Gadamer's Legacy

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Gadamer lived a long and fruitful life. Born in 1900, the year that phenomenology itself was born—if one takes as a convenient sign-post the publication date of Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen*—Gadamer, a student of both Husserl and Heidegger, managed to bring phenomenology into the twenty-first century. In so doing, he left us with a renewed and revitalized phenomenology, one stripped of its idealist elements (the old "metaphysics of presence") and, being fully postfoundationalist and postessentialist—in a word, postmodern—eminently suited to a new postmetaphysical age. This is his hermeneutical legacy, whose philosophical relevance to this new century it is incumbent on us, his students, to demonstrate and, in so doing, to perpetuate and preserve.

Gadamer's philosophizing was never of a formal, abstract sort; he always viewed philosophical theory as being essentially practical, in the Aristotelian sense: *scientia practica sive politica*. As Richard Palmer says in his introduction to *Gadamer in Conversation*, "Philosophy is not just theory, it is practical, embedded in the matrix of everyday human activity, a matrix requiring decisions and action."[1] As Gadamer makes clear in these conversations, he always had a keen sense for the concrete. He was in this regard a true phenomenologist: "[O]ne ought to work phenomenologically, that is, descriptively, creat-ively—intuitively, and in a concretizing manner" (*GC*, 113). The thing that attracted him most about Husserl's phenomenology, he says, was its "concrete-ness": "I went to Husserl's seminar, and when people spoke in a high-sounding manner he said: 'Not always the big notes! Small change, gentlemen!' I am the son of a natural scientist; I too dislike empty talk" (*GC*, 105). One might say that concreteness and *phronesis* were the two imperatives shaping all his work.[2] "For as long ago as I can remember," he wrote in reflecting on his philosophical journey, "I have been concerned not to say too much and not to lose myself in theoretical constructions which were not fully made good by experience."[3] Gadamer's life-long concern was to return to "the things themselves" and to philosophize (theorize) out of actual human experience.

As a mode of practical thinking geared to "experience" or *praxis*,[4] philosophy's task—as, precisely, a philosophy of practice—is to clarify the nature of the real-world challenges with which we are confronted and, if possible, to aid in their resolution. Gadamer's hermeneutics is of course a general theory of human understanding that lays claim (as does all genuine philosophizing) to universal validity[5]—but it is theory with practical intent. A theory of human understanding that was not of assistance in enabling us to better understand and come to grips with the difficulties of life would be of little value. A good interpretation of things—and a good interpretive theory of what makes for good interpretations—should have practical consequences. Gadamer's hermeneutical phenomenology is indeed, I would contend, of the utmost relevance to the difficult world situation we find ourselves in today.

As has been widely observed, the "new world order" that is slowly emerging could well turn out to be a new world *dis*order. Even Francis Fukuyama seems to have shelved the liberal triumphalism he so prominently displayed not so long ago on the occasion of the demise of socialism and the end of the Cold War (the "End of History" itself, as he then proclaimed).[6] Just when the global progress of liberal values seemed, like the World Spirit itself, to be proceeding apace, along came the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Commentators at the time called this the day the world changed. Certainly, our world-consciousness changed that day and can never again be the same. We can no longer pretend that a passionate antipathy of democratic capitalism or indeed of Western civilization itself—let us simply call it antiglobalization—is the exclusive hallmark of boisterous activists. It is also, as we now know, an increasingly common sentiment in the Islamic world.

The motivations that have led Islamist fundamentalists to declare a Holy War against the West are, to be sure, of an altogether different nature than those propelling Western antiglobalists in their own rage against Western culture. A common characteristic of both, however, is an intellectual bankruptcy when it comes to identifying an alternative to the globalization they decry. Calling people to man the barricades and mount a "resistance" to globalization is not a formula for constructive action. Since what globalization symbolizes in the first instance is the increased interconnectedness and interdependence of the various peoples of the world brought about by developments in technology, it cannot in fact be "resisted" without resisting or stopping technology itself. But this is not possible, short of destroying the freedom of the human spirit, since in the course of world history technological progress and spiritual development go hand in hand.[7] Margaret Thacher once famously remarked that "You can't uninvent the atomic bomb." You cannot stop technology; what you can do, however, is hedge it about with liberal institutions in order to ensure that its likely effects will work toward enhancing rather than eroding the freedom and well-being of all. But it is precisely these liberal values and institutions that—in line with their reverse Orientalism, i.e., Occidentalism[8]—Western antiglobalists reject.

