote commentary on Aratus.

[9] Aratus (fl. 270 B.C.), author of two Greek astronomical poems, based on Eudoxus according to Hipparchus.

[10] Zenodotus (ca. 325–260 B.C), Greek grammarian, first superintendent of the library in Alexandria; first critical editor of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

[11] Reading *Atethesen* as *Antithesen*.

[12] Crates of Mallus in Cilicia, lived during the reign of Ptolemy Philometor, contemporary of Aristarchus, founder of the Pergamene school of grammar.

into literary and religious productivity. Homer was a seer, and the contradiction in him between profound insights and crude sensuous imagery can only be explained by regarding the imagery as a mere means of literary presentation. And when this relation was conceived as a deliberate shrouding of a pneumatic sense in images, the allegorical method came into being.

2

If I am not mistaken, the same opposition returns in a new form in the struggle between the theological schools of Alexandria and Antioch. A common principle of both was naturally that an inner link of prophecy and fulfillment relates the Old to the New Testament. Such a link had indeed been implied by the use of prophecy and prototypes in the New Testament itself. Now insofar as the Christian Church developed on the basis of such a presupposition, it became involved in a complicated struggle with its adversaries about the interpretation of Holy Scripture. Against the Jews the Church used allegorical interpretation to transfer the doctrine of the logos back into the Old Testament; but, on the other hand, it had to defend itself against a too thoroughgoing application of the allegorical method by the Gnostics. Following in the footsteps of Philo,[13] both Justin[14] and Irenaeus[15] tried to develop rules for the limits and proper application of the allegorical method. Tertullian[16] adopted their strategy in the same conflict with the Jews and the Gnostics. On the other hand, he developed fruitful rules for a better kind of interpretive procedure, to which he did not always remain true. The most consistent working out of the opposed tendencies came in the Greek Church. The school of Antioch explicated its texts only by means of grammatical-historical principles. Theodorus of Antioch saw in the Song of Songs nothing but an epithalamium. He understood Job as nothing more than the literary reworking of a traditional historical tale. He dismissed the headings of the Psalms and

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[13] Philo Judaeus (20 B.C.–A.D. 40), Jewish Hellenistic philosopher who interpreted Hebrew Scripture in terms of Greek philosophy, e.g., Plato's *Timaeus*.

[14] Justin Martyr (ca. 100-ca. 165), Greek theologian. One of the Fathers of the Church.

[15] St. Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon, in Gaul, during the latter part of the second century after Christ, most active in opposing the Gnostics.

[16] Tertullian (ca. A.D. 160-ca. 240), early attracted to Stoicism; converted to Christianity (ca. 195).

denied any direct reference to Christ in a considerable portion of the Messianic prophecies. He did not accept a dual sense in the texts themselves, but only a higher unity between the processes involved. By contrast, Philo, Clement,[17] and Origen[18] distinguished a pneumatic and a literal meaning within texts themselves.

For the development from the art of interpretation toward a hermeneutics, which raises practice to a level of scientific consciousness, this conflict contributes the further step of producing the first fully worked out hermeneutical theories that we know of. There already, according to Philo, existed *kanones* and *nomoi tes allegorias*, which were applied in the Old Testament and whose knowledge must form the basis for its interpretation. This is the source from which Origen, in the fourth book of his *On First Principles*, and St. Augustine, in the third book of his *On Christian Doctrine*, worked out a coherently exposited hermeneutic theory. In opposition to it, the school of Antioch presented two works that have unfortunately been lost: the *Tis diaphora theorias kai allegorias* (The Conflict between Theory and Allegory) of Diodorus[19] and the *De allegoria et historia contra Origenem* (Concerning Allegory and History contra Origen) of Theodorus.

3

Interpretation and its codification entered a new stage with the Renaissance. Because one was separated by language, living conditions, and nationality from classical and Christian antiquity, in-
324 terpretation became even more than in ancient Rome a matter of transposing oneself into an alien spiritual life through linguistic, factual, and historical studies. And in many cases this new philology, learning, and criticism had to work with mere secondhand reports and fragmentary remains. So it had to be creative and constructive in a new way. In this period, philology, hermeneutics, and criticism attained a higher level, and a considerable hermeneutical

[17] Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150 – ca. 215), contributed to the fusion of Hellenistic and Christian thought; teacher of Origen.

[18] Origen (ca. 185–254), Christian theologian and exegete of the Bible, foremost member of catechetical school at Alexandria, strongly influenced by Platonic and Stoic thought.

[19] Diodorus of Antioch, lived during the latter part of the fourth century A.D., rejected allegorical explanations of the Scriptures.

literature survives from the following four hundred years. It is divided into two currents, for classical and Biblical writings were the two great forces being appropriated. The philological codification of classical studies was known by the term *ars critica*. Such works, including those of Scioppius,[20] Clericus, and the unfinished one of Valesius,[21] included a set of hermeneutical rules in their opening sections. Countless essays and prefaces dealt with *de interpretatione*. But the ultimate constitution of hermeneutics stems from Biblical interpretation. The first important work of this kind, and perhaps the most profound, was the *Clavis* of Flacius (1567).

Here for the first time the essential rules for interpretation that had already been worked out were connected with a systematic doctrine, and this was done by means of the postulate that a universally valid understanding was to be reached through the orderly and skillful application of such rules. Flacius came to this systematic view, which indeed dominates hermeneutics, through his involvement in the struggles of the sixteenth century. He had to fight on two fronts. Both the Anabaptists and post-Reformation Catholics were insisting on the obscurity of Holy Scripture. In opposing that view, Flacius relied especially on Calvin's exegesis, in which there was a constant movement from interpretation to its principles. The most urgent mission of Lutheran scholars of that day was to refute the Catholic doctrine of tradition, which had just been newly formulated. The claim of tradition to govern the interpretation of Scripture could be upheld against the Protestant principle of the Bible's supremacy only by denying that a valid interpretation could be worked out on the basis of Scripture alone. The Council of Trent, which met from 1545 to 1563, dealt with this problem beginning with its fourth session. The first authentic edition of its decrees appeared in 1564. In 1581, somewhat after the appearance of Flacius's works, Bellarmine,[22] the representative of Tridentine Catholicism, mounted the most astute attack on the intelligibility of the Bible in a polemic work that sought to demonstrate the need of completing Scriptural interpretation with tradition. In connection with these conflicts, Flacius undertook to prove the possibility of 325
universally valid interpretation through hermeneutics. And in his attempt to do justice to this problem he became conscious of the

[20] Gaspar Scioppius (1576–1649), author of *Observationes linguae Latinae*.

[21] Henri Valesius (originally Henri de Valois) (1603–76), French historian of Church history.

[22] St. Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621), Italian cardinal.

means and rules for its solution in a way that no earlier [versions of] hermeneutics had done.

If the exegete comes up against difficulties in his text, he overcomes them by means of a sublime aid, namely, by referring to the textual context given in living Christian religious faith. If we now translate this from its dogmatic mode of thought into our own, the hermeneutic value of religious experience becomes a simple instance of a more general principle, according to which every interpretive procedure contains as a factor the reference to a real context. Alongside this religious principle of interpretation there exist other, more properly rational ones. The first of these is grammatical interpretation. But besides this, Flacius was the first to grasp the importance of a psychological or technical principle of interpretation, according to which individual passages are to be interpreted in the light of the intention and composition of the whole work. He also pioneered in methodically drawing on the results of rhetoric about the inner coherence of a literary work, its composition, and its effective elements for the sake of technical interpretation. The reworking of Aristotelian rhetoric by Melanchthon had prepared the way for this. Flacius is fully conscious of having first used methodically, for the sake of a univocal determination of individual passages, [a criterion inherent in a work's] context, purpose, proportion, and coherence of its separate parts. He evaluates the hermeneutical value of this criterion from the general perspective of method in general: "And indeed the individual parts of a whole everywhere draw their comprehensibility from their relationship to that whole and to the other parts."[23] He searches for such inner form in the very style and individual effective elements of a work, and already sketches what is for this period a most sensitive characterization of the Pauline and Johannine styles. It represented great progress, even if it remained within the limits of the rhetorical viewpoint. For Melanchthon and Flacius, each written work is composed according to rules and is understood according to rules. It is a kind of logical automaton, clothed with style, images, and figures of speech.

The formal deficiencies in the work of Flacius were overcome in Baumgarten's hermeneutics, where a second great theological-hermeneutical tendency began to make its presence felt. Through Baumgarten's *Nachrichten von einer Hallischen Bibliothek*, the En-

[23] Matthias Flacius Illyricus, *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae* (Basel, 1580), I, preface, p. 3.

glish freethinkers and scholars who examined the Old Testament in the light of ethnology began to take their place beside the Dutch exegetes in the consciousness of the Germans. Semler and Michaelis 326
were influenced by their contact with Baumgarten and his work. Michaelis was the first to apply a unified historical view of language, history, nature, and law to an interpretation of the Old Testament. Semler, the predecessor of the great Christian Baur, demolished the unity of the New Testament canon, set up the requirement that each individual book be grasped according to its own local character, then connected them into a new unity that was implicit in the living and historical conception of an initial struggle in the Church between Judaizing Christians and those following a more liberal dispensation. In his propadeutic to theological hermeneutics, Semler was equally decisive in deriving hermeneutics as a whole from two basic elements: interpretation based on linguistic usage and that based on historical circumstances. At this point the liberation of exegesis from dogma was complete; the Grammatico-Historical School was founded. The sensitive and careful mind of Ernesti then provided the classic text for this new hermeneutics in his *Institutio interpretis*. Schleiermacher still used it to develop his own hermeneutics from it. To be sure, all these gains were made within certain fixed limits. In the hands of these exegetes the composition and the intellectual content of all the writings of a given age resolved themselves into the same threads of locally and temporally conditioned ideas. According to this pragmatic conception of history, human nature, ever self-identical in its religious and ethical formation, is limited by place and time in a merely external fashion. Such a conception is unhistorical.

Up to this point, classical and Biblical hermeneutics developed separately side by side. But should they not have been understood as applications of some more general mode of interpretation? Wolff's disciple Meier took this step in his essay on the general art of exegesis, published in 1757. He defined the idea of his science in as general a way as possible, as the science of projecting the rules to be observed in any interpretation of signs. But the book only proves, once again, that one cannot found a new science from the perspective of architectonics and symmetry. That way only ends up constructing blind windows through which no one can see. An effective hermeneutics could only develop in a mind where a virtuoso skill of philological interpretation was united with a genuine capacity for philosophical thought. Such a one was Schleiermacher.

4

Let us sketch the intellectual environment in which he worked: Winckelmann's interpretation of works of art, Herder's congenial
327 empathic projection into the soul of other peoples and ages, the new aesthetic standpoint, and the philology influenced by it, namely, that of Heyne, of F. A. Wolf and his disciples, among whom Heindorf pursued his Plato studies in closest association with Schleiermacher himself. All of this converged in Schleiermacher with the characteristic approach of German transcendental philosophy that seeks a creative capacity underlying what is given in consciousness—a capacity that is unconscious of itself but functions in a unified fashion to produce the overall form of the world in us. The conjunction of these two moments led to an art of interpretation specific to Schleiermacher as well as to the definitive foundation of a scientific hermeneutics.

Until then hermeneutics had been at best an assemblage of rules whose parts, the individual rules themselves, were held together by the aim of giving an interpretation of general validity. Hermeneutics had separated the various functions—grammatical, historical, aesthetico-rhetorical, and material—which worked together in the process of interpretation. And, after centuries of philological virtuosity, it had become conscious of the rules according to which such functions had to operate. Schleiermacher now sought for an analysis of the understanding that lay behind these rules—in other words, the knowledge of the purposive activity of understanding itself, and from this knowledge he derived the possibility of universally valid interpretation, along with its means, limits, and rules. However, he was able to analyze understanding as a re-creation or reconstruction only in its living relation to the process of literary production itself. In the intuitive grasp of the creative process by which a literary work comes into being, he saw the basic condition for grasping the other procedure, which understands the whole of the work out of individual signs and the spiritual intent of its creator out of that whole.

In order to solve the problem thus posed, however, he needed a new psychological-historical viewpoint. Beginning with the connection that arose between Greek interpretation and rhetoric as the theory of the rules for a specific kind of literary production, we have followed this relation [between the psychological and the historical] that now concerns us. But the apprehension of the two kinds of

procedures had always been formulated in logical and rhetorical terms. The categories used were always those of making logical connections and order. The [resulting] logical product was then adorned with style, figure, and image. Now, however, wholly new ideas are applied to the understanding of the literary product. A unified and creative capacity, unconscious of its own formative efficacy, is seen 328
as appropriating the first impulses toward a work and as shaping them. Receptivity and autonomous formation are inseparable in this process. Individuality manifests itself here in every detail and in each single word. The highest expression of this creative capacity is the outer and inner form of the literary work. And now this work is approached [by someone with] the insatiable need to complete his own individuality through the contemplation of other individualities. Understanding and interpretation are thus always active in life itself, and they reach their fulfillment in the rule-guided exegesis of life-filled works and their connection in the spirit of their creator. Such was the form that this new viewpoint assumed in Schleiermacher's mind.

Schleiermacher's bold design for a general hermeneutics was, however, further influenced by the fact that his contemporaries, and he himself, had developed the new psychological-historical modes of thought into a new philological art of interpretation. With Schiller, Wilhelm von Humboldt, the Schlegel brothers, German culture had turned its attention from literary production to a reunderstanding of the historical world. It was a powerful movement that influenced Boeckh, Dissen, Welcker, Hegel, Ranke, and Savigny. Friedrich Schlegel became Schleiermacher's mentor in philology. The concepts developed by the former in his brilliant essays on Greek poetry, Goethe, and Boccaccio were those of the inner form of a work, of the developmental history of a given writer, and of literature as a self-articulated whole. And behind such individual achievements of a reconstructive philological art there lay for Schlegel the plan for a science of criticism, an *ars critica*, which would be based on a theory of a productive literary capacity. How close this plan is to Schleiermacher's hermeneutics and criticism!

And from Schlegel also came the plan for a translation of Plato. Here the technique of the new interpretation was worked out, which was then applied by Boeckh and Dissen to Pindar. Plato must be understood as a philosophical artist. The goal of the interpretation is the unity between the character of Plato's philosophizing and the artistic form of Plato's works. Philosophy is here still part of life,

life intermingled with conversation, and its literary exposition is only a way of fixing it for memory. So it had to be dialogue, and a dialogue of such an artistic form that it requires its readers to recreate the living interchange of thoughts. Yet at the same time, according to the strict unity of Platonic thought, each dialogue must be a continuation of something earlier, must prepare for something to come, and thus spin out the threads of the various parts of philos-
329 ophy. When one follows the relations of the various dialogues to each other, there comes into view the overall nexus of the main works, which reveals Plato's innermost intention. According to Schleiermacher, a real understanding of Plato can only be achieved by grasping this skillfully constructed nexus. The chronological sequence of the various works, although it often coincides with this nexus, is of less moment. Boeckh was later to remark in his review-article that this masterful work first opened up Plato philology.

In Schleiermacher philological virtuosity was uniquely joined with philosophical genius. For he had been formed by transcendental philosophy, which provided the first adequate conceptual instruments for the general formulation and solution of the problem of hermeneutics. Out of this the general science and theory of the rules of interpretation emerged.

Schleiermacher worked out a first draft in the autumn of 1804, in relation to a reading of Ernesti's *Institutio interpretis* as an opening lecture for his course on exegesis at Halle. We possess this version of his hermeneutics in a very ineffective form only. It was Boeckh, a student of Schleiermacher from the period in Halle, who gave this version an effective formulation in the splendid lectures on the subject in his *Enzyklopädie*.

I now outline those points in Schleiermacher's hermeneutics that seem to me crucial for its further development.

All interpretation of written works is merely the rule-guided working out of the process of understanding that pervades our whole life and pertains to every kind of speech and writing. The analysis of understanding is therefore the groundwork for the codification of interpretation. The latter can be realized, however, only in conjunction with the analysis of the production of literary works. Only this relation between understanding and literary production can ground the nexus of rules that determines the means and limits of interpretation.

The possibility of a universally valid interpretation can be derived from the nature of understanding. In understanding, the individuality of the exegete and that of the author are not opposed to

each other like two incomparable facts. Rather, both have been formed upon the substratum of a general human nature, and it is this which makes possible the commonality of people with each other for speech and understanding. Here the relatively formalistic terminology of Schleiermacher can be further elucidated psychologically. All individual differences are not in the last analysis determined by qualitative differences among persons, but rather through 330
graduated differences in their psychic processes. Now inasmuch as the interpreter tentatively projects his own sense of life into another historical milieu, he is able within that perspective to momentarily strengthen and emphasize certain psychic processes and to minimize others, thus making possible within himself a re-creation of an alien form of life.

If we now attend the logical side of this process, [we see] it as one in which from only relatively determinate individual signs a systematic whole is recognized through the constant cooperation of already existent grammatical, logical, and historical knowledge. In present-day terminology, therefore, this logical aspect of understanding consists in the cooperation of induction, the application of general truths to particular cases, and the comparative approach. The next task would be to establish the particular forms that such logical operations and their interaction assume here.

It is at this point that the central difficulty of all interpretive practice makes itself felt. The whole of a work is to be understood from the individual words and their connections with each other, and yet the full understanding of the individual part already presupposes that of the whole. This circle repeats itself in the relation between an individual work and the development and spiritual tendencies of its author, and it returns again in the relation between an individual work and its literary genre. Practically, Schleiermacher resolved this difficulty most elegantly in his preface to Plato's *Republic*, and I find other examples of the same procedure in the notes from his exegetical lectures. (He would begin with a survey of the various divisions, which may be compared to a first rapid reading; then he would tentatively comprehend the whole, and illuminate the various difficulties, pausing reflectively at all those spots that afforded special insight into the composition. Only then did the actual interpretation begin.) Theoretically, we here reach the limits of all interpretation, which is able to fulfill its task only up to a certain point. For all understanding always remains partial and can never be completed. *Individuum est ineffabile*.

The separation of the interpretive process into the grammatical,

historical, aesthetic, and material modes, which had become accepted in Schleiermacher's day, was rejected by him. These distinctions only reflect the fact that grammatical, historical, aesthetic, and material knowledge must be there when interpretation begins, and be able to influence it at every moment. But the process of interpretation itself can only be resolved into the two aspects [grammatical
331 and psychological] that are involved in knowing a mental creation consisting of linguistic signs. Grammatical interpretation proceeds through the text from connection to connection up to the highest relations that dominate the whole. Psychological interpretation starts by projecting into the creative inner process, and proceeds onward to the outer and inner form of the work, and beyond that to grasp the unity of an author's works in relation to his development and spiritual tendencies.

This is the point at which Schleiermacher begins to masterfully develop rules for the art of interpretation. His theory of inner and outer form is fundamental, and his suggestions for a general theory of literary production from which an organon for literary history can be derived are profound.

The ultimate goal of the hermeneutic process is to understand an author better than he understood himself. This is a principle that is the necessary consequence of the theory of unconscious creation.

5

Let us conclude. Understanding can attain the universal validity of interpretation only in relation to written documents. Even though hermeneutics can make philological interpretation conscious of its modes of procedure and of its justification, F. A. Wolf would be right not to deem the usefulness of such a discipline as very great in comparison with its living practice. But above and beyond its practical merit for the business of interpretation, there seems to me to be a further purpose behind such a discipline, indeed its main purpose: to preserve the universal validity of historical interpretation against the inroads of romantic caprice and skeptical subjectivity, and to give a theoretical justification for such validity, upon which all the certainty of historical knowledge is founded. Seen in relation to epistemology, logic, and the methodology of the human sciences, the theory of interpretation becomes an important connecting link between philosophy and the historical sciences, an essential component in the foundation of the human sciences.

Addenda from Manuscripts 332

I

Understanding falls under the general concept of cognition, namely, cognition in the widest sense as a process aimed at universally valid knowledge.

(Thesis 1) We call understanding the process in which from sensuously given objectifications of psychic life the latter comes to be known conceptually.

(Thesis 2) As various as the sensuously apprehensible objectifications of psychic life may be, their understanding must have certain common characteristics based on the specific conditions of this mode of cognition.

(Thesis 3) The rule-guided understanding of textually fixed objectifications of life we call exegesis or interpretation.

Interpretation is a product of personal skill and its most perfect application is dependent on a certain kind of genius; the gift of interpretation is based on affinity, intensified by thorough familiarity with an author and constant study: Consider Winckelmann in his dealing with Plato,[24] Schleiermacher's Plato, and so forth. The divinatory aspect of interpretation depends on this.

Due to the indicated difficulty and importance of interpretation, it has been the object of immeasurable human effort. Philology and history aim first of all at [understanding] and so on. It is not easy to imagine the immeasurable amount of scholarly work that has been expended on this. The power of this understanding increases in the human race in a manner that is just as gradual, lawlike, slow, and difficult as that whereby the power to cognize and control nature increases.

Because there are few interpretive geniuses, interpretation is also practiced by less gifted people who must learn the skill. (Thesis 4a) Therefore, it is necessary that the art of such interpretive geniuses be preserved in terms of the rules that are implicit in their method or as they themselves have brought these rules to consciousness. For every human art refines and improves itself in its practice when it succeeds in handing down the life-results of artists in some form to subsequent artists. The means for artistically shaping understanding only arise where language provides a firm foundation and where

[24] Dilthey here refers to Carl Justi, the author of *Winckelmann und seine Zeitgenossen*, 5th ed. (Cologne, 1956).

great creations that have lasting value generate controversy through their differing interpretations. Attempts must then be made to resolve this controversy between gifted artists of interpretation by means of universally valid rules. To be sure, what is most stimulating for one's own interpretive skills is contact with an interpretive genius or his work. But life's briefness requires a shortening of the way by means of the fixation of tried methods and the rules in-
333 volved in them. (Thesis 4b) This theory of the rules of understanding textually fixed objectifications of life we call hermeneutics.

The nature of hermeneutics can thus be determined and its work can be justified to a certain extent. If hermeneutics does not seem to arouse the degree of interest today that exponents of this theory of rules would wish, then it seems to me that this is due to the fact that it has not taken up problems stemming from the current scientific state of affairs and suited to generate a high degree of interest. This science ⟨hermeneutics⟩ has suffered a peculiar fate. It is always the case that it receives attention only when there is a great historical movement, which makes it urgent that singular historical phenomena be understood scientifically. But then the interest in hermeneutics wanes again. Hermeneutics first drew attention when the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures of Christianity became an essential question for Protestantism. Then in relation to the development of historical consciousness in our century, hermeneutics was revived for a time by Schleiermacher and Boeckh. I lived through the period in which Boeckh's *Enzyklopädie*, which is completely permeated by [hermeneutical] problems, counted as the necessary entry into the holiest of holies of philology. If Fr. Aug. Wolf already made deprecatory remarks about the value of hermeneutics for philology, and if in fact this science has found few representatives who were able to advance it, this is because it has exhausted this now dated form. The problem that animated hermeneutics confronts us today again, but in a new and more comprehensive form.

(Thesis 5) Understanding, taken in the now to be formulated wider scope, is the fundamental procedure for all further operations of the human sciences. . . . Just as in the natural sciences all knowledge of laws is possible only through what is measurable and countable in experience and the rules implicit in it, so each abstract proposition in the human sciences can in the final analysis be justified only through its relation to the mental activity given in lived experience and understanding.

If understanding is basic for the human sciences, then (Thesis 6) the epistemological, logical, and methodological analysis of under-

standing is one of the main tasks for the foundation of the human sciences. The importance of this task only becomes fully apparent when one makes explicit the difficulties contained in the nature of understanding with reference to the practice of a universally valid science.

[First Aporia]. Each of us is enclosed, as it were, within his own consciousness. This consciousness is individual and imparts its subjectivity to all that we apprehend. The Sophist Gorgias already expressed the problem that lies here: Even if knowledge existed, the knower could not communicate it to others. For him this problem marks the end of thought. It is necessary to solve this problem. The possibility of grasping what is other or alien is one of the most pro- 334
found epistemological problems. How can an individual bring a sensuously given individual objectification of life to the level of a universally valid objective understanding? The condition that governs this possibility is that in no alien individual objectification can anything appear that is not also contained in the mental life of the one who apprehends it. The same functions and [psychic] constituents are to be found in all individuals. The dispositions of different people differ only in terms of the degree of their intensity. The same external world is reflected in their representational images. Thus human life must contain a capacity [to communicate]. [Processes of] connecting, intensifying, diminishing, and so on. Transposition is transformation.

Second Aporia. From the particular the whole, from the whole again the particular. Moreover, the whole of a work demands moving on to the individuality ⟨of the author⟩, and to the literature to which it stands in relation. Finally, it is the comparative procedure that first allows me to understand each single work, indeed each particular sentence, more thoroughly than I did before. Thus understanding derives from the whole, whereas the whole derives from the particular.

Third Aporia. Each particular psychic state is understood by us only from the external stimuli that aroused it. I understand hate from the harmful intervention in a life. Without this reference, passions would not be imaginable by me. Thus the milieu is indispensable for understanding. When pushed to its limits, understanding is not different from explanation, insofar as the latter is possible in this domain. And explanation in turn has the perfection of understanding as its presupposition.

In all these questions it becomes apparent that the epistemological problem is everywhere the same, [namely, to derive] universally

valid knowledge from experience. But here it manifests itself under the special conditions of the nature of experience in the human sciences. These are: In psychic life it is structure as nexus that is the living, familiar basis from which the particular [is known].

At the portal of the human sciences stands the analysis of understanding as a primary *epistemological problem*. Because hermeneutics proceeds from this epistemological problem and because its ultimate goal lies in its solution, it moves in close relation to the great questions that stir present-day science about the constitution and legitimacy of the human sciences. The problems and principles of hermeneutics are becoming of moment.

The solution to this epistemological question leads to the *logical problem* of hermeneutics. This also is naturally everywhere the same. Self-evidently (as distinct from Wundt's account of my position), the same elementary logical operations appear in the human and the natural sciences: induction, analysis, construction, and comparison. But what concerns us now is what special form they assume within
335 the experiential domain of the human sciences. Induction, whose data are sensory processes, proceeds here as everywhere on the basis of a knowledge of a connection. In the physical-chemical sciences this basis is the mathematical knowledge of quantitative relations; in the biological sciences it is the [nexus] of purposiveness; in the human sciences it is the structure of psychic life. The [latter] basis is not a logical abstraction, but a real nexus given in life; however, this nexus is individual and accordingly subjective. This determines the task and form of induction [in the human sciences]. The logical operations [of induction in the human sciences] receive their further definition through the nature of linguistic expression. The theory of this kind of induction is specified in the more narrow domain of language through linguistics: grammar. The special nature of the determination of the [linguistic] nexus known (through grammar) on the basis of relatively indeterminate (variable) meanings of words and syntactical form-elements. This induction aimed at the understanding of what is singular qua whole (nexus) is supplemented by the comparative method, which determines what is singular and makes its apprehension more objective through relations to other singular wholes.

The development of the concept of *inner form*. But ⟨the penetration⟩ to reality = the inner life, which lies behind the inner form of a particular work and the systematic relations among works is [also] necessary. This is different in the various branches of productivity. For the poet [this inner life] is his creative capacity; for the philosopher, the relation between a life- and a world-view; for great

practical human beings, their practical purposive attitude toward reality; for religious people, and so on (Paul, Luther).

[This accounts for] the link of philology to the highest form of historical understanding. Interpretation and historical narrative are merely two sides of enthusiastic involvement. Infinite task.

The inquiry into the cooperation of the processes that are common to all knowledge and their specification under the conditions of [actual] procedures transmits its results in terms of a *theory of method*. Its object is the historical development of method and its specification into the particular domains of hermeneutics. An example: The interpretation of poets is a special task. The rule [that expects us] to understand an author better than he has understood himself also allows us to solve the problem of the idea in poetry. This idea is (not present as an abstract thought, but) as an unconscious nexus that is operative in the organization of the whole and on the basis of which inner form is understood. A poet does not need to be conscious of this idea and will never be fully conscious of it. The interpreter brings it into relief and this is perhaps the highest triumph of hermeneutics. The present codification of the rules of hermeneutics, which is the only procedure that can produce universal validity, must be supplemented by explicating the creative methods of interpretive geniuses in different domains. Together they will have a stimulating effect. This link can be developed for all methods of the human sciences. The proper sequence is [1] the method of creative genius; [2] the already existing abstract rules 336
based on the former, which are subjectively conditioned; [3] the derivation of a universally valid codification from an epistemological foundation.

Finally, hermeneutic methods stand in relation to literary, philosophical, and historical criticism, and all this leads up to the explanation of singular phenomena. There are no fixed boundaries between interpretation and explanation, only differences in degree. This is because understanding involves an infinite task. But disciplines create boundaries in that psychology and systematic science[s] are applied as abstract systems.

According to the principle of the inseparability of apprehension and evaluation, literary criticism is necessarily connected with or immanent to the hermeneutical process. There is no understanding apart from a feeling of value—but only by means of comparison can the value be established as objective and universally valid. This then requires the assessment of what is normative in a genre, for example, drama. Philological [reconstructive] criticism proceeds from this. Appropriateness is assessed in general terms, and contradic-

tory parts are excluded. Lachmann,[25] Ribbeck's Horace,[26] and so on. Or a norm is taken from other works, and inappropriate works excluded; Shakespeare criticism, Plato criticism.

Thus ⟨literary⟩ criticism is the presupposition of philological criticism, for its impulse stems from confronting what is unintelligible and worthless. ⟨Literary⟩ criticism, as the aesthetic side of philological criticism, receives technical assistance from the latter. Historical criticism is only one branch of criticism, just as aesthetic criticism has its own starting point. Everywhere development, in the one case toward literary history, aesthetics, and the like, in the other to the writing of history.

II

Boeckh is correct in saying that philology is "the knowledge of what has been produced by the human spirit."[27] When he adds paradoxically that this involves "the knowledge of past knowledge,"[28] then this paradox rests on the false presupposition that what is known and what is produced are the same. In reality, all human powers cooperate in productivity, and there is more than knowledge in a poem or in a letter by St. Paul.

If one conceives the concept in the widest sense, then philology is nothing but the totality of acts by which the historical is brought to understanding. Only then can it become directed at a knowledge of what is singular. The Athenian state economy is such a singular reality, even if it shows itself to be a system that can be explicated in terms of universal relations.

The difficulties that are contained in these concepts can be solved in the course of the development of the disciplines of philology and history.

337 There must be unanimity about the pervasive difference between knowledge of what is singular as something that is valuable in itself and knowledge of a universal systematic nexus in the human sciences. That this boundary must be regulated is quite clear. For that there exists a reciprocity here is self-evident (*contra* Wundt)—even philology needs the systematic, expert knowledge of politics, and so forth.

[25] Karl L. Lachmann (1793–1851), professor of philology at the University of Berlin, famous for his critical sense.

[26] Otto R. Ribbeck (1827–98), German philologist, known for his critical contributions to the study of Roman literature, including the works of Horace.

[27] August Boeckh, *On Interpretation and Criticism*, trans. by John P. Pritchard (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), p. 8 (trans. revised).

[28] "das Erkennen des Erkannten."

Philology developed as the knowledge of what is given in literary works. When monuments were added, then its object came to be what Schleiermacher called "symbolic activity." For its part, history began with political deeds, wars, . . . constitutions. But this division according to content was transcended when philology as practical discipline also incorporated ancient states into its domain. On the other hand, there arose the distinction between methodological activities and finally historical narrative. But this distinction, too, was transcended by the practical discipline to the extent that it incorporated ancient literature and art history into its domain. Thus the relation between philology and history involves a regulation of their boundaries. This is possible only if one suspends the practical interests of the disciplines. This is best [illustrated by] Usener.[29]

If we must conceive the whole process of coming to know what is singular as [forming] one overarching continuum, the question arises whether it is possible to separate understanding and explanation in linguistic usage. This is impossible, because not only psychological insights, but also general insights implicitly contribute knowledge of a subject matter to each instance of understanding by means of a procedure that is analogous to deduction. Accordingly, we are dealing with a sequence. There, where general insights are consciously and methodically applied in order to bring what is singular to comprehensive knowledge, the expression "explanation" finds its proper place in the knowledge of the singular. It is only justified insofar as we remain aware that we can never allow what is singular to be fully submerged by what is universal.

This allows us to clear up the controversy, whether it is [informal] reflection on psychic experience or the science of psychology that provides the universal foundation for understanding. When the technique of knowing what is singular finds its completion in explanation, then the science of psychology is just as foundational as the other systematic human sciences. This relation I have already demonstrated in the case of history.

III

The relation of the theory of [interpretive] rules to the actual procedure of interpretation is exactly the same as we see in logic or aesthetics. The theory of rules explicates the procedure into formulas and these are derived from the purposive system in which the proce-

[29] Hermann Usener (1834–1905), German philologist, Dilthey's brother-in-law, known for his writings on the history of Greek philosophy and religion.

dure arises. By means of such a theory of rules the energy of the spiritual movement whose expression it is becomes intensified. For
338 the theory of rules raises the procedure to conscious virtuosity; it develops the [interpretive] procedure to bring out the consequences made possible by the formulas; because it allows us to know the justifications of the procedures, it increases the self-assurance with which they are carried out.

But another effect is even more fundamental. In order to recognize this effect we must move beyond the particular hermeneutic systems to their historical contexts. Each theory of rules is bound by a procedure, which is valued for a limited time-span and whose formula it develops. Once historical thought becomes mature enough, it becomes the task for hermeneutics and criticism, aesthetics and rhetoric, ethics and politics, to finally complete the earlier derivations of these disciplines from their purposive system by means of a new historical grounding. Historical consciousness must raise itself above the procedure of a particular temporal epoch. It can do this by gathering, delimiting, and balancing against each other all the previous tendencies within the purposive system of interpretation and criticism, poetry, and rhetoric, by clarifying their value on the basis of their relation to this purposive system, and by determining the limits within which they do justice to the human potential. Thus historical consciousness finally comprehends all these historical tendencies within a purposive system as a series of possibilities contained within it. It is of crucial importance for this historical work that it may consider the formulas of the theory of rules as a shorthand for historical tendencies. Thus reflection about the procedure by which a purposive system is able to solve the problems that are contained within it involves an inner dialectic, which allows this reflection to proceed through historically delimited tendencies and their corresponding formulas to [attain] a universality that is always and everywhere bound to historical thought. Here, as everywhere, historical thought itself becomes creative in that it raises human activity in society above the limits of the moment and the situation.

This is the perspective that connects the historical study of the theory of hermeneutical rules with the procedure of interpretation, and these in turn with the systematic task of hermeneutics.

PART II.

