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The Tasks of Theology

In chapter two there were distinguished and related some eight functional specialties, namely, research, interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications. Something more needs to be said on each of these though, perforce, I must be brief on the first and the last, research and communications, because their extreme concreteness does not lend itself to general treatment.

1. Research

I have little to add to what I remarked about research in chapter two. It is a matter of discovering and making available the relevant data. It differs from one field to another, and indeed from one project to another. It is learnt in laboratories and field work, in seminars and doctoral dissertations. It is carried out by a thorough grasp of issues, a lively eye for possibilities, a carefully planned strategy, and good luck.

The area of theological research is the religion on which the theology reflects. The general purpose of the research is fixed by the two phases of theology, namely, so to listen to the past as to speak to the present for the good of the future. Specific purposes come to light within each contemporary on-going process, and the significant theologian is the man that reads aright the signs of the times to carry out the operations that overcome evils and promote the good.

The openness of the foregoing position is to be noted. Theology is conceived, not as something intrinsically different from religious studies, but rather as ~~religious studies~~ a type of religious study that ~~is~~ is not content with

research, interpretation, and history but goes on to add dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics, and ~~and~~ communications. Again, while theology can be content to be simply the theology of a single religious group, the existence of the specialty, dialectic, enables it to be more comprehensive, to be the theology of a dialectically related set of distinct religious groups. Moreover, such comprehensiveness need not be restricted, say, to the Christian religions; for it is Christian doctrine that God gives all men sufficient grace for salvation, and so it should seem possible, especially as religious studies advance in penetration and profundity, to find common as well as divergent elements among all the religions of mankind.

In this connection see Friedrich Heiler, "The History of Religions as a Preparation for the Co-operation of Religions," in The History of Religions, Essays in Methodology, edited by M. Eliade and J. Kitagawa, Univ. of Chicago Press 1959, pp. 137-155. ^{Though} ~~While~~ Heiler stresses the common element in all religion, the technique of dialectic enables the theologian ^{while} to recognize the differences as well, ~~and~~ the decision of foundations enables him to determine which are acceptable and ^{are to be} which rejected.

The possibility of the foregoing openness and comprehensiveness arises from the transition from ^{the ideals set by} deductive logic to ^{the ideals set by} method. Religions are empirical facts that ~~can~~ offer data for investigation, and method guides the course of the investigation. In contrast, a ^{deductivist} approach has to have at the very outset the premisses from which all conclusions can ~~be~~ be reached and so, from the outset, there are bound to

be as many distinct and irreconcilable ^{sets of} premisses as there are differing religions and even differing theologies.

2. Interpretation

Our concern is with interpretation as a functional specialty. It is related to research, history, dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics, and ^mcommunications. It depends on them and they depend on it. None the less, it has its own proper end and its specific mode of operating. It can be treated separately.

One of the advantages of the notion of functional specialty is precisely this possibility of separate treatment of issues that otherwise become enormously complex. See, for example, such monumental works as Emilio Betti's Teoria generale della interpretazione [Milano (Giuffrè) 1955] and Hans-Georg Gadamer's Wahrheit und Methode [Tübingen (Mohr) 1960]. Or see my own discussion of the truth of an interpretation in Insight, pp. 562-594, and observe how ideas presented there recur here in quite different functional specialties. For instance, what there is termed a universal viewpoint, here is realized by ~~advocating~~ ^{distinct} advocating a functional specialty named dialectic.

On the historical background of contemporary hermeneutical thought see H. G. Gadamer, op. cit., pp. 162-250.

I shall follow a common enough terminology and understand by "hermeneutics" principles of interpretation and by ~~the~~ "exegesis" the application of the principles to a given task. The task to be envisaged will be the interpretation of a text, but the presentation will be so general that it can be applied to any exegetical task.