Political Islam (*al-Islam al-siyasi*) is for its part equally bankrupt when it comes to proposing a meaningful alternative to a liberal world order, as both Olivier Roy[9] and Bassam Tibi have recently argued. For his part, Tibi has maintained that Islamic fundamentalists—who subscribe to a form of universalism that is not only absolutist and exclusionist but also totalitarian in spirit—"will not be able to impose their 'order' on the world, but they *can* create *disorder*, on a vast scale."[10] In his view, Islamic fundamentalism "is not simply an intra-Islamic affair, but rather one of the pillars of an emerging new world disorder" (CF, 2). What Tibi sees emerging as a reaction to globalization is a global "clash of civilizations." The only alternative to this, he maintains, is a global order "based on secular democracy and human rights," which would go to make up "an international cross-cultural morality, one that might bring people of

different civilizations and cultures to live together in peace instead of perpetually clashing with one another" (CF, xii).

This is where Gadamer's hermeneutics comes in. The only genuine alternative to a new world disorder and the "clash of civilizations" prophesied by Samuel P. Huntington[11] is what Muhammad Khatami, the reformist president of Iran, has called a "dialogue of civilizations." The hermeneutical enterprise, geared as it is toward mutual understanding and agreement, embodies the values that any such dialogue presupposes. It was fully appropriate, and also revealing, that upon Gadamer's death Pope John Paul II should have sent a telegraph of condolence to his family, since it was after all Gadamer, a true humanist and a philosopher sensitive to cultural difference, who had inspired the Pope to issue his 1999 document on "Memory and Reconciliation."[12] The Pope knew a master of dialogue and "reconciliation" when he saw one. Gadamer's "philosophy of dialogue" is of the utmost relevance today since it is the only basis on which a "dialogue of civilizations" could ever be conducted. "In our age of the 'clash of civilizations,'" Tibi writes, "world peace means accommodation between civilizations on grounds of mutual equality, respect, and recognition" (CF, 3). In saying this, Tibi echoes the sentiments of that great defender of a "politics of civility," Václav Havel, who has emphasized the need to promote "an atmosphere of tolerant solidarity and unity in diversity based on mutual respect, genuine pluralism and parallelism."[13]

Philosophical hermeneutics provides the ethical legitimation for the kind of global politics Havel has called for—"politics as the practice of morality"[14]—and the philosophical basis for the "international cross-cultural morality" advocated by Tibi, for hermeneutics is above all an ethical, political philosophy.

Barring a collapse of the world economy and a loss of confidence in global free trade, i.e., a reversion to economic protectionism, globalization is here to stay. One thing this implies is that we must learn to think in categories other than that of the modern nation-state.[15] As Havel pointed out in an address to the Parliament of Canada in 1999: "The idol of State sovereignty must inevitably dissolve in a world that connects people—regardless of borders—through millions of links of integration ranging from trade, finance and property, up to information; links that impart a variety of universal notions and cultural patterns."[16] This is a development of which Gadamer himself was well aware. "I am convinced," he said, "that our thinking today within the framework not only of the nation-state but also of Europe is proving to be outdated. Isolation from the rest of the world is no longer possible. Humanity today is sitting in a rowboat, as it were, and we must steer this boat in such a way that we do not all crash into the rocks" (GC, 81). The great threat to any Havel-like politics of civility in today's world is the spread of identity politics and ethno-religious nationalism. Since globalization, or what Gadamer calls "the worldwide interwovenness of economies," is by its nature inimical to cultural insularity, it

is also a cosmopolitan force that can help subdue "the winds of nationalism" and keep the vessel that bears humanity from crashing into the rocks.

Unlike many of today's antiglobalists, Gadamer was neither a doomsayer nor a pessimist. "I am very skeptical of every kind of pessimism," he stated. "I find in all pessimism a certain lack of sincerity." In answer to the question "Why?" he responded: "Because no one can live without hope" (*GC*, 83). Indeed, the multifaceted phenomenon of globalization provides grounds for being hopeful: "[A]s the different requirements for life on this planet come together, I believe that unifying experiences will slowly increase and we will reach something like solidarities" (*GC*, 101). Along with economic globalization goes cross-cultural learning exchanges, and Gadamer saw in this positive development a means of counterbalancing the West's traditional privileging of instrumental rationality and for counteracting the long-standing tendency to make of instrumental reason "an instrument to dominate the world" (*GC*, 100).

