

How Gadamer Changed My Life: A Tribute

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Before Gadamer

How could I have imagined back in 1958–59 as a doctoral student in European Comparative Literature taking the last step in preparation for college teaching, that my career was to unfold as it did? Could I ever have dreamed that it would take me to Germany for four different years of postdoctoral study and into contact with such famous German philosophers as Hans-Georg Gadamer, Martin Heidegger, or Jürgen Habermas? Could I foresee summer study with American literary critics Geoffrey Hartman and Stanley Fish? Had it not been for Professor Gadamer, none of this would have happened. In a 1965 summer semester, he set my career on a new path, and now I pause to acknowledge my debt to him.

In 1964, some 38 years ago, I arrived in Zürich with my wife Louise and children for an American Council of Learned Societies Cross-Disciplinary research fellowship in theology and literature with theologian Gerhard Ebeling at the Institut für Hermeneutik in Zürich. I had a recommendation in hand from theologian Karl Michalson, who tragically died in a plane crash later that year. At that time I had not even heard of Hans-Georg Gadamer. My proposed research topic for the year was the influence of existentialism on theologians Rudolf Bultmann, Ernst Fuchs, and Gerhard Ebeling with regard to its potential methodological relevance for literary interpretation. At Redlands I had written a Ph.D. dissertation on existentialism in Baudelaire, Rilke, and T. S. Eliot (1959). That was my preparation, such as it was; this research was to continue it.

My perspective was unexpectedly widened, however, when Professor Ebeling disputed the opening sentence of my fourteen page research prospectus, which stated that hermeneutics was largely known to theologians as the methodology of theological interpretation. No, he said, hermeneutics was not, or at least was not now, merely a methodology of text interpretation, and it certainly was not restricted to theology. Insofar as he and other post-Bultmannian theologians had any methodology, it was that of philology! He recommended that I read at once Gadamer's *Wahrheit und Methode*, which had been the focus of a seminar there at Zürich in 1962. Furthermore, he suggested that my topic of hermeneutics and literary interpretation would be better pursued starting from philosophy, with Gadamer. But watch out, because hermeneutics in Gadamer was not a methodology.

The Summer Semester of 1965 in Heidelberg

Following Professor Ebeling's advice, I drove from Zürich up to Heidelberg in my Volkswagen Beetle and had the conversation with Gadamer that changed my life. It pointed my research in a new direction, toward a philosophical hermeneutics that was not a methodology, but still relevant—in a philosophical way—to literary interpretation. Professor Gadamer was a genial man and very

much open to this inexperienced young American teacher of literature barely out of graduate school and with little background in philosophy other than existentialism. He said that he would welcome it if I chose to come to Heidelberg for the second semester. Indeed, a professor was also coming from Holland to study hermeneutics that semester, so we could have a discussion group made up of his graduate assistants and the two visiting scholars.

The professor from Holland never arrived, but the discussion group came about anyway. The interchange of the discussions in that group was priceless. Especially decisive for my project was the meeting in which I ventured to present a paper on the influence of Heidegger on Gadamer. In this exploratory paper, which fortunately remains unpublished, I took up key concepts from *Sein und Zeit* and tried to show their presence in *Wahrheit und Methode*. Gadamer did not deny what I had claimed about the influence of *Sein und Zeit*, but he found it one-sided. He wanted me to know that it was Heidegger's famous essay on art, "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," that was the key inspiration for *Truth and Method*. For Heidegger had shown in that essay that art could be seen as the emergence of truth. This factor was decisive for Gadamer in seeking a new status for the humanities through hermeneutics. This point was a total surprise to me. I had not even read that Heidegger essay! Furthermore, a brilliant young assistant to Gadamer, Rüdiger Bubner, who became a prominent philosopher at Tübingen and in 1996 was called back to a chair in philosophy at Heidelberg, pointed out that Gadamer's approach to the interpretation of literature did not offer the basis for a critique of the New Criticism, as I had hoped it would, since Gadamer shared with the New Critics an emphasis on the autonomy of the work of art.

So it was back to the drawing board for me. I narrowed down my project to the rise of philosophical hermeneutics itself, not its influence on literature. I decided to focus on hermeneutics in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer and essentially to write an introduction to the philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer. For English-speaking people, it at least answered the question, "What is hermeneutics?" In fact, a recent translation of that book into Spanish carries the title *Qué es la hermenéutica?* (Madrid, Arco/Libros, 2002).