INTERPRETATIONS OF HISTORY

4. HISTORY AND SCIENCE (1862), ON H. T. BUCKLE'S *HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION IN ENGLAND*.

(Trans. by Arnold Ruge, 2 vols. Leipzig/Heidelberg, 1860–61.)[1]

Translated by Ramon J. Betanzos

The human mind has a peculiar need to narrate human deeds and to hear them narrated. Neither art nor science satisfies this need, because neither of these is content with presenting facts simply, just as they happened. Art casts a veil over naked reality, which is supposed to beautify and transfigure it; science looks for a permanent law in the flux of phenomena. That epic human drive for narration, however, does not seek what is beautiful or lawlike; it asks only about what has actually happened, and it often feels itself all the more stimulated the more unusual the narrative material is, that is, the less it wears the appearance of being law-governed. Even before the spirit of inquiry awakens in the child, which leads it to ask for the why and then the why of the why behind every event, another kind of curiosity takes shape, which can be satisfied only by the telling of stories and by the assurance that all these stories are true. And what is true of the individual is true of entire peoples as well. Everywhere the most ancient poetry is epic poetry, and the most ancient prose historical prose. Before scientific or philosophic literature could arise in Greece, not only had Herodotus described the recollections of antiquity and the deeds and customs of foreign nations, but Thucydides also had described the war in which both he and his readers had taken an active part. We find the same relationship repeated in all indigenous literature. The older an individual human being becomes and the more a people progresses in its culture, the more powerful the interest in science relative to history, and the more energetic the cultivation of mathematics, natural sciences, politics, and economics relative to history. But historical interest is never completely suppressed; there are always people ready to carry on and advance the [work of] history, which in turn benefits all other branches of knowledge. The histories of all lands and

[1] This review-essay first appeared anonymously in the *Berliner Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 29, 1862. Reprinted in *GS* XVI, 100–106. Pagination in the margins refers to *GS* XVI.

all periods are researched over and over again; new sources and monuments are constantly being discovered, and on the basis of the newly won material novel images of individual peoples and their prominent heroes are constantly being proposed and then appropriated with ever renewed and intensified interest. And, just as it did in the childhood of nations, so, even now, this interest is linked for the most part to the most outstanding men and to the most unusual events. Every feature of a hero's life seems important to us: Probably more has been written on the question of which Alpine pass Hannibal traversed on his march into Italy than on the entire first century of English history after the conquest by the Anglo-Saxons, even though one can draw no scientific conclusions at all from it.

Now, Buckle passes a verdict of condemnation against all such efforts and interests, which appear to him as foolish and childish
101 and worthy only of a backward nation. He asserts that among historians "a strange idea prevails, that their business is merely to narrate events, which they may occasionally enliven by such moral and political reflections as seem likely to be useful."[2] He wants to transform history into an exact science, like natural history; he wants to demonstrate what is law-governed in historical events and thereby put himself in the position of predicting them. He expresses the conviction that the law of necessity, that is, a cause-and-effect relation, prevails universally in the realms of historical as well as of natural events; that we must conceive of each individual action as the inevitable effect of certain causes that for their part are in turn effects of other events; that consequently we must totally exclude chance as well as providence, or direct divine intervention from the sphere of history. The entire work rests on this basic idea: Only in relation to it do the work's individual parts, which are joined together in rather motley arrangement, obtain any coherence and value. The reader's judgment regarding the work will depend on the attitude he adopts toward this basic idea. I express my own judgment on the matter succinctly by saying that I consider this basic idea as correct in the abstract, but that because of the distinctiveness of the content of historical writing it can be useful only to a limited degree. Moreover, in his attempt to derive comprehensive conclusions from it Buckle is completely off the mark.

In the realm of nature as well as in that of spirit, everything happens according to established laws. On the one hand this means that

[2] Henry Thomas Buckle, *History of Civilization in England* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1876), vol. I, p. 3.

any immediate intervention through divine omnipotence is excluded. In earlier times, people regarded bountiful years as signs of divine grace, epidemics and plagues as signs of divine anger, and comets as well as similar phenomena as divine warnings and threats; today we know that all these phenomena occur according to inexorable laws. Again, people looked on victories as signs of divine grace, defeats as signs of divine anger; they ascribed the successful flight through the Red Sea and the rescue from Babylonian captivity to the personal intervention of divine wisdom; they derived the destinies of nations from the fact that Yahweh had blessed Israel and had cursed Ishmael. Today we can apply what the Marquis Posa says in the following passage from Schiller's *Don Carlos* to the laws that govern history:

> Of Him,
> The Maker, one is not aware;
> discreetly
> He veils Himself in His eternal
> laws.
> The freethinker sees *these*, but not
> *Him*. Why have
> A God? says he; the world is
> self-sufficient.
> No Christian's piety has ever
> praised
> Him more than that freethinker's
> blasphemy.[3]

This view completely excludes the possibility of theology interfering with the aims of science.

In the sphere of nature as well as in that of spirit everything happens in accordance with fixed laws, so that, on the other hand, chance is excluded. In spite of the Old Testament's declaration, we know whence the wind comes and whither it goes. We know the laws of rain and wind, and wherever a drop of rain falls to the earth we know that this is the effect of a warmer layer of air entering a colder layer, that the movement of those layers of air was in turn the consequence of other conditions, and that where and when that drop had to fall to earth has been determined through an endless 102

[3] The text from *Don Carlos* by Friedrich von Schiller is taken from the translation by Charles E. Passage: *Don Carlos: Infante of Spain* by Friedrich von Schiller (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1959). The passage is from act 3, scene 3 (ll. 3229–35).

series of causes from eternity. And it is likewise the case in the sphere of human activity that every single event is the effect of an endless series of influences. This view excludes compromising the aims of science by means of a crude empiricism and atomism.

Nevertheless, we are justified in speaking of chance in a relative sense, both in natural science and in history. When we are unexpectedly surprised by a rain shower on a beautiful day, we call that a piece of bad luck, even though we know that more complete knowledge recognizes that the necessity of this shower had been determined for thousands of years. We call it chance because we cannot connect it with a cause that is consequential enough to stand out for us, because we had been unable to observe the meeting of two air streams in the upper atmosphere. In the same fashion we have to call the death of Alexander the Great and Frederick Barbarossa chance because we shall never be able to ascertain what motivated both men to bathe precisely at the specific place and time where an unknown danger threatened them. Now, the realm of chance in this sense is much larger and more important in the sphere of history than it is in that of the natural sciences. In the latter sphere we are merely hindered, on the whole, from tracing indifferent processes and applications of a law already known to us back to their ultimate sources; in the sphere of history it is virtually impossible for us to discover the details of the most important processes, which have never been repeated and on which our present situation is based, for example, particulars regarding the first formation of political units, because we can never observe them. No less hidden from observation are processes that transpire in the inner realm of the human spirit—man's thoughts, intentions, and decisions—which are also contributory causes of those events that then enter the sphere of perception as human actions.

The relation of human actions to the thoughts that prepare for them also occupies our author in the very first chapter of his work. The problem of free will, which is unavoidable in every philosophical inquiry, surfaces here. Buckle contrasts two views with one another: the metaphysical doctrine of absolute freedom of will and the theological doctrine of predestination. He rejects both views as unprovable, and demands from his readers only the admission "that when we perform an action, we perform it in consequence of some
103 motive or motives,"[4] and that all these motives must be inner or outer processes. This admission can be made without further ado.

[4] Buckle, *History*, p. 13.

The most zealous champions of freedom of will always admit that man can make a choice only among several motives facing him, such as a number of desires, or between a desire and a lively sense of duty. Free will can never lead to a completely unmotivated action. In like fashion, adherents of the doctrine of predestination will admit that God guides every person to the purpose set before him by arranging that certain events will seem to him to be decisive motives. Thus we have gained little from this truth that every man acts from motives. Many people who find themselves momentarily in a completely identical situation, nevertheless behave differently, and, as Buckle himself admits, it is impossible to attain exhaustive knowledge of exactly how this or that event serves to determine different people. Regardless of how outstanding an individual person might be, and regardless of how intensively one researches that person, it is impossible to depict his or her life so precisely that the particular processes can be related in terms of cause and effect such that one could describe how a received impression will elicit an action and the latter an impression again. In order to salvage the scientific rigor of history despite these conditions, Buckle commits himself to the most desperate hypothesis that any scholar has ever postulated, and advances the most paradoxical claim ever uttered by a historian. He excludes the actions of individuals, of the mighty ones of this world, from consideration, and he makes social conditions as they manifest themselves in the behavior of masses the only subject of historiography.

> The vast majority of historians fill their works with the most trifling and miserable details: personal anecdotes of kings and courts; interminable relations of what was said by one minister, and what was thought by another; and, what is worse than all, long accounts of campaigns, battles, and sieges, very interesting to those engaged in them, but to us utterly useless, because they neither furnish new truths, nor do they supply the means by which new truths may be discovered.[5]

On the other hand, if we look not at the actions of individuals but at the actions of a great mass of persons, say, an entire people, and indeed at actions that have taken place over a considerable period of time, then we find new truths everywhere. Contingencies that prevented us from investigating individual feelings and moods are here absorbed and neutralized, and we encounter regularly

[5] *Ibid., p.* 166.

recurring phenomena, that is, laws. Examples of such laws that have already been established include the following: The number of crimes committed bears a constant relationship to the number of inhabitants of the country in which they were committed; for example, in France the same number of people are charged with crimes as the number of males who die in Paris in the same period. A similar uniformity may be found in individual locales of the crimes; likewise with suicides. The number of suicides committed annually in
104 London averages 240 and deviates only insignificantly from that average number. There is a further law that the number of marriages contracted annually bears a constant relationship to corn prices. Buckle concludes from this that in a particular state of society a certain number of crimes will have to be committed, a certain number of people will have to commit suicide, and a certain number of marriages will have to be contracted. This is the extent of our knowledge of the lawfulness of events; for the time being we still do not know how to answer the further question as to who the specific persons are for whom the consequences drawn from the general state of society will function as motives for their behavior in such a way that they find themselves motivated to fulfill the social law through an apparently and supposedly free act. Buckle goes still further: The number of letters mailed, which their writers have forgotten to address, is the same every year. Hence here too we have a law. This last fact encourages me to share something with the public, the scientific value of which I had no inkling of for years, until reading Buckle's work brought it to my attention. If, at a dinner attended by one hundred guests, green peas and Teltower turnips are served in the same course, assuming that both dishes are equally well prepared, seventy people will select green peas and only thirty will select turnips. I cannot take credit for discovering this law; I know it only on the testimony of a cook whose experience and expertise are beyond all doubt, as far as I am concerned. On the same occasion this man told me that a similar constant relationship prevailed between roast pheasant and capon and, in general, between all foods that are customarily served at the same time, although it is not possible to determine a priori just who will prefer peas and who turnips. We have no choice but to adopt the explanation that the condition of mankind at this time is such that seventy people out of one hundred prefer peas to turnips, while thirty have the opposite taste. The matter seems to be exactly as important as the mailing of unaddressed letters. If one wishes to label phenomena of that kind with the name of law simply because of the regularity of their recur-

rence, all that follows from that, after all, is that in the realm of spirit one can subsume only relatively indifferent actions under laws. The more serious, momentous, and remarkable an action is, so much the higher is it elevated above the sphere of a calculus of probabilities. One may be able to predict how many thefts and suicides will occur next year, how many marriages contracted, and how many letters written, but no one will be able to predict when a world conqueror like Alexander, Genghis Khan, or Napoleon will appear again. And yet the deeds of these men—whom Buckle, to be sure, regards as merely criminals—have an impact on the state of society that is far more decisive than all the thousands of murders that are committed year in and year out by anonymous people. It is completely preposterous to maintain that the fortunes of the totality 105
provide us with new truths, while military undertakings by outstanding human beings do not. That Napoleon was defeated at Leipzig in 1813 is certainly a truth, an unforgettable and profound truth, and for those who participated in the campaign of 1806 it was also a new truth in its time. But the fact that the number of suicides in London is greater in summer than in winter, as Buckle informs us, is, in spite of the regularity with which it may repeat itself, not a truth, because we are unable to connect it causally with any other important fact. Obviously Buckle is here identifying the concepts of regular recurrence and lawfulness. But that is inadmissible even in natural science. The emergence of the solar system and the earth, the formation of the earth's surface, the emergence of flora and fauna—all this constitutes a great event that has never been repeated and never will be. Should we therefore throw overboard knowledge in this area that has been made available to us through the intelligence of the most renowned scholars, because that knowledge contains no universally valid proposition and therefore no truth? The error would be no greater if we were to ignore the history of the Gallic wars undertaken by Caesar.

The demand that history should be a science of social laws does not merely restrict its sphere unjustifiably; it also leads to erroneous results within the sphere that is left for it. The method of the empirical sciences, cultivated with such great success for two hundred years, stems from Bacon. But he has formulated a great number of rules without whose observance one cannot arrive at certain and productive results. Seeing for oneself (autopsy) should take the place of traditional assurances; analogies of nature should be vindicated against human convictions; observation through instruments should take the place of mere sense perception; experiment should

shield us from deception by the senses; the comparison of the largest possible number of cases should precede the rule; and error should be excluded by using negative and prerogative instances. All of these formulas are inapplicable to history. We cannot learn the circumstances of the past by way of seeing for oneself; there are no experiments that enable us to ascertain under what circumstances a historical event would not have taken place. Historical empirical inquiry requires different prescriptions and recommendations than does the empirical inquiry of natural science. A new Bacon will have to determine what measures the historian must take in order to attain positive results in the realm of history and preserve himself from error in the same way as the natural scientist does in his realm. Two years ago Droysen[6] gave a series of lectures on historical methodology at this university; their publication will show how very different the conditions of successful practice are for a historian than for a physicist. Empirical inquiry without a proper method ceases to be a science. Phrenology is a collection of assertions and doctrines, each of which is based on a series of experiences. It may not be in dispute
106 that many people with a strong sense of place and direction are found to have a considerable bulging of the forehead over the eyebrows and that many important musicians have prominent temples. Nevertheless, phrenology is not a science, because its data have not been compiled in accordance with the proper method and because analogies from nature argue against the view that one can ascertain functions of the brain by observing the cranium. Buckle is among historians what the phrenologist is among physiologists. Instead of making an effort to penetrate the inner core of the historian's mental activity, he gropes about on the surface. Instead of using an endless series of observations to derive the essential distinctive features of historical development, he examines each individual fact to see if it permits us to derive a general law from it, and he is content when he finds one, no matter how feeble and unsatisfying it might be. The laws that he establishes as the fruit of his historical studies are positivistic; but their correctness is subject to serious doubts. The most important of these laws says: Not moral but intellectual truths ground the progress of the human race. The line of argument for this is that two natural-scientific discoveries, namely, those of gunpowder and of steam power, and a national-economic one, as laid down in Adam Smith's work, have reduced the mania for religious

[6] Johann Gustav Droysen (1808–84), published an outline of his lectures at Berlin on historical methodology with the title *Historik*.

persecution and the warmongering spirit of mankind. A counter-question would be, Which scientific truths have led to the abolition of serfdom in Russia? Or are we to trace this back to moral progress alone? A second law says that peoples such as the Scots, for whom the theological spirit is powerfully preponderant, are able to make important contributions to the sphere of deductive, but not inductive, sciences. The line of argument here is that all famous Scottish natural scientists have used the deductive method, while among the English only the inductive method is prevalent. Here, too, I pose just one question: If one ascribes the discovery of latent heat by the Scotchman Black to deduction, what right does one have to attribute the discovery of the law of gravity by the Englishman Newton to the sphere of inductive knowledge? After all, Newton could not set up any experiments, either, about the circumstances under which the moon usually falls to earth.

Buckle possesses a comprehensive knowledge and an acute intelligence, but his strengths do not lie in the area of historical narration. When one sees that men like Buckle, Roscher,[7] and Riehl,[8] who are so different in their points of departure, their aims, and their scientific merits, often overlap in their efforts, one may hope that the realm of our knowledge will be enriched by a new field, the science of society. But this science will have to coexist with historical narration; it will not do away with it. And whoever demands from the historian that he take him beyond appearances to the foundation of those appearances will obtain greater returns from reading Polybius or Machiavelli, than from [reading] Buckle.

[7] Wilhelm G. Fr. Roscher (1817–94), main representative of the older historical school of political economy in Germany.

[8] Wilhelm H. Riehl (1823–97), conservative author of folk studies and cultural history.

5. ON JACOB BURCKHARDT'S *THE CIVILIZATION OF THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY* (1862)[1]

Translated by Ramon J. Betanzos

When Ranke, basing himself on Italian diplomatic reports and historians, began to characterize these historians of Italy, the involvement of Italian states in sixteenth-century European politics, and finally the popes, then the political acumen of the [Italian] nation—its clear eye for the life of the individual and for the true driving forces behind political action—took on an entirely new light. With his marvelous artistry Ranke gave new life to these reports that had long been lying buried and unused in the archives. It was he who first fully understood papal politics and the incisively intelligent assessments of the envoys. Meanwhile, his interest was essentially focused on the rise of Spanish-Habsburg power; hence he traces the inner history of Italy exhaustively beginning only with the Counter-Reformation, with which it is linked. The golden age of Italian culture still seemed to be only a flowering of a universal cultural development. At that time no one was able yet to view it as the expression of national character or as a preparation for political independence. In fact, it seemed that one had to regard Italy as a pensioner, so to speak, in the European state economy.

Even the historian's horizon is limited and determined by the standpoint that current history gives him. Hence recent events were bound to shed a completely different light on the Italy of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, at least for those who—like most of our historians—live in the hope that Italy will be able to achieve unification and someday also freedom from French influence. Burckhardt shares this hope. According to him, the period from Dante to the Counter-Reformation was the foundation of Italian national literature and politics; the subsequent period of Spanish influence, though it also had its brilliant figures and influential elements, was a violent interruption of this development; the movement since the stormy intervention of Napoleonic politics at the close of the previous century and the renewal of Italian poetry and science that went hand in hand with it merely took up that broken thread again.

[1] Review-essay on Jacob Burckhardt, *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* (Basel, 1860). First appeared anonymously in the *Berliner Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 10, 1862. Reprinted in *GS* XI, 70–76.

We see this complete change in manner of treatment before our eyes if we compare Voigt's *Wiederbelebung des klassischen Altertums*[2] (Revival of Classical Antiquity), which appeared in January 1859, with the book at hand. The contrast becomes all the more pronounced precisely because both accounts otherwise coincide in many essential ideas. The entire standpoint of Voigt's book regarding this movement is from the outset the progressive reappropriation of antiquity; hence it ends with "Humanistic Propaganda beyond the Alps." It does not give even a side glance to the enduring significance of this movement for Italy itself.

Burckhardt is interested first and foremost in the latter. He sees in the culture of the Renaissance essentially a national culture. If I understand him rightly, he wants most of all to show that in its source and in its character this culture is essentially Italian, and that classical antiquity is only a secondary factor in it.

The study of Italy's visual arts, the most original production of this Renaissance, must also have motivated him to this viewpoint. For the book before us is in fact at the same time the foundation for a history of the visual arts in that period. Kugler,[3] who is still so little appreciated for his deeper intentions, became preoccupied with a grand plan to "sketch the characters of nations that have surfaced, whether they have gone under or still flourish, with regard to their creative power in all spheres of art." One may hope that at least this part of that mighty plan will be worthily executed in his spirit and purpose by his friend. Recently Heyse[4] saw fit to dedicate [to Burckhardt] a charming Italian songbook that was inspired by his relations with Kugler. Burckhardt is praised as the one "who has ventured into so much of the weightier spiritual legacy of our friend." Not until this account of the visual arts of that time has appeared will it be possible to have a complete overview of Burckhardt's general conception of that period.

Perhaps it will also be possible then to evaluate his historical method better, which must be of great interest to every historian. It is the first thoroughgoing working out of a cultural-historical ap-

[2] Georg Voigt (1827–91), professor at Leipzig who was best known for his book *Die Wiederbelebung des klassischen Altertums oder das 1. Jahrhundert des Humanismus*.

[3] Franz Theodor Kugler (1808–58), painter, poet, etcher, and art historian. His *Handbuch der Geschichte der Malerei* (2 vols., 1837 and 1847) was edited in its 3d ed. by Jacob Burckhardt (1867).

[4] Paul Heyse (1830–1914), winner of the Nobel Prize in literature in 1910; his *Italienisches Liederbuch* appeared in 1860.

proach in Germany, excepting perhaps Rückert's[5] explication of early German culture. Burckhardt's approach is different in that it always puts general states or conditions in the place of individual 72
events. It is obvious what great danger this change brings. When the temporal and causal fabric of a set of events is dissolved, history seems to disintegrate into atoms, at best into atoms grouped together under general points of view. This is in fact what tends to happen in so-called cultural histories: They turn into collections of notes assembled under general chapter headings, such as Court Life, Attire, Domestic Life, and the like. Unlike what certain gentlemen imagine, this fashion is not the beginning of a new treatment of history, but rather the dissolution of all history. For a causal nexus is its solid framework; without that, even if history is crammed with individual traits, it remains an amorphous mass. When, therefore, cultural history dissolves this original [causal] nexus, it can do so only with the intention of establishing a deeper one.

It can do so only in order to trace general states and conditions back to their causes in the same way as political history does with events.

This is precisely what Burckhardt has in mind. Although a certain timidity in pursuing the causal nexus through more abstract operations—a timidity that one has to leave behind when one abandons the narrative form—leads him not infrequently to be content with aesthetic arrangements of individual features, more incisive readers will doubtless be principally interested in those passages where he is serious about the method of cultural history. Other passages display more the interests of a work of art than of a scientific work. For a work of art is content to arrange or order, while science presses on to investigate causes and grounds. This does not prevent us from being appreciative of the finely tuned intuitive viewpoint that does justice to the most diverse people and things with the most delicate sensitivity for their uniqueness, just as it appears in such purely descriptive passages. An aura of refined aesthetic and social culture—such as one can sense in the writings of Kugler, Ranke, and Heyse—only at times too artificially, hovers over this history of the most beautiful epoch of art and perhaps also of sociability in the modern world—after all, the two are closely interrelated. Every-

[5] Heinrich Rückert (1823–75), son of the well-known orientalist and poet, Friedrich Rückert, historian and expert on early German culture; among his main works are *Geschichte des Mittelalters* (1853) and *Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Volkes in der Zeit des Übergangs aus dem Heidentum in das Christentum* (two parts, 1853–54).

where one is conscious of a sensitive, artistic eye saturated with the intuitions of that greatest period of modern art, and of a style that bespeaks a perfect, perhaps even an overly refined aesthetic culture; at times one is also conscious of a free way of thinking and a deep feeling that breaks through artistic objectivity.

73 But what gives the book value in my estimation is not this artistic aspect, but rather the already noted scientific aspect: the attempt to describe the true and strict coherence of the many-sided life of this period. Burckhardt has not made it exactly easy for his readers to comprehend this side. In order not to overstep the measure of a clearly surveyable whole on the basis of a kind of artistic whim, he reached, if not surpassed, the outermost limit of compact and allusive description. Everything is shown only in outline, as though in the distance, nothing with the patient and plain detail of the foreground. Even for reading, this method of offering only the purest flower of things is strenuous; it makes it almost impossible to have complete understanding of what the historian thought. As often as one goes back to the book, new viewpoints, pursued through a host of details, reveal themselves; the main ideas themselves always maintain something of that illusory clarity and proximity with which distant mountains mislead the traveler.

The greatest difficulty lies in the peculiar way Burckhardt's historical standpoint vacillates between a reduction of phenomena to general concepts and a constantly erupting mistrust of those concepts. The historian's profound contemplative spirit has a definite need to grasp the inner significance of this period of the Renaissance in the context of Western culture. But the comprehensive concepts he uses to try to express its meaning are so general in themselves, and also so little explained by him, that they serve more to etherealize the phenomenon than to define it in a clear intuition. It is as though the historian could appreciate or understand each phenomenon of this period only after deriving it from the general background image of modern man as first emerging fully and completely in Renaissance Italy. One cannot say that the basic idea of his book lies here; Burckhardt is too distrustful of constructions of the philosophy of history for that: He concedes to the latter that "by and large it can clearly prove" the necessity of large-scale events, but "the particular" always eludes it. Nevertheless, this background image [of modern man] always shows through the characterization of individual phenomena as a kind of schema. How composite that image is! Phenomena of the most diverse kind are brought into indeterminate relations with it; only as they interact with one another

in this fashion do they provide specific content for the schema. Modern man emerges in Italy during the Renaissance while cultivating his individuality, his objective relations to society and nature, 74
and his versatility. [At the same time] we see the rise of a sphere of private life, of society as a neutral sphere that harmonizes social classes, and the elevation of the feeling of personal honor in place of objective morality. From among these and related characteristics the first two stand out most sharply. The cultivation of individuality as well as of the more objective relations to nature and society, with which it is related, hover almost constantly, along with the concept of modern man, before the historian's eyes in particular phenomena. There is something seductive in this whole sphere of intuitions. One believes one senses the significance of this period completely differently because the particular phenomena have been reduced to this composite schema, not intentionally, but, as it were, through an unmistakably certain, recurring psychological process in the author and the reader. Not until one has torn oneself away from this magic circle into which the historian again and again charms one back through a word, an allusion, or a turn of phrase, does one notice how the specific meaning of this period is not quite captured in this schema. For all these general concepts can be applied just as well to analogous periods of culture, such as post-Periclean Athens or Rome in the transition period into the empire and in the first part of the latter period. And once one has observed this, then some passages take on a new light, which brings out a peculiar historical skepticism. I mention only two such passages: about the attitude of this period toward dramatic poetry and toward the Reformation. Both of them indicate definite limits of this cultural form. Heretofore, one regarded these limits as essential. This had nothing to do with suppositions about what this inner link consisted in; but it is, so to speak, the immediate pulse of historical understanding to regard such sweeping characteristics separating this cultural form from that of England and Germany as essential, that is, as grounded in their inner nature. Burckhardt almost categorically denies this with respect to the first phenomenon; he concedes the second only with various kinds of skeptical reservations. I may be mistaken, but it seems to me that in both cases he is guided by the fact that his concept of developing individuality also really demands phenomena of this kind. Inasmuch as he emphasizes this concept, and inasmuch as in connection with it he raises the question why Italy had no Shakespeare and no Reformation, perhaps he is justifiably combatting the exaggerated separation of Latin and Germanic cultural

75 forms, which has recently become a kind of philosophical fashion. But at the same time he calls into question entirely factual boundaries between them in a manner that is, in turn, once again an arbitrary philosophical construction. That the only reason the epoch of Ariosto produced no Shakespeare was either because the Spanish Counter-Reformation forcibly obstructed such a development or because pleasure in observing spectacles already achieved satisfaction in other forms and robbed the theater of its simplicity—this will always remain a paradox for the simple fact of historical intuition.

To sum up: These general concepts absolutely fail to capture sharply enough the special character of the cultural forms of the Renaissance. And even insofar as they succeed, they simply need a sharper delineation than Burckhardt wished to give them, if they are not to confuse instead of to clarify. It is bewildering that a concept of modern man is suggested in relation to the following description of Benvenuto Cellini: "He is a man who can do all and dares do all, and who carries his measure in himself. Whether we like it or not, he lives, such as he was, as a significant type of the modern spirit."[6] People have said such things about the Sophists; one can say such things about many an audacious lord in the Middle Ages. On the other hand, we Germans, at least in the period of Kant as well as in the present, "whether we like it or not," are surely far less modern in this sense than, say, Alcibiades or the adventurers of the final republican period of Rome, such as Sulla and Curio, or than some German mercenary commander was. Hegel could hardly have devised a more arbitrary play with general concepts than Burckhardt has in some passages. Granted, Burckhardt is only seeking an incidental and suggestive enjoyment by placing this historical period in such relations. But it almost seems that this play of concepts has gained a certain measure of power over him, and less skilled readers will surely see in this the real intent of his work. For that reason, his intent itself will escape them.

I have said it already: His real purpose lies in his happily and indisputably argued proof, based on marvelous fullness of detailed research, that the Renaissance in Italy grew out of the character and relations of Italy itself as a completely spontaneous phenomenon, and that antiquity quickly and powerfully brought to maturity only what was already there by nature and gave it a coloration of its

[6] Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* [trans. S. G. C. Middlemore] (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), vol. 2, p. 330.

own. It lies in explicating the grounds and the inner relations of this spontaneous phenomenon, which is traced here for the first time in all its ramifications with the most faithful historical sense.

If we wished to follow this up with how the root of the Renaissance perspective is exhibited here in the character of the Italian states; with how the impact of this perspective on science and art as 76
well as on private life can be traced; and with how the impetus and coloring that antiquity gave to all this is demonstrated, we would have to finish what this book has begun. For it contains, in a densely compressed sequence, the results of the richest and finest studies. I hope that our readers will enjoy this brilliantly written book for themselves. Anyone who launches his own paths is going to stir up contradictions and doubts of various kinds. But it cannot fail to happen that he will also arouse the greatest interest and will truly further science.

6. FRIEDRICH CHRISTOPH SCHLOSSER AND THE PROBLEM OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY (1862)[1]

Translated by Ephraim Fischoff

2. The First Period of His Historiography and Its Practical Nature[2]

The period of Schlosser's development is reflected most reliably in his earlier works. He arrived at authorship rather late. Moreover, the slow growth of his philosophical-historical perspective on the inner coherence of spiritual life—a crystallization of his studies that did not begin until 1798—was repeatedly interrupted by a practical tendency. Yet it was the latter that from the outset had to give all his works direction and color. It made his writings a dialogue with his epoch. Through this practical bent the folios of medieval theologians, the manuscript letters of the Reformation era, and even the history of Byzantine emperors and monks received a palpable relationship to his own period.

In view of his experiences in Frankfurt at the time, can there be any doubt as to the direction in which this practical orientation was driving him? The serious Christian mood and the religious interest of that Frankfurt circle eminently suited his way of thinking and his own plans; then, too, this mood conformed to that complex of moral and religious ideas of the German Enlightenment in which he lived and that he was endeavoring to deepen through Kant, Plato,

[1] This is a translation of secs. 2–4 of "Friedrich Christoph Schlosser," the third in a series of four essays entitled *Deutsche Geschichtschreiber*, published in *GS* XI, 124–64. We have added a reference to universal history in the English title, because that is the problem to which the last and longest section is devoted. Pagination in the margins refers to *GS* XI. The essay was originally published anonymously in 1862 in the *Preussische Jahrbücher*.

[2] In sec. 1, entitled "Lehr- und Wanderjahre," Dilthey describes Schlosser's youth. We are told among other things that Schlosser was born on November 17, 1776, in Jever and studied at the University of Göttingen. He held several positions as tutor, the last of them in the house of Georg Meyer in Frankfurt. Then he accepted a position as assistant headmaster at a school in his hometown, but no longer feeling at home there he returned to the Frankfurt home of Meyer, whom he had since befriended. While there, Schlosser taught first at a Gymnasium and then was made a professor of history and the history of philosophy at the newly founded Frankfurter Lyzeum.

and Dante. As an educator he was preoccupied with reflecting on the course of ethical education and on the possibility of influencing it through religious views and moral ideas. But as a theologian he was concerned with the larger question as to what elements of Christianity were fundamental to ethical education, and how these might be fortified against totally destructive speculations and an Enlightenment that dilutes everything. While still in Jever he became concerned with a necessary reform of theology and even believed it to be his mission. Indeed, the basic idea of such an intended reform can still be readily understood. For him, as for Kant, religion was indissolubly connected with morality, and both stood outside the domain of philosophical speculation. Evidently he wanted to take
125 seriously that favorite Enlightenment idea about the educational significance of all religion: to closely link the evaluation of Christianity with the idea of ethical cultivation, and to sharply separate it from philosophical discussions. When a young friend presented him with his philosophical misgivings about Christian doctrine, Schlosser's curt response was that "the truly religious person should not even bring himself to speak about such matters at all." Again with respect to the growing power of Spinozism, he scoffed at the danger to Christianity that might be found in its so-called stringent demonstrations. His open, profound view of life, his historical studies, the need of his intuitive spirit to see the ethical harmony of the world, not in abstract concepts but rather in a benevolent totality—all this filled him with a reverence for Christianity such as was not felt by anyone else of this Enlightenment circle, with the exception of Lessing.

He was at one with Stein and Niebuhr, with Schleiermacher and Fichte, in taking a position opposed to the fundamental attitude of the materialistic historiography of Voltaire, Schlözer, and Gibbon.

What gives Schlosser's historical work of that period particular interest for us is the way it coincides with the attitudes of the best representatives of the German middle class. For the real focus of their spiritual life was still a moral idealism that demanded a personal ethics, religious training for it, and freedom of moral and religious conviction as its basic political precondition. Patriotism was rising under French rule but as yet there was no political culture.

If there was one label that was hated and detested among superficial adherents of the Enlightenment, it was "Scholasticism." Since the beginning of his sojourn in Frankfurt, Schlosser's research had led him to study this phenomenon. He had begun by attempting the rescue of Abelard and intended in a series of cognate publications to

illuminate the significance of the most illustrious among the other Scholastics. But he did not go beyond the small work, *Abälard und Dulcin, oder Leben und Meinungen eines Schwärmers und eines Philosophen* (Abelard and Fra Dolcino,[3] or the Life and Opinions of a Visionary and a Philosopher). Between these two character studies that this little work had brought together there is no other connection than their apologetic tendency and both are to a certain extent rescue operations in Lessing's sense. "Of great men there has not been a dearth at any time, but there has only been a lack of historians who, free of prejudice and hate, would have the ability to recommend such representative men to posterity in a worthy manner; and this alone is the reason for our judging the greatness of persons 126
only according to the mass movement they have projected."[4]

The first historical thesis that the mature man brought before the public was explicitly directed against the historical materialism of Schlözer. It expressed the distinction between inner greatness and the greatness of success that followed from Schlosser's moral idealism and constituted the main feature of his historical judgment. It was this alone that enabled him to combine the strictness of moral judgment with the freedom of historical perspective. An immediate consequence of this was a more just evaluation of such medieval phenomena than might be possible for Schlözer and Voltaire, from whose vantage point every ethical impulse, every movement of the spirit and of free thought was judged by its practical utility.

Besides this first thesis that is decisive for historical judgment, Schlosser set forth another, no less [decisive] for historical form: "The inner greatness of a soul cannot become an object of presentation, because it is an idea of the reader, and therefore indicates that he has the capacity to think grandly rather than that the author has the capacity to portray grandly."[5] For Schlosser, then, the obligation of historiography is not to provide adequate artistic representation, but only to provide the evocation of such an image in the reader. Thus in the portrayal of Fra Dolcino, his doctrines and external circumstances are passed over completely. The historical itself is only the transparent cover for the mental. More thorough than this popular characterization is Schlosser's exposition of the

[3] Fra Dolcino (executed at Vercelli in 1307), leader of the Apostolic Brethren from 1300 to 1307. His denunciations of the Church brought him into conflict with the Inquisition.

[4] Friedrich Christoph Schlosser, *Abälard und Dulcin, oder Leben und Meinungen eines Schwärmers und eines Philosophen* (Gotha, 1807), p. 1.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

system of Abelard. Schlosser might have been led to write on Dolcino by his Dante studies, particularly by his reading of Benvenuti, but in writing on Abelard he set out the results of his prolonged studies of Scholasticism. Of course even this work should not be measured by the present level of such studies, for our knowledge of the sources has grown amazingly by virtue of the newest French scholarship. Even then Schlosser was not in a position to provide a correct critical evaluation of what was then available. This is evidenced by his doubt that the publication by Pez was indeed the ethics of Abelard and his failure to use this, possibly Abelard's most original work, had deleterious consequences for his own exposition. Despite all this, Schlosser's work was influential because of his method of presentation, which for that time represented a definite progress.

> A mere extract of the words of an author or an exposition of his opinions not worked out in his spirit can never characterize that author because it contains at the same time what is distinctive and such addenda that the time renders necessary. What is needed is a free view of the man, but one that has grown out of a study of his writings.[6]

127 In place of a mindless reproduction of an author's writings, or at best a logical ordering of his ideas such as had been provided by the older historical school, there ought to be characterization and a reproduction of the inner form in which these ideas are connected in spirit, just as the Schlegels had taught. In this manner Schlosser first formed the pattern by which there appeared shortly thereafter those extraordinarily effective monographs of Neander[7] on Julianus,[8] Chrysostom,[9] and St. Bernard. Neander's procedure throughout, even in regard to details and arrangement, calls to mind his predecessor so much as to preclude our doubting that in this matter the subsequent elaboration of this field by the Neander School is related to Schlosser's studies on medieval theology. Admittedly his view of Abelard's system shows the limits of the then current historical mode of thought: It makes Abelard a precursor of Leibniz and Lessing in his attitude toward dogma. According to Schlosser, Abelard

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

[7] Johann August Wilhelm Neander (1789–1850), German Church historian.