First, then, not every text stands in need of exegesis. In general, the more a text is systematic in conception and execution, the less does it stand in need of any exegesis. So Euclid's Elements were composed about twenty-three centuries ago. One has to study to come to understand them, and that labor may be greatly reduced by a competent teacher. But while there is a task of coming to understand Euclid, there is no task of interpreting Euclid. The correct understanding is unique; incorrect understanding can be shown to be mistaken; and so, while there have been endless commentators on the clear and simple gospels, there exists ^{little or} no exegetical literature on Euclid.

However, besides the systematic mode of cognitional operations, there is also the commonsense mode. Moreover, there are very many brands of common sense. Common sense is common, not to all men of all places and times, but to the members of a community successfully in communication with one another. Among them one's commonsense statements have a perfectly obvious meaning and

stand in no need of any exegesis. But statements may be transported to ~~the~~ other communities distant in place or in time. Horizons, ~~in~~ values, Interests, intellectual development, experience may differ. Expression may have intersubjective, artistic, ^ssymbolic components that appear strange. Then there arises the question, What is meant by the sentence, the paragraph, the chapter, the book? Many answers seem possible, and none seems quite satisfactory.

Such in general is the problem of interpretation. But at the present time four factors have combined to heighten it enormously. The first is the emergence of world consciousness and historical consciousness: we are aware of many very different cultures existing at the present time, and we are aware of the great differences that separate present from past cultures. The second is the pursuit of the human sciences, in which meaning is a fundamental category and, consequently, interpretation a fundamental task. The third is the confusion that reigns in cognitional theory and epistemology: interpretation is just a particular case of knowing, namely, knowing what is meant; it follows that confusion about knowing leads to confusion about interpreting. The fourth factor, finally, is modernity: modern man has been busy creating his modern world, freeing himself from reliance on tradition and authority, working out his own world-view, and so re-interpreting the views held in the past. So the Greek and Latin classical authors have been removed from the context of Christian humanism and revealed as ~~pagans~~ pagans. So the Law has been removed from the context of Christian morality and theology to be placed in ^{the context of} some post-Christian philosophy and attitude to life. So the Scriptures have been

removed from the context of Christian doctrinal development and ~~placed~~ restored to the pre-dogmatic context of the history of religions.

Embedded in the problem of hermeneutics, then, there are quite different and far profounder problems. They are to be met neither by a ~~wholesale~~ wholesale rejection ~~and~~ of modernity nor ~~now~~ by a wholesale acceptance of modernity. In my opinion they can be met only by the development and application of theological method. Only in that fashion can one distinguish and keep separate problems of hermeneutics and problems in history, dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications. In fact the most striking feature of ^{much} contemporary discussion of hermeneutics is that it attempts to treat all these issues as if they were hermeneutical. They are not.

2.1 Basic Exegetical Operations

There are three basic exegetical operations: (1) understanding the text; (2) judging how correct one's understanding of the text is; and (3) stating what one judges to be the correct understanding of the text.

Understanding the text has four main aspects. One understands the object to which the text refers. One understands the words employed in the text. One understands the author that employed the words. One arrives at such understanding through a process of learning and even at times as a result of a conversion. Needless to say, ^{the} four aspects are aspects of a single coming to understand. Further, one may understand the object independently of the text, ^{or} one may come to understand the object through the ^{of} text.

To judge the correctness of one's understanding of a text raises the problem of context, of the hermeneutic circle, of the relativity of the totality of relevant data, of the possible relevance of more remote inquiries, of the limitations to be placed on the scope of ~~an~~ one's interpretation.

To state what one judges to be the correct understanding of the text raises the question of the precise task of the exegete, of the categories he is to employ, of the language he is to speak.

2.2 Understanding the Object

A distinction has to be drawn between the exegete and the student. Both learn, but what they learn is different. The student reads a text to learn about objects that as yet he does not know. He is required to have learnt the meanings of words and to know about similar or analogous objects that he can use as starting-points in constructing the objects he is to learn about. On the other hand, the exegete may already know all about the objects treated in a text, yet his whole task remains to be performed; for that task is not to know about objects; it is not to know whether or not the text reveals ~~adequate~~ adequate knowledge of the objects; it is ~~to~~ , real or imaginary, simply to know what happened to be the objects intended by the author of the text.