That summer semester in Heidelberg in 1965 was seminal for my scholarly career. During that time I took a seminar on *Sein und Zeit* with Konrad Cramer, a Gadamer student who later became a professor, and a tutorial from P. Christopher Smith, an American student of Gadamer who went on to make several excellent translations of Gadamer's writings into English. In late July, 1965 Heidegger himself came marching down the aisle of the Alta Aula auditorium with Gadamer to attend the final lecture in Gadamer's lecture-course, "From Hegel to Heidegger." Near the end of the lecture Heidegger was asked if he wished to make any remarks or give any response to the lecture. He did and how! A tape of his fifteen minute talk is one of my most valued possessions. After the lecture I was invited to attend a private Heidegger seminar for graduate

assistants. It took place at Gadamer's apartment in Handshuhsheim. After the seminar we walked down the hill to the "Goldene Hahn" restaurant for a group dinner which did not end until 1 a.m. There I had an opportunity for all the conversation with Heidegger I could ever want, and I got my copy of *Sein und Zeit* inscribed by the author. I soon ran out of questions to ask, so I allowed another student to move between Heidegger and myself and I just listened. This proved to be a good strategy. The summer semester of 1965 with Professor Gadamer had ushered me into a new world that exceeded my wildest anticipations.

After 1969: A Traveling Scholar

The timing of my book in 1969 introducing Gadamer's hermeneutics could not have been better. Gadamer retired in 1968 and had repeated invitations to teach in the U.S.A. But a translation of *Truth and Method* did not appear until 1975. My book was the only available book introducing Gadamer's hermeneutics at the time. Gadamer in those early days taught at such places as Boston College, University of Dallas, and Vanderbilt University. He became available to give lectures all over the United States, and I frequently was invited to be respondent to these lectures of Gadamer. I recall lectures in Washington DC, Vanderbilt, and the University of Dallas, and symposia at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, Syracuse University, Milwaukee, New Orleans, and Lawrence, Kansas. Thanks to Gadamer, I had become a "traveling scholar," a term Gadamer used of himself in his autobiographical reflections in *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, making a playful allusion to Mephistopheles in Goethe's *Faust*.

The 1969 book introducing Gadamer's hermeneutics opened a new era for me. It was widely used as a textbook for new courses in hermeneutics that were springing up. As an epilogue to that book I offered a "manifesto to American literary interpretation" on the significance of philosophical hermeneutics to literary interpretation, but it went basically unnoticed and the function of the book remained an introduction to hermeneutics. I still planned to write a second book unfolding the significance of hermeneutics for literary interpretation for I felt that Rüdiger did not perceive the profound significance for literature that lay in the shift in the deeper philosophical premises about reading and interpretation that come from a study of philosophical hermeneutics.

I never wrote the promised second volume applying hermeneutics to literary interpretation. Why? It was not for lack of funding. I received a "younger humanist" grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1971-72 to write it. Indeed, in applying, I argued that Gadamer was now 71, so it was important to get over there while he was still around! Little did I suspect that he would live and lecture for another thirty years with writings that were to fill ten volumes (1985-1995),¹ and because Gadamer lived on after 1995 and continued

to lecture these had to be supplemented in 2000 by an eleventh volume, titled *Hermeneutische Entwürfe*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000). I spent my grant in Heidelberg listening to Gadamer's lectures (he continued teaching after his retirement), but I also spent time probing the writings of Nietzsche, Foucault, and Derrida.² The hermeneutical quartet of critics at Yale were already lending an ear to the French and were fascinated with Nietzsche. I wanted to know what was going on over there. Exploring this French connection became a prerequisite for that second book, but it was never written.³ I was asked to write, speak, and respond, here and there in the seventies and eighties, and most of these writings took up the theme of the postmodernity of Heidegger and Gadamer.⁴ I did teach for a quarter in 1976 at University of Minnesota in their Humanities Program, and during a seminar there on Heidegger I was interrupted and brought word of his death. I spent the summer of 1977 in an NEH Summer Seminar at Yale offered by Geoffrey Hartman on Literary Criticism, including Derrida, and in the summer of 1978 in their Sterling Library I undertook a project sponsored by an NEH summer research fellowship of collecting an anthology of the major essays in hermeneutics from antiquity to the present. This turned into a six-volume "Hermeneutics Compendium," which was never finished, but the xerox copies are waiting patiently in my file drawers. Lest the research devoted to the entire project be lost, I included a table of contents with a paper I presented in 1978 at a hermeneutics conference at the University of Ottawa, the proceedings of which became a special double issue of the *University of Ottawa Quarterly* and also a book.⁵ (See my website, www.mac.edu/~rpalmer for the table of contents of an imagined six-volume "Hermeneutics Compendium".)