[8] Flavius Claudius Julianus, the Apostate (ca. 331–63), became Roman emperor in 361.

[9] St. John Chrysostom (ca. 347–407), made archbishop of Constantinople in 398.

transformed the meaning of dogma in order to attach to this raw mass that was needed by the people ideas that could satisfy the thoughtful mind. In this manner he reconciled the people and the philosopher by teaching that in all alleged or actual revelations there is something more than human. Thus he served the wise plan of Providence to sustain in humanity the feeling for its own divine nature.

This rapidly produced book by Schlosser was warmly recommended by Luden[10] in the *Jenaer Literaturzeitung* and by Planck[11] in the *Göttinger gelehrten Anzeigen*, to the delight of the author. Whereupon Schlosser thought first of continuing his comprehensive series with sketches of Peter Lombard and Alexander of Hales,[12] when the collected letters of Beza,[13] which had been hidden in the Gotha library, became available to him through the mediation of Löffler.[14] On the basis of this manuscript treasure, Schlosser now produced his excellent book *Leben des Theodor de Beza und des Peter Martyr Vermili* (The Life of Theodore Beza and Pietro Martire Vermigli[15]). This work, which is still indispensable by virtue of its employment and partial transmission of Beza's correspondence but also because of its admirable characterization, remains one of Schlosser's finest achievements, by virtue of its clear and fluent style, an excellence never again attained by him. In this new publication there comes to expression more sharply and popularly than in the Abelard treatise the practical purpose of the Frankfurt theologian and educator. In the introduction, still very readable today, he expresses his aim with such deep enthusiasm as will rarely be found in his later works. It is as though in his general theses and in the castigations of his age there are resonances of Fichte's *The Characteristics of the Present Age* and *Addresses to the German Nation*. For both of them, the historian as well as the philosopher, rely on Plato and Kant, and on their own religiously animated character as strengthened by the seriousness of the time. Using Plato's reasons, 128
Schlosser condemns the striving of his time for sensual pleasure,

[10] Heinrich Luden (1780–1847), historian in Jena.

[11] Gottlieb Jakob Planck (1751–1833), German historian.

[12] Alexander of Hales (d. 1245), English schoolman, author of *Summa universae theologiae*.

[13] Theodore Beza (1519–1605), French religious reformer who headed the Genevese Church after Calvin's death in 1564.

[14] Josias Friedrich Christian Löffler (1752–1816), professor of theology at the University of Frankfurt and Lutheran bishop of Gotha.

[15] Pietro Martire Vermigli (1500–62), Italian reformer; fled to Zurich after falling under suspicion by the Inquisition.

"which while temporally attainable yet divides the character, because it is foolish to seek to hold fast to what is changeable, and because every pleasure is like a shadow that vanishes when we seek to grasp it."[16]

He laments that in the limited vision of his age the eternal stands in second place to the temporal, and that a narrow-minded egoism prevails that is more corrupt than any fanaticism and more destructive than the most cruel persecution. By contrast, he deems it necessary to show "that there was a time when the wish for a hoped-for good, namely eternal bliss, exceeded any thought of earthly advantage."[17] Furthermore "although he has but little hope that any insignificant person could dam up the current or purport to function as a tool of Providence,"[18] he nevertheless undertakes to defend the inner truth of idealism against the historiography of the period. In this instance it would be against Voltaire himself, who had condemned the Fathers of the Reformed Church by the measuring rod of his own time.

> Remembering the difference in goals between our age and theirs may alone preserve us from a common base error, in judging the heroes of faith in a bygone era; that when we discover how certain actions result from passion and consideration of earthly advantage, we tend with wicked glee to derive all other actions from similar sources, and so reduce all persons to our own level of meanness with superficial impartiality.[19]

> But whoever wishes to evaluate a person correctly, whoever wishes to study the greatness of the human soul in the events of all ages, must succeed in becoming familiar with the way of thinking of the age in question. Once he has done this he would then be able to judge even Beza correctly and not, like Voltaire, condemn him because he measures all things according to his own ideas.[20]

Schlosser summarizes his whole point of view as follows:

> The only true interest that can be inculcated by the life of the men who, without leading armies or dominating nations, have influenced Europe mightily, derives from this fact alone: that in them

[16] Schlosser, *Leben des Theodor de Beza und des Peter Martyr Vermili* (Heidelberg: Mahr und Zimmer, 1809), p. 5.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 1f.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 2
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 3.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

> one recognizes how the thought of advancing God's cause dominated their souls so thoroughly, and so armed them with courage and determination to combat every foe and to defy even the most terrifying adversaries, sacrificing willingly and joyfully all earthly considerations, and even their own life.[21]

It was the aim of Schlosser to rescue the heroes of faith and spirit, in contrast to the heroes of war. This was a consequence of his idealism, which henceforth would flow through all his works.

The rescue of these heroes of the Reformation, as of the medieval system, proceeded from the thought of Lessing and Kant that sensu- 129
ous man needs to be gradually educated through binding dogma to free faith in the supersensuous. Nor does Schlosser hesitate to apply this thought to the most vulnerable point in the lives of the Fathers of Protestantism, namely, the death sentence on Servetus and its vindication by Beza.

> At a time when everybody sought to establish new religious opinions everywhere, when crudeness and barbarism of mores would have rendered a morality unsupported by fear even more powerless than at every other period, it was right to regard as a criminal anyone who might seek obstinately to model the educational institutions of the people on his own idea; and every teacher of religion, even if not as vehement as Calvin, still was working in the direction in which the latter was striving, but with more earnestness and success.[22]

> The uncultivated person who is incapable of pure faith needs a firm, positive doctrine.[23]

Here again the error, as in the earlier writing, is only that Schlosser's abstract formula in no way does justice to the real motive of Beza; otherwise he would also have had to approve the procedure against Ochino[24] and Castellio[25]—instead, he condemned it.

Still in the line of these works there is also the *Geschichte der bilderstürmenden Kaiser des oströmischen Reichs* (History of the Iconoclastic Emperors of the Eastern Roman Empire) (1812), even though the purely academic interest already appears more indepen-

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 52.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 57.
[24] Bernardino Ochino (1487–1564), Italian theologian of the Reformation.
[25] Sebastianus Castellio (1515–63), born in Savoy; became Protestant theologian and classical scholar in Basel.

dent here. For us today what is of primary interest as regards the Eastern Roman Empire is in the first instance the long duration of this purely military despotism, its causes in the far-flung boundaries always under threat, the dissolution of its civil constitution, and its method of administration. Schlosser's entire interest was focused on questions of ecclesiastical politics in the eighth and ninth centuries in the East, which he highlights in the very title of his work.

Gibbon, in the last four volumes of his work, from the death of Heraclius,[26] had altered his manner of presentation. He would have gladly eliminated completely "the Greek slaves and their historians," and he rushes through ecclesiastical struggles of that time with tired indifference and that gentle, ironical smile on his lips, which more patently characterizes his mode of thinking than any single judgment. It is at this point that Schlosser's history of the Eastern Roman Empire, after a brief overview of earlier work, begins with his thorough presentation. He counters the frivolous mood of the "philosophical" historian with the most serious involvement. In place of his predecessor's monotonously polished eloquence, which considers things from a sublime distance, Schlosser exhibits a sort of masculine naivete, which through the most diverse personal experience of life and ethical reflection, pushes this remote history
130 very close to the reader. The idea that a noble attitude is inborn and cannot be inculcated, the question as to the position of women with regard to scholarship and politics, the differentiation of the virtues that ground the state from those that make a noble person—these questions excited him at the time and enlivened every moment of this dispute and indeed every outstanding character.

Against Gibbon, Schlosser maintains that "for the hot passions of the southern nations even the spiritual may take on visible form."[27] He disapproves that Leo "wished to forcibly bring people to purer knowledge. While he possessed the virtues of a ruler, he lacked those of a noble person who knows that the truth cannot be taught, much less imposed."[28] "Regardless of what Leo and his archbishop might believe, what gave them the right to tear down with unholy hand one plank or stone to which even one of the subjects had attached his soul when he had thought to raise it above earthly relationships?"[29]

[26] Heraclius (ca. 575–641), Byzantine emperor.

[27] Schlosser, *Geschichte der bilderstürmenden Kaiser des oströmischen Reichs mit einer Übersicht der Geschichte der früheren Regenten desselben* (Frankfurt: Narrentrapp und Sohn, 1812), p. 7.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

An interest in the right of religious faith over against the state, the study of how they both cooperate and conflict, how the religious spirit and the power of the Church on the one hand curb despotism and how on the other hand the true need of the state might not permit the rise of a mood credulous of miracles and opposed to sober reality—throughout the work Schlosser's treatment of this material is dominated by such considerations and questions.

At various points in Schlosser's elaboration of this material there is evidence of the beginning of a deeper understanding of this period and its struggles, and our historian approximates the new ecclesiastical history as created by Neander. Examples would be his censure of Michael II, namely, "that he permitted his limited intellect to judge the doctrines of a holy church," the heartfelt idealism that governs his almost enthusiastic response to the contemplative emperor Theodosius as a man "who has a feeling for the true happiness of mortal beings whose life has a narrow scope, whose pleasures are even more delimited, and for whom beyond the eternal darkness there lies the tormenting disquiet and toil of the Danaides."[30]

Besides these practical concerns, scholarly ones assert themselves with ever growing independence. As in Schlosser's treatment of Beza, Planck was presupposed as an antecedent influence, now in the new work it is Gibbon. Schlosser clips the latter's historical imagination on the basis of his own tremendous knowledge of the sources. His own account rests on innumerable corrections of histories of Eastern Roman emperors, on a more comprehensive comparison of Byzantine, Italian, German, and Russian chroniclers, and also on all those individual reports that trickle meagerly through the sand of conciliar collections and histories of saints. In short we have here Schlosser's first scholarly composition of greater style. Already 131
his studies in the history of medieval literature are extending into medieval political history; we see here all the preparations for his purely scholarly history of the Middle Ages, constructed from source excerpts. The *Geschichte der bilderstürmenden Kaiser* closes the first phase of his literary productivity and prepares the way for the second.

The ideas of this first period always remained the basis of Schlosser's historical judgments, even after he directed his interest to the political domain and, in opposition to a new direction of the times, seemed to pursue quite opposite goals. Later these earlier ideas appear only in the form of occasional allusions, for which reason

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

one can understand Schlosser's historiography only by uncovering its background. Moreover, unless we are completely in error, this course of Schlosser's development is of large general significance. The first of the historians to look at political convictions, he based himself on a deeply rooted moral individualism as did Fichte, W. v. Humboldt, and Schleiermacher. This moral individualism is the root of our sense of political freedom in Germany, which has no greater precursor than Kant, nor any greater antagonist than Hegel with his concept of the state as an end in itself, a notion deriving from antiquity and nourishing both the apotheosis of the state by the French Revolution and the Restoration.

3. The Transition to Political Historiography

Schlosser was thirty-six when he turned to political historiography. His convictions, as we have just observed, had become strengthened by life itself and by his experiences. If in the most recent years his concern with the state increasingly preoccupied his thoughts and studies, this was as much the consequence of such convictions as of the urgent events of these years. What a change time had brought to Germany since the years when the young theologian had been a doctoral candidate! With what energy and concentration did our people then occupy themselves with philosophical, theological, and pedagogical questions! And Schlosser, like every true historian, lived exclusively in the life of his nation; its sense of life was also his. Very early on, the currents surrounding him influenced him deeply, almost passionately, and his feelings were as enduring as they were powerful. According to the report of eyewitnesses, Schlosser in the final years of his time in Frankfurt was already completely engrossed by political questions. But concomitantly he had immersed
132 himself as scholar and worker in the sources of political history in order to master them academically and pragmatically. The product of this endeavor was the multivolume *Weltgeschichte in zusammenhängender Erzählung* (A Coherent World-Historical Narrative).[31] Only after he had successfully mastered this political side of history as completely as the cultural movements and the course of the moral culture did he turn to his nation with two great works that set themselves the highest goal the historian may be permitted

[31] This four-volume work is to be distinguished from a later, extremely popular, nineteen-volume *Weltgeschichte für das deutsche Volk*.

to envisage, namely, the political and ethical-religious education of his people. This goal, apparently long forgotten, was also taken up contemporaneously by Johannes von Müller,[32] following the model of the ancients and the feeling of being at home in a small republic filled with communal sense. This goal asserted itself anew in a large stateless people both because of the need for national unity and because of the ethical idealism of such noble natures as Stenzel and Dahlmann.[33] It was felt by no one as comprehensively and passionately as Schlosser.

The occasion for Schlosser's *Weltgeschichte*, a pragmatic history clarified by original sources, was his position at Frankfurt. When Dalberg[34] in his grand duchy, to which Frankfurt also belonged, began a reform of the educational system, he distributed the faculties and located them at three places, and to each of these he attached a philosophical faculty, called a Lyzeum, and an associated preparatory school or Gymnasium. Schlosser was appointed professor of history and the history of philosophy at both the Gymnasium and Lyzeum in Frankfurt. His explicit instructions were to treat history philosophically in his lectures. But what was most essential for his Lyzeum students was, as he himself says, "that he provide them with solid knowledge, without which all philosophizing about history remains empty chatter."

> Since I began the first course at the Lyzeum and the Gymnasium concomitantly, I would have to wait three years for students who had been taught by me. To begin to philosophize about history for those whose knowledge of history I could not presuppose—as the noble Dalberg and the insightful Paulus[35] wanted me to do—was at first a difficult if not impossible task. Therefore I searched for a way to assist me in this task and came upon the idea of publishing an outline of the facts of all history in three little volumes, without any intellectual elaboration, without any divisions, and without any arbitrary or incidental arrangement, except for sequence and an indication of their inner linkage.[36]

[32] Johannes von Müller (1752–1809), Swiss historian, author of *Geschichte der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft*.

[33] Friedrich Christoph Dahlmann (1785–1860), author of *Quellenkunde der deutschen Geschichte* and *Geschichte von Dänemark*.

[34] Johann Friedrich Dalberg (1760–1817), high government official in Frankfurt.

[35] Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus (1761–1851), German theologian.

[36] Schlosser, *Weltgeschichte in zusammenhängender Erzählung*, 4 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 1815–41), vol. I, p. i.

The first half of the first portion was written, as he himself said, rather hastily. It still allocated much space to mythical history and set religion in the foreground. Hebrew history was provided by Schlosser's friend, Meyer, author of a Bible translation, and was written in the spirit of a positive inwardness of faith. But already in
133 the preface of the second half, Schlosser explicitly turned away from this mode of treatment. While he was involved with this, the Lyzeum passed out of existence, with the result that the situation which had provided the occasion for this project but also had limited him in it, now disappeared. Moreover, the expansion of his studies and the breadth of his plans that had developed in the course of his work cracked open the narrow form. "I recognized," he writes in the foreword to the second volume,

> that if I intended to abide by my plan of checking all the facts, of arranging them in a series, and of facilitating an understanding of the view of the time and of its spirit by means of carefully selected passages (and not by secondary restatement with consequent detriment), this would require me to abandon the brief scope originally determined upon, if I did not wish to end up with a mere skeleton embellished with passages.[37]

Thus it came about that Schlosser on the threshold of the Middle Ages once again changed his pattern and expanded his treatment of this period until about 1300, with even more detail and thoroughness, extending to a series of volumes. Today these would hardly be used for anything but reference purposes to track down particular source materials, but at that time they were of great influence for the study of history, as it stood then.

In opposition to the influences of French historiography, and against Herder, Schiller, and Woltmann,[38] who passed over historical materials in order to reach forthwith the final goal of their research, namely, animating ideas, a new school had arisen in Germany that was interested above all in mastering this material in its full scope. It was one of the most characteristic signs of our philosophical and aesthetical mode of education that we preferred philosophies of history and aesthetic narratives to compilations of materials and factual elaborations thereof. It was a most justified reaction against this tendency when a series of more thorough re-

[37] *Ibid.*, vol. II.1, p. ii.
[38] Karl Ludwig von Woltmann (1770–1817), historian and diplomat.

searchers took up this empirical and selfless labor. Our German historiography is rooted in their cooperation. There is an excellent remark by Gervinus:

> When Wilken published his *Kreuzzüge* (Crusades)[39] in 1810 and Niebuhr his *History of Rome* in 1811, and Schlosser began his *Weltgeschichte* in the very same year, it appeared that this was really the beginning of our independent historiography. Wilken was the first to move to an exhaustive narrative account, rich in source material, of a great period of history. Then Niebuhr, marching in the footsteps of Wolf,[40] gave historical criticism an impetus of wide influence. Schlosser demonstrated over against such authors of universal histories as Schröckh, Mascov, Ritter, and Engel, that their accumulation of materials did not suffice. Schlosser now began to infuse spirit into this body of materials, even in his thoroughly fact-laden initial works.[41] 134

When Schlosser allied himself with this school of strict research he was still half lost in the study of sources. His work served him as a means of becoming sure about the content of medieval history. For him it was not possible, as was the case with Niebuhr, for example, to calmly work through his material and to approach it from ever new perspectives before presenting his results to the public. He was not one to make excerpts; aiming swiftly at a tangible goal, his method of work was to shape his materials immediately into lecture notes and books. Only in this way is it possible to understand how this man who had lived half his life in philosophy and the study of intellectual developments could now, during these years when he was deeply immersed in studying medieval sources, turn vehemently against writers of history who were striving to go beyond researching the raw data—more vehemently than the narrowest material gatherers would ever dare.

Indeed in the goal of the moment he appeared to have forgotten all his earlier strivings, and even his own unique nature. In the zeal with which he defended his perspective the concept of historical solidity and truthfulness became almost identical with the dryness of

[39] Friedrich Wilken, *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge nach morgenländischen und abendländischen Berichten* (Leipzig: S. L. Crusius, 1807–32).

[40] Friedrich August Wolf (1756–1824), founder of classical philology in Germany.

[41] Georg Gottfried Gervinus, *Friedrich Christoph Schlosser. Ein Nekrolog* (Leipzig, 1861), p. 55.

bare facts and their mere sequential ordering. His aversion to "the rationalizing approach of the British and French" led him to reject not only its tendentious superficiality but also political reflection and political characterization.

The distinction between a fundamental compilation of facts and the "philosophical" lecturing style, which practical need had forced upon him, gradually changed for him in the course of his defense of this distinction into another, namely, that between the author who strings together disparate facts and that of the true public, which in its own fashion arrives at a synoptic survey and evaluation. With precipitate zeal he indiscriminately threw together scientific understanding, the artistic delineation of historical material, and the mere display of such material.

> The reader must bring with him good nature, sense, and unprejudiced understanding. For his part the author should, by his placement of the data, facilitate the reader's talents and the further investigation of what has been suggested. It is a matter of extreme indifference to me what this or that person once said about it, or what he thinks or has thought concerning it, regardless of how great an authority he might be in regard to the facts. A mere mishmash of politics, strategy, statistics, comparisons of incomparable entities, and declamatory accounts I do not acknowledge as science. Concerning loose talk or rhetorical show, whose practitioners emit information on all matters as though they had themselves been present, this may do for people who without improving themselves seek to improve the state, and the like, or for those who seek the shining star of wisdom in the chaotic darkness of the primeval world, or for those who search for true human constitutions and laws in the forests and swamps of crude barbarians. But truth, wisdom, thoughtfulness, and diligence are not advanced thereby.[42]

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Such a statement demonstrates better than any assurance to what degree this passionate man was dominated in his judgment by subjective moods.

This work and Wilken's *Kreuzzüge* were followed by numerous compilations of medieval materials such as we have received from

[42] Schlosser, *Weltgeschichte im zusammenhängender Erzählung*, vol. II.1, pp. vii–xii.

Stenzel,[43] Manso,[44] Raumer,[45] and Aschbach.[46] Just as Wilken with his methodical mind stimulated the kind of criticism of medieval sources by his work and even more by his personal activity, which was then grounded by Ranke, so Schlosser's sound judgment vis-à-vis the romantic distortion of facts had a dominant influence on historians and at various points stimulated new works. Schlosser's effectiveness was due primarily to the soundness of his judgment. He was able to remain equally distant from the romantic adoration of the Middle Ages and from the sarcastic devaluation thereof by Voltaire, who measured all ages by the same standard.

That Schlosser had not lost the older and deeper conception of a historical context is evidenced by a monograph produced at the end of this stage of his labors, and which causes us to regret very deeply that he did not treat the Middle Ages in the same philosophical manner as he treated antiquity and the eighteenth century, that is, by grasping the place of the individual phenomenon within cultural history. The treatises on the course and condition of ethical and academic education in France up to and including the thirteenth century, which Schlosser added to his translation of the *De eruditione filiorum nobilium* of Vincent de Beauvais,[47] actually constituted the start of a true history of the philosophical and theological resources and the elements of medieval culture, a beginning that far outdistances Neander's related effort in historical profundity. Here Schlosser was taking up anew, but more broadly and with more openness, the task with which he had begun his literary career, namely, to present the course of Scholastic education. Just as he celebrated humility, profound earnestness, pure love of learning cultivated in solitude and unnoticed in a lonely cell, and divine tranquility of soul as virtues in which the Middle Ages surpassed our time, he now acknowledges in the spirit of fairness the milder and friendlier mode of life, and the transformation of the world through science as the distinctive features of the newer age. Indeed he takes 136
the task up again with wonderfully comprehensive knowledge.

[43] Gustav Adolf Harald Stenzel (1792–1854), German historian in Breslau, member of the 1848 Parliament in Frankfurt.

[44] Johann Kaspar Manso (1760–1826), German philologist and historian in Breslau.

[45] Friedrich L. von Raumer (1781–1873), German historian who wrote a history of the Hohenstaufen emperors.

[46] Gerhard Adolf Aschbach (1793–1842), German legal scholar.

[47] *Hand- und Lehrbuch für königliche Prinzen und ihre Lehrer* (Frankfurt am Main, 1819).

Anyone who knows the *Speculum historiale, naturale, et doctrinale* (Historical, Natural, and Doctrinal Mirror) of de Beauvais[48] will recognize how much work and scholarship are concealed in so brief and simple a piece as the one dealing with history. It gives us the clearest possible view about the resources with which history was practiced in that age, and with what deep emotion Schlosser here links the practical goal of the old handbook to the goal that he had pursued in Frankfurt among the circle of his noble female friends: to cultivate in the place of the sentimental piety of immature judgment practical reason and moral sobriety, even as old Brother Vincent had done so heartily and impressively for his friend Margaret of Scotland, Queen of France. With these treatises Schlosser already has paved the way to the cultural and literary-historical parts of his universal history, and to this day they remain unquestionably among the limited number of superlative accounts of this aspect of the Middle Ages.

This monograph he composed already when he was professor of history in Heidelberg (1819), to which he had been called to fill Wilken's place, especially at the recommendation of Daub[49] and Creuzer.[50] He wrote this as a preliminary work for a trip to Paris, where he wanted to finish the last part of the medieval history but at the same time also to start an entirely new project. His lectures led him back, of course, to his old studies on the eighteenth century. The tremendous change of views that he underwent particularly stimulated him. He recognized the connection between them and political development. Thus arose the plan of his *History of the Eighteenth Century*, the one subtitled "Mit besonderer Rücksicht auf den Gang der Literatur" (With Special Reference to the Course of Literature). It was to be only a manual for his lectures. That it grew to at least two small books we owe to the influence of Alexander von Humboldt. As Schlosser has related:

> I was introduced to Alexander von Humboldt and showed him the first pages of my outline in order to get his views about the whole project. He wrote me a note expressing his view about

[48] Vincent de Beauvais (d. ca. 1260), French Dominican and encyclopedist.

[49] Karl D. Daub (1763–1836), German theologian and philosopher; editor (together with Creuzer) of the *Heidelberger Studien*.

[50] Georg F. Creuzer (1771–1858), German historian, author of *Symbolik und Mythologie der älten Völker, besonders der Griechen*.

> my plan, in such fashion that I was ashamed and believed that I was obliged to fulfill his expectation about my work, at least by dint of diligence.[51]

From this time on Schlosser turned ever more strongly and openly toward a history oriented to influencing the middle class and educating its judgment. He was deeply pained by the realization that in Germany everything was unstable and almost unconsciously being driven to a crisis. "In the history of the last period of Louis XV," Schlosser says in a very peculiar abstract of his own history, 137
written long before the revolution,[52]

> the author has particularly stressed certain points that must be set forth anew, particularly in our time, to governments and nations, all too secure in their reliance on blind faith, police, officials, and bayonets, because everything that has happened once does not need to occur again, yet may.

Schlosser sought to warn and awaken, to destroy the appearance of tranquility and happiness, and above all the ostentatious glitter by which at all times power dazzles good and weak spirits so that they are unable to penetrate to the core of things. For him no word is too hard, too blunt, or too incisive for breaking this shell of personal pleasantness, imposing dazzle, and the highest and most gracious patterns of life with which the ruling classes surrounded themselves. His only concern was how their actions affected the people for whom they had to care. What they were, their personal existence would not hinder him from pursuing plainly and simply the decisive question as to their effect. For himself, he "had chosen the thankless business of taking under his protection the prose of poverty that nowhere finds defenders against the numerous poetic panegyrists of the arts of wealth." He was equally concerned to destroy the shimmering brilliance with which the official rhetoric had enveloped the highest spheres so as to undermine the parochial middle-class historiographical perspective with its aesthetic contentment in the display of color and form. His hard, frequently sarcastic, and occasionally even cynical narrative is altogether a product of this mood and intention that in turn like every particular conception is a constant polemic against the prevalent, bland, and abstract misrepre-

[51] Schlosser's "Autobiography," reprinted in Georg Weber, *Friedrich Christoph Schlosser der Historiker* (Leipzig, 1876), p. 48.

[52] Dilthey is here referring to the German revolution of 1848.

sentations of a harsh reality. Schlosser's treatment throughout, whether intentionally or on the basis of practical instinct, exceeded the path of moderation as much as the other historians had fallen short of it.

Ultimately it was Schlosser's intention to destroy all those dim, romantic perspectives that appeared to him to be the greatest support for the newly rising dominance of the ruling orders, and fundamentally only a device for inducing the people to accept medieval institutions by means of the twilight of mystical views. In the execution of his intention Schlosser could even lose himself in trifling matters as when he railed at the project of rebuilding of some castles in the medieval style—these "old dens" should be left in their well-deserved state of ruin.

To be sure, he retained his earlier conception of the medieval period by defending it against a superficial utilitarianism. Only his
138 practical goal had changed and thereby also the direction and form of his narrative. Yet in this, too, there can be observed a slowly progressing intensification and even embitterment. From 1826 to 1834 he was occupied with ancient history, whose core can be found in the first volume of his *Weltgeschichte*. Here his style and historical perspective are still rather moderate and restrained. But then when he together with Bercht[53] inaugurated his *Archiv für Geschichte und Literatur* (Archive for History and Literature) (1830–35), there was from the outset an incisive sharpness of direction. Then as he entered into the well-known controversies with Heeren,[54] Varnhagen,[55] and others, his passion intensified from year to year. It was in 1835 that his polemic against the contemporary historians first received powerful expression in his beautiful essay *Zur Beurteilung Napoleons und seiner neuesten Tadler und Lobredner*[56] (Toward an Evaluation of Napoleon and His Most Recent Detractors and Eulogists). Schlosser's radical innovation was to relentlessly demolish the whole dazzling web that the courts, bulletins, official pronouncements, memoirs, and French historians had woven together. To us, admittedly, his evaluation of Napoleon now appears

[53] Gottlob Friedrich A. Bercht (1790–1861), German classical scholar and editor of several journals.

[54] Arnold H. L. Heeren (1760–1842), German historian; wrote an economic history of the ancient world.

[55] Karl A. Varnhagen von Ense (1785–1858), German writer; author of *Biographische Denkmäler*.

[56] The essay appeared in the *Archiv für Geschichte und Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main, 1832–35).

as still too favorable because he bases his views of him mostly on conversations with persons devoted to him.

When finally in 1836 he used the second revision of those two little volumes on the eighteenth century to begin his multivolume history, it was entirely directed to influencing the middle class and to awakening its political conscience. And he accomplished his purpose. He was sixty years of age when he began this work from which his influence on our nation derives; so late did this slow and serious character, yet all the more incisive for that, achieve the goal of his life. And in what times did he undertake this! The political spirit of the nation was in utter ferment and motion. There was a general need for historical orientation, and for the writer of history it now appeared possible to influence the political conscience of a passionately aroused nation. It was now possible for him to become an educator in the grand sense that since his youth had been his soul's desire. Now at sixty he would devote twelve more years to complete his work. The reward was a series of editions, a name uncommonly popular, especially in southwestern Germany, an extraordinarily educational influence that would encourage the middle class toward political activity—these were the fruits of a long, industrious life.

That his influence on the whole remained confined to South Germany is quite understandable as then and for a long time beyond, it stood in the foreground of political life. It was there, particularly in the chambers of Württemberg and Baden that the ideas and men 139
responsible for political moderation and soundness in 1848 were nurtured. In Prussia all political energies were still paralyzed. It will always remain a remarkable example of the influence of our universities in mediating the regional differences among the Germans that this historian from the North Sea was regarded as a fellow countryman throughout southwest Germany, and indeed as the head of the South German School, whereas in northern Germany his perspective was regarded as partly alien. In an overview of contemporary historians, Waitz[57] presented him as founder of a "South German School." While the *Junge Deutschland* movement[58] and the Hegelian School—both under the influence of the July revolution (of 1830)—expressed their uncontrolled and uninformed hatred of the status quo in highly stylized brochures, the South German School

[57] Georg Waitz (1813–86), founder of the Göttingen Historical School, author of *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte*.

[58] A political and literary movement preceding the revolution of 1848.

started to work at training the middle class for political activity. The sympathy of the middle class for Schlosser derives from his educational role, not from rediscovering in him its own disgruntlement and rancor against the governmental regimes.

4. Universal History

Whoever has read Schlosser, not just leafed through his work, finds in him a nexus of positive thoughts and only through it can one understand his significance. This nexus is what we were pursuing when we traced how his quest for human knowledge on the basis of philosophy, praxis, and history dominated the long formative years of his life and how this quest guided him through all his diverse studies. It remains for us now to examine this nexus itself.

Schlosser was the first German historian to regard the purpose of history as the education of a people toward a practical world-view. This is his primary significance and in this activity the seeming contradictions of his nature manifest a unity. He was philosophical and yet a stubborn historian; an idealist and yet incapable of breathing the pure air of mere ideas; an introverted visionary and yet glowing with practical energy. These contradictions he combined in the great and true thought that in the ethical universe of history there lies the completion of the life experience of the individual; and that their interpenetration provides the basis for an ethical world-view fruitful for life. With this idea he turned against historical construc-
140 tions built up from mere concepts, as well as against artistic self-contained or purely political result–oriented histories. He opposes concepts with bare historical facts, the artistic illusion of objectivity with the admitted subjectivity of the investigator, and direct, even pointed political results with the general breadth and stability of a practical world-view.

By virtue of this thought he becomes the historian of the Enlightenment, the age of Kant. Even when divested of its strict form, the philosophy of Kant exerted a powerful influence on its time. But it was not only that Schlosser lived under its involuntary influence, which affected all contemporaries invisibly like the air; he had studied philosophy—having wavered among it, theology, and history up until adulthood—and had read Kant's main works several times. At an age when the ideas of a person tend to crystallize for the rest of his life, he was totally absorbed in Kant's ethical world-view. This is already obvious in the earlier works of Schlosser that have

been discussed and in certain favorite ideas in the later ones that agree almost literally with statements of Kant. One example would be Schlosser's frequently expressed misgiving implicit in Kant's question: "How will our descendants begin to understand the burden of history that we may be leaving them after several centuries?"; and Kant's solution of this difficulty with the idea of a concentration of history in the philosophical mind. Ultimately Schlosser's proximity to Kant is shown best by his main ideas. For Schlosser, too, the center of gravity of things, at least for our consideration, lay in the ethical task of humanity. The sublime words with which [the first section of] Kant's [*Foundations of the*] *Metaphysics of Morals* opens and which never disappeared from the soul of Fichte also resonate like a prevailing tone through Schlosser's historical works. "Nothing in the world—indeed nothing even beyond the world—can possibly be conceived that could be called good without qualification except a *good will*."[59] Heaven and earth revolve about the axis of the good will. But for Schlosser, as for Kant, this sublime idealism was still conceived dualistically. What ought to be and what is, human nature viewed according to its ideal tendency and the empirical person are in opposition. Kant solved the contradiction by the thought that human beings do not develop completely in the individual but only in the species. By this idea history receives a completely new meaning, and an entirely new and powerful impact. Henceforth it belongs to the essence of man himself that he is historical, that is, that he fulfills his moral task only in the continuity of culture. This essence is not grasped by anthropology, which deals 141
with the empirical existence of the individual, nor by morals, which determines what ought to be, but only by this philosophical history, which has as its object the life of the human species itself. Here for the first time a philosopher allows history to enter into the nexus of his system, and without pressing it into formulas. Rather by virtue of its being altogether free to move in its own course, history becomes the intermediary between the ideal of humanity and the empirical human being. History is also the source of a practical worldview and a powerful lever for the conscious cultivation of the human species. Such an elevated goal had been extended to history by Kant, and Schlosser carried it forward. Well did he know that he was doing this in only a tentative fashion and only gropingly. At the beginning of his universal-historical treatment of the ancient world

[59] Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959), p. 9.

and its culture, he remarked: "Every humble person who writes a history of mankind will wish to provide no more than an attempt or a contribution to such a history."[60]

But in what way does the contradiction between the empirical and the ideal person become resolved in the course of history? Here again, in the new dualistic turn taken at this point by Kant, Schlosser follows him. Just as Hegel liked to speak of the "cunning of reason" in relation to his abstract reason and rigid causality, so Kant spoke of a "natural purpose in this idiotic course of things human."[61] Kant repeatedly emphasized that it is precisely the antagonism of interests, unsociability, and the sensuous nature of people that are the means for binding them together into a moral whole. Over against the intentions of mankind he placed the intention of nature and the providence of history. Particularly fascinating to him was the process whereby nature operates with the unsocial and uncontrolled egoism of people in order to produce the unity of a moral world. The mediation between these oppositions that is implicit in the great instinctive positive traits of human nature, and which was first demonstrated through the study of language, religion, and later governmental constitutions, was still strange to Kant and to pragmatic historians.

The very same stance is taken by Schlosser. The mood that animates his history is completely expressed by Kant, who wrote:

> One cannot suppress a certain indignation when one sees men's actions on the great world-stage and finds, beside the wisdom that appears here and there among individuals, everything in the large woven together from folly, childish vanity, even from childish malice and destructiveness. In the end, one does not know what to think of the human race, so conceited in its gifts. Because the
> 142 philosopher cannot presuppose any [conscious] individual purpose among men in their great drama, there is no other expedient for him except to try to see if he can discover a natural purpose.[62]

Along this line Schlosser still differentiates between moral greatness and historical efficacy. Indeed in the spirit of that Kantian formula regarding egoistic passion as the basis for the civilizing of the world—a sort of historical theodicy—he remarks appropriately,

[60] Schlosser, *Universal-historische Übersicht der Geschichte der alten Welt und ihrer Cultur* (Frankfurt am Main, 1826), pt. I, sect. 1, p. 2.