In practice, of course, the foregoing distinction will ~~be~~ imply not a rigid separation of the roles of student and of exegete but rather a difference of emphasis. The student also is something of an interpreter of texts, and the exegete also learns something from texts that otherwise he would not know. However, though the distinction ~~is of emphasis,~~

in practice is only of emphasis, it remains that our present concern is theory and, indeed, not the general learning theory that regards students but the special learning theory that regards exegesis.

~~Now, in general, the exegete will know the meanings of the words employed in the text~~

I have said that the whole exegetical task remains to be performed even though the exegete already knows all about the objects treated in a text. I now must add that the more the exegete does know about such objects, the better. For he cannot begin to interpret the text unless he knows the language in which it is written and, if he knows that language, then he also knows the objects to which the words in that language refer. Such knowledge, of course, is general and potential. Reading the text, when its meaning is obvious, makes that general knowledge more particular and that potential knowledge actual. On the other hand, when the meaning of the text is not obvious ~~for~~ because of this or that defect, still the greater the exegete's resources, the greater the likelihood that he will be able to enumerate all possible interpretations and assign to each its proper measure of probability.

Now the foregoing amounts to a rejection of what may be named the Principle of the Empty Head. According to this principle, if one is not to "read into" the text what is not there, if one is not to settle in a priori fashion what the ~~e~~ text must mean no matter what it says, if one is not to drag in one's own notions and opinions, then one must just drop all preconceptions of every kind, attend simply to the text, see all that is there and nothing that is not there, let the author speak ~~or~~ for himself, let the ~~author~~ author interpret himself.

In brief, the less one knows, the better an exegete one will be.

These contentions, I should say, are both right and wrong. They are right in decrying a well-known evil: interpreters tend to impute to authors opinions that the authors did not express. They are wrong in the remedy they propose, for they take it for granted that all an interpreter has to do is to look at a text and see what is there. That is quite mistaken.

The principle of the empty head rests on a naive intuitionism. So far from tackling the complex task of ^{first,} understanding the object, the words, the author, oneself, ^{secondly,} of judging just how correct one's understanding is and, ^{thirdly,} of adverting to the problems in expressing one's understanding and judgement, the principle of the empty head bids the interpreter forget his own ^{views,} ~~mind~~ and look at what is out there, let the author interpret himself. In fact, what is out there? There is just a series of signs. Anything over and above a re-issue of the same ~~high~~ signs in the same order will be mediated by the experience, intelligence, and judgement of the interpreter. The less that experience, the less cultivated that intelligence, the less formed that judgement, the greater the likelihood that the interpreter will impute to the author an opinion that the ~~the~~ author never entertained. On the other hand, the wider the interpreter's experience, the deeper and fuller the development of his understanding, the better balanced his judgement, the greater the likelihood that he will discover just what the author meant. Interpretation is not just a matter of looking at signs. ~~For~~ That is imperative. But it is no less imperative ~~that one proceed from habitual, general knowledge~~ ~~that, guided by the signs, one proceed from one's habitual,~~

that, guided by the signs, one proceed from one's habitual, general knowledge to actual and more particular knowledge; and the greater the habitual knowledge one possesses, the greater the likelihood that one will be guided by the signs themselves and not by personal preferences and by guess-work.

In this connection, Rudolph Bultmann has written:

"Nothing is sillier than the requirement that an interpreter must silence his subjectivity, extinguish his individuality, if he is to attain objective knowledge. That requirement makes good sense only in so far as it is taken to mean that the interpreter has to silence his personal wishes with regard to the outcome of the interpretation... For the rest, unfortunately, the requirement overlooks the very essence of genuine understanding. Such understanding presupposes precisely the utmost ~~life-likeness~~ liveliness of the understanding subject and the richest possible development of his individuality." From an article entitled "Das Problem der Hermeneutik," Zschr. f. Theol. u. Kirche, 47(1950), 64. Reprinted in Glauben und Verstehen, II, 230.