The Gadamer–Derrida Encounter of 1980

In 1980 an "unlikely" event took place at the Sorbonne in Paris that had a major effect on my life. Gadamer and Derrida both attended a conference on "Text and Interpretation" featuring six major speakers, and there was a brief public encounter between them quite apart from the formal paper each presented. Derrida listened to Gadamer's paper, titled "Text et Interpretation," and overnight formulated three questions, later titled "Good Will to Power I." Gadamer, never at a loss, made a detailed reply in French that was later titled "And Yet: The Power of Good Will [in interpretation]." Each presentation only occupied three pages of text when later published. The *Auseinandersetzung* which Gadamer had implored Manfred Frank to arrange had finally taken place, but in the words of Derrida, nothing happened. Manfred confided to me that Gadamer had asked him several times during the seventies to set up some kind of encounter, but Derrida had always said no. But here was a French conference of six distinguished scholars taking place in Paris discussing a topic central to both, so Derrida accepted. The conference was hosted by Philippe Forget at the Sorbonne, and featured François Laruelle, Jean Greisch, Manfred Frank, and

Philippe Forget in addition to Gadamer and Derrida. The encounter itself was soon published in the *Revue internationale de philosophie*⁶ and Forget edited a collection of all six essays plus the encounter for publication in German as a UTB paperback under the title *Text und Interpretation*, writing an introduction with the title "Guiding Threads of an Improbable Debate."⁷ Derrida's contribution, translated into German, was titled in French "Interpreter les signatures (Heidegger/Nietzsche): Deux Questions." This essay does not mention the writings of Gadamer, although Gadamer's contribution refers to several writings of Derrida, showing that he had read them. Derrida later confided to Neal Oxenhandler that his "shoes of wind" had not given him the time to read the writings of Gadamer, so he merely responded to what Gadamer said about him in his paper.⁸

How did I become involved in translating along with Diane P. Michelfelder the papers of Gadamer and Derrida and the encounter between them? It came about in this way: In 1985 I was attending a twelve-member NEH Summer Seminar on Nietzsche in Riverside, California, led by Bernd Magnus. Magnus had recently received a copy of *Text und Interpretation*, probably for review, and he mentioned it in the seminar, saying that a translation of Derrida's essay on Heidegger and Nietzsche would be "instantly publishable."⁹ Diane and I decided to take on this project at once. He was right. It was, in fact, instantly accepted and the translation of Derrida's essay very shortly appeared in *Philosophy and Literature*.¹⁰

Diane and I were interested, however, in translating the whole encounter, including the presentations by Gadamer and Derrida, and adding commentary on it by leading scholars, to make a book. Our proposal was quickly accepted by State University of New York Press and published in 1989 as *Dialogue and Deconstruction: The Gadamer–Derrida Encounter*. But one other development had occurred. By that time, 1987, Gadamer had published three articles on deconstruction, thus adding his own commentary on Derrida and the encounter. So we also translated and included these essays in the volume. Years later, a final, long essay by Gadamer dating from 1994, "Hermeneutik auf der Spur," was included in volume 10 of his collected writings.¹¹ I am presently translating a collection of Gadamer's essays edited by Jean Grondin.¹² I have decided, with Grondin's permission, to add Gadamer's final word on deconstruction to that volume, which will be published by Northwestern University Press. Getting back to our 1989 volume, Derrida cooperated with us by immediately providing us with the unpublished French original text of his essay on Heidegger/Nietzsche, which was shortly thereafter published in his collection, *Psyche* (Paris: Galilée, 1987). He also sent *De l'esprit: Heidegger et la question* (Paris: Galilée, 1987), personally inscribed to me, a volume which I treasure and have preserved in the very package in which it arrived since it was addressed in Derrida's own hand. On the several occasions when we have talked at conferences, Derrida has always been very friendly and kind to me. Meeting and

having interchange with such important figures as Derrida has been one of the rewards of my association with Gadamer, and my activities as a Gadamer translator and scholar—and also a translator of Derrida, in this case.