[61] Kant, "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View," trans. Lewis White Beck, in *On History* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), p. 12.

[62] *Ibid.*

"Moral corruption and greatness of mind and action are unfortunately always indissolubly connected in mankind."[63] He declares that certain political relations among states and citizens are incompatible with strict ethics if what is better is not to become sacrificed to what is worse. Schlosser praises the Roman idea that what maintains the state is not goodness and virtue but character and talent, and he demonstrates this from the life of the English aristocracy. This view must always be kept in mind when he casts sharp side glances at the private lives of great men. Over and over again he reaffirms the thought that the engines of history lie in the elementary force of passionate characters. At the same time, however, he reaffirms the complementary judgment that no human may evade simple ethical standards. It serves to confirm the intent of such assertions that Gervinus reports from Schlosser's lectures how in them, and in very definite opposition to Dahlmann and in emphatic agreement with Machiavelli, Schlosser absolutely separated public and private morality. Yet another indication of Schlosser's perspective is the enthusiasm frequently manifested in his writings, particularly those on Dante when he speaks of the bliss of a tranquil pious life remote from the conflicts of history. These principles have landed this disciple of Kant into an undeniable dualism of the ethical and historical modes of consideration. It is a testimony to the greatness of the influence of Kant that these questions do agitate this historian, that he strives to wrest from history a sort of theodicy, a reconciling practical world-view.

What we have here termed "practical" in the understanding of Kant and Schlosser was quite remote from what it meant for that great utilitarian party of the eighteenth century, which prepared the way for the materialism of the nineteenth. Schlosser mocks the German Enlightenment for its polemics against the categorical imperative, which plainly is not applicable to "normal life and to the catechism." He castigates Voltaire for basing his concept of history on the world of great men, and for "lacking in his soul everything whereby history might be made into an instructress of mankind," especially the "belief in the nobility of the soul amid the corruption 143
of the civilized world."[64] Altogether reminiscent of the great Hume with his belittling and half-mocking tone is Schlosser's remark in discussing Robertson: "He wrote not for the small number of those who think and examine things, but he sought to be useful to practi-

[63] Schlosser, *Universalhistorische Übersicht*, pt. II, sec. 2, p. 455.

[64] Schlosser, *Weltgeschichte für das deutsche Volk* (Frankfurt am Main, 1854), vol. 16, p. 136.

cal people in their outward life."[65] Schlosser's concern was rather with the inner person and his education. Only in one of his predecessors in the eighteenth century did Schlosser find the deeply reflective combination of philosophy, life experience, and history, from which the delicate fruit of that practical view of the world could grow, namely, Hume. So it is with frank and undisguised admiration that he salutes the spirit of this man's historiography, yet without wishing to be silent regarding the weaknesses of its execution. "Hume was a deep thinker who first followed the career of philosopher and wandered through the labyrinths of all systems. This is what makes his historical work valuable, not his scholarship or citations."[66]

As has already been stated, the basis of Schlosser's own view of history is a dualism, but one he was able to nurture with Kant, Plato, and Dante as his guides in the tranquil domain of the inner world. Sometimes when he saw on the stage of history the endless struggle of egoistic passion, he was overcome by sorrow concerning "the nothingness of things and the vanity of human endeavors as well as by the truth that in life one shadow gives way to the next, only to make room in the end for nothingness." Only the lightheartedness of the *Briefe* (Letters) can discern in this outburst of passion the product of his historical thinking. Throughout he was filled with the belief in a quiet moral world beyond the turmoil of external history, and additionally by the thought that all the greatest revolutions—all those that were pure and enduringly felicitous—had their origin in this quiet moral world and its influence. For him this was the basis for the beginning of a positive counterbalance.[67] To cure the wounds that pride, luxury, and barbarism cause mankind, healing has been provided by poor and powerless persons, mighty only in the world of the mind: poor fishermen and persecuted missionaries, sons of shepherds and carpenters, of sculptors and miners. The clamorous mechanism of history appeared trivial to Schlosser by comparison to the powerless and yet all-penetrating effects of a Solon, Socrates, and Aristotle, and the creator and propagators of Christianity. Greatness of deeds attaches to the passionate hardness
144 of characters, but there is an invisible power of the spirit that animates the mechanism created by them.

This way of conceiving history stands in sharp contrast to the dominant conception in the eighteenth century, which related his-

[65] *Ibid*., p. 74f.
[66] *Ibid*.
[67] Schlosser, *AG* I, 3, 91. (D)

tory directly to politics as well as to the conceptions that were becoming prevalent in the nineteenth century, namely, the constructive and the artistic. One must first understand these oppositions if one is to understand Schlosser's polemic against other historians.

For Schlosser history had no immediate political goal; it does not purport to teach the practicing statesman what he should do. Already in 1817 he expressed himself clearly about this, even more stridently than he would have later: "I separate scholarship as such entirely from life. Those tempted to involve history in life should observe how unfortunately this has turned out for the many who have attempted it recently. Scholarship wants to instruct, but life should regulate itself."[68] No matter how one judges Schlosser's conception now, when history has again become predominantly political, on the basis of his experience and studies, and consistent with his fundamental perspective on history, he was bound to pursue this path. From Thucydides to Machiavelli and beyond to Guizot and Macaulay, those who have written the best history were experienced in politics and were desirous of teaching by what means states are maintained and enlarged, and from what causes they decline. As against this type of historiography, Schlosser offered another. It rested on a completely different sphere of experiences, and aimed at completely different goals. Schlosser disdained to place at the center of history political affairs, which were completely alien to him and which were of little consequence in Germany in Schlosser's youth. Yet he had lived in an epoch of extraordinary upswing in spiritual and moral culture in Germany. Early on he had observed and studied the causes that advance and hinder this culture, its branches and connections, its influence on the nation's education as embodied in the state. Thus in cultural history as he understood it, he spoke on the basis of extensive experience, many years of reflection, and knowledge of the matters in question. He wrote as one educated in the age of Kant, though, unlike Johannes von Müller, not as imitator of his predecessors. What he praised above all was the will to freely rediscover one's own innermost life in the course of history, and this is what impelled him to write history.

Even more bitterly, vehemently, and repeatedly did Schlosser reject objective historiography, whose greatest master in his youth was Gibbon, and in his later years, Ranke. Here a personal antipathy served to intensify a conflict of principles. Schlosser's view of 145
history placed great emphasis on the ability to freely judge the facts

[68] Schlosser, *Weltgeschichte in zusammenhängender Erzählung*, (1817), vol. 2, p. i.

of history. The aim was not to produce an aesthetic impression, not to imprint on us a vivid image of bygone times, but rather to [reproduce] their actual historical moods. The historical spirit itself must come to expression without shackle but also without ornament; it is to be given free rein just as it is, in the processes of gathering and classifying, judging and comparing. History was so important to him because here all mental operations from which a practical world-view is formed are able to work freely with the materials; and because this can happen unhampered by any coercive presuppositions about systems, that is, naturally, without broad systematic forms, which he did not like and could not handle.

Hence nothing is more characteristic of the form of [Schlosser's historiography]—or, if you prefer, its lack of form—than that it manifests all the powers of a rich subjectivity in a disorderly, impulsive activity. It is also characteristic that the play of these powers is not concealed and merely reflected in a simple and fixed result, but that we can look into the workshop of his historical mind itself. It is not the facts we see directly, but rather this powerful mind working with the facts. Some of these he thrusts into the foreground explicitly, others he omits and tells us why; sometimes he reproduces some passage or other for the reader. He is in constant dialogue with those who collected and recorded the materials of history; he treats Diodorus[69] and Polybius as contemporaries, and one must always bear in mind that his judgments are directed against other conceptions [of history]. Nor is he less apt to be engaged in ceaseless combat with the historical tendencies of the most diverse times than with the facts of history themselves. Against them all he set his own historical spirit, his life experiences, his world-view; it is his practical, ethical, spiritual core that is dominant throughout.

But it is not this alone, however. Connected with it was a very peculiar cast of mind, which with the passage of time became increasingly harsh and caustic. Everything relating to the form and methods of his historiography is as much determined by this as by his conception of history. Schlosser possessed a naive nature. No matter how ruggedly he demarcated his standpoint against all sides, no matter how energetic his will, he nevertheless lacked the power of formal delineation that alone can confer a tranquil unity to a
146 character. In people of this sort there is something primitive and unpredictable. Their judgments are [too much] affected by emotion,

[69] Diodorus Siculus (fl. 44 B.C.), collected materials for his *Biblotheke Historike*, a history of the world up to the Gallic wars of Caesar.

too ponderous and one-sided. Even when such people are more cheery, there is something evanescent or luminescent about it, like the sparkling of the sea. The lack of harmony, the hardness and instability in their character put us off, while the power of their energy moves us. They display a natural sympathy with the unarticulated wisdom of the people, a natural aversion to the careful and polished style of aristocratic life, which blunts the edge of the more violent agitations of our emotional life. A character of this type would certainly feel sharply opposed to all the trends of that time in which the aftereffects of the age of German aesthetic and philosophical reflection and the discouraging impression of the prevailing [political] circumstances favored an objective and formalized mode of thinking and writing. Such a character would feel most strongly the right of its effervescent practical energy over against an equalizing artistic or philosophical intellect.

Consequently Schlosser also eschewed every stylistic or substantial concession to these contrary trends; and he threw himself the more openly into energetic polemics against other authors of the time. With full awareness he held fast to the immediacy of his feelings and expressions—an immediacy that was for him essential to their full truth. In Johannes von Müller he found a remarkable example of the opposite trend. What depth of truly human sensitivity was his; but between his emotion and the proper word for it, so much conscious imitative art and time were expended that its simple effect on simple natures was lost. Rather than risking the loss of this effect Schlosser for his part preferred to expose himself to the reproach of indulging in arbitrary and passionate judgments and of subjective and mercurial views. He would have preferred to dispense with this limiting medium of writing altogether. Every page of his writing emits a direct trace of his manly sense of life; he himself can be seen behind each of his figures. Gervinus has given an excellent account of this side of Schlosser's character and the abrupt nature of his ideas, how they are controlled by the moment and by practical circumstances, and how his judgments change even in various editions of the same work. Here we would emphasize only one point: Even if Schlosser had desired to write differently he would not have been able to do so; the artistic historiography of our century is based on its critical method. The two greatest masters of this method, Ranke and Mommsen, also went furthest in that bold artistic treatment of history. When it is not the truth of particular facts that is being assessed but the relation of the writer to the events, then the procedure of criticism becomes so complex that every allu- 147

sion must disappear from the narrative. Only on the basis of complete mastery of all historical accounts according to their value can complete artistic certainty begin to arise.

Schlosser, who had matured before this foundation of the critical method had been laid, was never able to acquire this for himself no matter how highly he esteemed it. This is clear from his diffidence vis-à-vis Niebuhr's second volume of the *Lectures on Ancient History*, and from other explicit statements. Yet everywhere he depends on the results of this method, for example, for Jewish history on Gesenius,[70] for early Christianity on Paulus, and for the Roman period on Niebuhr. But even where he did indeed make such an attempt, as in his Jewish history, to compile critical results, his lack of talent for this aspect is obvious. Even in his youth he was not able to collect drafts and notes for further use; and later, too, he kept no files and excerpts, but rather worked up his books out of his course lectures, his memory, and studies gathered at a moment's notice. Following his established pattern he read tremendous masses of sources in order to form in his head a picture of the whole. In a word, the very technique of investigation was strange to him. The distinctive purpose of his historiography may excuse this, as best it might. His attitude toward diplomatic historiography was like that toward critical historiography. Admittedly, after his journey to Paris one finds occasionally in his *History of the Eighteenth Century* citations of embassy reports, but his use thereof is very capricious. He never lost a certain distaste for diplomats because their style of living and communication appeared to him to be mendacious. In any case, he always preferred oral reports, assigning them an influence that often vivifies many points but even more frequently impairs their impartiality. A particular instance of this is his opinion about the Revolution, which was strongly influenced by Grègoire[71] and other dubious authorities; and another was his judgment about Napoleon, which was affected by the grand duchess of Baden and her circle with whom he was on friendly terms. This procedure of using eyewitnesses as sources of information was in accord with the ancient concept of historiography, which he shared.

Now this conception of history and this organization of his mind as we have explicated them earlier find their content in universal
148 history. Just as in considering history as the material for a practical

[70] Friedrich H. W. Gesenius (1786–1842), German Biblical scholar, author of *Thesaurus philogico-criticus linguae Hebraicae et Chaldaicae*.

[71] Henri Grègoire (1750–1831), French prelate and revolutionary, sent to the States-General of 1789 as a deputy of the clergy.

world-view Schlosser relied on Kant, so in relating it to universal history he relied on Schlözer and his French and British predecessors. It cannot detract from Schlosser's achievement that he stood on the shoulders of others. Occasionally he himself spoke sarcastically about "new historical ideas" and always spoke most candidly about his relation to his predecessors. After Bolingbroke, Voltaire produced in his *Abrégé de l'histoire universelle* (Short Universal History) the first sketch of a philosophical universal history (in 1754). Here already there was expressed the decisive idea that the real subject of history was not wars and courtly chronicles, but human culture. In Germany there then appeared in 1772 Schlözer's remarkable *Vorstellung seiner Universalhistorie* (Introduction to His Universal History)[72]—just a few sheets, mostly an attempt to organize world history according to epochs and then according to peoples, but preceded by general discussions about "systematic world history." One finds in this introduction an air of inspiration that is otherwise completely alien to this most sober historian. In this new science of history there is to be no criticism, no rationalizing, no depiction, no painful chronology, no lists of kings. On the other hand it will encompass everything—the history of states as well as that of art and scholarship; it becomes essentially the history of mankind—a new kind of history that heretofore had been cultivated mostly by philosophers, though clearly still a domain of the historian. It would be intended above all for the world citizen and for the human being as such, and it would bring to the forefront of consciousness how much culture is to be found in our daily existence as one surveys the uninterrupted progress of the human spirit from discovery to discovery, and so on. We do not doubt that the course of lectures about this book, which Schlosser attended in Göttingen,[73] already provided him a stimulus toward universal history. Later he was to say: "It was Schlözer who really paved the sole path that could lead to the sort of history our age needs."

Aiming at a practical world-view based on the totality of history, Schlosser never during any period of his life identified with and nurtured the fate of a particular nation or the genius of a particular man, as artistic historians do. Indeed, not for a single moment was he capable of isolating his interest and point of view as required by

[72] August Ludwig Schlözer, *Vorstellung seiner Universalhistorie* (Göttingen, 1772).

[73] Schlosser, *Geschichte des 18.Jahrhunderts und des 19. bis zum Sturz des französischen Kaiserreichs. Mit besonderer Rücksicht auf geistige Bildung*, 3 vols. (Heidelberg, 1836–43), vol. III, 2, pp. 234ff.

this artistic sort of consideration. Every historical phenomenon immediately showed him its limits, relativity, indeed its double-edged nature. He saw it in relation to the cultural phenomena of all ages,
149 and with them measured it against human nature. It is at this point that all the strengths and all the weaknesses of his universal history become visible.

It is not possible to overestimate its strengths. Every particular phenomenon is measured by a mind equally at home in antiquity, the Middle Ages, and modern times; in political, church, and literary history; in life and research. As has already been said, he searched in all ages for the same human nature, so all of them are brought equally close; all speak to the reader with the same human interest. Just as what is most remote in time becomes contemporary as it were, so what is closest appears to recede into a historical distance, and through this simple relation of the reader to every age a quite peculiar participation is engendered. Because a uniformity of human destiny and character in the most diverse historical periods is made manifest, the conviction is strengthened in the reader that no changes affect the moral law and the divine world-order, and that his own time and his own surroundings also are subject to this standard.

The events themselves for the first time appear to receive their correct perspective, in which their own distinctive nature stands out. For at all times they are considered in reference to their position in the culture in which they stand, but at the same time they are measured against the totality of human culture. The former is attained because cross-sections, as it were, are made of the broad stream of historical events. Admittedly, such a living flux nowhere permits the formation of a static picture. But a penetrating consideration of history permits us to recognize, in a way, generations whose culture displays a unitary feature. This Schlosser was able to establish with a most acute historical eye. Within these generations he assembled all the homogeneous phenomena of the ethical and political culture; over against them, and in strict correlation, he set the phenomena of spiritual culture. The idea of cultural history had existed for a long time but now it became a reality in Schlosser's masterful writings. How quickly in the great course of our historical knowledge Schlosser's presentations have aged in many respects. Yet sections like those on the age of Pericles, Roman aristocracy in its heyday, the age of Cicero or Roman culture as the basis of and in transition to the medieval, and many others—who can count them?—will forever retain their value and attractiveness for the per-

son who reads history not as a suspenseful novel but in order to reflect on it.

The latter [achievement of Schlosser] was that he placed what is individual into a direct relation to the totality of the moral world. In 150
this way analogy attained an importance in his view of history such as it never had for any other historian. Only Gervinus followed him in this distinctive method, particularly in his earlier period. The first and most common aspect of this method is that particular historical phenomena or groups of them mutually illuminate one another. Thus Schlosser compared, for example, the feudal period of the Middle Ages with the oldest aristocratic period in Rome, the revolutionary age of Rome with seventeenth-century England, the artificial Greek culture with French culture in England and Germany, and there are many others. It is as if incessant lightning illuminated the course of his history with momentary flashes. Even where he does not specifically use an analogy, he scarcely ever sees any fact without this multiple illumination. But as long as the light of analogy plays only among the phenomena, their common ground remains completely dark. Hence it is necessary to investigate further how similar historical relationships generate a series of similar phenomena. Some of those relationships pursued further by Schlosser are slavery in ancient states, the aristocratic system of government among the most diverse peoples, and the differentiation of literature from nationality. At this point one can discern his deepest thoughts, and here he approaches what we, too, term the philosophical comprehension of history, the understanding of historical laws, the course first charted by Vico, Machiavelli, and Montesquieu. The comparison of the dynamic causes that enable states and their cultures to grow and decline is the pervasive theme that continues to haunt him throughout. In this, too, he is a true son of the eighteenth century and a decisive opponent of the mode of thought pervading the beginning of the nineteenth. With the former he strove for a great pragmatic conception of history according to which particular phenomena derive from relations operating alike everywhere, and stemming from human nature—in short, from laws, even though they are not yet laws based on an understanding of human nature. He always opposed the nineteenth-century tendency to concentrate historical phenomena around an ideal core, their spirit. He operated with the basic historical category of sober causality, and not with an immanent teleology of phenomena and a dialectical process, by which in our [nineteenth] century the effort was made to spiritualize the rigid mechanism of pragmatic history.

The shortcomings of Schlosser's approach stand out as clearly as do its merits. As a consequence of the fact that a particular historical phenomenon has, with impatient haste, been held up close to the
151 whole of history and that it is treated in a comparative and judgmental way before the multiple threads that bind it to greater spheres are carefully traced, that is, before its correct standard has been found, his account of it seems somewhat arbitrary, changeable, and double-edged. With such approximations of totality, the relativity of the particular offers him the opportunity for all-around historical criticism. For example, Schlosser is always sarcastically berating "pedants and collectors," because they do not engage in action; and [conversely] those who simply seek results because they are concerned only with mass recognition. He also vigorously rebukes the greatest English and French stylists because of their overrefinement, as though there could be style without art; moreover, he cannot speak sharply enough about the English quest for monetary gain. Then again he derides with almost pathological bitterness our modest "middle classes who enhance their meager pleasures by idealizing and sweetening their hard deprivations by an excitation of feelings in accordance with the suggestions of Campe[74] and Salzmann."[75] This double-eagerness in Schlosser appears above all in the manner in which he impugns all the great practical tendencies of the eighteenth century, in view of the indisputable relativity of all attempts to influence the external world, and yet at the same time mocks the defenders of the inner life, such as Rousseau, as dreamers. No aspect of Schlosser's writings is more repugnant than such double-edged judgments. Indeed it appears as though he thoroughly enjoyed this relativity of human things and even relished it with gusto—and then one can almost feel a moral antipathy against him.

No one can set himself a great goal without becoming one-sided and therefore negative in other directions. To track this down everywhere and to seek to keep everything great in check by its negative side and all value of things by their limitations destroys historical piety. Gervinus defends this by pointing out that "the greatest of all judges of the world and of human beings, that is, those who understand how to measure the outer world by their own inner life—a Shakespeare, Dante, or Machiavelli—have always had a picture of

[74] Joachim H. Campe (1746–1818), German educational theorist.

[75] Christian Gotthilf Salzmann (1744–1811), one of the most important educational theorists of the Philanthropical School and founder of a famous educational institution near Gotha.

the world that made them earnest and disciplined."[76] But for the historian a more moderate standard is appropriate than for great creative beings. [Consider], too, how Machiavelli honored and loved the Medici and how he highlighted what is positive in each of the characters that he portrayed and [consider] what exalted, unimpeachable characters Shakespeare created, and with what mild irony he surrounded the sharp edges of more limited and poorer characters. In short, there was in them what Schlosser lacked: a strong sense of the positive in all strivings, and of that original power of important human beings, which leads them to greatness 152
even through one-sidedness—namely, the sense for the *principium individui*. How much Schlosser lacked this is shown nowhere more clearly than by his tendency always to see intent or design everywhere, to always assume that a person's motive is to exploit the trends of the time and the inclinations of the people. Here too he has developed an involuntary mannerism; the term "intent" sometimes represents little more for him than a stylistic combination of two facts, as, for example, when he remarks apropos of Clavigo, "this attention (to Beaumarchais) Goethe believed he had to make use of for a play." In this matter, too, Schlosser, although he lived in the midst of a new age, remained of the old school, which knew nothing of the powers that unconsciously move the depths of the human mind, still transposing everything into conscious intent. This approach tends to disparage everything, because the power of personality is based entirely on the persistent force of the unpredictable and the involuntary, because will and intelligence first of all draw their power and individuality from dark emotions. This approach, then, stresses the moral purpose of religion and the extrinsic aspects of artistic forms, with the result that the arts fall outside the focus of history. Yet the volitional power of this ideal [artistic realm] of emotional life is not less important than any other impulse. Without Homer, no Alexander; without that belief in the gods that Schlosser unconcernedly dismisses as irrelevant to history, none of the glory of the Greek world; without the penetration of the emotions developed in the English novel, but which our historian so bitterly disparages in speaking of Sterne's works as a "mixture of lascivious tales, lachrymose scenes, and sermonizing ethics," no Goethe, and no literary basis for our national consciousness.

This method of immediately measuring a single action by the universal moral law results in Schlosser's failing to recognize the worth

[76] Gervinus, *Friedrich Christoph Schlosser*, p. 31.

and independence of individuals as well as of nations. From early on Schlosser was familiar with and valued the basic tenet of pragmatism[77] of taking into account the locus and period of every culture, but he lacked the method of applying it. Schlosser frequently grasps general features with incomparable penetration; but he seizes them hastily, plunging without further ado into the network of events, unconcerned as to whether he is tearing it apart. Naturally, what results is an arbitrary picture of nationalities disfigured by moral judgment. His final verdict too easily disposes of nationalities, for in every historical judgment the difficulty of an adequate
153 result rests entirely on the complexity of the factors. His judgment about England may serve here in lieu of all other examples. Admittedly, in his work on ancient history, where his posture is more impartial, he succeeded far better in characterizing nations than in his work on modern history. Still, his work on the Greeks foundered as a result of his complete exclusion of mythology and art, without which this people of imagination could never be understood. In his history of Rome, however, the obvious kinship of the subject and of Schlosser's moral and political standards appears at its most fortunate. Here again he took his stand with Kant and Schlözer against Herder, who with his developed aesthetic sense was the first to perceive the unique individuality of peoples. In this context, too, Schlosser felt himself to be opposed to Ranke's perfected sense for the particular characterization of nations.

It is this defect of method that impaired even the most profound aspect of Schlosser's treatment of history. His dictatorial sweep cannot take the place of a sense for many-sided development, nor can the incessant free play of analogies substitute for a more methodical advance to laws. Hence even amid Schlosser's most fundamental ideas one finds again the abstract deistic notion of a historical providence that operates separately from the driving forces of the events themselves. Thus he is able to regard it as fate and a divine decision that Hannibal succumbed to the Romans—a view that tears apart the whole inner nexus of ancient history and abandons it to arbitrariness. Nowhere can one perceive that Eichhorn's[78] works on constitutional history, or the perspective of political economy, which so fruitfully entered history with Lappenberg[79] and Wurm,[80]

[77] Dilthey really means "pragmatic history."

[78] Karl Friedrich Eichhorn (1781–1854), historian whose *Deutsche Staats- und Rechtsgeschichte*, 4 vols. (1808–23), was the foundation of the Historical School in German jurisprudence.

[79] Johann Martin Lappenberg (1794–1865), German historian.

[80] Christian Friedrich Wurm (1803–59), historian and journalist.

deepened Schlosser's historical studies. Ultimately then, Schlosser's history—as distinct from philosophical history—is attracted to periods illuminated by ample source material. The beginnings of every developmental process, so fascinating to the philosophical historian, Schlosser flies over swiftly.

It is important to point out that what we have said about Schlosser places him in opposition to what we will call the immanent teleological approach to history. Even in regard to the form [of history], he rejects this approach, regardless of how beneficial its influence might have been. Schlosser and his disciples were vigorously opposed to concentrating a historical period into an ideal image and dialectically constructing the moments through which history passes—two procedures that had a significant spiritualizing influence on even so pure a historical mind as Ranke. These procedures encouraged Ranke to give an artistic form to history and left deep traces on the historiography of Droysen. The older Schlosser grew, the more energetically, and one might say raucously, did he contrast his tough and abrupt *realism* to every unified historical image achieved by abstraction. [Indeed], ever more consciously did he turn away from that admirable dramatic art of Ranke's historiography where the forces of history appear in a restless, always progressing dialectic. His narratives have something of that epic style in which every fact claims our interest for itself—their unity being left to our intuitive powers. 154

But the chief thing was that he rejected altogether the value of the teleological philosophies of history from Herder to Hegel for the understanding of history, and in this regard every truly historical mind must applaud him, and so must every philosophical mind. The grouping of particular data on the basis of a total idea of some historical period into a system everywhere destroys the nexus of basic causes and phenomena, and hence also the actual historical fact about which we are concerned, and substitutes for it a fictitious and abstract connection. It is not possible to protest enough against the prejudice of many historians, that this is philosophy of history. For the latter can never have any other purpose than to derive the multifarious phenomena of history from their causes or laws, and these in turn from human nature. With respect to this view of the philosophy of history, Schlosser and Wilhelm von Humboldt appear to stand together, no matter how these two may differ otherwise. "Everything that is efficacious in world history also animates the inner nature of man."[81] This fundamental idea of Humboldt for

[81] Wilhelm von Humboldt, "Über die Aufgabe des Geschichtsschreibers" (1821), *Werke in fünf Bänden* (Darmstadt, 1960), vol. 1, p. 597.

understanding history also guides Schlosser when he constantly grasps experience and history as a unity. The only thing is that he interpreted both realistically and practically in Kant's sense, and that he lacked the patience of the researcher to pursue the larger connections to their root. Entirely consistent with this position, though inadequately executed, is the way Schlosser thinks about development in the totality of history. We have seen how for Kant the idea of this development bridged the gap between what the individual is and ought to be. For Schlosser, too, the task of universal history, "as the product of all experience is to attempt to demonstrate, by means of the history of our species, that through continuous revolutions it is developing more and more," that is, as is said later, in the direction "toward the more perfect."[82]

But he is far from forcing a schematic symmetry upon everything,
155 and he finds "connectedness and true instruction only in the history of the Caucasian race."[83] Yet even within the Caucasian race, the theocratic nations diverged in two main features from the general character of human beings: [The first is that] among them human community was destroyed by the caste system; and second, this resulted in making impossible a universal development of the human species extending to all areas, times, and peoples, [modeled on the development] we have endeavored to demonstrate in the history of the Hellenic and German tribes. In what manner does this development take place then? "The progress of human culture," he answers, "may be thought of as analogous to tracing the history of the earth's surface: The ruins of the earlier culture were always the base on which the new culture, when completed, stood a level higher than the one born earlier."[84] This sentence compresses the entire design of Schlosser's *Universalhistorische Übersicht der Geschichte der alten Welt* (Universal Historical Survey of the Ancient World). Nothing is more evident here than the preference for those periods of transition when a new culture is being formed out of ruins, as, for example, the age of Hellenism, and the period of the preparation of medieval culture on the basis of the dying Roman Empire. On what then does progress depend in this tradition of cultural elements? Schlosser, unlike Buckle, is far from attributing it to the increase of knowledge. Just as little is he inclined to follow a naturalistic line that in every case attributes progress to the entrance of new peoples into history. Rather his essential ideas are entirely focused on the

[82] Schlosser, *Universalhistorische Übersicht*, vol. 1(1), p. 6f.
[83] *Ibid.*, p. 58.
[84] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

permanent advances in moral and political life. This is for him the central point of all history. Historical development begins with the decline of theocracy and the rise of purely political self-government among the Greeks. The Romans first founded a civilization that set in action the powers of the totality for the well-being of all individuals. With Christianity there was founded, besides the state organized in this fashion, but independent of its growth and decline, a political and religious education and mode of thought for human beings. Among the grounds of the modern age Schlosser stressed the abolition of slavery, the equalizing power of an independent merchant class unknown to antiquity, monarchy, and the accommodation of city and country.

By virtue of the fact that the motive power of historical development is assigned to moral and political development, we find ourselves once again on the soil of the Enlightenment and of Kant: "The greatest problem for the human race, to the solution of which Nature drives man, is the achievement of a universal civil society that 156
administers law among men."[85] However, this state of Kant is not a temporal manifestation of the divine, but a technique of nature, so to speak, for the development of individuals. Thus the historical view of Schlosser at the same time bears within itself the outlines of a theory of the value and freedom of the person, as it characterized the eighteenth century.

The first principle is that what makes it possible for the state to function is not a mechanism, nor any particular form or administration, but only individual persons filled with ethical strength. "Any reformation worthy of its name," he says, "must necessarily be built on strict morality. Without this and a pure fervor for truth and light, and without profound contempt for selfishness and the vapid vanity of low and courtly souls, every attack on the social status quo is pernicious." Actually, not since Tacitus has a historian repeated anew with greater moral earnestness that in the last analysis it is morality alone that builds or destroys states; indeed, hardly ever was it more necessary to stress this dull and simple idea over against a politics that believed that it possessed in constitutional or democratic formulas a political panacea. One is reminded of the more eloquent than historical views of Sallust and Tacitus when one reads Schlosser's depiction of the transition in Greece from democracy to monarchy by citing the diatribes of Isocrates, and when in his *History of the Eighteenth Century* the immorality of the courts repeatedly arouses him to indignant outbursts. Yet the history of all

[85] Kant, "Idea for a Universal History," Fifth Thesis, in *On History*, p. 16.

free peoples to this very day proves him to be right in holding that political freedom has developed only in periods of strict morality. Of course he knows the limits of this idea. For if the material for grounding freedom lies in the moral earnestness of the people, different and contrary forces determine the formative power of genius and the brilliant elaboration of a later period. Schlosser recognizes these forces for their value without any moral prudery. The descriptions of a Sallust, Schlosser counters with the latter's own admission that the popular hostility to the Catilinarian conspirators was directed more against the political influence of the aristocrats and the wish to have been able to seize this opportunity to weaken their power than against their immorality. In Schlosser's opinion the whole thing was partisan. Indeed, he maintains that neither in Rome nor in England—the two greatest political examples—were goodness, virtue, or a pure personal character necessary or the rule
157 for the public activity of the statesman, but only genius. How splendidly this view is demonstrated in the character and efficacy of Scaurus. With what pure enthusiasm Schlosser speaks of Hannibal, who morally was pretty much without scruples, yet in whom, despite his having few moral scruples, he saw something of "the perfection of humanity" just as Mommsen had done in the case of Caesar. Even with regard to a Sulla, Schlosser notes reflectively and with a true sense for political genius "that he stood on a fearsome height where all human and divine things as well as the life of myriads and all human opinion, belief, and knowledge appeared unimportant, even pitiful."[86]

In his history of the nineteenth century, which in its practical tendency evinced an increased moral acerbity, surely Schlosser's unique interpretation of Napoleon indicates that he made judgments far more in accordance with his concept of the state than in accordance with moral presuppositions. Only with the creation of a new nobility, clergy, and empire did Schlosser become alienated from Napoleon, whereas previously he had regarded him as explicitly analogous to Julius Caesar, as the architect of a more just social order amid the ruins of the Revolution. What he once said relative to Frederick the Great, with a disdainful glance at moralizing historians, is crucial: "One who has the interest of humanity at heart, and who knows that any far-reaching improvement could be effected only by violence in the period before or during the Seven Years' War and during the French Revolution, will feel no concern

[86] Schlosser, *Universalhistorische Übersicht*, vol. 2(2), p. 383.

for the means employed by Frederick to unify an army that had to secure a victory for the claims of reason against the combined powers of European and German princes."[87] Such were the parameters in which he framed the principle that the freedom of states rests on the strict ethical principles of individuals. He distinguishes between the freedom of states and their subsequent glory and world power, and he also differentiates between the content of this freedom and the formative spirit of statesmanship.

From this same starting point of personal freedom there derives the second basic element in Schlosser's conception of the state, namely, that its social side is of greater interest to him than the political, and the free movement of the individual more than the self-government of the totality. Everywhere on the Continent did this standpoint precede the contemporary political standpoint. In this respect again Schlosser is altogether a child of the eighteenth century, whose ideal of the state culminates in "human rights." Should anyone still require a special reason to explain the one-sided sharpness with which Schlosser expresses this position, we must remember that the minor states in which Schlosser moved very definitely engendered this extreme conception. For the subordination of so- 158
cietal interests to the state is conceivable only when some emotional substitute is provided to allow the self-consciousness of the individual to belong to a powerful totality animated by historical memories. For Schlosser what was most essential, he constantly emphasized, was that everyone should have a feeling of self. "That government is the best where everyone has a feeling of self, where the law holds passions in control, and where the Deity and law, not the cleverness of individuals, are sovereign."[88] Since the expansion of Rome, great states, with all their social antagonisms, have had a need for a sovereign monarchical power that can balance these antagonisms. Schlosser emphasizes throughout that the individual can have a feeling of self only in the constitutional form of monarchy. Yet even the absolute state has value for him in the light of the consideration that it was this that first destroyed the aristocracy on the Continent. One of the most important points in explaining his historical view is his hatred of any attempt to restore the aristocracies. He stands altogether on the side of the French Revolution, the fundamental product of which was the completion of that destruction of social contrasts that monarchy had already initiated so zeal-

[87] Schlosser, *Geschichte des 18.Jahrhunderts* (Heidelberg, 1837), vol. 2, p. 253.
[88] Schlosser, *Universalhistorische Übersicht*, vol. 2(2), p. 482.

ously; and against England which, by virtue of its aristocratic base, felt itself completely antagonistic to the new state. Schlosser's position is as much the outcome of his ideas as of his peculiar nature. His tough, naive character, accustomed to Friesian egalitarianism, was hostile to the forms in which aristocratic life moves; and in southern Germany where no aristocracy confronted the bourgeoisie, this antipathy became ever sharper. Then, too, he was suspicious of the virtuosity of the intercourse of high society and diplomacy, and even of literary style, which appeared to him to make history cold and elitist. In his view, the future of the state lay in the middle class and its open, naive manner, which he himself shared, and in the egalitarian self-awareness of all. With zeal and bitterness Schlosser attacked every move in contemporary states of the Continent to restore the importance of the aristocracy. He contrasts the later English form of government with the old Anglo-Saxon type, and it is on the latter that he bases the rights of the British people. Even a man like Stein cannot earn full praise from Schlosser. He does, however, distinguish from the modern aristocracy the ancient aristocracy that submerged itself in the state and in service to it, thereby renouncing personal ascendancy and personal pleasure. Schlosser's history knows no more boundless praise than is allocated to the Roman aristocracy, in which the virtue of the most
159 distinguished men was nothing more than the general character of their class. Schlosser compares this with the aristocracy of the Scottish Highlands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and with the aristocracies of the French Reformed Church in Geneva and Holland. In all of these he finds praiseworthy that the aristocracy really formed the core of the state and presented a model of innocence and simplicity in living, as contrasted with the mores of the monarchy.