With this view I agree as far as it goes. However, I sharply distinguish between ~~understand~~ and understanding and judgement, between the development of the one and the development of the other.

2.3 Understanding the Words

Understanding the object accounts for the plain meaning of the text, the meaning that is obvious because both author and interpreter understand the same thing in the same way. However, as in conversation so too in reading the author may be speaking of P and the reader may be thinking of Q. In that case, sooner or later, there will arise difficulty. Not everything true of P will also be true of Q, and so the author will appear to the interpreter to be saying what is false and even absurd.

At this point the controversialist has all that he wants. On his mistaken assumption that the author is speaking of Q, he sets about his triumphant demonstration of the author's errors and absurdities. But the interpreter, ~~however~~ considers the possibility that he himself is at fault. He reads further. He rereads. Eventually he stumbles on the possibility that the author was thinking, not of Q, but of P, and with that correction the meaning of the text becomes plain.

Now this process can occur any number of times. It is the self-correcting process of learning. It is the manner in which we acquire and develop common sense. It heads towards a limit in which we possess a habitual core of insights that enables us to deal with any situation, or any text of a group, by adding one or two more insights relevant to the situation, or text, in hand.

Such ^{commonsense} understanding is preconceptual. It is not to be confused with one's formulation of the meaning of the text *that* one has come to understand. And this formulation itself is not to be confused with the judgements one makes on the truth of the understanding and formulation. One has to

if one is to understand ~~before one can~~, formulate what one has understood. One has to understand and formulate ~~before one can~~ pass judgement ~~made~~ in any explicit fashion.

Moreover, it is understanding that surmounts the hermeneutic circle. The meaning of a text is an intentional entity. It is a unity that is unfolded through parts, sections, chapters, paragraphs, sentences, words. We can grasp the unity, the whole, only through the parts. At the same time the parts are determined in their meaning by the whole which each part partially reveals. Such is the hermeneutic circle. Logically it is a circle. But coming to understand is not a logical deduction. It is a self-correcting process of learning that spirals into the meaning of the whole by using each new part to fill out and qualify and correct the understanding reached in reading the earlier parts.

Rules of hermeneutics or exegesis list the points worth considering in one's efforts to arrive at an understanding of the text. Such are an analysis of the composition of the text, the determination of the author's purpose, knowledge of the people for whom he wrote, of the occasion on which he wrote, of the nature of the linguistic, grammatical, stylistic means he employed. However, the main point about all such rules is that one does not understand the text because one has observed the rules but, on the contrary, one observes the rules in order to arrive at an understanding of the text. Observing the rules can be no more than mere ~~pedantry~~ pedantry that leads to an understanding of nothing of any moment, to missing the point entirely. The essential observance is to note one's every failure to understand clearly and exactly and to sustain one's reading and rereading until ~~my inventive~~ ~~ness~~

one's inventiveness or good ~~luck~~ luck have eliminated one's failures in comprehension.

2.4 Understanding the Author

When the meaning of a text is plain, then with the author by his words we understand the object to which his words refer. When a simple misunderstanding arises, as when the author thought of P but the reader of Q, then its correction is the relatively simple matter of sustained rereading and inventiveness. But there can arise the need for a long and arduous use of the self-correcting process of learning. Then a first reading yields a little understanding and a host of puzzles, and a second reading yields only slightly more understanding but far more puzzles. The problem, now, is a matter not of understanding the object or the words but of understanding the author himself, his nation, language, time, culture, way of life, and cast of mind.

Now the self-correcting process of learning is, not only the way in which we acquire our own common sense, but also the way in which we acquire an understanding of other people's common sense. Even with our contemporaries & with the same language, culture, and station in life, we not only understand things with them but also understand things in our own way and, at the same time, their different way of understanding the same things. We can remark that a phrase or an action is "just like you." By that we mean that the ~~action on~~ phrase or action fits in with the way we understand your way of understanding and going about things. But just as we can come to an understanding of our fellows' understanding, a commonsense grasp of the ways in which we understand not with them but them, so the same process

can be pushed to a far fuller development, and then the self-correcting process of learning will bring us to an understanding of the common sense of another place, time, culture, and cast of mind. This is, however, the enormous labor of becoming a scholar.