In his writings subsequent to *Truth and Method* (and subsequent as well to his debate with Habermas) Gadamer had become ever more a socio-political critic concerned to denounce the dominance of instrumental rationality in Western culture. "It is the function of hermeneutical reflection," he stated in response to Habermas, "... to preserve us from naïve surrender to the experts of social technology."[17] From a purely technological point of view, globalization represents a kind of universalization of instrumental rationality, but the answer to the problems produced by the globalization of instrumental reason (the technological unification of the world) is not an impossible halt to globalization. From a Gadamerian point of view, the imperative is rather to work toward developing, alongside the globalization of technological or instrumental reason and on an equally global scale, another and higher form of reason: hermeneutical reason, i.e., communicative rationality, dialogue, or "conversation."

The "philosophy of conversation" is indeed, as Gadamer states, "the essence of what I have been working on over the past thirty years" (*GC*, 56). (See also *GC*, 39: "I moved the idea of conversation to the very center of hermeneutics.") The overriding characteristic of the practitioner of "conversation" or communicative rationality is, in the words of Paul Fairfield,

> openness to communication and learning, a willingness to engage in argumentation, provide reasons, justify, criticize, question, and reexamine all matters before it. The communicatively rational speaker is prepared to have its most heartfelt convictions called into question and learn from opposing perspectives. It is prepared to test its convictions in dialogue with others and admit its own fallibility. Never certain of the ground on which it stands, its beliefs are contingent and revisable in light of future inquiry. While such inquiry may generate consensus on occasion, or even succeed in fashioning a true belief, in principle it remains open to further inquiry.[18]

Fostering dialogical solidarities in this manner—promoting "reasonable-ness"—is the ethical imperative of philosophical hermeneutics. It should be noted in this regard that communicative rationality or conversation has its own operative premise, as it were. The precondition for any genuine dialogue, as Gadamer so often remarked (*"l'âme de son herméneutique*," as Jean Grondin puts it[19]), is a willingness to allow that the other may possibly be right over against oneself. It would be pointless to engage in conversation, in a common pursuit of the truth, if, as Palmer remarks, "one assumed oneself to have a hammerlock on the truth; rather one has to assume that one's interlocutor could be right, or at least could show you something you did not know" (*GC*, 10). Or as Gadamer himself stated: "[I]t belongs to the concept of reason that one must always reckon with the possibility that the opposite conviction, whether of the individual or in the social order, could be correct."[20] Indeed, only when as human beings we are prepared to learn from each other, Gadamer insisted, "is there understanding" (*GC*, 39).

To subscribe to a premise such as this is to subscribe to the core democratic virtues of tolerance and pluralism. Gadamer's hermeneutics, as I have long maintained, provides the philosophical basis for a general theory of democracy, beginning with the notion of hermeneutical reason—the art of reaching agreement and common understandings by means of peaceful dialogue conducted in a spirit of good will.[21] This is the preeminent form of social reason which Gadamer contrasts with instrumental or technological reason. Hermeneutical reason, as Gadamer has defined it, is a form of social reason whose guiding notion is solidarity ("Solidarity ... is the decisive condition and basis of all social reason"[22]). This is the solidarity that as a result of globalization and the "internationalization of world culture" (*GC*, 101) is that of "a humanity that slowly begins to know itself as humanity" (*RAS*, 86–7). As Gadamer insisted with an eye to Hegel—who had declared that the history of the world is "none other than the progress of the consciousness of Freedom"[23]—the highest "principle of reason" in this regard is that of "the freedom of all" (*RAS*, 9). Freedom, it could be said, is the supreme human right. Gadamer's hermeneutics thus not only provides a philosophical underpinning to democratic practice, it also legitimates the notion of universal human rights.[24]

Herein lies one of the great merits of philosophical hermeneutics and one that renders it relevant to the world of the twenty-first century. For the overriding question today is, as Bassam Tibi formulates it: "[H]ow can we combine the need for common rules and norms in international society with the reality of enormous cultural diversity?" (CF, 109). One thing that is clear is that any viable global ethic capable of providing an alternative to a global clash of civilizations must provide for "common rules and norms," i.e., values that are themselves global. Nothing like this is to be expected from the cultural incommensurabilists who populate our postmodernity. However tolerant and respectful of "the Other" they may be, they are, *per definitionem* as it were, in no

position to defend philosophically the notion of a transcultural, "truly universal ethics," in the words of Hahm Chaibong.[25] As Hahm points out, no genuine ethics can be based on particularistic grounds alone: "To make an ethical judgment only to claim that it only applies to a certain culture is to deny its ethical character."