That he attached unconditional value to the morality of individuals had as its consequence that he was able to recognize the importance of religion for culture. Waitz, in his characterization of the Heidelberg School, criticizes Gervinus and Hagen in particular for their "faulty understanding of the immeasurable importance of Christianity and for generally downplaying the religious elements in history," and derives this from Schlosser. Yet the truth is that on this score Schlosser was decisively opposed to those two figures. When Gervinus in a fine review of Schlosser's *Universalhistorische Übersicht der Geschichte der alten Welt* characterized the coherence of this work, he singled out one point for particular criticism, namely, Schlosser's detailed treatment of Christian literature and

culture. Indeed, to Gervinus it appeared that the exclusive goal of the Schlosser work was Hellenistic culture and its diffusion. But, on the contrary, Schlosser had placed more emphasis on the fusion of ancient and Christian culture and on their connecting threads in accordance with the basic ideas of his universal-historical perspective. It was not the pure classical orientation of the sixteenth-century Italian Renaissance and of eighteenth-century Germany that represented the zenith of modern historical development, but rather the outlines of fusion as he had traced them in his Dante.

Of course, by virtue of the fact that Schlosser subjected the whole world to the moral law, he could see in dogma only a strengthening of the motivation to live morally, as Kant had done. For him Christ was "the teacher, who preached a simple, reasonable religion of the heart, without ceremonies, priests, or atonement—a religion that should consist of purity of sense and uprightness of conduct."[89] But although angered by the disappearing simplicity of original Christianity, Schlosser spiritedly affirmed those systems, like that of Clement, in which the wisdom of paganism combined with the simple profundity of Christ's teaching to form the ensuing dominant Christian world-view.

Generally, Schlosser paid tribute, as no one had done before him, to those imponderable spiritual forces which, independent of the real power relations of a particular state, and in opposition to them, maintained an indestructible system of culture. It is in this sense that 160
Schlosser understood, albeit imperfectly, the growing idea of humanity in the eighteenth century. A comparison of his Roman history with that of Mommsen readily discloses the difference in the criteria. Mommsen wrote under the influence of a mood evoked by the drama of a movement that had been crushed by the mechanical powers of the state because it had fought only with ideas as weapons. His book expresses perhaps more incisively than any other of this epoch the political result of that time. It is not speeches or criticism, inner nobility or intellectual superiority that can seize the motor of history but only force, which can find a place in the machinery itself and can seize some elements within it on the basis of which something really can be moved. To weigh the possibilities arising from this mechanism and to reckon with them when it involves the progress of the state—this statesmanlike intelligence Mommsen alone considered. All the insulting utterances of Mommsen derive from the bitterness with which he pursued and attacked

[89] *Ibid.*, vol. 3(1), p. 265.

the kind of idealism that operates with false and imaginary possibilities or the kind that keeps its critical distance.

As contrasted with Mommsen, Schlosser is by no means the mere moralist that some have sought to make him out to be. He, too, condemns Cato for having failed completely to notice the chief causes of the demoralization, the spread of the slave trade, the destruction of the middle class, and the transformation of the Italian alliances into suppressive relations. Schlosser also remarks without reproach that the great Scipio was already proceeding "demagogically on the path to monarchy, which after him all the great ones of Rome would enter upon quietly."[90] Schlosser calmly recognizes the necessity of political facts. Mommsen wrote in a period when it almost seemed as though morality and a feeling for justice constituted an impediment in the struggle of mechanical forces. In Schlosser's period, however, the central or moderate parties rooted in ethical consideration still constituted the hope of all, and national-economic and political aspects of events were considered less important than moral aspects. Whereas Mommsen focused on the state with exclusively political vision, Schlosser brings out the aftereffect of Cato and Cicero on history as a whole—an aftereffect not based on power, and therefore incalculable, beyond time and the mechanism of forces. Schlosser follows the imponderable influence of such characters on the general course of cultural life, beyond the logic of political facts, and beyond a purely national culture. His talent in grasping the causal relations by which cultural conditions
161 are connected with literary influences, and the latter with each other, is definitely the greatest possessed by any historian up to and including him. He stressed more energetically than anyone before him the influence of every literature on the education of its nation and the aspect whereby it belongs to the cultural history of the particular people in question. Especially the way in which he relates society to literature was of pervasive significance for genuine literary history. But for him the goal of the latter was not the plantlike unfolding of each nation, but rather universal culture—a unity that reaches out far beyond Europe. Accordingly, he set squarely in the foreground of his history of the eighteenth century the remarkable interaction of England and France, and the unity of culture developing there. As no one before him, he appreciated that the foundations of a unified culture of the Western nations resided in a Christian body of literature, through which a coherent set of ideas could

[90] *Ibid.*, vol. 2(2), p. 291.

spread over such a wide domain and exert a harmonizing and unifying effect. Here again as everywhere the sober energy of Schlosser's character placed a limit on the nature and importance of his research and his talents. He strictly relates literature to his fundamental idea of moral culture, and of course in the latter, as he understands it, the direct reference to the world of action and politics controls everything. Consequently, the world of imagination completely recedes behind the will and the sober intellect that are nurtured in this [moral culture]. As a result Schlosser does not do justice to the rich life of the spirit, not even to the forces that actually influence human political action. Recently, the progress of civilization has been constructed on the basis of the progress of rigorous knowledge, especially in the natural sciences, as the only transferable and therefore continuous element in human development.[91] Schlosser values this force only to the extent that it attains a popular form and becomes an element of education and culture. And is it any different with the way art enriches the life of the mind when it takes the transitory elements of our imagination and our emotional life and gives them shape and form, thus nourishing and stabilizing these elements within us from early on? Is not this, too, a continuingly growing motif in human morality?

The above-mentioned limit becomes even more apparent in the way Schlosser executes his basic ideas. Because everything is considered solely in reference to its origin and effect, solely as historical causality, he never shows us the phenomenon itself; only its relation to the national life and society, its inner power, the influence it exerts through its form and through its connection with similar phe- 162
nomena come to the fore.

It would be amply rewarding to now go into some detail. Attention would have to be drawn to two themes above all others. One is Schlosser's conception of Roman history. He had presented oriental antiquity only as a foil for later development, in an obvious polemical reaction against romantic enthusiasm. As soon as it appeared, this section was criticized for its superficiality. When he then made a first attempt to present a critical history of the Jews in connection with his general history, his achievement again was limited by his inadequate knowledge. So, too, in his Greek history the treatment became more accurate only after the rise of the two rival states. Schlosser is wholly at odds with the philologians and archae-

[91] Here Dilthey alludes to Buckle's *History of Civilization in England*. See "History and Science," above.

ologists of his time when he claims that what is greatest in this history is "freedom, love of order, and obedience to the gods, the laws and the properly elected authorities."[92] From such starting points it is scarcely possible to approximate the inner essence of Greek life. But for the Roman spirit Schlosser felt an elective affinity. His many investigations shed more light on Roman history than on any other period in history. For the earlier period he was able to rely on Niebuhr, but for the later period he found available in this nation abounding in historians the amplitude of material that his approach required. This, the most highly developed political system—other than England's—had been studied by many great political minds since Machiavelli, and in Schlosser's youth it still was what England's political system is for us today.

The other obvious major theme in Schlosser would be his conception of the eighteenth century. One can only understand the latter correctly by seeing the history of that time as he himself did, namely, as contemporary history. For it was his intention—which Gervinus later took up—to extend this history to the present. Schlosser's history depicts the two most powerful phenomena that he himself had experienced—both of them from the eighteenth century—one being the politics of absolutism and its disaster, and the other the literature of the Enlightenment. All historiography is conditioned by the sum of the experiences that constitute the horizon of an age. Who is not cognizant of the innumerable great lessons taught us since Schlosser's time by the course of Caesarism in France, by parliamentary reform in England, by the antagonism between Austria and Prussia, and by the position of the composite Austrian state toward its constituent nationalities—who could enumerate them all?—and how these experiences have transformed his-
163 torical judgment? Our historians, in the sharpest contrast to earlier historians, are concerned only to ward off the onslaught of the multiple impressions of the day storming in upon them. But not Schlosser. Whatever lay within the horizon of his time he kept directly in view without fear of the hazards of a contemporary history. Thus a remarkable book arose, which, while written in the spirit of the time it encompassed, at the same time constitutes the sharpest critique thereof. Where he felt himself to be at one with his century is in the annihilation of the medieval spirit in all quarters.

Of the positive seeds of the century he had as yet no sense, but its negative tendencies he viewed with the sharpest eye. While still a

[92] Schlosser, *Universalhistorische Übersicht*, vol. 1(2), p. 100.

part of this time, he nonetheless formulated the most bitter criticism of its great historical sins: the establishing of states on the basis of military power, the radical politics of absolutism, culminating in the partition of Poland; the undermining of morality by the corruption of the courts, of religion by the frivolity of high society, and of the old English political life by the conquest of India and the unstoppable assault of plutocracy. Consequently, he saw in the conditions of Europe between 1789 and 1813 the tremendous catastrophe in which all these unstable factors collapsed, the final divine judgment, as it were. At the same time, however, he saw in these events the beginning of a new development, but also new dangers that threatened the progress of a civilization. Harsh criticism has been directed against the bitterness with which he presents the shadowy side of this period. Yet he is certainly right [in holding] that one can only get at this period of the most personal regimes if one also brings to light those harsh features of courtly extravagance, corruption of morals, bad economics, and the exploitation of subjects; otherwise everything becomes vain embellishment. It was this glossing over that Schlosser hated most, especially when our unhappy German circumstances were glorified by brilliant stories of kings and princes to be relished with a kind of aesthetic contentment. Apropos of this he remarks in one of his occasional reviews:

> We desire to note only this much: that everyone who has read and believed the boasting about German activities of that time, which have been served up to us so lavishly, must, if he still has a human heart in his body, be convinced by this chapter that the nation would be cheated out of any knowledge of the history of the fatherland by a band of Sophists. Unless, that is, honest, veracious, and learned researchers provided facts by which all the patriotic babble and loyalistic prevarications come to naught.

We have endeavored to bring closer to our readers the creator of universal history in that we have explained his historiography on the basis of the sphere of ideas of his period, the vicissitudes of his 164
life, and the course of scientific scholarship. Since his time no significant attempt at universal history has been made again. Those who are deeply immersed in particular materials will only smile at the possibility of such a thing before they have mastered everything requiring investigation. But the progress of the sciences has everywhere been different than the empiricists surmised and perhaps there is already someone somewhere thinking about the problems of history who will put to shame their derisive smiles. This would be

the man of whom Kant with his careful but bold mind had prophesied that he would subject history to general laws even as Kepler and Newton had done in natural science. The work of such a person would then at one stroke place Schlosser in a brighter light than any account today can.

At the same time we have also endeavored to illuminate through Schlosser's personal development how from our individualistic German culture an interest in history and the state came about, and how a series of protagonists emerged who fought for the right of history to become an instrument of national education even as formerly antiquity and our poetry had been for us. Even those who lose themselves in historical material, and hold that it is incumbent to believe that a philosophical history is a dream of questionable historical value, will be pleased to recognize with us this aspect of Schlosser's merit. Only those who boast of the reputation of our own age, so infinitely critical, so methodical, and so eloquent, may ignore Schlosser's name, as their predecessors ignored those of Vico and Montesquieu, the one appearing to them as incoherent and the other as lacking adequate knowledge of the sources. In this [the minimizers of Schlosser's philosophical history] would only be exercising the right of retribution, for no one ever despised Vico and Montesquieu more thoroughly than did Schlosser.

7. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND THE HISTORICAL WORLD (1901)[1]

Translated by Patricia Van Tuyl

The Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, which is reproached for being unhistorical, produced a new conception of history, which was conveyed in the brilliant historical masterpieces of Voltaire, Frederick the Great, Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon. In these works, the view of the human race's solidarity and progress spread its light over all peoples and ages. Now for the first time, universal history acquired a nexus drawn from empirical observation itself. This nexus was rational in that it connected all events in terms of ground and consequent, and critically superior in its rejection of any transcendence of given reality through otherworldly ideas. It was based on a completely unbiased application of historical criticism, which did not spare even the most sacred shrines of the past, and on a method of comparison that spanned all the stages of mankind.

This new experience-based conception of a nexus in the life of mankind made possible for the first time a scientific connection of natural science with history. Hypotheses concerning the origin of the universe, the formation of the earth, and man's appearance on the earth amid the animal species could now be linked with the process of history through the idea of evolution.

But this century's attitude to life already contained within it the limits of its historical enlightenment. These cheerfully and confidently progressive men of the Enlightenment saw in all the past merely the stages leading up to their own heights. This view filled them with a godlike impudence toward the methodical scholarship of previous centuries, with a most immodest consciousness of their own merit, and with happy sovereignty of the new spirit represented by the name Voltaire.

1.

There have been great historians since the Greeks who, with the clairvoyance of artists, looked into the affairs of the world. But it is the inner law of historical science that, as the historical world forms

[1] This essay first appeared in the *Deutsche Rundschau* (Berlin, 1901), vol. 108, pp. 241–62, 350–80. Reprinted in *GS* III, 209–68. Pagination in the margins refers to *GS* III.

itself in time, scientific understanding of man's historical nature grows along with it. For it is not through a sort of brooding about ourselves that we humans achieve self-understanding. All this produces is the Nietzschean misery of exaggerated subjectivity. Only by understanding the historical reality that we produce can we attain consciousness of our capacity for good and for evil.

The Greeks were the creators of the great art of history. Herodotus and Thucydides were its permanent models. This historiography achieved perfection in the age when every art shone with incomparable brilliance. The highest pitch of artistic power ever seen by the world was also creatively at work in historiography.

But in this great age of the free city-state, the horizon of the Greeks was still spatially and temporally restricted. From the time of Herodotus, the Greeks saw with the clearest vision the typical features of the nations with which they stood in contact through trade, war, and travel. But their ignorance of [other] languages prevented them from delving into the earlier history, the constitutions, and the literature of foreign peoples. Thus, they expressed magnificently the typical contrast they found between themselves and other peoples, but they produced no scientifically grounded view of the historical development of culture and of the position they themselves occupied in this development.

Consequently, even political science during the period of the independent development of their states was limited to the analysis of their own states, and those of the Macedonians, Persians, and Carthaginians, with whom they were in closest contact. They investigated the essential conditions of life that determined the existence and form of their city-states. They explored the economic conditions of these political bodies, their structure, and the law of constitutional change. They discovered the great rule of proportion between political achievements and political privileges, the maintenance of which is linked to domestic peace. From this, they derived the true causes of revolutions. From the time of Plato, they were concerned with the problem of endowing the state with stability, and, where possible, immortality—a task tantamount to squaring the circle, given the conditions of life under which these politicians stood. They analyzed the forms of their own poetry and rhetoric in a similar way
211 and it was Dicaearchus in his *Bios Hellados* (Life of Greece) who arrived at the concept of Greek culture as a unity and attempted to establish a science of it. This great student of Aristotle, taking natural conditions as a background, differentiated the aspects of this culture and described Greek life in terms of its political structures, customs, amusements, cults, and festivals.

Thus the analytical knowledge of this brilliant nation was directed primarily at the rapid course of its own culture. This plant-like generation, blossoming, and withering, the rapid change in its systems of government, the swift decline of its great art, the vain effort to give its small city-states stability—this was the dark shadow cast over glorious, radiant Greek life. If a pessimistic feeling of the vanity of human life appeared in this beauty-blessed people again and again, it was the necessary consequence of this dark side. If the majority of its thinkers let periods of genesis, development, and decline of the universe follow one another in hopeless monotony, this surely followed from the starting point of their world explanation. But to them, this cycle was also the most sublime symbol of the transiency of our race. They were conscious of having left barbarism and unfreedom behind them, but no idea of continual progress or of some task to be performed for the human race turned their gaze forward toward a greater future.

Starting with Alexander the Great, the geographical and historical horizon of the Greeks steadily broadened. There arose a complex of positive sciences, which extended from astronomy through geography to chronology, and to an inventory of the entire stock of Greek cultural achievements. During the age when the Roman state, which had originally been like a Greek city-state, rose to world supremacy, Polybius composed his great histories. He wrote the history of the epoch that extended from the beginning of the struggle between Rome and Carthage to the destruction of Carthage and Corinth. The advance of history itself, the inner connection of events in a vast arena during this struggle for domination of the Mediterranean, set a new task for the historian and political thinker. Now it was possible to grasp those aspects of universal history that depended on such a broadening of the historical view to include interactions among states and the relation between the two greatest cultures of the Mediterranean Sea.

The historian who would perform this task had to be trained in 212
the political science of the Greeks and, at the same time, had to stand at the center of contemporary world politics, where he could survey the relations among states and gain an understanding of the leading people. History itself seems to have fashioned Polybius for this task. Steeped in all the achievements of Greek science, schooled in the turbulent politics and military campaigns of his native country, he entered the circle of the Scipios in Rome. Here he found himself transposed into the universal standpoint, which saw the future of the civilized world in the alliance between Roman power and Greek culture. Aemilius Paullus, the high-minded victor of Pydna,

took Polybius into his home for companionship and to educate his sons. The historian himself somewhat boastfully reported how he won the heart of one of them, the younger of the two great Scipios. The timid yearning with which the soul of this young hero turned to the wisdom of the Greeks reminds us of how, in a later age, our Germanic forefathers are said to have submitted longingly, but modestly, to Greco-Roman culture. The friendship that arose between the two was a symbol to their contemporaries of the alliance that was forming between the Roman will to rule and Greek intellectual power.

The aristocracy of this age of the Scipios represented one of the high points of human existence. Here, the power of the Roman will was wedded to the aesthetic and contemplative spirit of the Greeks. The most beautiful monument to this alliance is Cicero's "Dream of Scipio." The great hero of this family appears to the younger Scipio and explains to him the supersensible system, in which the order of the vast universe as the Greeks knew it is combined with the duty to live for the state.

The demands of their ruling activities had already led the great men of Rome to gather together all the achievements of human thought. They wanted to free these from the overly subtle reasoning connected with the philosophical tenets of the Greeks. They brought these achievements into harmony with the genius of their own people. Stoic philosophy now entered the circle of the Scipios through Panaetius[2] and was destined to penetrate Roman culture. Who could say which was greater—Stoicism's influence upon this culture, or the culture's influence upon Stoicism?

Polybius was keenly aware of this alliance between the two greatest historical forces yet produced by the world. Thus, from his relation to the circle of the Scipios, he gained a universal historical understanding of the process linking the lifework of the two greatest nations of the ancient world with the culture that was to determine intellectual life until the appearance of Christianity and the Germanic nations in history. The self-confidence with which he and other prominent Greeks like Panaetius moved among the conquerors also stemmed from this understanding. Polybius certainly had his fair share of Greek vanity and submissiveness to the new rulers of the world. But in Rome, and especially within the circle of aristocrats in which he lived, it was natural for this trained

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[2] Panaetius (ca. 185–109 B.C.), Stoic philosopher who tried to adapt Stoic ethics to the requirements of the life of the Roman leaders with whom he associated.

political mind to recognize historical realities and to submit to them. This does not cast even the faintest shadow upon the character of the great historian. The posture of the intransigent, unteachable statesman, angry with fate, was not an option for this clear, sober mind. Though surrounded by rhetorical Greek lies about history, Polybius was quite genuinely, and with a critical sense, resigned to reality.

His detailed narrative began with Hannibal's advance over the Alps into Italy and with the alliance between Philip III of Macedon and the Carthaginians. Thus, he was faced with the task of explaining the forces that enabled Rome to overcome this crisis and advance to world supremacy. His explanation focused on the genuine and enduring causes of the grandeur of the Roman state, in the manner of Aristotle's *Politics*. He found these causes in the customs, the law, and the institutions of Rome. If he returns again and again to the manly virtue of the Romans as the ultimate explanation, we no doubt see in him the student of the Attic philosophers and the contemporary of the Greek rhetoricians. But at the same time, this documents the objective historical impression that the characters and customs of Rome's great aristocratic epoch made upon a Greek of that time. And if he then saw in Rome's mixed constitution a major cause of its stability and its power, there is still an important kernel of truth here, merely embedded in the doctrinaire form of the Aristotelian political theory. The main point was that he undertook to apply to history all the results of political analysis in order to raise history to a science, which would enable it to predict the future and to become the teacher of statesmen. In order to fulfill this task Polybius had to sacrifice the artistic form of Herodotus and Thucydides.

The original contribution of his historiography to universal history was that it included the interaction of states constituting history in a given age, and strove to derive particular political events from this interaction. With proud self-confidence, he designated this as the advance he had made in the understanding of history. He emphasized how his subject matter itself had led him to this approach. For he saw that the events of his age in Italy, Asia, Greece, and Africa stood in the most intimate connection with one another, and that they had collectively brought about the world power of the Romans. And he saw that this theme of his called for a new kind of historiography, which would rise above the history of particular nations and focus on the universal process that linked together the events of three continents. 214

And yet even Polybius found himself under the spell of the Greek conception of the cyclical course of all earthly things. This vital Roman state, which had just vanquished the Semitic race, would perish. Surrounded by the exuberance of the Roman will to power, the Greek observer maintained an intellectual coolness, which is refreshing but also chilling as it wafts our way from his work. It was just this undisputed supremacy and the increase in wealth and luxury that would bring about the inevitable decay of Rome's aristocratic political order. Democracy and then mob rule would set in. As Scipio viewed the ruins of Carthage, he also, despite his keen awareness of the victory that had been won, expressed the presentiment of Rome's impending decline. Polybius was with him at the time, and the conqueror turned to Polybius with his prophetic words that someday another man would be able to recite the words of Homer over the ruins of Rome.[3] Not until the age of Pompey and Cicero did the eternal life of the city and of the Roman Empire become the article of faith that so greatly influenced historical thinking.

2.

History moves forward. The nations of three continents are united under the administration of the Roman Empire. Into the system of Greco-Roman culture as it has developed enter the revealed religions of the East. The Christian Church expands and as it does so it must confront the problem of the proper relation among the Roman world-state, Greek science, and the revealed Christian religion. Such great historical changes bring about a new concept of the nexus of human history. The human race is now conceived as a unity that actualizes an immanent purpose in the succession of gen-
215 erations. In this teleological ordering of history, individual nations fulfill the functions assigned to them as members of this systematic whole by developing science, exerting political power, or advancing to higher grades of revelation.

Polybius's view had spanned, as it were, the breadth of history, but now the concept of universal history was expanded and fulfilled by attending to its temporal nexus. This nexus was not comprehended scientifically, however, but was conceived in a religious and

[3] This account is taken from bk. XXXIX, ch. 6 of Polybius's *Histories*. See *The Histories of Polybius*, trans. from the text of F. Hultsch by Evelyn S. Shuckburgh (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), vol. II, p. 529.

metaphysical way. It was grasped as a purposive order grounded in God, and the link that binds the beginning of this order to its end is sacred history.

This new concept was first developed in Augustine's *City of God*. Augustine wrote as the Greek-speaking peoples in the Eastern Roman Empire broke away from the body of the Western world and fell into stagnation, as the Greek philosophical schools declined, and as the Germanic nations invaded the Roman Empire. In this world situation, only the Church held its own and moved triumphantly forward. According to Augustine, this "city of God" was being built in a progressive development, which began with the origin of the human race, and upon which the future history of mankind would also depend. Pervading the work is a sense of the senility of ancient culture, of the immanent demise of the political orders, and of the insignificance of all earthly existence.

The origin of this new view of universal history was the idea of the Kingdom of God. The beautiful illusions of the age of the Scipios had perished in the brutal egoism of the oligarchy, in the exploitation of the subjugated provinces, and in the bloodshed of the civil wars. Under the imperium of Augustus, a relieved world had enjoyed a happiness born of peace, civilization, and wise administration. The feeling of life of this aging world did not yet recognize the independent living value of nations or the progress of mankind. But Jesus, standing on the peaceful banks of the Galilean Sea, saw nature and the simple life surrounding him as the image of the divine order mentioned in his Holy Scriptures. He thus conceived the idea of the Kingdom of God not only as something that was to come, but as something that always is. Then, in the development of the Christian communities, this idea of the Kingdom of God was fused with the Stoic concept of the cosmopolis and the Roman concept of the universal Church. For the first time there emerged the consciousness of a solidarity among peoples and of their progress toward the realization of the Kingdom of God. As the expectations of Christ's Second Coming faded, this realization moved farther and farther into history's distant future. 216

Augustine subordinated all the concepts of Christian philosophy to this idea, including Clement's theory of the education of the human race; the progress of the human race through the ages as postulated by Tertullian, or through the six days of creation as set forth by Cyprian; and the succession of the four world monarchies derived by Jerome from the Book of Daniel. In Augustine's work, the opposition of the city of God and the city of the world, the

duality that ruptures history, dominates all these other ideas. The further development of his position lies in a growing appreciation for the outward order of life. Augustine derives property and power structures from the Fall of Man. He sees the worldly city as a creation of egoism. He calls Rome to account for its acts of violence, even though he sees in Rome's manly virtue the source of its power. To the ascetic bishop, this virtue, which seeks glory and power, seems like a magnificent vice. Worthless in itself, the city of the world acquires its religious significance only as an instrument in the hands of the Church. For Albertus and Thomas Aquinas, the harmonious political order is grounded in the ethical nature of human beings. Yet this order realizes only those conditions that are necessary for the fulfillment of mankind's religious end. Dante is the first to appreciate the independent value of the state. It is there that temporal happiness is achieved. It is the Church's task to prepare man for eternal life.

This first concept of the solidarity and progressive development of humanity could suffice only as long as the conditions from which it grew persisted. It was a teleological interpretation of world history. A sense was sought in history, like in the epos of a poet, and this sense was found only because revelation offered the key to the great mystery. The beginning, middle, and end of the life course of humanity were determined by the Holy Scriptures. On this basis, history was construed according to the real conditions that existed from Augustine's time until the decline of the medieval order.

The course of things itself demonstrated the finitude of the theocratic form in which Jesus' ideal had made its first appearance. The unity of the city of God could not be realized. The Muslim world confronted Christendom, which struggled in vain to surmount this historical obstacle to its Kingdom of God. Earlier the Greek-speaking peoples had already withdrawn from the papacy. Then the Prot-
217 estant churches confronted it, and the unity of Christian theocracy was completely dissolved. Even the active idea of a progressive task for Christianity, which would link different peoples in realizing the Kingdom of God on earth, disappeared from the life of the Christian churches. In Tridentine Catholicism, the Church's great intention to direct the progressive forces of the nations with prudent moderation had been lost. And the living feeling of the unifying, progressive power of Protestantism that had animated Luther during his first great years, as well as Calvin, Coligny, and the Princes of Orange, withered and shrank in the Protestant churches of the seventeenth century. And gradually the most profound contradic-

tion in the Christian city of God also became apparent. From the time of its origin, each religion is confined by the historical specificity of the religious outlook that gave birth to its dogmas and ecclesiastical organization. As long as it finds itself bound to this origin, its claim to supremacy over the human race stands in contradiction with its universal spirit.

3.

History moves forward once again. An advance is now made in the historical sciences, which creates the necessary conditions for the eighteenth century to develop the first outline of a scientific nexus of universal history, and then for us to produce our historical world-view in the nineteenth century.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the modern mind advanced to a natural conception of historical life and the forces that govern it. The internal dissolution of the medieval Church and its metaphysical system brought about advances in intellectual and economic culture and the transformation of social and political relations. A growing awareness of the independent worth of all life and activity in this world accompanied these changes, and was successful everywhere in breaking through the barriers of the transcendent world-view of the previous centuries. Individuals, states, and nations grasped their sovereignty. They began to direct their behavior according to their natural interests, and they never hesitated to admit their motives openly.

Because the revival of ancient culture was based on the inner affinity existing between the new forms of life of modern peoples and those of the Greco-Roman world, all the results of antiquity's scientific consideration of morality, law, politics, and history were also 218
adopted. The inadequacy of all metaphysical world constructions was felt more deeply, and the need for a natural foundation for the governance of this life asserted itself more forcefully, because what issued from the powerful religious movement of the sixteenth century was not a new cultural unity of Christian nations, but a bloody rivalry of confessions and sects. From these elements grew the beginnings of a new theory of man and society, which abandoned all concepts and explanations drawn from a world beyond, and sought to explain this world of human volition and action by its own laws, which are accessible to observation and description, and therefore have practical application. Then, under the influence of the new

natural science of the seventeenth century, the natural system of the human sciences was brought to completion, and its power to transform life and the sciences infinitely increased.

It was in Italy that this new way of conceiving the human world was first made profitable for the understanding of historical problems. This is most intimately connected with the fact that here modern politics was first developed practically and theoretically into a system. Machiavelli, who was first in the series of modern political theorists, was also the father of modern historiography. And like the great Florentine, his younger contemporary Guicciardini,[4] a busy diplomat, was also in the thick of the restless bustle of Italian party politics of the age. Their histories are extremely one-sided, namely, purely political in content. They consider man only in his relation to the state, and are interested in all the other aspects of his life, such as economics, art and science, ethics and religion, only insofar as they can be made to serve the ends of the state. Their purpose is also political. They seek to show how political power is won and maintained. When elevated to its highest standpoint, this kind of history addresses the problem of how the patriotic statesman can keep this profusion of competing interests in balance and guarantee the welfare and stability of the whole. But it is precisely this one-sidedness that makes it significant and explains its influence on historians through Frederick the Great, down to Ranke and his school. For its perspective was drawn from reality itself, and it was and remains the most important perspective from which history can be written. The way in which Machiavelli and Guicciardini developed this perspective made them the creators of a dynamic historiography.

219 It is with a critique of sources, ascertaining the actual state of affairs on the basis of remnants of events themselves and reports of them, that historiography first produces certainty. And it is with an interpretation of the sources that permits this state of affairs to be understood as the expression of man's inner life that historiography first produces truth.

In this respect, the great philology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did historiography a most valuable service. By undertaking the reconstruction of a lost world from the corrupt remnants of its literature, philological criticism and interpretation developed into an art and an explicit method. The religious struggles and antagonisms that filled both of these centuries brought fur-

[4] Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540), author of *Storia d'Italia*.

ther advancement. The two great Protestant denominations repudiated the authority of the Catholic tradition, and yet, to ward off the unbridled individualism of the sects, they were forced to seek in the letter of the Holy Scriptures a firm basis for their dogmas and institutions. Thus, exegesis of the Bible assumed the greatest importance for them. Flacius was led by his struggle with Tridentine Catholicism to the principles of exegesis, and he created in his *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae* the first system of Biblical interpretation since the days of the dispute between the theologians of Alexandria and Antioch. Spinoza, Richard Simon, the English freethinkers, the Dutch Arminians, and Bayle subjected the Holy Scriptures to criticism. The *Magdeburgensis centuriatores* (Magdeburg Centuries)[5] inaugurated the critical study of church history from a Lutheran point of view; Basnage[6] continued it from the point of view of the Reformed Church. Even the new Pietist faith made its appearance in the work of Arnold.[7] Tillemont,[8] the Port-Royal Jansenist, outdid them all.

Criticism specifically historical in nature was developed by following the example of critical activity set by these philologists and theologians. In the introductions to their [historical] expositions and compilations, and in special methodological works, there came to be an increasingly decisive emphasis on the scrutiny of sources as the first prerequisite of all historical work. Sources were to be evaluated on the basis of the author's personality, the whole situation in which he had written, and the degree of dependence existing between them. In the honest effort to meet these requirements, the technique of textual criticism gradually developed into firm principles.

Recognition of the great importance of documents and records grew at the same pace. The whole basis for this had already been laid in the seventeenth century in the special field of diplomatics. This new discipline grew out of the intensely practical interest that this age of complex legal relations had in establishing the authenticity and binding force of centuries-old parchments. The memorable 220

[5] The *Magdeburgensis centuriatores* were compiled by Matthias Flacius Illyricus, Johann Wigand, Matthaeus Judex, Basilius Faber, Andreas Corbinus, and Thomas Holzhuter, and published between 1559 and 1574.

[6] Jacques Basnage (1653–1723), French Protestant theologian and historian, driven from France to Holland.

[7] Gottfried Arnold (1666–1714), author of *Unparteyischen Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie* in which heretics, especially mystics, are regarded as the Five Christians.

[8] Louis Sebastien le Nain de Tillemont (1637–98), author of *Histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles*.

war of documents, which the city of Lindau had to wage for recognition of its status within the German Empire occasioned the superb studies of Conring.[9] One decade later in France, the Jesuit Paperbroch's attack on the oldest documents of the Benedictines of St. Denis provoked Mabillon's classic work.[10]

And with unprecedented diligence, the age of the humanists and polyhistorians accumulated materials from every quarter, upon which the eighteenth century would then base its own historical accounts.

The work of philologists of all nations gradually brought the whole wealth of ancient literature to light, to the extent it had actually survived the crises, discord, and indifference of the intervening centuries. The texts produced were increasingly pure and reliable. Studies, interpretations, and commentaries were also written on every aspect of this literature, and it was in this context that the special areas of classical scholarship had their origin. As the methods of the new philology were made to serve the practical needs of jurisprudence and public administration, the imposing edifice of Roman law was restored to its original purity and completeness after centuries of corruption and distortion.

Religious conflicts added to the material concerning Church history. In order to refute history with history, Cardinal Baronius[11] opposed his own *Annales ecclesiastici* (Annals of the Church) to the *Magdeburgensis centuriatores*. To this end, he spent forty years thoroughly examining the Vatican archives and the libraries of major European churches, assisted by a staff of scholars. Part of the treasure stored in these places was now published and made accessible for general study for the first time. Bolland's[12] collection of the *Acta sanctorum* (Lives of the Saints) resulted from the same tendencies in restored Catholicism. In Paolo Sarpi, the ever-fertile combination of political and scientific interests was again active. He wrote the documentary *Istoria del Concilio Tridentino* (History of the Council of Trent), which was so thorough and so candid that it had to be published abroad under a pseudonym.[13]

[9] Hermann Conring (1606–81), founder of the historiography of German law.

[10] Jean Mabillon (1632–1707), published *De re diplomatica* in 1681, with a supplement in 1707.

[11] Cesare Baronio (1538–1607); his *Annales* were written to show that the Roman Church was identical with the Christian Church of the first century.

[12] John Bolland (1596–1665), Antwerp Jesuit.

[13] Paolo Sarpi (1552–1623) wrote this work between 1610 and 1618. It was published in London in 1619 under the pseudonym Pietro Soave Polano.

The material collected and ordered in preparing the histories of particular nations and regions was perhaps even richer and more extensive. Today, Duchesne's[14] and Baluze's[15] collections of sources are still as valuable for French historians as is the *Glossarium*[16] of their countryman Du Cange for those who must venture into the maze of medieval latinity. Muratori[17] gathered together material on the authors of sources and the antiquities of Italy.