Two Fulbright Research Grants in the 1990s

A major reward of my association with Gadamer was receiving two Fulbright research fellowships for study in Heidelberg during the 1990s, my last decade of teaching. The first was in 1991–92 and the other in 1995–96. These offered the chance for many interviews with Gadamer that I taped, with his permission. I have not yet had the time to transcribe, edit, and translate them. For both grants, Gadamer wrote a special recommendation from his side of the Atlantic to the Fulbright Foundation in Bonn. I thanked him most heartily when I arrived in Heidelberg in 1991, and he said he just wanted to express to me his gratitude for my book—not the 1989 book but the 1969 book! This book made it possible, he said, for him to convey to Americans on his visits something of what his philosophy was about. But I think the other recommenders and the Foundation also noted that I had recently co-translated a book in 1989 on Gadamer's encounter with Derrida, and inferred that I was still active as a Gadamer scholar.

Of the two research years, the first was especially wonderful for me. I was given the key to Gadamer's large book-lined study by his secretary, Christa Hornung. I made it my headquarters, except for Monday and Wednesday afternoons when the Professor received visitors. They came from many countries, and he welcomed them all. Television stations from Italy, France, and Germany sent interviewers for almost any occasion. Etsuro Makita was also there compiling his magnificent bibliography of Gadamer's writings, including translations into other languages, published in 1995,¹³ and we became fast friends. He later invited me to his wedding at the most expensive hotel in Tokyo—all expenses paid! He showed me around Tokyo and Kamakura, and three younger colleagues accompanied me to Kyoto to see the temples there while Etsuro prepared for the big day. To see a wedding in Japan and live through its lavish reception banquet afterwards is an experience I will never forget. And his bride was so beautiful, her family so elegant. I made a tribute at the reception dinner. Fortunately, I wrote it out in advance so that the interpreter could wait until I was finished to translate it. Some understood my English and even laughed at my jokes, while more laughed at them in the translation.

1991–92 was a lucky year to be there for other reasons. While Gadamer was working away at home on editing the text of the ten volumes of his collected works "*aus letzter Hand*," he received a letter from Lewis E. Hahn, of Southern Illinois University, inviting him to be an honored philosopher in the "Library of Living Philosophers" series. I thought to myself: Did they have to wait until he was ninety years old? They certainly took their time; but Gadamer also later took his time in reading and responding to each of the contributions since editing his

own writings had to come first. They asked him to suggest a list of contributors, and I was surprised that he suggested critics of his philosophy, not just his friends. Also, he would be required to write a philosophical autobiography for the beginning of the volume, and he needed to submit a picture, a handwriting specimen, and a bibliography. Being there in Heidelberg, I had the opportunity to help with this important project. I translated the sixty-page autobiographical reflection, for which he wrote a special section on his experiences in the U.S.A. after his retirement. He titled this section "Travelling Scholar, 1968–." My suggestion for its title was accepted: "Reflections on a Philosophical Journey." I was also commissioned to round up and translate the required handwriting specimen that prefaces the volume. It was in the archives of the library. I accepted the task of compiling the selected bibliography of his books and articles, a task I took home with me, where I had a student secretary to help out. In this task, the bibliography of Etsuro Makita was indispensable, and he provided it in advance of publication. But it had only Gadamer's writings. I added a list of books about Gadamer in English, and I journeyed to Frankfurt to compile a list of radio interviews he had given that were archived there. This was the first time these had been collected. I thoroughly enjoyed these tasks.