Gadamer's hermeneutics is, however, supremely adept at defending the values required by a universal, transcultural ethics—and in a strictly non-essentialist fashion. Here is where Gadamer's key notion of "application" is of the utmost relevance. There could be no philosophical understanding of anything without an appeal to universals, but universals, as Gadamer has shown, do not exist fully defined in their own right or in any metaphysical sense of the term; they exist only in their application to particular situations. The relation between the "universal" (e.g., the meaning of a text) and the "particular" (e.g., various interpretations of its meaning) is not a vertical or hierarchical relation of logical subsumption but a lateral or circular one of co-determination. Understanding (grasping the universal) is always of a particularizing or "applicational" nature, which is why Gadamer provocatively stated that the universal is properly understood "only if it is understood in a different way every time."[26]

Gadamer's hermeneutics is a unique form of postmodern thought in that it moves decisively beyond both objectivism (essentialism) and relativism.[27] With its notion of concrete universals, Gadamer's hermeneutics defends a notion of universality that is not opposed to particularity and which is thus well suited to addressing the challenge facing us in an age of globalization—that of reconciling the universal with the particular or, as Tibi says, combining the need for common rules and norms with the reality of cultural diversity.[28]

Hermeneutical universalism, while being nonessentialist and thus non-hegemonic, is nevertheless of a properly normative sort, in that it allows for the possibility of a philosophical or rational critique of existing practices (in the same way that hermeneutical interpretation theory allows for rejecting as invalid certain interpretations of texts). To the degree that any human community fails to embody the universal values of communicative rationality, it is a legitimate object of critique. To fail to expose various forms of what Gadamer called "social irrationality" (RAS, 74) for fear of being accused of "ethnocentrism" or "Eurocentrism" would, from a hermeneutical point of view, amount to nothing less than a betrayal of reason. A global ethic inspired by Gadamer's hermeneutics would thus be such as to do what any philosophical ethics must be able to do, namely, provide a principled basis on which to criticize any cultural practice that violates human values. There can be a genuine "dialogue of civilizations" only when all parties to the discussion are prepared to subscribe to certain overriding, universal "principles of reason."

That having been said, it is important to recognize that universal values can never be applied in a mechanical, algorithmic-like way. A global ethic of a hermeneutical (nonessentialist) sort would thus be one that acknowledges that

there is, and can be, no universal formula for the implementation of universal values. There is, as Gadamer well knew, a "plurality which is tied to the exercise of human reason."[29] Reason is essentially pluralistic. This means that every culture, as every individual, must ultimately find its way to the universal on its own. When viewed hermeneutically, universality does not mean homogeneity. Just as there is no reason why globalization should entail the Americanization (or even Westernization) of the various cultures of the world,[30] there is, philosophically speaking, no reason why universality should entail homogeneity.

In the transcultural application of universal values, all is a matter of interpretation in the hermeneutical sense of the term. There are not, and cannot be, formal rules for determining the proper reconciliation of universal and particular. As Paul Fairfield points out, "One applies normative principles not in the formalistic manner of the technician but in a manner that tailors them to the requirements of the individual case and with careful attention to extenuating factors which may cause a revision in judgment. Good judgment [*phronesis*] is an art that tailors a principle to the complexity of a particular case without [formal] criteria of appropriateness." As he also observes:

> [A] liberal order recognizes that particularity is not an eliminable feature of political discourse and, in fact, is ultimately inseparable from universality. The rights and freedoms for which it demands universal recognition are never altogether separable from the particular contexts and applications in which they have their being. Individual [human] rights are not comprehended in a cultural vacuum but depend for their practical significance on the particular circumstances and contexts in which they are applied.[31]

The attempt to promote universal human values on a global scale can thus never be mechanical or absolutist but must always be context-sensitive or context-relative in that it must always take into account the particularities of different cultures. As Tibi says, "We need to ask, how can peoples of different cultures and civilizations speak a common language of human rights and democracy *in their own tongues*?" (CF, 180). This is to say that the adoption of universal principles by any society always involves a creative adaptation of such principles to the particular spirit (as Montesquieu would say) of the society in question. There is no great culture or civilization that does not possess the inner resources for undertaking this sort of creative, particularizing appropriation of the universal.