This kind of historical work enjoyed an immense growth in Ger- 221
many. Here, the existence of numerous independent political entities, each of which had its own history that it wished to transmit to posterity, came to the aid of scholarly zeal. Another incentive lay in the practical need to have the legal monuments of the empire or of the individual territories together in serviceable editions. The great majority of annals and chronicles upon which we base our present knowledge of the German Middle Ages was already discovered and printed in those days. Along with this came the steady, growing stream of source-based accounts of territorial history. The old forms of the arid annal and the chatty chronicle yielded everywhere to the new demands for the greatest possible completeness and reliability. Formless and diffuse, more an accumulation of material than historiography, these folios were nevertheless the firm foundation upon which future German historians would build. Even today, historians frequently refer back to them. The age of Leibniz had already conceived a plan for uniting forces to develop this vast material into a great German history, of which every detail would be supported by original evidence. To this end, Hiob Ludolf[18] worked toward the founding of a German historical institute, a project to which Leibniz lent his help and advice.

The great contemporary historiography of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was itself the source of the eighteenth century's knowledge of that period. The line of classical Italian historians extended from Machiavelli and Guicciardini to Strada[19] and Davila.[20]

[14] André Duchesne (1584–1640) made collections of early Norman and French histories.

[15] Etienne Baluze (1630–1718); see his *Capitularia regum francorum* and *Nova collectio conciliorum*.

[16] The full title of this work is *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinatatis*, published in 1678. Its author, M. Charles Dufresne du Cange, lived from 1610 to 1688.

[17] Lodovico Antonio Muratori (1672–1750), Italian historian.

[18] Hiob Ludolf (1624–1704), German philologist and historian.

[19] Famiano Strada (1572–1649), Italian writer and historian.

[20] Enrico C. Davila (1576–1631), Italian historian, author of *Storia delle guerre civili di Francia, 1558–98*.

These historians grasped what they experienced in their native land or outside in France and Holland with the keen vision of practical statesmen, and described it in the artistic form of the great ancients. Next to them Thuanus[21] was no match in his efforts at classical expression, lucid organization, or psychological explanation, but he surpassed them in historical understanding just as much as the petty relations of the Italian political world lagged behind those of the new monarchy of Henry IV. The heroic age of Dutch Calvinism prompted the historiography of Grotius and Hooft.

Germany had nothing of comparable value to set alongside these works. There was no large-scale national historiography in which the fateful developments of German history could find their reflection. Contemporary observers saw only single events and factors, or they considered things in the context of the competing political interests under this or that government. But within these limits, works of distinctive value were also produced in Germany. Greatest of all
222 was the immortal work of Pufendorf. Frederick William, the elector of Brandenburg, and Samuel Pufendorf met at the end of their lives. By nature and influence they should have met long before. One was the strictest realist among German princes, the other among German publicists. In the dramatic moments of his career, when the interests of Germany and Brandenburg collided, Frederick William unscrupulously followed the impulses of his natural egoism and sacrificed the general cause. Similarly, Pufendorf saw in the great worldly territories the only promising element of the German system of states. Both were animated by a feeling for the reality of power over against all the antiquated structures of the past.

In the summer of 1686 Pufendorf was called to Berlin. He arrived in February 1688. A quarter of a year later, Frederick William died, and Pufendorf himself was able to sign only the manuscript of his work, for he followed his great master to the grave. It was not until a year after his death that *Friedrich Wilhelm des grossen churfuerstens zu Brandenburg Leben und Taten* (The Life and Deeds of Frederick William, the Great Elector of Brandenburg) appeared. The work is extremely one-sided in that it considers everything from the perspective of Brandenburg politics and is concerned only with outward actions. But it is precisely because of its one-sidedness that this work is the perfect expression of the nature both of the young state of Brandenburg and of its first great historian. And because ruthless candor was also one characteristic of this common nature,

[21] Jacques Auguste de Thou (1553–1617), French historian and diplomat under Henry III and Henry IV.

the elector permitted his historian unrestricted use of the archives. Pufendorf made such free use of this privilege that, the moment it appeared, his work was reproached with damaging the reputation of Brandenburg politics. In all this, Pufendorf was the point of departure and the model for all late historiography that was specifically Prussian. Frederick the Great, Droysen, and Treitschke were conscious of their inner affinity with him.

4.

The art of writing history requires a comprehensive intuition of the nexus that connects events and gives them life and an inner spiritual power. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had produced the scientific tools for compiling the vast material of history. But the great leading ideas capable of mastering this material were not generated until the eighteenth century. Again, they developed from historical life itself—in fact, from connecting the greatest world-historical events. For only intuitions of a wholly universal nature could 223
grasp the forces at play on the broad stage of that age's contemporary history and in the distant past, which was now disclosed through research.

From the sphere of natural science, with its universally valid knowledge of the lawful system of the universe, came the idea of the solidarity and progress of the human race. What religious conceptions had seen metaphorically was now the object of scientific knowledge. And even though it would be limited and more precisely defined in the future, a guiding idea, demonstrable within certain limits, was now won for historical science. This idea, like all previous ones, was derived from an intuition of what was occurring in reality itself.

From the collaboration of philosophers and natural scientists in all civilized countries, mathematical natural science arose in the course of the seventeenth century, with its philosophical foundation and its application to all spheres of life. Knowledge of the lawful system of reality was now erected on universally valid foundations. This collaboration of researchers and the steady progress of their work was the important new fact that effected a revolution of all thought. Voltaire said of the emerging eighteenth century:

> Never was communication among philosophers more universal; Leibniz helped encourage it. A republic of letters was gradually established in Europe, despite the wars and despite the different

> religions. . . . The academies formed this republic. . . . Genuine scholars in every field formed the bonds of the great society of minds, which spread everywhere, but which everywhere was independent. This communication still continues, and it is one of the consolations for the ills that ambition and politics are spreading throughout the world.[22]

Thus the leading ideas of the new epoch now appeared together: the autonomy of reason, the human mind's mastery over the earth by means of knowledge, the solidarity of nations despite their power struggles, and the confidence in steady progress based on the universal validity of scientific truths, which permits the founding of one truth upon another. These ideas imbued mankind with a new feeling of life. I find no greater event in the history of the human race than the emergence of this system of ideas, which extends from the knowledge of natural laws to the control of reality through the power of thought, and from there to the highest ideas that determine us all. That the feeling of life of each one of us is superior to
224 that of the greatest thinkers and heroes of the ancient world, and its most sublime religious minds, is a result of this system of ideas. Now for the first time, the human race stands on solid ground; it has a goal before it, embedded in reality, and a clear path by which to reach this goal.

This certainty in the progress of civilization was increased by the development of the great European monarchies. Robust political bodies were formed, which became the bearers of modern history. France was the first to consolidate. Then, with William of Orange's accession to the throne, England achieved the peaceful stability that became the basis of her extraordinary rise to power. In the same epoch, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was born from the struggle on two fronts, against France and the Ottoman Empire. This monarchy was an oddity among these national states, but managed to maintain itself through the force of circumstances. Then, in the first generation of the eighteenth century, Russia became a European state, which has been drawn inexorably toward the West ever since. Finally, there emerged the Prussia of Frederick the Great, the most modern and audacious of political formations, and it too held its own.

These "great powers" shared among themselves control of the Continent. But because they held one another in check, the number

[22] From *Siècle de Louis XIV*, *Oeuvres completes de Voltaire* (Paris: Garnier Freres, 1878), vol. 14, pp. 563–64.

of wars gradually diminished, and in the last half of the eighteenth century Europe saw more enduring conditions of peace than at any other time since the height of the Roman Empire. Literature was filled with the ideal of perpetual peace and with projects for realizing this ideal. Internally, these states encouraged and protected the individual in his effort for the economic benefits of life. They created that continuity of material culture that always constitutes the foundation for the advancement of higher or spiritual culture. These states placed themselves directly in the service of science and civilization as the reliable and efficient bearers of their development. They needed these spiritual forces to maintain and strengthen their political power. The great princes sought to enhance the splendor of their reigns and to secure the immortality of their names by granting protection to the Muses. All of this strengthened the cheerful confidence of eighteenth-century political and historical thinkers in the steady progress of culture. There was a pervasive optimism, which heartened intellectuals and spurred them onward—until the catastrophe of the French Revolution fell upon this whole order of things.

In these modern states, scholarly work acquired a stable new organization, and this too strengthened belief in the steady, inexorable progress of knowledge and of its impact on life. The academies 225
were founded. Now for the first time, the major cities of Europe supported centers of modern intellectual work. And precisely because it was organized into lasting corporate bodies operating with state support, this work now took a definite direction. The academies promoted the division of labor, specialization by the individual, and research of a positive, exact, and methodical kind. Laplace once said that the essential advantage of the academies lay in the philosophical spirit that developed within them. It was precisely because of their desire to convince one another that the academy members agreed to give preference to investigations of a certain and nonmetaphysical sort. The academies were the lasting bearers of the most highly complex and extensive enterprise of modern empirical science, for which the continuity of regular work was required. They spread to all the major cities. Twenty-five years after the founding of the Berlin Academy, the academy in St. Petersburg was established. Then followed the academy in Stockholm, whose first president was the great Linné, and then the one in Copenhagen. Even the smaller German states founded such institutions.

The universities were seized by the modern scientific spirit, and here too the division of scholarly labor advanced steadily onwards.

Those studies that were less important at the academies, but necessary for these modern states—political science, jurisprudence, and medicine—were developed at the universities. Science was used to educate the ruling classes, especially future government officials. The prototype for these new universities was Halle, the seat of political science as defined by the philosophy of that century. Then Göttingen emerged as the center of historical studies, which were under England's influence. One can imagine how the continuous expansion of a state-organized scientific operation, the resulting acceleration of research, the intellectual authority of the persons active in these places, and their powerful influence upon the high public officials who had once been their students steadily strengthened the power of science and its influence on life. Again, one can imagine how this very organization of the scientific enterprise bred confidence in civilization's advance through the influence of reason, and how this basic idea of the Enlightenment spread from scholars to officials, lawyers, and writers.

Thus arose the concept of the Great Culture, which has its solid foundations in the power of legally regulated monarchy, and in the
226 development of industry, trade, and wealth. On these foundations, general culture rises to a firmly grounded, progressive, universally valid science, to enlightenment, and to the power of man over nature, in order then to blossom forth into arts ennobled by thought, into a purified uniform taste, and into a refined civilization uniting all the upper classes. The Enlightenment created this idea from itself, and made it the standard for judging all previous ages. Its persuasive power stemmed from the new sense of security that the mathematically based sciences had won for civilization in the large states. Even artists and poets were understood in this context of life as regulated by thought. They were a force for advancing this civilization. Their value was measured by their power to express the human ideal of this culture and the delight in existence that springs from the sovereignty of mind. No one-sided aesthetic view could do justice to this idea of the function of art.

It was the England of the great William of Orange, his wife Mary, and Queen Anne that first developed a unified civilization of this kind. Shaftesbury was the expression of this age. He was keenly aware of the connection between the power and freedom of his country and the development of the inner harmony of the human personality. All the conditions had been met: The Great Culture, which, during the age of the Roman Empire, had been hampered by

the continual state of war, would now become reality in England. This would require a subordination of the imagination to a way of thinking that could take hold of reality. It would then bring forth a more highly developed personality, a purer form of art, and a more noble civilization.

When Voltaire came to England, he steeped himself in this ideal of a powerful yet free order of society. But every fiber of his being was French, and he clung to the value inherent in the culture of his spirited fatherland. First of all, Voltaire applied the new idea of culture to history. In his *Age of Louis XIV*, he undertakes to describe the context in which all the facets of French life during the reign of this king are connected. For Voltaire, Louis XIV is the personification of the French monarchy's will to power. His worship of this king stems from the notion that it is the greatness and stability of this state alone that has made possible the improvement of the entire human condition, the flowering of the sciences, the nobility and greatness of artistic forms, and the courtly refinement of manners. He condemns the excesses of this will to power, namely, the destruction of German states, the insatiability of military ambition, the expulsion of the Protestants, and the persecution of the Jansenists. Yet his heart is with all of the king's campaigns that have as their aim the consolidation of power and expansion of France. "The greatness of soul," the inclination "toward great things of every kind,"[23] and the will to power in this man fascinate Voltaire. He seeks to capture the king through his military and political exploits. In a collection of anecdotes, which illuminate the most intimate details of the king's private life, Voltaire wishes to make him understood. But in the last analysis, it is not this king that interests Voltaire. Rather, it is the structure of this age in France, as made possible by the power of her monarchy, that he wishes to elucidate. 227

From the development of France's political power through war and diplomacy, Voltaire proceeds to the rise of trade and industry, legislation, military affairs, and financial administration, in order then to portray what happened in the sciences during this period. He does note that "sound philosophy"[24] had not made the same progress under Louis as had rhetoric and literature,[25] and, because the comparison with English culture is always present to his mind,

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 419.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 539.

[25] This claim actually appears in the chapter on the fine arts (XXXII), rather than the one on the sciences (XXXI).

he frankly admits the superiority of England's scientific achievements. The reasons for this state of affairs, which cast such a dark shadow over the reign of Louis XIV, Voltaire lightly passes over.

When he turns next to literature and the arts, the distinctive perspective of his work emerges fully. Voltaire does not find the same immense importance of this literature in the perfection of individual writers, but in the perfection of language. Language is now equal to any task. It can extend art to all species of poetry and prose and to all objects of reality. It has the power to penetrate refined society everywhere, to relate princes, politicians, and military men to writers, and thus to contribute to the development of a higher form of human and social existence. Here Voltaire truly grasps the advance that led from the poetry of the imagination to the epoch of Racine, Diderot, Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller. These new human beings were more than poets. Because they dominated the age from their intellectual heights, they became teachers of humanity in a more comprehensive, if not a higher, sense than was true of previous writers—even Shakespeare.

Now Voltaire's historiography reaches its highest reflective standpoint. He undertakes a comparative overview of the whole spiritual
228 culture of the epoch that began shortly before the reign of Louis XIV and now, as he prepares his work, lies completed before him. In Voltaire's view, it is philosophy as universal science that makes this age vastly superior to all previous centuries. If Plato is compared with Locke, the progress achieved by culture in this great age of the human race becomes apparent. From Milton to Pope, Addison, and Swift, the English are the masters of a literature rich in ideas. Through Locke and Newton, they are mankind's teachers in true philosophy. And maliciously as he might ridicule Leibniz elsewhere for his optimism, here Voltaire acknowledges him to be the most universal thinker of Europe. Voltaire sees the greatness of this age in the universal interconnection of all the sciences in the various civilized countries, borne by the academies.

Since enlightenment, tolerance, and humanity ultimately represent for Voltaire the most important products of the Great Culture, his account ends with a description of the religious and ecclesiastical situation. He thrusts himself into the thick of the religious fray. He recognizes the errors of Louis's religious policies, but does not see through their political motives. And, as he finds the king's intolerance, the fanatical obstinacy of the Huguenots, and the theological wrangling of the Jansenists and their opponents equally odious,

even incomprehensible, the work ends on a note of desperation over man's susceptibility to narrow-mindedness and superstition. Voltaire did not understand the emotional forces that move history.

Voltaire did not meet the demands that alone would have permitted him a full understanding of this culture. He described and he judged, but he did not explain. Yet he had an exceptional understanding of the kind of greatness that existed in this French monarchy. He had knowledge of three great nations; he understood the great men of action through a sort of inner affinity, because he himself was guided by the interests of his literary power, which spread throughout all of Europe. And finally, he had met at Sanssouci the greatest representative of that period's monarchy. We have been adequately informed of Voltaire's influence on Frederick the Great; the king made no secret of the sources of his learning. How much Frederick influenced Voltaire is difficult to say. Voltaire knew everything the king had written, and everything he was thinking but had not yet written. When we read Frederick's dissertation "Des moeurs, des coutumes, de l'industrie, des progres de l'esprit humaine dans les arts et dans les sciences" (On the Morals, Customs, Industry, and the Progress of the Human Spirit in the Arts and Sciences),[26] which appeared several years before Voltaire's *Age of Louis XIV*, the agreement of these two men in their approach to 229
cultural history becomes obvious. It was one of Frederick's leading ideas that the Prussian state, which lagged behind the other great monarchies, should first establish its power and develop within itself the resources of the kingdom. Then on this foundation, the arts and sciences would begin to flourish.

Thus, historiography underwent a change that more noticeably than any other distinguished the historical works of this century from those of all previous ages. History began to include the system of culture. This had nothing to do with a false ideal of cultural history, which severs the connections between great men and their circumstances, as well as between the power struggles of nations and the regular advances of civilization. It was precisely these connections that the great historical works of Hume, Gibbon, and Robertson explicated. For the Enlightenment was keenly aware of the

[26] This dissertation seems to have appeared only as an appendix to several editions of Frederick's *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Brandenbourg*. The first of these is one published in Berlin by Ambrosius Haude in 1750. There are also some English translations of this dissertation appended to translations of the *Mémoires* dating from this period.

importance of the great monarchies and vitally interested in the shifts of power among them. Even its ideals of freedom were adapted to this context.

Nor were the great advances in the conception of the historical world during this century brought about by a philosophy of history as a newly arisen science. There is no separate philosophy of history that could be of any value. But the philosophical spirit was active in all minds and enhanced the ability to understand the historical world. This spirit sought out the causal connections that link the laws of nature with the life of spirit, and the earth's development with mankind's progress upon it. This was its major achievement—to have moved into the foreground the universal historical perspective of the progressive culture of the human race. Power struggles among nations, war, and politics claim their place in history. Even Voltaire devoted the greatest part of his two works to them. But Voltaire still saw war as an incomprehensible natural event, as a disturbance in the smooth course of civilization. Religious passion and Louis's insatiable craving for conquest were to Voltaire like natural forces breaking into the peaceful reign of reason. Here, then, lay the task for the further development of true historiography—to investigate the reasons for these power struggles, and to explain the decrease in their number and strength, especially as this resulted from the development of the great monarchies and the bal-
230 ancing of power among them. It is here that Frederick's political and historical ideas become important.

For the understanding of culture itself, the best historians of the century developed a technique for explaining it according to its various facets. Cross-sections were made, as it were, at especially crucial points in the development of culture. It was Hume who, starting in 1763, first employed this method with satisfactory precision. Montesquieu's major writings had appeared, and Voltaire had just published his *Age of Louis XIV*, when, in Edinburgh, Hume immersed himself in the sources of English history. While he was in the midst of his work, Voltaire's *Essay on Universal History, the Manners and Spirit of Nations* appeared. Besides recounting political history, Hume offers a thorough, comprehensive description of the constitution, laws, and customs under the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy and then a description of these under the Norman feudal system. He ends with the famous account of the morals and scientific spirit under William of Orange, after the long struggle between the Crown and the people. Then, in 1769, Robertson showed the inter-

nal evolution of conditions in European society in the superb introduction to his *History of Charles V*.[27]

The century's greatest historian, Gibbon, begins his work with a description of the entire culture of the Roman Empire in the age of the Antoninus. This was the long, happy period, during which the Roman Empire enjoyed the greatest state of peace and domestic welfare under the wise rule of noble emperors—until the decline began with the death of Marcus Aurelius. This description was the highest achievement of its kind in eighteenth-century historiography. A similar account is devoted to the conditions of the Germans up to the time they invaded the empire during the reign of Decius. Elsewhere, Gibbon analyzes the spirit of the nations that came in contact with the Roman world. And he gave a pioneering, insightful account of the character of Christianity in its first centuries and explicates the causes of its growth. This was indeed the great age of analysis in England. Economic life, moral facts, artistic creation, and the scientific results of the human mind were subjected by these Englishmen to their first methodical analysis. This provided the basis upon which Adam Ferguson and Henry Home would base their analyses of society as a whole and of its historical development.

But the concepts of the unity of the human race, the nexus of cultural phenomena in each epoch, and the development to the 231
great civilization of the present also gave rise to the task of describing the line of progress that led from the barbarism of primitive conditions to the establishment of the great monarchies, to the formation of a universally valid science, to enlightenment and civilization. This was the real problem of eighteenth-century historiography. All Enlightenment historians shared certain basic principles. Each saw the goal of the historical process to be the independence of scientific investigation, tolerance, religious enlightenment, art displaying a good style, and man's new freedom to develop his personality, which these large, secure states had made possible. On the basis of natural science, the descriptions of travelers, and the oldest relics of our race, the beginning of history was now located in the primitive stages of human existence. The age of myths concerning the origin of man was over. Historians now considered every aspect of history from the point of view of man's ascent, step by step, through delusion, illusion, and passionate confusions, to this civili-

[27] The full title of Robertson's book is *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles the Fifth*.

zation. The historian's mood vaccillated between sympathy and amusement toward the great deceptions of the past, between open hatred of the despots and hierarchs of all ages and the optimism with which this age of reason confidently anticipated an endless progress of man under the guidance of knowledge. Voltaire settled accounts with Bossuet's theological historiography. And, in his *Essay on Universal History, the Manners and Spirit of Nations* he was the first to attempt an account of the new universal history of human culture.

This work accompanied him throughout his life. He had written a philosophy of history and an essay on the history of the human spirit from Charlemagne to his own age for the Marquise de Châtelet around 1740. He then combined these two works and had them published in 1756. Twenty years later, in the year of his death, he was again occupied with this work. The realization of his plan was as inadequate as its intention was great. Nevertheless, the effect produced by applying the new ideas to historical facts was extraordinary. Two factors strengthened this effect. By submitting all past traditions to the standard of common sense, Voltaire advanced the
232 *critical spirit*. His work was desultory and often inaccurate when he rejected or accepted a view in question. It was vastly inferior to Vico's insightful combinatory critique and Perizonius's[28] methodically trained critique. Yet Voltaire was more effective than all his predecessors by virtue of his general principle of historical doubt.

But what is especially striking in this *Essai*, more so than in almost any other work, is his consummate literary power. The *Essai* is completely different from anything that had ever been written on history. After scholars had spent so many years in painstaking labor, a sovereign type now appeared, convinced that he possessed in his modern consciousness and in the culture of his century the standard for judging all historical phenomena. He heaped scorn upon priests of all religions, up through those whose quarrels filled the entire nation under Louis XIV. He showed his hatred of all forms of intolerance and slavery, up through the great aristocrats in the court of Louis XIV, who still owed their livelihood to the state. But at the same time, he sensed how distant the intellectual freedom he experienced was from the vulgar masses, who remain stuck at the bottom, the lower stratum of history made up of deceivers and deceived. Every advance in knowledge and every work of good taste he sought out with youthful enthusiasm. Historical life provoked

[28] Jakob Perizonius (1651–1715), German philologist and historian.

him to utter a thousand pronouncements on folly and superstition and on the iron rule of chance. By relating each phenomenon to himself, this liveliest of men brought history to life.

The power of subjectivity now entered the domain of Tillemont and Muratori. And in their wake came the art of historiography that is always grounded in inner life. This art-form was at first extremely subjective and irregular. But true works of art would appear when liberated subjectivity submitted more peacefully, more consistently, and more scientifically to the great objectivity of the historical world.

The advance to a methodical procedure for explanation was necessary. And the impetus for broadening Voltaire's line of inquiry lay in historical reality itself. At the same level in the development of society, there appear many forms of life. The political thinker of this age saw before him the theocratic despotism of the Turkish Empire, the monarchies of France and Prussia as regulated by laws, the free political system of England, and the republics of Venice, Switzerland, and then North America. He found these differences to be linked to differences of national character, civil law, and spiritual life. Thus arose the task of deriving these differences from common characteristics of human nature, and of relating them to the major 233
stages of human development. The comparative method created by the ancients, and its results as found in Plato, Aristotle, Polybius, Cicero, and in the sweeping views of the medical schools concerning the effects of differing climates, would have to be used for explanation. The work of Vico, Grotius, and Bodin would have to be carried on. It was Montesquieu who first understood this task.

5·

Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws* was the masterpiece of eighteenth-century political thought. Its author belonged to the Nobility of the Robe, which held as its hereditary property the judicial offices of old France. But Montesquieu combined the humanistic and juristic studies in which Bodin had once been immersed with the spirit of natural science characteristic of the century. He had published scientific treatises in Bordeaux as a member of the academy. And now when he came to England, he adopted the characteristic approach of the natural sciences, and explained the free political system of this country in mechanical terms, as a mutual limitation of political

powers. About the middle of the century, in 1748, he published *The Spirit of the Laws*—the result of his life's work.

Three major leading ideas lend unity to this work. Montesquieu concealed these ideas. For a large part of the literary skill that made possible the book's immense success lay in the analysis of the whole into individual reflections.

What is common to the political and ethical orders of all nations comes from the natural laws governing all human reason. With this thesis, he adopted the standpoint of natural law. But then his problem was to explain the differences between these orders, and the reasons for their individual characteristics. Proceeding from ancient political thought, he extended this comparative method by tracing the connections leading back from social orders to their conditions in nature. Climate and soil conditions cause differences in economic life and in the distribution of wealth. These effect differences in customs, legislation, and political systems. Montesquieu conducted an exhaustive examination of these interconnections. But he also appreciated how the general spirit of nations is conditioned by history,
234 and ultimately, perhaps, by a native predisposition. Every people maintains a specific character throughout its entire history, which determines the legal order and the political system, and to which legislation must be accommodated.

With these chapters,[29] Montesquieu began a new epoch in political and historical thought. They are full of the most profound insights—how climate influences human bodily functions, thus imparting a specific character to the spirit of the various regions; how the composition of the soil in the broad plains, where no physical obstacles bar the strongest from expanding his power, produces large, extended states; how the migration and conquest of peoples proceed from places with infertile soil to better areas; how smaller political formations find shelter in mountainous regions or on islands and are able to develop freedom; how through history man gradually breaks his ties to the soil. The primary features of a historical geography are sketched here.

Montesquieu brought about a second great advance in political thought. He inquired into the physical and moral forces that sustain the various forms of government, and saw how these differ in despotic, aristocratic, democratic, and monarchical states. The main forms of political system come into being and survive through the

[29] Charles Louis de Secondat Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, bks. XIV–XVIII.

power of corresponding types of general spirit. This idea appeared before him in Vico, and the political writers during and after his time, Frederick the Great and Hertzberg,[30] took a lively interest in the problem he had raised. They detected the weaknesses of his solution, but they failed fully to comprehend his profound central idea, that a monarchy regulated by law is more independent of the religious convictions and moral qualities of its citizens than any previous political system. It was precisely from this that Montesquieu derived hope for its greater stability. For the important thing, even to Montesquieu, was to demonstrate the superiority of this great regulated monarchy. "In monarchies, politics can accomplish great things with the least possible display of virtue, just as in the best machines the design employs the fewest possible movements, forces, and wheels."[31]

Thus, even the development from regulated monarchy to the political freedom enjoyed by England becomes a mechanical problem for Montesquieu. The solution lies in the mutual limitation of political powers. The executive power will be kept within its bounds only if the legislative and judicial powers have their own basis, independent of the executive, and are strong enough to assert themselves. Yet this theory also made an important scientific advance. If regarded as an interpretation of the English political system, then Montesquieu's theory deserves all the reproaches heaped upon it. But understood as a theory that has, so to speak, the dynamics and the statics of political forces as its object, its powerful historical influence is seen to stem from the fact that it was the first to take this aspect of political life into account. In England, which was the first state to realize political freedom, Montesquieu studied the conditions to which freedom is linked, taking into account only the relation among powers in the political body. Thus he arrived at his theory of the separation of powers as the condition of English freedom. From this he derived the necessity of distributing these powers to different subjects, the veto of the monarch, and the accountability of the ministers. Everything is [really] a system of weights and counterweights, of restraining mechanisms, of safeguards against the usurpation of any one of these powers. Seen in this way, political freedom appeared transferable from one country to another through the will of the legislator. Montesquieu did not consider the

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[30] Ewald Fr. Graf von Hertzberg (1725–95), minister under Frederick the Great and chancellor of the Prussian Academy.

[31] Montesquieu, *The Spirit*, bk. III, ch. 5.

deep ties connecting England's political freedom with her national character and local self-government.

Montesquieu's solution to the problem he had posed for himself was quite inadequate. He worked with a vast amount of material in a profoundly thoughtful and completely unbiased way. He allowed time for his work to mature. But his explanations only involve causal relations between givens that stand before him like fixed, immutable facts. He explains the various legal maxims and constitutional provisions on the basis of single causes. His comparative method is never directed toward the entire structure of a social order, the development it undergoes, or the relation in which it stands as a whole to the religion and the customs of a people. He does not think genetically. He has no eye for the special characteristics of a social body that is rooted in the vitality of human nature. He does not trace the stages through which laws and constitutions pass in their historical development.

It was precisely with this idea of lawlike stages in the progress of society that Turgot began. A reading of *The Spirit of the Laws* evoked in him the strongest impulse to solve Montesquieu's problem more fully.

On December 11, 1750, Robert Jacques Turgot presented in the
236 Sorbonne his discourse *On the Progress of the Human Mind*.[32] He was twenty-three years old at the time, a precocious genius, who, with plans for new sciences, eagerly pursued a vast range of studies. These were all aimed at grounding a science of history. The comparison with Herder is inevitable, who, in the same period of his youth, entertained a vast range of ideas concerning the entire historical world. But while Herder was able to devote his life to developing these ideas, the great French statesman was unable to take up the projects of his youth until after his retirement from political affairs. Nothing by Turgot was published—neither this speech, nor the papers of his early period, nor those of his later years. It was in his friend and pupil Condorcet that his view of progress in history first became operative. It was not until 1809 that his papers were published. Directly or through Condorcet, these papers became the foundation upon which Comte developed his philosophy of history.

Turgot was in the center of the French intellectual movement that produced the *Encyclopedia*. He, too, was influenced by mathematical natural science and by the positive spirit of his friend d'Alem-

[32] *Oeuvres de Turgot*, ed. Gustave Schelle (Paris: Librarie Felix Alcan, 1913), vol. I, pp. 214–35.

bert, who had abandoned metaphysics of every kind. The physiocratic school to which he belonged proceeded from natural science to political economy, seeking out natural laws in economic life. Thus, Turgot saw a correlation between the geographical divisions of the earth's surface and the different forms of economic life, and took this to be determinative of the historical and political life of nations. This idea can also be seen as the most general conceivable version of Montesquieu's theory of the influence of climate and soil conditions on historical life. The science that takes these relations as its object Turgot called "political geography," which he defined as a "cross-section of history."[33] He wished to inquire how the configuration of the earth's surface affects the production and circulation of goods in the various regions; how the distribution of land, seas, and rivers affects communication, relations among peoples, conquests, and trade; and, finally, how these external causes are related to the moral forces, with which they produce the different characters of nations, their genius and their political system. His brilliant speculations touch on many of the problems that Kant and Herder would take up, the solution of which has occupied historical geography since Karl Ritter.[34] The way in which Turgot approached them reveals his training in natural science, which made possible his 237
understanding of form, structure, quantitative determination, and the relationship among forces.

Turgot takes an idea from political geography and carries it over into universal history, again anticipating one of Comte's fundamental ideas. On the earth's surface as it is now, with its multiplicity of more or less cultivated peoples, every stage in the entire course of human development is still present. A look at the earth permits us to take in the whole history of mankind in *one* picture. If the primitive peoples of the American West are compared with a Moslem or with an inhabitant of a Spanish monastery, and if the Scholastics at the Sorbonne are compared with the philosophes of the salons, we see here alongside one another the same stages in the development of our race that we encounter in history. "Alas! Our fathers and the Pelasgians who preceded the Greeks, resemble the savages of America!"[35] Thus the general idea of the progress of the human

[33] "Plan d'un ouvrage sur la geographie politique" (1751), in *Oeuvres de Turgot*, vol. I, p. 258.

[34] Karl Ritter (1779–1859), professor of geography at Berlin.

[35] Turgot, "Plan du second Discourse sur les progres de l'esprit humain" (1751), *Oeuvres*, vol. I, p. 304.

race in history acquired a more definite form. A survey of the cultures of various levels dispersed over the earth at a given time leads to the same result as a survey of the historical process. In the dreary uniformity of nature's course, man is like an atom in the boundless world. And yet, if the totality of mankind is understood philosophically, his triumphant development in the causal chain of successive generations becomes apparent. In the ups and downs of historical change, he is one great unit, like water in the stormy sea steadily advancing toward higher perfection. This intuition takes in the whole breadth of culture. Everywhere the progress of mankind is derived from the facts. "Manners become gentler, the human spirit becomes enlightened, isolated nations grow closer to one another; trade and politics finally unify all parts of the globe, and the totality of the human race, through periods of calm and agitation, good and ill fortune, marches on, however slowly, toward greater perfection."[36]

What Turgot achieved, of course, did not entirely correspond to these great intentions. For everything remained in outline form. In political and ethical culture, progress was more postulated than proven. Nations proceed from despotism to free, just systems of government, and from a social ethic in which the scope of good will and obligation toward others is limited within a small tribe to an increasingly gentle, more humane civilization, which finally includes all of mankind. Then Turgot introduces in passing the developmental conception of art that Schiller and his age would elaborate.
238 There was a naive stage of art, which was facilitated in poetry by the metaphorical character of the language and guided by instinct and imagination. After the demise of the first great art, mankind had to achieve through reflection what he had once produced naively and without effort. Thus arose a new perfection of a different kind. Thought guides imagination, and this is the highest achievement of reason.

In *one* area of history, Turgot achieved something of lasting value. He was the first to formulate the law of the three stages in the spiritual development of the human race. Human intelligence passes through a theological, a metaphysical, and an experiential-scientific stage. This conception had its origin in the scientific attitude of the age, and could only have been produced in France, where, in d'Alembert's circle, positive science had broken away from the meta-

[36] Turgot, "Tableau philosophique des progres successifs de l'esprit humain," *Oeuvres*, vol. I, pp. 215–16.

physics of the Scholastics, of Descartes, and of Leibniz. All around him, Turgot saw the best minds make this advance to the positive investigation of nature. At the same time, he was surrounded by all the religious superstition that still reigned in the Catholic Church. Thus he postulated a stage of metaphysical illusion, in which the human mind attributes reality to metaphysical entities. Positive thought dissolves this illusion by seeing through to the subjectivity of sensory perception and learning to think of concepts as abstractions from the facts. Spanning a long, long period prior to this metaphysical stage was a primitive level of human intelligence—the stage of the mythical mind, which saw wills and persons everywhere. Today, the unlimited power of this imaginative level is still manifest in primitive peoples and in children. It was this law of the three stages that first exhibited a regularity in the progress of history that is immanent in history itself. Turgot, like Comte, surely erred in not adequately separating myth, as a primitive manner of grasping reality, from religion, which is a permanent feature of the life of each people. And when they allow the metaphysical stage to pass over into the positive stage without remainder, here too there is a lingering question that demands a different kind of answer. But these defects can be removed by means of a more exact formulation of the law, which accords more closely with the facts. The law in its essence stands.

6.

The attempt to show the progress of the human race in its entirety through the whole course of human history will never succeed. This progress must be analyzed and its individual aspects explored. We shall follow these investigations as they took place in the eighteenth century.

Progress in the sciences is obvious. As experience accumulates 239
with time, laws are derived from it by generalization. The number of these laws increases. Hobbes had already recognized these relations of dependence within the sciences and how these relations condition the sequence of their development. Turgot's law then made it possible to formulate the progress of human knowledge in a most general way.