The phrase, understanding another's common sense, must not be misunderstood. It is not a matter of understanding what common sense is: that is the task of the cognitional theorist. It is not making another's common sense one's own, so that one would go about ~~speaking~~ speaking and acting like a fifth-century Athenian or a first-century Christian. But, just as common sense itself is a matter of understanding what to say and what to do in any of a series of situations that commonly ~~arise~~ arise, so understanding another's common sense is a matter of understanding what he would say and what he would do in any of the situations that commonly arose in his place and time.

2.5 Understanding Oneself

The major texts, the classics, in religion, letters, philosophy, theology, not only are beyond the ~~inter~~ initial horizon of their interpreters but also demand an intellectual, moral, religious conversion of the interpreter over and above the broadening of his horizon.

In this case the interpreter's initial knowledge of the object is just inadequate. He will come to know it only in so far as he pushes the self-correcting process of learning to a revolution in his own outlook. He can succeed in acquiring that habitual understanding of an author that spontaneously finds his wave-length and locks on to it,

only after he has effected a radical change in himself.

This is the existential dimension of the problem of hermeneutics. It lies at the very root of the perennial divisions of mankind in their views on reality, morality, and religion. Moreover, in so far as conversion is only the basic step, in so far as ^{it} ~~there~~ remains the labor of thinking out everything from the new and profounder viewpoint, there results the characteristic of the classic set forth by Friedrich Schlegel: "A classic is a writing that is never fully understood. But those that are educated and educate ~~themselves~~ ^{more} must always want to learn from it."

Quoted by H. G. Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode,
Tübingen (Mohr) 1960, p. 274, n. 2.

From this existential dimension there follows another basic component in the task of hermeneutics. The classics ground a tradition. They create the milieu in which they are studied and interpreted. They produce in the reader through the cultural tradition the mentality, the Vorverständnis, from which they will be read, studied, interpreted. Now such a tradition may be genuine, authentic, a long accumulation of insights, adjustments, re-interpretations, that repeats the original message afresh for each age. In that case the reader will exclaim, as did the disciples on the way to Emmaus: "Did not our hearts burn within us, when he spoke on the ~~way~~ way and opened to us the scriptures?" (Lk 24, 32). On the other hand, the tradition may be unauthentic. It may consist in a watering-down of the original ~~message~~ message, in recasting it into terms and meanings that fit into the assumptions and convictions of those that have dodged the issue of radical

conversion. In that case a genuine interpretation will be met with incredulity and ridicule, as was St. Paul when he preached in Rome and was led to quote Isaiah: "Go to this people and say: you will hear and hear, ^{but} and ~~not~~ never understand; you will look and look, but never see" (Acts 28, 26).

At this point one moves from the functional specialty, interpretation, to the functional specialties, history, ~~and~~ ^{re} foundations. dialectic, ^{re} If the interpreter is to know, not merely what his author meant, but also what is so, then he has to be critical not merely of his author but also of the tradition that has formed his own mind. With that step he is propelled beyond ~~the writing of history to the making of history.~~

2.6 Judging the Correctness of one's Interpretation.

Such a judgement has the same criterion as any judgement on the correctness of commonsense insights. The criterion is whether or not one's insights are invulnerable, whether or not they hit the bull's eye, whether or not they meet all relevant questions so that there are no further questions that can ~~not~~ lead to further insights and so complement, qualify, correct the insights already possessed.

The relevant questions usually are not the questions that inspire the investigation. One begins from one's own Fragestellung, from the viewpoint, interests, concerns one had prior to studying the text. But the study of the text is a process of learning. As one learns, one discovers more and more the ~~a~~ questions that concerned the author, the issues that confronted him, the problems he was trying to solve, the material and methodical resources at his disposal

for solving them. So one comes to set aside one's own initial interests and concerns, to share those of the author, to reconstruct the context of his thought and speech.