One other memorable experience from that year: The Gadamer family asked me to accompany them to a cello concert at a church in Mannheim. Before I go into it I should mention how I came to be invited. I learned from Gadamer's secretary that Frau Gadamer, whom I really did not know very well, was going to have an operation on her eyes. She would be confined to her house and would have to wear a blindfold for several weeks in order not to jeopardize the operation. I felt very sorry for her, and I got an idea. I went to a department store on the Bismarkplatz and bought a quality portable radio complete with batteries. She could carry it about the house and stave off the boredom by listening to the radio. I took it to their door about a week before the operation. She was very surprised and touched, and she also subsequently found it useful. A month or two after her recovery came the invitation to attend a cello concert in Mannheim with "the Gadamer family." It was not just any concert; it was the six Bach cello suites played by the chair of the music department at the University of Freiburg, a fabulous cellist! The Gadamer party included their grown daughter, Andrea, a prominent judge in the district, and her boyfriend (who later became her husband), plus Frau Gadamer. I sat next to Professor Gadamer at the concert. The others had to take other seats. He sat through the concert motionless and saying absolutely nothing, eyes closed in deepest concentration. It was a consummate musical experience and I was deeply impressed by Gadamer's intense absorption in it.

In the invitation, nothing had been said about dinner afterwards, and I did not ask. After the concert, however, we drove to a very fancy restaurant for a sumptuous six-course meal with a different waiter for each course and for the different wines, which each had to be tasted in advance, of course. It was all just

for the Gadamer party in a special dining room. I have never had a meal as elegant as this before or since. The conversation was also refined but wide-ranging. I felt deeply thankful for their kindness and for the respect they showed me. Frau Gadamer had more than repaid my gift, which I had never considered necessary.

The second Fulbright research year, 1995–96, was also fine but no match for the first. When I arrived at the Philosophy Seminar after moving into the guesthouse for visiting scholars at Schlierbach, I was advised by Gadamer's secretary, Frau Hornung, that I would have a special office for my research but I would not be inhabiting Gadamer's office as I had the first time. If I wanted a specific book from that study, I could ask the secretary to open it up for me or lend me a key on a short-term basis. I was thunderstruck! All kinds of questions arose in my mind as to whether my occupancy the first time had been out of line. But I concluded that his very protective secretary had decided it would be best for Gadamer to have unimpeded access and sole possession of the office. It was increasingly difficult for him to climb the stairs to her office on the second floor, although he continued to do so at age ninety-five. The day might come when he would not be able to do so and would need his office to give dictation, and she may have thought I went too far the first time. In any case, I quickly established myself in the special office near the copy room and the departmental secretary's office, working as I always did, morning, afternoon, and evenings six days a week. Frau Hornung and I took in some concerts, which I greatly enjoyed. We shared a love of music, and I enjoyed accompanying her flute playing.

That year Jean Grondin occupied the guesthouse as well, and we shared many conversations about the Professor. He was industriously compiling material for his *Hans-Georg Gadamer: Eine Biographie*. Although his native language is French, he wrote in German without a translator, and Gadamer's own publisher, Mohr Siebeck, published it also. This biography is now being translated into English by Yale University Press. We spent many happy hours and meals together in the Mensa. John Robertson, a professor of religious studies from McMaster University, was on a sabbatical in the guesthouse. His wife accompanied him, and we had many hours of pleasant association. He was a close friend of Gadamer when he was at McMaster and accompanied him on his daily walk after lunch. Also, there were monthly parties in the big conference room. The room had a piano which I enjoyed playing for relaxation and occasionally at the parties.

In my first visit to Ziehanke's bookstore on the Uniplatz I came across a thin little book of three conversations that Carsten Dutt had held with Gadamer from 1989 to 1992. The topics of the three conversations were hermeneutics, aesthetics, and practical philosophy. I found the little volume an excellent and accessible introduction to Gadamer's philosophy, and I decided I would translate it at once. I already knew the interviewer from a seminar taught by Professor Reiner Wiehl, where he was one of three of Wiehl's assistants in the course. He

was obviously an outstanding student with an incisive mind. When I returned to Heidelberg for Gadamer's one hundredth birthday celebration in February, 2000, he had a new larger office in the German Studies Department while keeping that in the Philosophy Seminar. Hard as it was, he was moving up in the academic world.