How much more difficult was the problem of seeing continuity in the history of art and literature! Scaliger noted how Greek poetry had ascended by stages, as it were, and then declined again. But the

preservation of what had been achieved and the progress in transmitting it from one people to another still needed to be understood. Count Caylus[37] undertook to demonstrate this transmission in the history of the arts in the ancient world. Every people traverses the cycle of its life. The artistic beauty it has achieved, it passes on to another people, which then enriches its inheritance by its own genius. Thus, out of barbarism grew the visual art of the ancient world, one piece of the cultural history of this world. It was transmitted from Egypt to the Etruscans, from whom the Greeks inherited it. The age of Alexander, when the Greeks produced the artistic models for all nations, marked the high point. Then the decline began with the unartistic Roman people.

The parity of modern artistic creation with that of antiquity, if not its superiority, could be derived from the highest concept of the Enlightenment. Shaftesbury, Voltaire, and King Frederick subordinated art and literature to the aim of the Great Culture. The refinement of manners, development of sociability, increased joy in life and celebration of existence, grace in speech and style, and the creations of art and fine literature that grew on this basis all moved forward as a whole. Voltaire distinguishes four high points of this culture: the flowering of Greece, the age of Caesar and Augustus, the Italian Renaissance, and finally the age of Louis XIV in its European diffusion as he now portrays it. His standard is taste, style, the combination of reasoning and perfect form, the highest development of language, the refinement of manners—[in short,] the spirit of his age. And the age of Louis most nearly approaches the perfection of such a culture.

A similar concept of high points of cultural life is to be found in Frederick the Great. As taste is subject to universal norms, it passed
240 over from the age of Pericles to the age of Augustus by a process of transmission. After a long, barren interval, the age of Lorenzo de Medici and then that of Louis XIV rose to the same height. Thus, one after the other, nations had enjoyed a brief flowering of supreme taste and perfect art. "This flowering is heralded by the number of great men of every type who appear at one time. The virtues, talents, and genius of these men, as if in a movement common to all, then pull the princes along with them toward great and noble things." Then the nations fall again. Others rise up. In France, the decline had already begun. "We Germans are late to arrive, but now

[37] Anne Claude Philippe de Tubières, Comte de Caylus (1692–1765), French archaeologist and promoter of the fine arts.

the important thing is to begin to move forward." In an essay on the cultural history of Prussia, he traces its progress from century to century. From the continual growth of power, industry, and intellectual culture, he predicts the advent of our great literature. These same ideas dominate his essay on German literature. All his criticism of this literature springs from the concept of the continuity and transmission of intellectual culture, which also pervaded the age. Germany must assimilate the great French culture into itself in order to surpass it.

In these ideas, major errors of a striking kind are mixed with truths that cannot be given up along with them. Homer and Shakespeare can never be surpassed. But the human nature that they portray is driven forward by passions and is subject to the imagination. In the advancing civilization, an ideal of life is now projected—life regulated by thought—which the eighteenth century seeks to realize. After the poets come the more versatile men of letters, who instruct their people in the conduct of life and transmit to them the whole body of intellectual culture—the Goethes and the Schillers. Much has been lost as they struggle in this way to win a sublime poetry on the basis of knowledge and other sorts of intellectual effort. And yet they are moving forward to a more comprehensive goal.

The Enlightenment carried its analysis of history further. Religion has also made progress in the history of mankind. For in its subjection to thought, it has moved closer to perfection. Wherever French culture had spread, there was no belief in such a progress, because this culture had emerged from the conflict between Catholic authority and the natural-scientific world-view. The outstanding writer on religion outside this cultural sphere was David Hume. In his book, *The Natural History of Religion*, he assesses with profound insight the influence of the irrational forces of affect and 241
imagination on the course of religious faith. Yet how one-sided is his derivation of monotheism from power struggles among nations over their gods and from adulation that continually magnifies the properties of the divine majesty. The dark vitality of our nature, whence Hume sees the gods ascend, bears characteristics of animality. Nothing of lasting value can arise from this part of us. And the subsequent power of thought as limited to the uniform sequence of phenomena, leaves us helpless before the riddles of life.

Belief in the future of religion was possible only insofar as the two great Protestant peoples, the English and the Germans, affirmed a universal principle that could ground religious convictions. This

might be found in the highest theoretical truths, as claimed by Locke and Leibniz, from which arise the love of God and one's fellow man. It might be sought in the moral faculties of our nature, as was the case with Rousseau, the Scottish School, and Kant. But if such an unshakeable system of spiritual truths concerning the highest things was assumed, then it followed that the metaphorical personifications and ceremonial services of previous ages had to be described as preliminary stages. There was an advance, then, of religion to an active faith that unites mankind.

As a rule, this kind of conception is traced back to Lessing's *The Education of the Human Race*. Yet Lessing had merely found the definitive formulation for what Spinoza and Leibniz above all had enunciated.

Spinoza starts with the universality of revelation in all nations. In Judaism, this revelation appeared as divine legislation. It tied physical reward to the fulfillment of the law and physical punishment to its violation. It was concerned exclusively with earthly life, without reference to a future existence. In Christ, this revelation reached a higher level. Of course, Christ's religion is to be distinguished from the legendary version of the Gospels and the dogmas concerning Christ and his divine–human nature. Christ's teachings consist of a few simple truths—a supreme being all-loving and just, man's duty of love and justice toward his neighbor. What follows from this teaching is a living community dedicated to the simple worship of God and to ethical acts. But religion reaches its highest level only in knowledge through the natural light. The imaginative form of religious consciousness is overcome and raised to adequate knowledge.
242 And as the presence of God in the human mind, this consummate knowledge is also a prophecy.

Leibniz distinguished the same three stages. But prior to them he placed the pagan religions, which consisted in ceremonies without articles of faith concerning God or the soul. He, too, emphasized the fact that Mosaic law did not yet include the doctrine of the soul's immortality. Then, while Spinoza saw the connection of human conduct with an otherworldly reward in Christ's teaching as accommodation, Leibniz identified the belief in immortality and the doctrine of rewards as Christianity's powerful center point, as would Gibbon and Jacob Burckhardt later. No matter how cautiously he expressed it, he saw in the Christian ceremonies the "images of virtuous conduct" and in its dogmatic formulas merely the "shadows of truth." They are enclosures that surround and protect perfect piety, which is grounded in knowledge; for only a few breathe in

this ether of Christianity and its divine love. He did not need to say it expressly—these few have reached the highest stage.

Now do these views not contain Lessing's whole theory of the progress of religion? For Lessing, too, saw in his predecessors the advance in the form of religion—from metaphor, from the cloaking of eternal truths in history, and from the literal acceptance of basic religious books to the new eternal Gospel, which no longer requires all of this. But these stages were most sharply distinguished in Lessing's version: to do good for earthly reward, to do it for the sake of blessedness, and finally to do it because it is good. He conceives the resulting teleological nexus in the metaphorical terms of the Church Fathers, as the education of our race. He makes use of the Leibnizian parallel between the infinite development of the individual and the progress of mankind. He wrests from the enthusiasts the concept of the new Gospel and finds the fulfillment of their enthusiastic hopes in the authority of the simple rule—to do the good for its own sake. In so doing, he wins this concept for the history of religion, which now, because of him, acquires a goal and a standard of unquestionable certainty—the same standard to which Kant would then subject it.

A few years before the outbreak of the Revolution, Kant expressed the view that the most difficult of all problems confronting our race was the establishment of legitimate, free states and a peaceful community among them.[38] He put into words what all of Europe was thinking. The great monarchies had come into the world. If these states were to satisfy the political aspirations seething within 243
them, they would have to develop the autonomy of the middle classes, in the sense that this had been done in England and the Netherlands. These monarchies had to remove the obstacles to industry and trade and revoke the obtrusive privileges that stemmed from the feudal system, the guild order, and the ecclesiastical power of the Middle Ages. They were supported in these actions by the doctrine of natural law, which in all its forms had asserted the sovereignty of the state over against historical traditions. These monarchies used maxims which, since Machiavelli, had been derived from the state's interest as the ultimate end. They made use of economic theories. In this way, these monarchies themselves became schools of freedom. King Frederick's great example encouraged enlightened reforms everywhere. The call for the restructuring of government

[38] Kant, "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View" (1874), trans. Lewis White Beck, in *Kant on History*, ed. L. W. Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), pp. 11–26.

progressed to the demand for free constitutions patterned on England's and then on America's. Living in the midst of this great movement, political and historical thinkers grasped progress as a law of political development. They expected even the political problem to be solved according to rational principles. They hoped to see increasingly longer periods of peace result from an equilibrium among the great states. A boundless political optimism and a bold drive toward political construction, which animated them all from Montesquieu on, mounted steadily. As they now looked back and applied the standard of the political world around them to previous ages, even the once glorified republics of antiquity looked inferior to them, in comparison with legally regulated monarchies and the more advanced monarchies based on a free constitution. It was characteristic of these thinkers, from Montesquieu and King Frederick up through Schlözer, to oppose the admiration of humanists for the ancient republics. Despotic states—the free city-states, which the Greeks could not defend, and the Roman state—had to pass over into the monarchical form. Then there was the progress from the aristocratic order of life in the Middle Ages to the great monarchies, which would adopt free constitutions. This was the progress they saw dominating political life.

The problem of political history received its most general formulation from Kant. The task of universal history is to discover the regular course along which the human race progresses toward the most perfect form of ordered life. Nature brings about the development of all human capacities through the antagonism among individuals and states. The egoism of individuals is kept in check by the state, which functions as the master. But the highest head of state
244 can derive justice only from himself—and he is but a man. "From such crooked wood as man is made of, nothing perfectly straight can be built."[39] Thus, our race approaches the completion of this task only gradually, but never reaches it. Similarly, in the antagonism among states according to the laws of nature, the path for approaching a state of perpetual peace is marked out. All wars are attempts by nature to bring about peace among standing political bodies. The increasing burden of debt, every shock communicated across the Continent, enlightenment reaching all the way up to the thrones, and above all, a certain tendency in the nature of things themselves toward achieving an equilibrium among the states are all factors preparing the way for cosmopolitanism and a lawful order of life for mankind. Finally, there exists an automatic relation be-

[39] Kant, "Idea," Sixth Thesis, pp. 17–18.

tween the aspirations of states for power and the progress of their domestic culture. No state can neglect its domestic culture without diminishing its power in the world. Thus, nature itself has guaranteed the progress of the human race through forces that operate mechanically.

When Kant published his essay on universal history in 1784, Hertzberg had just published the basic ideas of Frederick the Great's view of history in his first essays. It is quite possible that Kant was familiar with them. But it is certain that, along with the theory of natural law and Adam Smith's school, Frederick's system as manifested in government actions, edicts, and the writings of leaders, exercised a powerful influence on him. Thus, the philosopher's theory contained a profound philosophical generalization of the great king's maxims of government.

7.

The idea of the new historiography, as Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Turgot had conceived it, was now realized in England.

It was the age in which England established its political and economic superiority through incessant wars, now open, now covert, with the Bourbon powers. This was a sight unparalleled in modern history—this energetic, determined political force, moving from one success to the next, from the moment William of Orange set foot on the island until the outbreak of the North American revolt. This policy was carried by the national will, and therein lay the secret of its power and tenacity. The great political and religious conflicts that had disrupted the population in the seventeenth century were overcome in the revolution of 1688. On the basis of the peaceful order that now emerged, law and constitution, cultural and economic life grew constantly and naturally. To be sure, internal party 245
struggles and the whole train of weaknesses and vices associated with partisanship [still remained]. The victors of 1688—nobility, capitalism, and the High Church—owned Parliament. They maintained their control owing to a corrupt electoral system, and exercised it with the utterly brutal narrow-mindedness of class interest. To maintain the goodwill of this body, the Crown resorted to bribery. Walpole made a system of this means, and not one of his successors—not even Pitt or Chatham—could dispense with it. The general confusion and animosity stirred up by such dealings were intensified when George III seemed to readopt the absolutist aspirations of the Stuarts. Thus, the call for a truly constitutional govern-

ment, for a national monarchy and parliament became increasingly vehement. The days of the [anonymous] *Junius Letters* (1769–72) and of young Burke's first speeches and writings were approaching. But all of this becomes insignificant, once attention is again focused on what is great and permanent in the development, on this secure and steady progress of external power and domestic culture.

This was the soil on which the great eighteenth-century English historiography grew. Hume, Gibbon, and Robertson were the sons of a people that had covered the globe with its will to power and, through centuries of education, had achieved the highest level of political culture the world had seen since the days of Rome. It was this that they selected and treated as their subject matter. Hume presented the history of England from the first appearance of the Romans to the fall of the house of Stuart. For him, this history revolved entirely around the problem of reconciling popular freedom and political authority in the interest of the power and culture of the whole. This political perspective dominated Hume's work so completely that he defended the relative right of the Stuarts and their party against the Whigs and declared the England of his own age to be sated with freedom. For the dark religious motives that he saw governing history in the seventeenth century more powerfully than any political interests, he had merely loathing and scorn, but no understanding.

When Robertson wrote the *History of Charles V*, the central question for him was how the modern European system of states had arisen in this epoch from the struggle between the last great universal monarchy and the new nationalist tendencies.

And then Gibbon—it was up on the Capitol in Rome on October 15, 1764, as barefooted monks sang vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that there arose before him the image of the Roman Empire at the very peak of its power, and of its splendor and fortune dur-
246 ing the glorious days of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius. He resolved to devote his life to the greatest theme in all of history—the decline of the most powerful state the world had ever seen. He sympathized and commiserated as he followed this giant body in its struggle against the enemies within and all around it. But the integrity of this work was due mainly to the fact that it was dominated by the political perspective. Even the masterly portrayals of the domestic conditions of peoples and states were always considered from this perspective.

The more precise understanding of human nature acquired through the analytic study then being carried out in England about the facts of psychic life was at the disposal of this historiography. By

utilizing this resource, Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon made their historiography the prototype for any pragmatic treatment of historical material. They were thoroughly steeped in the philosophy of the century. Hume and Gibbon had adopted this philosophy in the critical years of their lives, and they always stayed close to Voltaire, Montesquieu, and the Encyclopedists. These English historians thus began with individuals as isolated forces, and more particularly with the self-interest of individuals. They sought to make all political life intelligible on this basis. Even the greatness and heroism of leading personalities were seen to spring from this motive. It was the same hypothesis to which this age submitted economic life for explanation.

Consciousness, rationality, and calculation guided by interest were the proper categories for understanding the policies of the great monarchs and ministers of this epoch. But as these categories were no longer adequate for other ages and men, their employment led to an extremely biased view of history. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to say nothing of the Middle Ages and the Christian communities of the first centuries, remained beyond the reach of these writers. As much as they possessed some of the most important qualities that make a historian, such as genuine historical critique, they lacked genetic understanding. For this is rooted in a feeling for the inherent value of each historical phenomenon. Only themselves, only their present did they fully understand. They valued in the past only what was akin to their own cultural ideals, and even this they viewed as a bit of civilization in the midst of barbarism. They demeaned human nature. They did not value its vitality or its richness. And corresponding to all this is the clear, intellectual style of their historical writing, an elegant uniformity that is spread across all these ideas like a gray tint. To the extent historical subject matter is raised to objectivity in these works, this does not stem from the soul's unrestrained submission to the object in a living 247
intuition. It is an intentional and reflected art, which in Gibbon rises to affectation.

8.

In Germany, the influence of the new history was strengthened through the personality and activity of the great king, his relationship to French literature, and his historical writings. We now replaced the age of record and document collecting and journalistic historiography with another age, which strove to spiritualize the

mass of accumulated historical material with the new ideas. All historical and political thinkers were affected by Montesquieu. But we now developed these assimilated ideas in a direction that stemmed from the depths of the German spirit. The latter involves a native capacity to recapture the feeling of richness and vitality in the forces that produce history. This capacity had been improved enormously through the course of our intellectual history. Only Germany experienced the ongoing influence of the great cultural forces that had been determinative in the past. Melanchthon had combined the newly restored faith of the ancient Christian communities with the idealism of Plato and Aristotle, and Leibniz had undertaken to reconcile these two historical forces with the natural-scientific thought of the seventeenth century. All of this was part of our present. It was a force that continued to be effective. From this arose the inner understanding of human history. Connected with this living approach was an understanding of genesis, of the true nature of development, as it had permeated the thought of Leibniz.

Eighteenth-century Germany was split up into particular regions of diverse character. There was no Paris and no London, but rather, quite diverse centers such as Berlin, Dresden, and Vienna, the coastal cities, and then the medium-sized country towns, which everywhere pulsated with a distinctive provincial cultural life. Around the middle of the century, there emerged among us the indigenous creative men, who raised themselves above the confining German conditions, but who still bore some traces of this confinement: Semler, Möser, Winckelmann, Hamann, Hippel,[40] and Herder. These thinkers introduced an entirely new conception of the historical world; a new, genuinely historical world-view came into being. But there was no great historian among these thinkers who could have the power to continue Frederick's work. Our confining political conditions circumscribed even the considerable political understanding of Schlözer and Spittler,[41] and it was not until the period of the Revolution, which shook the nation to its depths and awakened a feeling of unity, that we gained a great national historiography.

248 Justus Möser died in 1794 at the age of seventy-four. The peak of his life and productivity coincided with the period of the Enlightenment's triumphant rule. If during his last years the spirit of our new literature and philosophy and the experience of the French Revolu-

[40] Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel (1741–96), writer and high official in Königsberg, belonged to the circle of Kant.

[41] August Ludwig von Schlözer (1735–1809), historian in Göttingen; Ludwig Timotheus Spittler (1752–1810), German historian and state official.

tion were raising doubts about the century's ideas, this opposition was still restricted to a small circle of select minds. It did not yet alter the convictions of the educated classes. On the contrary, it was precisely now in Germany, in the last two decades of the century, that the Enlightenment completed its world conquest.

[Möser], the author of the *Patriotische Phantasien* (Patriotic Reveries) and the *Osnabrückische Geschichte* (History of Osnabrück), stands out in his age as a solitary great man. His was a realistic and practical mind, which was always in touch with the rich colors of reality, and which repeatedly directed its refreshing humor, its caustic ridicule, and its manly rage against the abstractions of the century. He had a discerning eye that recognized in the class divisions and patriarchal relations of his native Lower Saxony something generated by history, and thus something meaningful and necessary. He devoted loving attention to the past, in order to see the development of the present and to understand the forces that shaped this development. His method was brilliant. It combined the most diverse sources—the accounts of historians and the contents of records, along with the keys provided by etymological study of language, by observation of the present, by comparison with what is similar and akin, and finally by the nature of the subject matter itself. All of this was completely new to his contemporaries. How little they understood this man is shown by the judgments of his writings in the journals—and not least by the biography written after his death by Nicolai.[42] Unable to grasp the essence of this personality, the biographer stuck to details and superficialities. Anything that contradicted prevailing views he explained, even excused, as the public official's regard for the prejudices of his superiors and his countrymen. Only a few—Herder, Goethe, Schlözer, and Abbt, who, despite everything that separated them from this indigenous character, felt their profound community with him—looked up to the patriarch of Osnabrück with admiration and reverence.

It is certainly rare that a literary corpus grows as immediately and as obviously from an author's public activities and circumstances as did that of Justus Möser. His father was in the center of the governmental affairs of Osnabrück. Möser established himself as a lawyer in his native city after completion of his studies. Then 249
the government conferred upon the twenty-seven-year-old the office of *advocatus patriae*, thus making him its representative in the Es-

[42] Christoph Friedrich Nicolai, *Leben Justus Mösers* (Berlin: F. Nicolai, 1797). Nicolai was Möser's friend, publisher, interpreter, and first biographer.

tates. But on the other hand, as secretary and then syndic of the nobility, he sought to protect the interests of this estate against the government. General confidence in him was such that, during the turmoil of the Seven Years War, he was dispatched now to the French camp, now to the allies' camp, and after the conclusion of peace, he was chosen for a difficult mission to London. Meanwhile, the death of the ruling bishop opened up for him the broadest range of activities. Under his successor, Möser, as the spiritual head of the government, controlled the destiny of the territory. He worked tirelessly for thirty years, until his death, achieving much success and grateful recognition. This was a career from which, to a keen observer like Möser, an abundance of knowledge of real human life must have flowed, especially in this small political entity, where every activity on behalf of the whole would lead directly into the details.

What a wealth of lively regional characteristics was concealed in the small sphere within which he worked. Osnabrück was a small, northern German principality, with a population of 120,000 in an area of forty-five square miles, far from the scene of major world events. The needs of the modern state had not been felt here; nor, therefore, had they exercised their transformative power. Throughout this tenacious Westphalian land, the ancestral order had been preserved in its rich variety. The political structure from primitive German times, which was based on the freedom and equality of landowners; the entire development of the Middle Ages, with all kinds of gradations and dependencies, with its numerous, skillfully balanced contrasts of fealty and leagues of vassals, landed property and serfdom, control of the towns and freedom of the townspeople, sovereignty of territorial princes and joint rule by the Estates, church and state, clergy and laity, bishop and chapter house—all this extended into the present in powerful, indigenous realities. When the Reformation captured [many] hearts here, a strong minority remained true to the old Church. For this reason, the Peace of Westphalia had struck a curious compromise—the territory would be governed alternately by a Catholic and then a Protestant bishop. Then again, the same treaty had awarded the Catholic party twenty-four votes, and the Protestants only three votes in the chapter house. Wherever one looked, each place manifested a tradition and a distinctive character.

250 To the generalizing and constructive Enlightenment mind, all of this could appear to be just a complex, isolated anomaly, a standing affront to reason. But Möser's eye saw here a great, meaningful

system, the distinctiveness of an organism, which lives its life in a wealth of diverse forms that are always nourished by the same blood. Everything belonging to a people—its religion, language, system of government, law, and custom, down to the most mysterious ideas and habits—is the natural product of the formative power operating within it. That is to say, the major types of these forms of life always stay the same, but their particular shapes change constantly with the external conditions to which they are subject. Just as an organic body in nature is both the same and not the same at any given moment, the whole life of a people is adaptation, development, growth. And, as in the organic body, the necessary consequence of this is increased differentiation. Nothing is identical to anything else. But the primary and always the most powerful factor controlling a people's objectifications of life lies in the economic conditions. Möser demonstrated their effect on all institutions and viewpoints. The realistic conception and penetrating explanation he offered along these lines put him on a par with the great physiocrats. He was the father of historical political economy.

Möser provided an entirely new conception of historical phenomena. Montesquieu had been the first to win back for political theory an awareness of the special character of a people, and the dependence of this character upon geographical place, climate, and soil conditions. His work had left its mark on the whole century. Möser felt an affinity with the great Frenchman. He had always respected Montesquieu, and readily employed him as a compurgator in his own struggle against the leveling tendencies of the age. But even Montesquieu had paid tribute to the spirit of the Enlightenment, and claimed the variety of political forms and laws to be the result of the deliberate actions of farsighted princes and ministers. But over against this rationalistic conception, there now arose another, which sprang from the characteristic tendency of the German spirit. It brought to the fore the historical genesis of all political institutions, and this, moreover, in organic connection with all other forms of life. Montesquieu had aimed to demonstrate that states could attain power and stability only if their domestic institutions were based on knowledge of their particular conditions of life. Möser was convinced that the well-being of a people as a whole was linked to the natural development of its original capacities. Now for 251
the first time, each of these two major possible ways of understanding and mastering the phenomena of history came into its own.

But the limitation in the thought of this great man was that he saw the real nucleus of a people only in the established landed prop-

erty, and would acknowledge as natural development only that which aimed to preserve this element. He expressed his views on the economic problems of his day, and offered numerous proposals, all of which aimed at one goal: to protect agrarian interests against the dangers that now posed an increasingly imminent threat—the aspiring powers of industry, commerce, and money, the centralized bureaucratic government of the modern state, science and culture, the whole spirit of the eighteenth century. The primitive conditions of his native Westphalia gave rise to this firm conviction. He thrived in these confined conditions, and found in them the source of all the peaceful satisfaction that surrounded him and that he himself experienced. Thus he obstinately rejected everything produced by the progress of culture—the good as well as the bad.

No one observed the peasant as closely as Möser—in all his comings and goings, in his honest work under God's free heaven, in his simple family life, in his robust cheerfulness and sociability, in his old, faithfully preserved customs and ideas, and in his firm concepts of law, morality, and religion. No one felt as deeply or portrayed as beautifully how much homespun poetry and peaceful happiness there was in this life, which moved smoothly along a steady track, unnoticed and untouched by the great world outside with all its deceptive culture—with the exception of Rousseau. But the hot-blooded son of French-speaking Switzerland had to keep his ideas locked in the confined space of his heart. The world trod all over them, and he himself dragged them through the mud again and again. Thus, his life and work took on a general tone of bitterness and indignation. He became a misanthrope and a revolutionary fanatic. Möser saw what he extolled all around him in palpable reality. He did not need to seek peace; he needed only to protect it. Nature had given him the most serene of temperaments; fate had given him a busy and prosperous life, secure external conditions, and the finest relations of shared activity and outlook. He could enjoy the fortunes of life and laugh off his troubles. All of this was reflected in his work.

252 Thus the triumphant critique that Möser exercised on the whole system of the Enlightenment originated long before the experience of the French Revolution induced thinkers from all quarters to fight alongside him.

The eighteenth century was caught up in the idea of reducing the complex world of human life to clear, universal concepts and principles, and to obtain from these equally simple and lawlike maxims for practical action. Discursive thought was the means for compre-

hending and regulating everything. Möser showed the limits of what could be achieved by this means and the dangers of applying it to political life.

Such rule-bound thought lets man down in every practical situation. Because it involves "calculation," it requires nothing but isolated, determinate concepts, which can be gained only by abstraction, that is, through the artificial reduction of real things and situations. Thought proceeds from presupposition to presupposition, from part to part of the part: Everything real is finite. Thus a living intuition, a "total impression," must finally compensate for what thought cannot do. It is the "silent thought" that Carlyle opposed to the orator's verbosity as the precondition of all real work and whose power Bismarck felt when he could not suffer the brilliant dialecticians in Parliament and at the ministers' table.

Möser points to his peasants. Their trust in God is unshakable. "If his house burns down, or if a hailstorm deprives him of all his hope in the field—God gave it, God has taken it away. If his good wife or his favorite child dies—he will see them again in the eternal life. If the powerful oppress him—after this life, there will be another. If war deprives him of everything—God knows what is best for him, and the name of the Lord is always cheerfully praised. And on his deathbed, tired and full of years, he looks toward his release from the yoke with an admirable calmness, and, needing none of the consolations amassed by the learned, is provided only with the household remedies afforded him by practical religious instruction."[43]

This powerful religiousness stems from the fact that the peasant acquires his idea of God from the unanalyzed total impression of the creation surrounding him. Right next to the loftiest example is placed the most robust, as Möser was fond of doing: A woman holds us in the spell of her charms. This, again, is a total impression just as powerful as it is indissoluble. The "anatomical moralist" will never penetrate the mystery; on the contrary, he will ultimately believe he sees only an aggregate of weaknesses. The "practical man" does not allow analysis to disturb his joy. And so it always is. The general in battle, the explorer in danger—they can act only on the 253
basis of total impressions. They do not even have the time to perform the slow work of reflection. It is certain "that infinitely more good would be left undone in the world than evil now occurs in it,

[43] Justus Möser, *Patriotische Phantasien*, in *SWW*, ed. B. R. Abeken (Berlin, 1842), vol. 4, p. 24.

if man had the capacity to adhere to a string of remote rules or to regulate each of his actions as if he had chosen it in his easy chair with cold deliberation."[44] Accordingly, the modern overestimation of the cultivation of reason and of the culture based upon it must no longer be allowed to influence the education of the young, the appointment and promotion of public officials, and all social and political evaluation of men. Erudition, in the best of cases, is nothing more than laziness, and enlightenment only serves to reinforce such laziness. "The fuss about barbarism is merely the cry of learned quacks, who wish to sell their pills."[45]

Now the criticisms of this powerful autochthon struck the very heart of the modern state, its energetic tendency to eliminate the whole profuse wealth of variety, particularity, singularity, and self-will by means of uniform legislation and administration. "Ever since Voltaire found it ridiculous that someone had lost his case under the laws of one village, while he would have won it under the laws of a nearby village, general lawbooks are demanded and produced everywhere."[46] And yet, every situation and every event in the organic formations of human society is so singular that it can be dealt with under a general rule only by an act of violence. "Voltaire had no reason to ridicule discrepancies in the laws of two neighboring villages. He could have found the same discrepancy in two families living under one roof, of which the head of one owned his property jointly with his wife and the other did not. How many thousands of legal questions arise from this single difference, and must be decided one way in the one case, and another way in the other."[47] After this example, Möser adduces quite specific instances, one after another, from the broad sphere of civil law to show the inadequacy and injustice of general statutes.

For this reason, he always defended the right to a free contract. A contract should by no means be materially restricted. "Contracts are valid in spite of laws."[48] He wished to see the natural jurisdiction of the old economic associations, of the regional partnerships, the manorial nobility, the guilds, and the corporations, preserved. He also called for the revival of the ancient German jury trial in
254 criminal law. Only this could guarantee a just and speedy judicial process. Here as elsewhere, his argument was bolstered by his active

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[45] Möser, *Abgerissene Gedanken*, *SWW*, 5, 1843, p. 36.
[46] Möser, *Patriotische Phantasien*, *SWW*, 2, 1842, p. 20.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 23.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

familiarity with the conditions in England, as well as his historical knowledge. It was in England that he saw the political system of the primitive German age in its most natural development. "In most countries, the criminal is condemned according to abstract laws. In England, a concrete deed is judged by means of twelve total impressions."[49] The only thing that the state can do, and must do, is to establish and protect the "formal law." There must be fixed forms according to which justice is sought and pronounced, and an authority that protects these forms and the law that is founded upon them. This is reflected throughout the history of law, in which trial regulations always come first, and lawbooks later. Moreover, it may happen that the actual law must yield to the formal law. "It is politically better for a single man to suffer than for everything to be placed in jeopardy."[50] Möser goes so far as to say that the world can do without actual law if need be, but not without formal law. In this connection, Möser considered the preservation of the continuity of the law to be the indispensible condition for any change in the political structure or in the other conditions of a people, as did Edmund Burke after him, based on direct observation of English history. Möser saw the continuity of the law as the sign, visible to all, that development has taken place naturally. Since every contract is the expression of the political organism's adjustment to a real need, other needs will call forth other contracts, without making necessary the dangerous turn to breeching the laws.

When the rational spirit of the eighteenth century in its search for simple, universal principles even went so far as to base the state on the eternal rights of man, it had in Möser's eyes arrived at manifest nonsense. The theories of Locke and Rousseau turned nature and history upside down. Möser had already shown the numerous problems with these theories in the 1770s and 1780s, so when the French Revolution attempted to translate them into reality, he needed only to repeat what he had stated in the two earliest collections of the *Patriotische Phantasien*. His basic idea throughout was that the state simply must be treated just like any other human associations for the attainment of a specific end. Accordingly, obligation and rights within the state are limited by its particular end, but in this context have an inner connection with one another, which then finds its outer expression in the form of contracts, of "social contracts." 255

[49] Möser, *Patriotische Phantasien*, *SWW*, 4, p. 27.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 113.

To be specific, the sole aim of the state is the common defense, both external and internal. To this end, the first conquerors of the land always form a partnership. Everyone who receives a share of land enters into this partnership with equal duties and equal rights. This is the first "social contract." Naturally, this contract can be perpetuated only by those who inherit the shares of land. Anyone without land cannot fulfill the duties to the political partnership, nor for this reason can he share in its rights. If he nevertheless wishes to enjoy its protection, he must submit to any condition, even if it is bondage. This situation applies to all slaves and serfs from the outset, as well as to all younger sons and descendants of the original landowners, and finally to all those who move in after the partition of the land in order to seek their livelihood as tenants and servants or as merchants and craftsmen. The state is and remains, as Möser liked to put it, a "corporation," in which only those with "stock" have a voice and a role.

On the one hand, as things develop, there is established, due to an increasing inequality of land ownership, a minimum (which varies according to need) as the condition for membership in the political partnership. Anyone who owns less withdraws. And, just as the power of the members in any other corporation depends on the amount of stock they own, those in the state who are able and expected to offer more have a greater claim to its offices and titles. On the other hand, due to increasing trade and industry, a new kind of property develops in the cities. Moneyed property attains equal footing with landed property, which until then had been the only known property. At the same time, the state's problems increase and the power of its first contracting parties diminishes. As a result, the state turns with its requests more and more frequently to the richer and more powerful of its naturalized citizens until it allows them to sit and vote in the national assembly. This is the origin of the "third estate," the "tiers état." Meanwhile, the character of the state is not changed by the fact that there are now "shareholders of money" alongside "shareholders of land." The new members, even if they constitute the majority, do not have the right unilaterally to damage the property of the old members, as the French national assembly was now doing by abolishing serfdom and confiscating property that had once been left to the Church. But even less can the
256 great mass of people still outside the state declare themselves "human beings" and derive from this some sort of political claim—as little as can the English nation or the English Parliament dissolve the East India Company if it agreed to do so, or make all native

Englishmen into stockholders. Möser stressed over and over that a state can no more be founded on the mere concept of man than can a league of owners of diked land or any other real association. There must always be a specific kind of property, a share of stock. Just as all men are not equally well-suited for dancing or for making music, neither do they all have the same value and right for the state. "It must be left to the theologians to establish a Kingdom of God without shares of stock and to equalize men with one another under the rubric of poor sinners."[51]

This conception of the state at first seems infinitely narrow and rigid, especially when presented without the real detail of its justification. It lacks an understanding of the contribution made to the large modern states by the ideas of natural law. But hidden everywhere beneath this form are Möser's splendid new ideas concerning the organic nexus of all human affairs, the inner purposiveness as a whole and in detail that results from this nexus, and the independent life instinct by which human affairs adjust to each new condition in a continuous natural development. It was the beginning of the Historical School as Savigny has acknowledged. Möser's weaknesses and prejudices are merely those that lie in the nature of this whole school.

From this historical consideration of the present, Möser arrived at an idea of German history so significant and profound that today it still has not been fully worked out. Its focal point was to be the ordinary landowner. The development of his rights, customs, and views based on the changing conditions of his existence, the influence of governments and great political and military events on this development, and the fine invisible nexus that extends from the crude everyday events of economic life to the highest cultural achievements—all this was supposed to be explicated.

What a contrast between the total historical view of this incomparable man and that of the French and English historians of the century! Möser replaced the structureless account of the culture of an age, as offered by Voltaire, Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon, with the idea of an inner purposive system that connects the various expressions of human existence in an epoch. The abstract concept of progress, which dominated the whole eighteenth century, 257
was superseded by the concept of development, which, having been suggested by Leibniz, was now given fruitful application. No one

[51] Möser, "Über das Recht der Menschheit, als den Grund der neuen Französischen Constitution," in *SWW*, 5, p. 191.

before or after Möser presented more humanely, more vitally, or more warmly the connection between the natural forms of life in an age and the happiness, the inner satisfaction, of the individuals living under these forms. It was also now that the unhistorical tendency of the Enlightenment to make the culture of the eighteenth century the standard for all earlier ages, was discarded. For Möser, each age bears its standard within itself. The inner goal, which is always happiness, satisfaction, and social harmony, is the only standard that need be applied to an age for the time being.

9.

No one has executed the great plan for a genuine history of the German people as Möser had conceived it. Möser wrote the history of Osnabrück, Spittler that of Württemberg. Our political situation, which placed us between cosmopolitan universality and particularism, determined the fate of our political historiography: on the one hand universal historical surveys and on the other particular histories. No important work of political history was produced in Germany during this century. Nevertheless, a profound understanding of cultural forces was immediately manifest in a first-rate historical work of art, namely, Winckelmann's history of art.