Karl-Otto Apel was entirely correct when he stated: "[T]oday for the first time, we live in a multi-cultural world civilization that requires interculturally valid basic norms for the various tradition-dependent life forms to live and responsibly work together."[32] He was, however, entirely mistaken when he went on to accuse Gadamer of being "totally confused on the question of the *justification of intersubjectively valid norms*" and possibly of not even

recognizing the issue as a meaningful one. Gadamer has articulated a clear (though by no means simplistic) view of what goes to make for universally valid norms. Gadamer's work was never an uncritical paean to tradition, nor was it directed against what one of his interlocutors referred to as "normativistic moral philosophy"; what it was directed against was any purely abstract, Kantian-like "ethics of the *ought*" (see *GC*, 82). This is precisely one of its great merits. Gadamer has shown that in order to defend universal values one does not have to fall back on the kind of formalistic universalism defended by critical theorists. Gadamer's hermeneutics represents a distinct alternative to both Apel's endeavor to "ground" an ethics of praxis in a transcendental "ultimate foundation" (*Letzbegrüdung*) and Habermas's highly idealistic form of Kantianism.[33]

Hermeneutical universalism is not at all identical to Habermas's "principle of universalization" ("U") which equates universality with context-free unanimity. While Habermas's discourse ethics is a form of deontology, Gadamer's hermeneutical ethics is neither deontological (formalistic) nor consequentialist (utilitarian). It is an ethics that holds to universal "principles of reason," but it is also one that rejects any categorical separation between the universal and its necessarily varying (cultural) "applications" or instanciations. It is neither a priori nor a posteriori, but seeks to reconcile universality and particularity and which recognizes that value judgments are invariably matters of interpretation.[34]

What is peculiar to hermeneutical universalism—in contrast to metaphysical conceptions of universality—is well illustrated in the work of Calvin Schrag who, perhaps wisely, prefers to speak not of "universality" but of "transversality," which he characterizes as "convergence without coincidence, conjuncture without concordance, overlapping without assimilation, and union without absorption." Unity understood in this way "functions as a coefficient of transversality [and] is very much an open-textured *process of unification*, moving beyond the constraints of the metaphysical oppositions of universality versus particularity and identity versus difference." Hermeneutical universalism thus conceived provides "a sheet anchor against any cultural hegemony" and is a welcome postmodern and postmetaphysical alternative to Habermas's heavily logicized "grammar of universalizable validity claims and context-independent conditions of ideality."[35]

This way of conceptualizing (or reconceptualizing) universalism avoids, as Schrag would say, both "the Scylla of a hegemonic unification" and "the Charybdis of a chaotic pluralism"; it is neither Orientalist nor Occidentalist, and it provides the only philosophical basis on which may be worked out (in Tibi's words) "an international cross-cultural morality ... that might bring people of different civilizations and cultures to live together in peace instead of perpetually clashing with one another." Gadamer's hermeneutics lays out the groundwork for a genuinely global ethics.

Experience in the proper sense of the term, as Gadamer always insisted, is

itself hermeneutical, that is, an experience of something other *as* other. Hermeneutical consciousness is the philosophical awareness of this fact, of otherness itself. A hermeneutical ethics is in turn an articulation of the values implicit in hermeneutical experience. The values it defends are nothing other than the practical conditions of possibility of the communicative process itself. These values are decidedly liberal democratic ones, e.g., tolerance, reasonableness, and the commitment to work out differences by means of discourse rather than force. Contrary to what critical theorists would have us believe, Gadamer was not a conservative, either philosophically (in the manner of Leo Strauss or Alasdair MacIntyre) or politically, as Gadamer was himself at pains to point out: "It is a grave misunderstanding to assume that emphasis on the essential factor of tradition which enters into all understanding implies an uncritical acceptance of tradition and socio-political conservatism."[36] Although he rejected Habermas's utopian notion of a *total* critique of tradition, for Gadamer our "belongingness" to tradition in no way precludes "the possibility of our taking a critical stance with regard to every convention."[37] There is nothing in the hermeneutical enterprise that prevents one from subjecting tradition to serious, philosophical critique—even though any such critique can never be total but must, given the presuppositional nature of human understanding, proceed always on a piecemeal basis. Indeed, for Gadamer the hermeneutical "task of bringing people to a self-understanding of themselves" is guided by the overriding exigency of helping "us to gain our freedom in relation to everything that has taken us in unquestioningly" (*RAS*, 149–50).