I proposed to Yale University Press that I make a translation of this book, calling it *Gadamer in Conversation*, approximately the same title it had in the German.¹⁴ It would be an attractive introduction to Gadamer, and they already had a series on hermeneutics edited by Joel Weinsheimer. It was a natural! When the reader's reports finally came back, they were highly favorable about the book and about my translating it, but they wondered if it was not too short. At eighty pages of large print in the German, it would still be a booklet rather than a real book, even if I wrote a lengthy translator's introduction. I wrote to Grondin asking him to write a lengthy biographical introduction. He suggested that it would be better to translate several more conversations and to write my own introduction. He sent me a list of six possible interviews with Gadamer that could be added to the book. I chose three of these that seemed not to overlap the three conducted by Dutt. One was "The Greeks, Our Teachers," which brought out Gadamer's deep roots in philology and Greek thought. Another was on the topic of phenomenology, already translated and published by Alphons Grieder, and the third was an as yet untranslated 1989 interview with an expert on the Nazi period seeking to explore his experiences as a university professor under National Socialism. To what extent did he collaborate?

The situation was growing critical for researchers on the period of National Socialism. By 1989, not too many university professors were still alive who had lived through the thirties under Hitler. Gadamer was a gold mine of information, and he remembered much about the period and about his colleagues. He was very open with her and it was a lively interview. It also answered many questions about Gadamer's relationship to the Nazis. In 1995, a book by Teresa Orozco, titled *Platonische Gewalt: Gadamer's politische Hermeneutik der NS-Zeit* (Hamburg: Argument Verlag, 1995) appeared. Orozco was at a standstill in her career and had gone back to Spanish-American regional studies when a professor at the University of Berlin persuaded her to research the topic of Gadamer and the Nazis as her "Promotion" dissertation. She worked diligently but turned up very little. As the title indicated, she tried to argue that Gadamer's work on Plato made him a fascist. After all, did not the republic anticipate the Third Reich? It worked, and was accepted by the very people who persuaded her to undertake the work. It was immediately included in their series, "Ideologische Mächte im Deutschen Faschismus." But this was absurd. An ideological power in fascism Gadamer was not, and the book was insulting, unfair, and misconstrued the evidence. A review of the book in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* found the book "überzeugt nicht"—didn't persuade. Then the anti-Heidegger scholar, Richard Wolin, came across the book, treated it as the

definitive study of the topic, and wrote an article for the *New Republic* on "Nazism and the Complicities of Hans-Georg Gadamer: Untruth and Method."¹⁵ I immediately wrote a reply to that article, but it was summarily rejected with a form letter. Apparently the *New Republic* did not care to be contradicted. I mentioned this rejection in a meeting of the Husserl Circle at Seattle that year, and Dermot Moran, editor of the *International Journal for Philosophical Studies*, asked me to send it to him at once. It was accepted. I also sent an early draft to Gadamer, who liked it. He did not reply to the Orozco book, he told me in 1996, because it would give it publicity it did not deserve. He simply ignored it. He said this issue had already been openly discussed in several interviews that were part of the public record. My article, "Wolin on Gadamer: Methodological Untruth," will appear in the December, 2002 issue of *IJPS*. It demonstrates, point for point, the inaccuracy of Wolin's case against Gadamer and the sloppiness of his argumentation. I also discussed in the introduction to *Gadamer in Conversation: Reflections and Commentary* the ways in which this interview refuted the claims of Orozco and Wolin. It was my last thanks to Gadamer to speak out against these distortions. Fortunately, he received my book before he died, and I assume he saw my defense.

The Gadamer Reader, a One Hundredth Birthday, and Roses on the Grave

To celebrate Gadamer's ninety-seventh birthday, February 11, 1997, Grondin published on that very date the *Gadamer Lesebuch*, a collection of essays by Gadamer representing the range of his philosophy. It was published by Mohr Siebeck in an inexpensive paperback edition. Gadamer and Grondin together decided which essays should appear in the reader. I am in the process of translating this book into English for Northwestern University Press; it should appear in 2004. Half of its essays are not previously translated, so it will not only serve as a Gadamer reader but make important later writings available in English for the first time.