Since the writings of Goethe and Justi, we have a clearer picture of Winckelmann's development and importance than of almost any other German writer. Thus it suffices to indicate briefly the position occupied by his history of Greek art in the development of historical science.

In the difficult years of his youth, he steadily accumulated and supplemented his knowledge of what the French and English had thought about historical science. The ideas of Voltaire accompanied him to Rome. Montesquieu also was a constant presence for him and taught him to trace differences in the creations of peoples back to their natural causes. He was steeped in and saturated with Enlightenment ideas about the connection between culture and the new tasks of history. The insights that he acquired in this way he applied to the Greek world, which had always been the object of his study. He thrived on Greek poetry, yet his strongest inner tendency was directed toward the beauty that appears to the visual artist in
258 the sensible world, especially in the human figure. He once said that God had wanted to make a painter of him. He felt within himself both the urge for a purely spiritual perfection and the sensuous plea-

sure inspired by the beauty of the body. He found an explanation for this mysterious combination in Plato's enthusiasm for eros and for the presence of supersensible ideas in beautiful forms.

By the age of thirty, he had fought his way through misery and poverty to the service of Count Bünau in Dresden. Here he absorbed the artistic wisdom of Öser,[52] and was surrounded by this century's courtly art in the buildings of the splendor-loving king and the paintings and statues of the degenerate Italian School. But these buildings also contained the Sistine Madonna and some ancient sculptures, and, with the divination of a genius who grasps the essence of the thing from just a few experiences, Winckelmann immediately recognized the vast superiority of this great art to all the contemporary works around him. What little visual art he now saw he understood from the perspective cultivated in him by Homer, Sophocles, Plato, and Raphael. This whole world breathed "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur," the stillness of the ocean depths beneath a turbulent surface, resolute strength of soul.[53] It consisted of typical shapes. It was an anticipation of the great Greek style that would be made fully visible in the sculptures of the Parthenon. The contrast between this most perfect art and contemporary artistic productions intensified his longing and passion for what had been lost, and the search for its traces became for him a vital necessity. Perfection in art rose before him like a huge, distant mountain on the flat landscape of his own age—a peak located in the past. He finally succeeded in going to Rome, and in the few years still remaining to him, he composed his history of Greek art.

It was Winckelmann who showed us the value of congenial recreative intuition for historical knowledge. This intuitive approach grasps works of the human spirit through an inner movement of the soul. It makes a work intelligible in terms of its productive force, starting with the whole and moving down to the last technical stroke that expresses the work's inner [form], down to every line of a drawing or every rhythm and sound of a verse. Winckelmann developed this approach when, soon after his arrival in Rome, he conceived the plan of describing the sculptures assembled at that time in

[52] Adam Fr. Öser (1717–99), German painter, of great influence on Goethe's generation.

[53] These phrases come from Winckelmann's descriptions of Laocoon in the *Gedanken ueber die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (Reflections on the Imitation of the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks), *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Joseph Eiselein (Donaueschingen: im Verlage deutscher Classiker, 1825–29), vol. I, pp. 30–31.

the Belvedere court. In the happiness of these first days in Rome, while in contact with artists, he began these descriptions together
259 with the painter and art critic, Raphael Mengs, his beloved friend. As he continued to work, his observations coalesced in concentrated intuitions of the sculptures. "I am so occupied with this work that I think about it wherever I am and wherever I go."[54] He experienced how an inner state similar to that of the creating artist himself is alone capable of yielding an understanding of the artist's works.

After many attempts, it became apparent to Winckelmann that a totally new style and a new poetic language would be required for these sublime objects. Before him, only Buffon had written anything of the sort. Thus he produced his descriptions of Apollo Belvedere, the Torso of Hercules, Laocoon, and the so-called Antinous, which he later incorporated virtually unchanged into his history of art. In these descriptions he captured the enduring grandeur of ancient art, because its ideal image lived within him. The beauty of these later sculptures seems to have been more readily accessible to him than that of the older and greater works, which he also saw and studied in Pompeii and Rome. He understood the Apollo as an appearance from the "world of incorporeal Beauty,"[55] which moves toward the viewer with no exertion of energy. It seems removed from the temporal; youth and mature manhood merge in an overly slim build. Embodied in the Torso of Hercules is the Olympian repose of the deified hero—an immortal body, as it were, that nevertheless has retained strength and dexterity from the great feats it performed. From this unified conception, Winckelmann explained the Torso right down to the details of the musculature. And every line of the nude body of Laocoon results from the equal distribution and "balancing out" of bodily pain and greatness of soul throughout the whole figure. The contrast of suffering and resistance, of bodily pain and spiritual strength, renders the anatomical details intelligible.

This method employs painstaking study to read from the nude body the unifying intention that gave rise to the work through the genius of the artist. Thus the historian teaches us to see art. He becomes an instrument for understanding the work of art, just as the artist is an instrument through which we learn to see reality. This method was taken from visual art and applied to art-works of

[54] Johann Winckelmann, *Freundschaftliche Briefe* (1747–68), in *Sämtliche Werke*, (1825), vol. X, p. 143.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

every kind by Herder and Schiller, the Schlegels and Goethe. It constitutes an essential component of any project in art history. Such a method of aesthetic interpretation is the basic operation in this field.

Winckelmann was led from these descriptions to the style of an artist and to a sequence of epochs of style. As his art history thus developed, he made his other great contribution to historical science. His view of the perfection of Greek art contradicted the basic idea of a gradual progress through regular stages to the Great Culture of the eighteenth century. Here was an extraordinary phenomenon, which occurred long before this culture and was grounded in different forces, and which could not be incorporated into this progression. With this idea began the German renaissance of Hellenism, which turned back to the magnificent artistic power of the Greeks. This renaissance was defined by an aesthetic perspective, from which a vision of the whole system of Greek life was gradually developed. Winckelmann himself undertook to explain Greek art as an organic growth from the conditions under which it had developed. In so doing, he carried on the work of Montesquieu. He had learned from this great thinker that every historical form is conditioned by the climate, the formation of the land, and the mode of human life upon it. Because he was an indefatigable reader, his material for elaborating these basic ideas was drawn from many sources. It seemed possible to explain on the basis of this more or less geographical consideration of contemporary cultures how one nation produces something exceptional in religion or art, which thereafter is never achieved again. He brought together all the causes that could explain the perfection of Greek art: the finer appearance of the southern peoples; the melodiousness of their language and their metaphorical expressions; the beauty of the Greek body, which was enhanced through their games, their festivals, and their cult of the beautiful figure; and their political freedom, which developed greatness of soul and left artists to be judged not by sensualist princes, but by the wisest of the people. It was on this basis that the art of ideal beauty arose in Greece. This art improved nature by liberating its intent to form the perfect nude from the restraints due to chance. 260

Winckelmann's account of the successive forms of style constitutes the height of his achievement. The earlier style preserved in the cult idols passes over into the lofty style of Phidias and Polyclitus. The plainness of this latter style is accompanied by a celestial grace,

which does not offer itself, but wishes to be sought: "too lofty to make itself very sensuous."[56] The beautiful style begins then with Praxiteles and reaches the height of its brilliance in Apelles and Lysippus. "Delight hovers [here] like a gentle breeze that barely stirs a leaf"[57] on the face of the gods. The first and highest grace is joined
261 by the sensuous one, which descends to the needs of men. Then, in the last period, creative continuity turns into imitation, and this art collapses almost all at once. Winckelmann thus describes Greek visual art like a plant that sprang up, grew, and withered in an exotic region, where bodies have a different shape and the imagination is of a different nature. It had been the highest realization of the artistic idea, never to be repeated. This view, like every aspect of Winckelmann's life, was foreign to his age.

On the basis of Winckelmann's work, there developed a great movement devoted to grasping the cultural world. With the same Germanic originality, Herder would interpret poetry in the folksong and in Shakespeare as cultural phenomena that can neither be understood by our faculty of thought nor subjected to rules. Schleiermacher would continue along the same lines and understand religion as the spontaneous total expression of the human essence—a view that the Enlightenment could neither comprehend nor appreciate.

10.

Throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, systematic work was undertaken in Göttingen, which had a tremendous impact on the historical sciences. The activity of the English and French Enlightenment was continued here in the scholarly, coherent, and systematic manner characteristic of the German university. Ever since its founding in 1734, Göttingen had been the most modern of the German universities. The secular sciences were to develop here, free from theological perspectives. The connection with England broadened the horizon of historical and political vision. It facilitated the influence of English science. To the initial cadre of teachers, Gesner, Michaelis, Mosheim, Pütter, and Achenwall, younger

[56] Winckelmann, *Die Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (History of Ancient Art), bk. 8, ch. 2, *Johannes Winckelmanns Werke* (Stuttgart: Hoffmann'sche Verlags-Buchhandlung, 1847), vol. I, p. 320. According to a note in this edition, Winckelmann either borrows this phrase from Homer or alludes in some way to Homer *Hymn. in Vener. v.* 95.

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 322.

ones were gradually added: Gatterer, Schlözer, Meiners, Heyne, Spittler, Heeren, and Sartorius. Göttingen thus became the main seat of historical studies in Germany.

Gesner sought to unify the various branches of classical studies in order to grasp ancient culture as a distinctive system. His successor, Heyne, who had been influenced by Winckelmann, greeted the book on Homer's originality by the Englishman Wood with enthusiastic approval. Having visited the original sites of the Homeric songs, Wood had assimilated an overall impression of Homer and thereby achieved a vivid understanding of his poetry. As a teacher 262
and writer, Heyne covered the whole range of ancient studies, both classical and oriental. He was sober and rational, yet frequently arbitrary and careless; but he always sought the connections between peoples and their culture as a whole. Heeren investigated the interaction of commercial and political interests and the international relations of ancient peoples on the basis of geographical conditions. And based on greater linguistic knowledge, reports of travelers, and information about the geography, history, and institutions of the region, Michaelis produced his epoch-making work on Mosaic law, which, with Montesquieu's ideas as a starting point, was the first to penetrate the overall coherence and distinctiveness of this culture and to find its conditions in the nature of the land. In this work, a major problem concerning sacred documents was moved into the free light of history. All of scholarly Germany looked on as the nexus of the ancient world was opened up for serious study through this rare collaboration of scholars here in Göttingen.

The numerous German textbooks on universal history from the second half of the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries were superficial, sketchy, uncritical, and tasteless, and had long since ceased to meet the needs of an age that lived on the ideas of the unity and progress of mankind. The various attempts to translate, edit, and imitate a newly published comprehensive English work proved unsuccessful. From such attempts came only a series of individual histories of unequal merit. In Göttingen, this tendency in universal history was now given a solid foundation in scholarly work and systematic thought. Here, Gatterer used physical geography in Montesquieu's sense to ground history. Through the work of Achenwall and Schlözer, statistics was raised to a science and brought into the service of history as well. Schlözer even defined statistics as static history and history as statistics set in motion. Combined with this were the contributions made under Buffon's influence by Blumenbach, Camper, Forster, and especially Kant to the knowledge of the

great nexus that leads from the history of the earth to an explanation of the configuration of its surface, and from there to the distribution of plants and animals, and then of the human races. The discussion of these questions was exceptionally lively. These were the bases upon which Gatterer and Schlözer presented universal history in their lectures and writings. They produced numerous outlines in ever new formulations. They filled Germany's entire edu-
263 cated world with the century's leading ideas on world history. Then Schlözer finally went from universal history over to political science, which became his central interest, just as it was for the nineteenth-century writers of German history.

Schlözer was the most important historical thinker in this Göttingen circle. He was a character through and through, brash and surly, self-assured and domineering. Again and again he encroached upon the political sphere in the valiant defense of the ideas of the Enlightenment against the caprice of princes, class rule, and the priesthood, against stupidity and lies in every form. An irrepressible urge to know about countries and peoples, preferably the most distant and exotic, led him at an early age into the big wide world. His goal was the Orient, but he saw only Sweden and Russia. By the age of thirty-four, he had already retreated to the quiet confines of a German university, where he tirelessly compiled all the historical and statistical material conveyed to him from his reading and from his correspondence "with malcontents all over the world."[58] Because his interests and studies encompassed all nations and ages, it was natural that he became a universal historian. The lectures on universal history were the focus of his teaching activity until he turned them over to Spittler and then to Heeren. His writings on universal history developed out of his lectures. Their aim was to demonstrate the "universal connection of all peoples and ages."[59] This connection can be shown even in those places where it is not noticed by a merely external historical approach. When the sources leave us completely in the lurch, this connection must be established through analogy. It encompasses the entire culture. "In the past, the world historian looked for the paths connecting nations only on the military highways, where conquerors and armies marched to the beat of a drum. Now he seeks them even on by-ways, where merchants, apostles, and travelers skulk unnoticed."[60] "Inventors are the favor-

[58] Schlözer, *Briefwechsel meist historischen u. politischen Inhalts*, 10 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1776–82), vol. 1, p. 386.

[59] Schlözer, *Weltgeschichte nach ihren Hauptteilen im Auszug und Zusammenhang* (Göttingen, 1785), pt. I, p. 76.

[60] *Ibid.*

ite themes of world history. Kings, if they are not inventors, are used as chronological crutches."[61] He wanted to include within the nexus of world history not only the revolutions of the human race, but also those of the earth's surface, and even the migration of plants and animals. He too saw in this whole development of human culture essentially an ascending line leading up to a level at which, once reached, it remains.

But Schlözer distanced himself from the conception of universal history found in Voltaire and his successors, not only through the thoroughness of his research, but also through the power of the political perspective in his thinking. For Schlözer, everything that appeared to the Frenchman as the highest achievement of culture—literature, art, taste, and manners—falls far behind the important 264
real factors that he finds in commerce, industry, those aspects of science that lead to technology, and above all in political power. This man of facts, who took it almost as an insult when Johannes Müller once praised his style, valued only what he could count and measure. He had become familiar with Russia and the reign of Catherine II. It is as if he had formed his historical standard there, where everything takes on enormous proportions. More than any other historian of this period, Schlözer realized the importance of the great states of modern history with their monarchical form of government, their centralized administration, their regular provision for welfare, security, and freedom, and their monumental efforts on behalf of culture. It was primarily by this standard that he measured general progress and the value of individual peoples and epochs. By comparison, everything the magnificent Greeks had ever achieved was diminished in his sight, and he brutally repudiated the enthusiasm for the republican "virtue" of this people, of which Winckelmann was the most recent exponent. "With few exceptions, these Greeks were rabble, like the Swedish estates in the olden days."[62] Their dissolution into numerous independent communities and the ochlocratic forms of government of these republics made them incapable of performing the established tasks of great states over a long period of time. "The immortal Athenians lived an especially violent, thieving, and murderous life."[63] Thus, Schlözer's articulation of history was also determined by the great economic and political revolutions in the life of nations, which he was able to identify and analyze with historical acumen.

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

[62] Schlözer, *Weltgeschichte nach ihren Hauptteilen im Auszug und Zusammenhang* (Göttingen, 1789), pt. II, p. 267.

[63] *Ibid.*

Despite all the thorough work and the keen perception, neither here in Göttingen nor anywhere else in our fatherland was a work of political history produced that passed into the national literature like the creations of Voltaire, Montesquieu, Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon. Intellectuals were too rigidly bound by the limitations of German life. They lacked the sustenance of a powerful national state, practical schooling in major political affairs, and personal contact with princes and rulers. What a distance there was between Voltaire, who conversed with kings as with his peers, and Gatterer, the quiet, shy scholar, who lived only for his research and his students! Or between the political activity of Hume, who, as chargé d'affaires in Paris and then as undersecretary of state, stood for a while at the center of English world-power politics, and that of Schlözer, who as a publicist chastised German petty tyrants for their
265 sins, or that of Spittler, who wore himself out in the miserable conditions at the ministry of state in what was then the duchy of Württemberg. The significance of these Göttingen historians was thus limited to their place in academic life. Through their textbooks, and even more through their lectures, they disclosed fertile new perspectives and methods. The next generation of historians was schooled here. The influence of the Göttingen School stands out visibly in Johannes Müller and Friedrich Christoph Schlosser, who sat at Schlözer's feet.

It was also in Göttingen that Mosheim and Spittler secularized ecclesiastical history. Planck and Schröckh wrote along these same lines outside this university. For these historians, Church history came under the law of the same pragmatic perspective that dominated all the rest of history. Before, it had served the polemical needs of the denominations. Each ecclesiastical phenomenon had been examined for its agreement or conflict with current dogma. Even Arnold had based the right of the heretic on its conformity with the belief of the ancient Christian communities. The eighteenth-century Enlightenment completed the transformation of the rigid principles of orthodoxy into more humane concepts. In doing so, it gained more independence from all previous religious epochs. By applying its rational concepts of morality and religion to the past, of course, it proved itself particularly incapable of appreciating the most important phenomena in these very spheres. Spittler, by far the most gifted of these Church historians, was also the most resolute in executing this approach. He considered the whole development of Christianity from the perspective of religious enlightenment. He wished to demonstrate the steady progress of this develop-

ment and came to the optimistic conclusion that the dark ages are gone forever. (These were the days of the first edicts of Josephinism.[64]) Everything in this development he saw as the plans, intentions, or calculations of individual men. Jesus had founded the Church according to a plan. His relationship to his disciples was roughly that of an endowed professor in Göttingen to his students. It was understandable that Spittler went on to political history.

The limitations of the pragmatic historiography of the eighteenth century are especially obvious in this material. Let us call to mind once more the nature of this method. Its characteristics are an emphasis on the knowledge of causes, the recognition of individuals as the only true (i.e., empirically verifiable) causes, and the consider- 266
ation of these individuals, not in terms of forces operating blindly within them, but in terms of purpose and plan, in short, of intelligible activity based primarily on their own interest. Consequently, it is also characteristic of this type of history to be without any concept of an inner connection among persons in society that would be given along with their individual existence—of a people or a state as an original historical magnitude. Connected with this is another basic feature of this pragmatic history. It aims to be useful, and seeks to do this by informing the reader of the motives of men of action, parties, religious schools, or the masses that come under their influence. It seeks to make its readers "not merely learned, but also wise," by showing how the human spirit "has worked its way through the fiercest struggles and the most outrageous confusions."[65] It seeks to make the present comprehensible. Spittler defined history as the science of the genesis of the present.

The eighteenth century came to this sort of view of human beings in history by taking the way they had been formed by the society of this century as the norm for human existence. As a rule, Bolingbroke is regarded as the founder of this type of historiography. But this unscrupulous politician, this petty man who vacillated between ambitious and disappointed involvement in court politics and the attempt to maintain a philosophical distance from public affairs; this man so ignorant of history that he could put Guicciardini on the same level as Thucydides, so shallow that he neglected the study of historical origins and antiquity and had no feeling for Herodotus; this dilettante, who said nothing true in his writings that had not

[64] Josephinism refers to the reform policy of Emperor Joseph II of Austria (1741–90) as based on Enlightenment ideas.

[65] Ludwig Timotheus Spittler, *Grundriß der Geschichte der christlichen Kirche* (1782), *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. K. Wächter (Stuttgart/Tübingen, 1827), vol. 2, p. 2.

been said before, did not possess the knowledge necessary to qualify him for any solid historical work of a limited, subordinate kind, let alone to be judge over the whole of history. Bolingbroke's only service was to play with truths discovered by serious thinkers like Polybius, Machiavelli, Guicciardini, and Hobbes, and to express audaciously the opinions of contemporary statesmen and men of the world concerning history.

The first work of pragmatic history to cover a large subject matter thoroughly was Montesquieu's *Considerations on the Causes of the Grandeur and Decadence of the Romans* (1734). This book shed new light on Polybius's and Machiavelli's great theme by methodically applying psychological concepts to the idea of a political
267 whole and the way in which it functions. "Since men have had the same passions in all ages, the occasions that produce great changes are different, but the causes are always the same."[66] He begins with the Romans who waged the wars during the age of kings. They are staunchly religious and true to their oaths. The distribution of the spoils of victory spurs them on to the utmost bravery. He pictures this population enclosed within walls, constantly preparing for war, forever fighting with other tribes, and always seeking its advantage. He ponders the psychological effects of such a situation and the habits that arise from it. In short, he seeks to explain the "manly virtue of the Romans," that psychic state regarded by the ancient writers as the chief cause of their successes, by means of the conditions under which they live. The decisive factors in the struggle between Rome and Carthage are also, for Montesquieu, primarily psychical forces determined by the conditions of life in each state. He even derives the eclipse of Roman freedom from the relaxation of moral forces tending toward the cohesion of the whole. These forces had been necessary to preserve the political structure, and were now subject to the influence of the changed conditions brought about by the expansion of the empire.

By being raised to the standpoint of eighteenth-century universal history, pragmatic historiography became a historical power of the greatest importance. For it was pragmatic history that first turned consciousness of the solidarity and progress of our race, and of culture as its goal, into a universally active force that penetrated the whole civilized world. What it took from man's changed feeling of life it gave back to the age enhanced and confirmed by the richness

[66] Montesquieu, *Considerations on the Causes of the Grandeur and Decadence of the Romans*, trans. Jehu Baker (New York: Appleton, 1882), p. 23.

of historical reality. It became popular in order to accomplish this. Because it was borne by the inner power of a new conception of life, it became a work of art.

But from the very work involved in writing history, viewpoints emerged that modified the basic ideas of the Enlightenment. The question arose concerning the collective force that lends its power to the state and sustains forms of government. And from the very outset, the German mind had had a way of seeing history that led the most outstanding of our historical thinkers beyond the limits of the Enlightenment understanding of the historical world. Möser and Winckelmann stood alone in the midst of the Enlightenment epoch with their original historical thought, the founders of something new. Herder's thought was the turning point. His scientific foundation was knowledge of the evolution of the physical universe, of the formation of the earth, and of the effect of geographical conditions on the life of nations. In this respect, he was the son of the eighteenth century and the disciple of Buffon and Kant. But his notion of the inherent value of each historical stage and of every form of life in every region of the world, of the realization of happiness and perfection under the most diverse conditions, and of the instinctive formative powers of human nature led him beyond the limits of this eighteenth century. With him began the movement that made its unified, systematic, and continuous advance through romanticism to Humboldt, Niebuhr, Schleiermacher, and Hegel, and extended into the nineteenth century.

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8. REMINISCENCES ON HISTORICAL STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN (1903)[1]

Translated by Patricia Van Tuyl

When I came to Berlin in the early fifties of the last century, a great movement was at its zenith—the movement in which the definitive constitution of history as a science and, facilitated by this, of the human sciences in general, was achieved. How long ago that was and how few among us witnessed it! The seventeenth century had produced mathematical natural science in an unrivaled collaboration of the civilized nations of the time. But the constitution of history as a science started with the Germans. It had its center here in Berlin, and I had the inestimable fortune to live and to study here during that period. And when I ponder its point of origin, I think of the great objectifications produced by the historical process—the purposive systems of culture, nations, and finally humanity itself. I think of how these objectifications develop and fulfil themselves according to an inner law; how these then operate as organic forces and how history arises from the power struggles of nations. Infinite consequences follow from this. I would like to call them collectively "historical consciousness."

Culture is, in the first place, the weaving together of purposive systems. Each of these—like language, law, myth and religion, poetry, philosophy—possesses an inner lawfulness that conditions its structure, which in turn determines its development. The historical character of culture was first grasped at that time. This was the achievement of Hegel and Schleiermacher: They permeated the abstract systematic structure of culture with the consciousness of its essential historicity. The comparative method and the developmental-historical approach were applied to culture. What a circle of men were at work here!: Humboldt, Savigny, and Grimm. I recall the distinguished figure of the aged Bopp, the founder of comparative linguistics. But the strongest memory for me here is of my

[1] This is a talk Dilthey gave to friends and students on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, November 19, 1903. It was published in the Berlin newspaper, the *Tägliche Rundschau*, of November 22, 1903, on the basis of Dilthey's own notes, and then reprinted in *GS* V, 7–9.

teacher and friend Trendelenburg, who exercised the greatest influence on me. Nowadays it is hard to imagine the position of power
8 he held in those days. It lay in the way he combined carefully researched facts of the history of philosophy into a whole, which then worked like a powerful force on his audience. He embodied the conviction, based on Aristotle and Plato, that the entire history of philosophy came into being and endures in order to ground the consciousness of the ideal connection of things. The unshakableness of this conviction, this solid, immovable foundation, gave him an air of authority. He never sought power, but it came with his manliness. He was one of those vigorous natures from our northern coast.

The other great moment of the new historical science was its assessment of nationalities. This recognition of nationalities first arose from the study of the literature of different peoples by the Romantic School, and gained strength in every quarter with the struggle against Napoleon's world domination. In Germany, both moments worked together. Gathered together right here in Berlin were the great historical minds who first combined philosophy and historical science and who grasped the entire life of a nation in its various facets, from language on up. First came Niebuhr, who banished the entire fable-ridden tradition and produced a new history of Rome from the sources. Second among these great men was Boeckh, and I was lucky to still be able to experience the influence of his lectures. All of his labors were undertaken from the standpoint of a comprehensive intuition of Greek life. His personality made a wholly peculiar impression by combining mental acuteness with enthusiasm, a mathematical mind with artistic sensitivity, a strong sense for everything measurable and countable in metrics, finance, and astronomy with the ideal. Then Jakob Grimm—with timid reverence we kept a distance from this most powerful human being. He evoked a total intuition of early German life. I still remember the speech he gave at the Academy in memory of his brother Wilhelm; how he held the page up to the light so that his aging eyes could catch the words; how his face with its large features bent downward; the subdued, somewhat strained voice. The speech combined the deepest love with an objective appraisal, in which there was not one word of exaggeration. At the end of this first period that I spent in Berlin, Mommsen also came—the most fortunate and most triumphant in this line of scholars. More completely than any of his predecessors, he accomplished the task of reconstructing the life of a nation. Then Ritter and Ranke combined the results of all the special investigations into a universal intuition of our globe and of the history that

runs its course there. They were inseparable for us: Ritter's venerable patriarchal figure, with his horn-rimmed glasses before his powerful eyes, his calm, steady, pleasant lecture; and Ranke—the liveli- 9
est of figures. An inner movement, which also manifested itself outwardly, seemed to always transfer him into the event or the human being of which he was speaking. I remember the effect as he spoke of the relation of Alexander VI to his son Cesare [Borgia]: He loved him, he feared him, he hated him. I was greatly influenced by Ranke, even more by his seminar than by his lectures. He was like a mighty organism assimilating chronicles, Italian politicians, ambassadors, historians, Niebuhr, Fichte, and, not least, Hegel—transforming everything into the power to objectively intuit what has been. To me he was the embodiment of historical insight as such.

To these great influences I owe the direction of my thought. I have tried to write the history of literary and philosophical movements in keeping with this universal-historical approach. I undertook to examine the nature and condition of historical consciousness—a critique of historical reason. I was finally driven forward by this task to the one that is most universal. An apparently irreconcilable antithesis arises when historical consciousness is followed to its last consequences. The finitude of every historical phenomenon—be it a religion or an ideal or a philosophical system—accordingly, the relativity of every kind of human apprehension of the totality of things is the last word of the historical world-view. Everything passes away in the process; nothing remains. And over against this both the demand of thought and the striving of philosophy for universally valid knowledge assert themselves. The historical world-view liberates the human spirit from the last chains that natural science and philosophy have not yet broken. But where are the means to overcome the anarchy of opinions that then threatens to befall us? To the solution of the long series of problems that are connected with this, I have devoted my whole life. I see the goal. If I fall short along the way, then I hope my young traveling companions, my students, will follow it to the end.

GLOSSARY

German Expressions

Absicht: intent
Ahndung presentiment
Aneinderreihung: aggregation
Anschauung: intuition
Anwendung: application
Auffassung: apprehension
Ausdruck: expression
Auslegung: interpretation, exegesis
Aussage: assertion

Bedeutsamkeit: significance
Bedeutung: meaning
Bedingung: condition
Begriffsbildung: concept formation
Besinnung: reflection
Bewußtsein: consciousness
Bildung: formation, education

darstellen: explicate, present, narrate
Darstellungsmittel: expository or explicative device
Denken: thinking, thought
Dogmatik: dogmatics

Echtheit: authenticity
eigentümlich: distinctive
eigentlich: authentic
Eindruck: impression
Empirie: empirical inquiry
Empirismus: empiricism
Entstehung: rise, genesis
Entwicklung: development
Epoche: epoch
Erfahrung: experience
Erkenntnis: knowledge, conceptual knowledge
erklärend: explanative
Erklärung: explanation
Erlebnis: lived experience

Erscheinung: appearance
Exegese: exegesis
erzählen: narrate

Forscher: scholar, researcher

Gedanke: idea
Gegensatz: antithesis
Gehalt: content
Geisteswissenschaften: human sciences (including the humanities and the social sciences)
geistige Welt: human world
Gelegenheitsschriften: occasional writings
Gemeingefühl: feeling of community
Genossenschaft: fellowship
Geschichtlichkeit: historicity
Geschichtserzählung: historical narration
Gesetzmäßig: law-governed, lawlike
Grenz: boundary

Handlung: activity, action
Hermeneutik: hermeneutics
Herrschaft: power
Historik: theory of history

Individualität: individuality
Innewerden: reflexive awareness

Keimenstschluß: seminal decision
konstruieren: construe, construct
Konstruktion: construction
Kunst: art, skill
Kunstlehre: theory of rules, theory of an art
künstlerisch: artistic
künstlich: artificial
kunstmäßig: rule-guided, skillful

Lehre: doctrine, theory

Mitteilung: communication

Nachahmung: imitation
Nachbildung: re-creation
Nachkonstruktion: reconstruction
Notwendigkeit: necessity

Offenbarung: revelation

Realität: reality
Rede: speech, discourse
Regelbildung: codification of rules
Regelgebung: codification (in terms of rules)
Reiz: stimulus

Sachverhalt: state of affairs
Satz: thesis, sentence, principle, proposition, statement
Seelenleben: psychic life
Selbstbeobachtung: introspection
Selbstbesinnung: self-reflection
Selbstbetrachtung: self-observation
Selbstgefühl: self-feeling
Sinn: sense
Sittlichkeit: ethical life
Sprache: language
Sprachgebrauch: linguistic usage, usage
Sprechen: speech, discourse
Stoff: matter

Trieb: drive

Urheber: author
Ursprung: origin
Urteil: judgment

Verband: association, group
Verfasser: author
Verhalten: attitude
Vernunft: reason
Verstand: intellect, import
Verstehen: understanding
Volk: people
Vorstellung: representation

Wahrheit: truth
Wahrnehmung: perception
Weltanschauung: world-view
Weltzusammenhang: structure of the world, world-nexus
willkürlich: arbitrary
Wirken: doing, efficacy
Wirklichkeit: reality, what is real
Wissen: knowledge, immediate knowledge
Wissenschaft: science, discipline, study
Wort: word

Zeitalter: age, period
Zeitgeist: spirit of an age
Zusammenhang: nexus, context, system, coherence
Zusammenhang des Seelenlebens: psychic nexus
Zweck: purpose
Zweckmässigkeit: purposiveness
Zweckzusammenhang: purposive system

English Expressions

action: *Handlung*
activity: *Handlung*
age: *Zeitalter*
aggregation: *Aneinderreihung*
antithesis: *Gegensatz*
appearance: *Erscheinung*
application: *Anwendung*
apprehension: *Auffassung*
arbitrary: *willkürlich*
art: *Kunst*
artificial: *künstlich*
artistic: *künstlerisch*
assertion: *Aussage*
association: *Verband*
attitude: *Verhalten*
authentic: *echt*, *eigentlich*
author: *Urheber*, *Verfasser*

boundary: *Grenz*

codification (in terms of rules): *Regelbildung*
codification of rules: *Regelbildung*
coherence: *Zusammenhang*
communication: *Mitteilung*
concept formation: *Begriffsbildung*
conceptual knowledge: *Erkenntnis*
condition: *Bedingung*
consciousness: *Bewußtsein*
content: *Gehalt*
context: *Zusammenhang*
construction: *Konstruktion*

development: *Entwicklung*
discipline: *Wissenschaft*
discourse: *Rede*, *Spreche*
distinctive: *eigentümlich*
doctrine: *Lehre*
dogmatics: *Dogmatik*
doing: *Wirken*
drive: *Trieb*

education: *Bildung*
efficacy: *Wirken*
empirical inquiry: *Empirie*
empiricism: *Empirismus*
epoch: *Epoche*
ethical life: *Sittlichkeit*
exegesis: *Exegese*, *Auslegung*
experience: *Erfahrung*
explanation: *Erklärung*
explanative: *erklärend*
explicate: *darstellen*
expository or explicative device: *Darstellungsmittel*
expression: *Ausdruck*

feeling of community: *Gemeingefühl*
fellowship: *Genossenschaft*
formation: *Bildung*

genesis: *Entstehung*
group: *Verband*

hermeneutics: *Hermeneutik*
historicity: *Geschichtlichkeit*
historical narration: *Geschichtserzählung*
human sciences: *Geisteswissenschaften*
human world: *geistige Welt*

ideas: *Gedanken*
imitation: *Nachahmung*
immediate knowledge: *Wissen*
import: *Verstand*
impression: *Eindruck*
individuality: *Individualität*
intellect: *Verstand*
intent: *Absicht*

interpretation, exegesis: *Auslegung*
introspection: *Selbstbeobachtung*
intuition: *Anschauung*

judgment: *Urteil*

knowledge: *Erkenntnis*, *Wissen*

language: *Sprache*
law-governed, lawlike: *gesetzmäßig*
linguistic usage: *Sprachgebrauch*
lived experience: *Erlebnis*

matter: *Stoff*
meaning: *Bedeutung*

narrate: *darstellen*, *erzählen*
necessity: *Notwendigkeit*
nexus: *Zusammenhang*

occasional writings: *Gelegenheitsschriften*
origin: *Ursprung*

people: *Volk*
perception: *Wahrnehmung*
period: *Zeitalter*
power: *Herrschaft*
present: *darstellen*
presentiment: *Ahndung*
principle: *Satz*
procedure: *Verfahrensweise*
proposition: *Satz*
psychic life: *Seelenleben*
psychic nexus: *Zusammenhang des Seelenlebens*
purpose: *Zweck*
purposive system: *Zweckzusammenhang*
purposiveness: *Zweckmäßigkeit*

reality, what is real: *Realität*
reason: *Vernunft*
reconstruction: *Nachkonstruktion*
re-creation: *Nachbildung*
reflection: *Besinnung*
reflexive awareness: *Innewerden*
representation: *Vorstellung*

researcher: *Forscher*
revelation: *Offenbarung*
rise: *Entstehung*
rule-guided: *kunstmäßig*

science: *Wissenschaft*
self-feeling: *Selbstgefühl*
self-observation: *Selbstbetrachtung*
self-reflection: *Selbstbesinnung*
seminal decision: *Keimentschluß*
sense: *Sinn*
sentence: *Satz*
significance: *Bedeutsamkeit*
skill: *Kunst*
skillful: *kunstmäßig*
speech: *Rede*, *Spreche*
spirit of an age: *Zeitgeist*
state of affairs: *Sachverhalt*
statement: *Satz*
stimulus: *Reiz*
study: *Wissenschaft*
structure of the world: *Weltzusammenhang*
system: *Zusammenhang*

theory: *Lehre*
theory of history: *Historik*
theory of rules: *Kunstlehre*
thesis: *Satz*
thinking: *Denken*
thought: *Denken*
truth: *Wahrheit*

understanding: *Verstehen*
usage: *Sprachgebrauch*

word: *Wort*
world-nexus: *Weltzusammenhang*
world-view: *Weltanschauung*

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