Gadamer's political views were neither conservative nor communitarian but were, as Richard Palmer has observed, decidedly liberal.[38] As Gadamer himself stated, "I would see myself not as a right-wing conservative but rather as a liberal" (*GC*, 120). Fairfield pertinently observes in this regard:

> Dialogical rationality is properly describable as a liberal theory, since it is the same recognition which liberal politics enshrines in law that are here placed at the centre of a conception of rational discourse and agency. A liberal order is the political counterpart and implication of communicative reason since its principal task is to uphold the liberty of all persons to speak and act in accordance with their individual judgment, to participate in the political process, and to due process of law. It is the institutional application of the conversational virtues and the notion of the human being as a rational agent.[39]

Liberal values are thoroughly embedded in the hermeneutical enterprise, and these values are all ones having to do with the recognition (*Anerkennung*) of the freedom and dignity of one's dialogical partners. As was mentioned above, the ultimate "principle of reason" of any hermeneutics of good will is, as Gadamer said, "the freedom of all." "[W]e understand actual history," Gadamer stated,

"from the perspective of this principle: as the ever-to-be-renewed and the never-ending struggle for this freedom" (*RAS*, 9). Gadamer's hermeneutical theory provides the philosophical underpinnings for a liberal politics of civility and mutual recognition and is guided throughout by the ethical injunction "to translate the principle of freedom into reality" (see *RAS*, 37).

Were all those who are working to achieve a dialogue of civilizations able to infuse the process of globalization with the liberal values conceptualized by hermeneutics, the net result would surely be, as Gadamer would say, "the reawakening consciousness of solidarity of a humanity that slowly begins to know itself as humanity" (*RAS*, 86). As Havel describes it, the supreme task confronting humanity in a globalizing world is indeed a properly hermeneutical one: "If humanity is to survive and avoid new catastrophes, then the global political order has to be accompanied by a sincere and mutual respect among the various spheres of civilization, culture, nations, or continents, and by honest efforts on their part to seek and find the values or basic moral imperatives they have in common, and to build them into the foundations of their coexistence in this globally connected world."[40]

Gadamer's legacy to a globalized world lies in what it can contribute to the formation of the new cross-cultural solidarities envisaged by Havel. After all, the task of philosophy as Gadamer understood it is not just to interpret the world but—by means, precisely, of judicious interpretation—to change it, to assume active responsibility for what the world will be.

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Notes

1. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gadamer in Conversation: Reflections and Commentary*, ed. Richard E. Palmer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 17. (Hereafter *GC*.)

2. See *GC*, 105: "Still today people say of my work in philosophy that it makes things concrete."

3. Gadamer, "Reflections on My Philosophical Journey" in Lewis E. Hahn, ed., *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer* (Library of Living Philosophers, vol. 24) (Chicago: Open Court, 1997), 16.

4. Cf. *GC*, 78–9: "The word 'praxis' points to the totality of our practical life, all our human action and behavior, the self-adaptation of the human being as a whole in this world. Thus it has to do also with one's politics, political advising and consulting, and our passing of laws. Our praxis, in short, is our 'form of life.'"

5. See my "Hermeneutics' Claim to Universality" in *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*.

6. See Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *The National Interest* (Summer 1989) and *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992).

7. See in this regard my "Spiritual Civilization," paper presented to the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (Wuxi, PRC, Aug. 1996).

8. See Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, "Occidentalism," *New York Review of Books* 49, no. 1 (Jan. 17, 2002).

9. See Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, trans. Carol Volk (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

10. Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Disorder* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), xi.

11. See Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *The National Interest* (Summer 1993), as well as his more extensive treatment of the matter, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

12. See the obituary of Gadamer by Gerald Owen in the *National Post* (March 29, 2002).

13. Václav Havel, "The End of the Modern Era," *New York Times* (March 1, 1992).

14. Havel, *Summer Meditations* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 15.

15. See in this regard my "Nationality and Universality" in G. B. Madison, Paul Fairfield, and Ingrid Harris, *Is There a Canadian Philosophy? Reflections on the Canadian Identity* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2000).

16. Havel, "Address by Václav Havel, President of the Czech Republic, to the Senate and the House of Commons of the Parliament of Canada," on-line (www.hrad.cz/president/Havel/speeches/1999/2904_uk.html); reprinted (with modifications) as "Kosovo and the End of the Nation-State," *New York Review of Books* 46, no. 10 (June 10, 1999).

17. Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, ed. and trans. David E. Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 40. As Richard Bernstein observed, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics confronts us with "a practical task," which is "to foster the type of dialogical communities in which *phronesis* becomes a living reality and where citizens can actually assume what Gadamer tells us is their 'noblest task'—'decision-making according to one's own responsibility'—instead of conceding the task to the expert" (*Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983], 159).

18. Paul Fairfield, *Moral Selfhood in the Liberal Tradition: The Politics of Individuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 200.

19. See Jean Grondin, "In Memoriam Hans-Georg Gadamer," *Symposium*, 6, no. 1 (Spring/Printemps 2002), 6.

20. Gadamer, "Reply to My Critics," 294.

21. See my *The Politics of Postmodernity: Essays in Applied Hermeneutics* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2001).

22. Gadamer, *Reason in the Age of Science*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981), 87. (Henceforth *RAS*.)

23. See G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), 19.

24. Hermeneutics does not conceive of human rights in metaphysical fashion as "natural rights" but, rather, as rational rights, as rights of (social) reason. See in this regard my "Hermeneutics: Gadamer and Ricoeur" in Richard Kearney, ed., *Continental Philosophy in the 20th Century*. Routledge History of Philosophy Vol. 8 (London: Routledge, 1994), 346, n. 101. For an extended discussion of human rights from a hermeneutical perspective, see my *The Political Economy of Civil Society and Human Rights* (London: Routledge, 1998).

25. See Hahm Chaibong, "Confucianism and Western Rights: Conflict or Harmony?" *The Responsive Community* 10, no. 1 (Winter 1999/2000), 56.

26. See Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 275–6.

27. For a discussion of the two main forms of philosophical postmodernism—hermeneutical and "poststructuralist"—and how they differ in important ways, see *The Politics of Postmodernity*, Chapter 1: "Coping with Nietzsche's Legacy: Rorty, Derrida, Gadamer."

28. See in this regard my "China in a Globalizing World: Reconciling the Universal with the Particular," paper presented to the Chinese National Academy of Social Sciences (Beijing, June 2001), as well as *The Politics of Postmodernity*,Chapter 2: "Hermeneutics, the Lifeworld, and the Universality of Reason (The Case of China)".

29. See Gadamer, "Reply to My Critics," 294.

30. See Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 11, 17: "Globalization is not the story of homogenization.... Globalization does not necessarily or even frequently imply homogenization or Americanization."

31. Fairfield, *Moral Selfhood in the Liberal Tradition*, 204, 240.

32. Karl-Otto Apel, "Regulative Ideas or Truth-Happening? An Attempt to Answer the Question of the Conditions of the Possibility of Valid Understanding" in *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, 78.

33. As Grondin pertinently remarks, "Habermas est parfois plus kantien que Kant dans le sens où son formalisme va si loin qu'il n'énonce jamais les moyens de réalisation ou d'actualisation de la rationalité communicationnelle, non stratégique" (*L'Horizon herméneutique de la pensée contemporaine* [Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, 1993], 127).

34. For a comparative analysis of the positions of Habermas and Gadamer, see my "Critical Theory and Hermeneutics: Some Outstanding Issues in the Debate" in Lewis E. Hahn, ed., *Perspectives on Habermas* (Chicago: Open Court, 2000).

35. See Calvin O. Schrag, *The Self After Postmodernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 128, 133. In Schrag's view, "Habermas reverts to purchases on concepts of transcendence, rationality, unity, and universality that have outworn their usefulness in the wake of the postmodern challenge" (134). For an overview of Schrag's work, see my "Bringing Philosophy into the Twenty-First Century: Calvin Schrag and the Phenomenological Movement" in Martin Beck Mastustík and William L. McBride, eds., *Calvin O. Schrag and the Task of Philosophy After Postmodernity* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2002).

36. Gadamer, "The Problem of Historical Consciousness" in Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan, eds., *Interpretive Social Science: A Reader* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 108.

37. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 495.

38. According to Palmer, Jean Grondin's biography of Gadamer (*Hans-Georg Gadamer: Eine Biographie* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999]) "paints a well-documented picture of Gadamer's liberal political views" (see *GC*, 21).

39. Fairfield, *Moral Selfhood in the Liberal Tradition*, 207.

40. Havel, "A Farewell to Politics," *New York Review of Books* 49, no. 16 (Oct. 24, 2002), 4.