I was honored to be invited to the one hundredth birthday celebration in Heidelberg in the year 2000. Seating was limited, but I sat in the third row. Richard Rorty, Michel Theunissen, and Gianni Vattimo were major speakers in an international panel. President Rau spoke at length along with several others. A banquet at City Hall was held in the evening with many tributes. Other conferences on Gadamer's writings were held in Heidelberg and Tübingen which I attended while I was there. Gadamer at one hundred was still very lucid, and he addressed the audience via a microphone from his chair after the three major speakers had spoken. Habermas was in the second row in front of me, and he and Gadamer had a joyful conversation after the ceremony. Their personal friendship dates back to the sixties when he was a member of the Philosophy Faculty at Heidelberg. I was fortunate enough to get a dozen photographs of this lively and occasionally humorous conversation. I used sensitive film that did not

require a flash. I have placed a couple of these photographs on my webpage (www.mac.edu/~rpalmer). I showed the pictures of Gadamer and Habermas as slides last summer in China when I spoke on Gadamer's philosophy there for a second year in a row. I also showed a picture, now on my webpage, taken of Gadamer and myself by Etsuro Makita when I came for a visit at Gadamer's home and interrupted a conversation with Etsuro. I was on my way to Beijing in 2001 and stayed only long enough to take down a greeting from Gadamer to Chinese philosophers at their conference. Makita took pictures and sent them to me. Regrettably, due to Gadamer's death, I could not convey his personal greetings this year when I spoke at Wuhu, Hefei, and Shanghai. Habermas, I was told, had been there shortly before, so they asked me to say a few words in Shanghai about the contrasts between the two thinkers. I pointed out that they had a great deal in common in spite of their differences, and that there was room in the world for both of their contributions.

I was not present at Gadamer's death on March 13, 2002. Only the closest family members were, but I have a report from Carsten Dutt, who was there up to thirty minutes before he died. He telephoned shortly afterwards and pictured for me his family gathered around his bed, Gadamer lucid to the end, and dying in his sleep. The story of my life may be divided into two parts: that before I met Gadamer and that after. I visited the gravesite near their home with Dutt and his wife Hildegard last July. We drove up in his car to the graveyard at the top of a hill not far above his house in Ziegelhausen. On his headstone, there was only his name and dates and one simple word: *Philosophe*. I placed some roses on the grave. Now I know what being a philosopher means. Farewell, beloved teacher and friend. You will be missed.

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Notes

1. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke*, volumes 1–10 (1985–95). Hereafter *GW*.
2. See my webpage (www.mac.edu/~rpalmer) for the several articles that grew out of this. Information on further articles referred to in this paper may be found in the list of my articles on that webpage.
3. An important fruit of that reading was "Toward a Postmodern Interpretive Self-Awareness" in a special issue of the *Journal of Religion*, 15 (July, 1975).
4. See my webpage for a proposed collection of these articles.

5. "Allegorical, Philological, and Philosophical Hermeneutics: Three Modes in a Complex Heritage," in *University of Ottawa Quarterly*, 50, nos. 3–4 (July and October, 1980). The article appeared in *Contemporary Literary Hermeneutics and Interpretation of Classical Texts*, ed. Stephan Kresic (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1981).
6. 38th year, no. 151 (1984).
7. "Leitfäden einer unwahrscheinlichen Debatte," in *Text und Interpretation*, ed. Philippe Forget (Munich: Fink, 1984).
8. Neal Oxenhandler, "The Man With Shoes of Wind: The Derrida–Gadamer Encounter" in *Dialogue and Deconstruction: The Gadamer–Derrida Encounter*, eds. and trans. Richard E. Palmer and Diane P. Michelfelder (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989).
9. Jacques Derrida, "Interpreting Signatures (Nietzsche/Heidegger): Two Questions" in *ibid.*
10. *Philosophy and Literature*, 10, no. 2 (October, 1986). Also see *Hermeneutics: Questions and Prospects*, eds. Gary Shapiro and Alan Sica (Albany: SUNY Press, 1984).
11. "Hermeneutik auf der Spur," *GW* 10 (1995).
12. *Gadamer Lesebuch*, ed. Jean Grondin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997).
13. Etsuro Makita, *Gadamer–Bibliographie: 1922–1994* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1995).
14. *Hermeneutik–Ästhetik–Praktische Philosophie: Gadamer im Gespräch*, ed. Carsten Dutt (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1993, 1995, 2000).
15. *New Republic*, May 15, 2000.