On commonsense judgements, see Insight, pp. 28³~~8~~-299.

My own experience of this change was in writing my doctoral dissertation. I had been brought up a Molinist. I was studying St. Thomas' Thought on Gratia Operans, a study later published in Theological Studies, 1941-42. Within a month or so it was completely evident to me that Molinism had no contribution to make to an understanding of Aquinas.

But what precisely is meant by the word, context? There are two meanings. There is the heuristic meaning the word has at the beginning of an investigation, and it tells one where to look to find the context. There is the actual meaning the word ~~acquires as one develops one's initial horizon and comes to~~ acquires as ~~one~~ one moves out of one's initial horizon and moves to a fuller horizon that includes a significant part of the author's.

Heuristically, then, the context of the word is the sentence. The context of the sentence is the paragraph. The context of the paragraph is the chapter. The context of the chapter is the book. The context of the book is the author's opera omnia, his life and times, the state of the question in his day, his problems, prospective readers, scope and aim.

Actually, context is the interweaving of questions and answers in limited groups. To answer any one question will give rise to further questions. To answer them will give rise to still more. But, while this process can recur a number of times, while it might go on indefinitely if one keeps changing

the topic, still it does not go on indefinitely on one and the same topic. So context is a nest of interlocked or interwoven questions and answers; it is limited inasmuch as all the questions and answers have a bearing, direct or indirect, on a single topic; and because it is limited, there comes a point in an investigation when no further relevant questions arise, ^{then} and ^{the} possibility of judgement has emerged. When there are no further relevant questions, there are no further insights to complement, correct, qualify those that have been reached.

Still, what is this single topic that limits the set of relevant questions and answers? As the distinction between the heuristic and the actual meanings of the word, context, makes plain, the single topic is something to be discovered in the course of the investigation. By persistence or good luck or both one hits upon some element in the interwoven set of questions and answers. One follows up one's discovery by further ~~and~~ questions. Sooner or later one ~~hits~~ hits upon another element, then several more. There is a period in which insights multiply at a great rate, when one's perspectives are constantly being reviewed, enlarged, qualified, refined. One reaches a point when the ~~overs~~ overall view emerges, when ~~or~~ other components fit into the picture in a subordinate manner, when further questions ~~will~~ yield ever diminishing returns, when one can say just what was going forward and back it up with the convergence of multitudinous evidence.

The single topic, then, is something that can be indicated generally in a phrase or two yet unfolded in ^{often} an enormously complex set of subordinate and interconnected questions and answers. One reaches that set by striving persistently to

understand the object, understand the words, understand the author and, if need be, understand oneself. The key to success is to keep adverting to what has not yet been understood, for that is the source of further questions, and to hit upon the questions directs attention to the parts or aspects of the text where answers may be found. So R. G. Collingwood has praised "... the famous advice of Lord Acton, 'study problems, not periods.'" So H. G. Gadamer has praised Collingwood's insistence that knowledge consists, not just in propositions, but in answers to questions, so that to understand the answers one has to know the questions as well. But my present point is not merely the significance of questions as well as answers -- though, of course, that is in full accord with my cognitional theory -- ~~it also~~ but also regards the interlocking of questions and answers and the ~~closed~~ eventual enclosure of that interrelated multiplicity within a higher limited unity. For it is ^{the} emergence of that enclosure that enables one to recognize the task as completed and to pronounce one's interpretation ~~of~~ as probable, highly probable, in some respects, perhaps, certain.

R. G. Collingwood, Autobiography, London (Oxford U. P.) 1939, 1967, p. 130. See also The Idea of History, Oxford (Clarendon) 1946, p. 281.

H. G. Gadamer, op. cit., p. 352.

~~It will help clarify what I have been saying if I contrast the above position with Collingwood's. First, then, my account of meaning and especially of meaning as constitutive component in human living accords with his main views on human nature and human history.~~

2.7 A Clarification

A few contrasts may add clarity to what I have been saying. Collingwood has conceived history as re-enacting the past. Schleiermacher has contended that the interpreter will understand the text better than the author did. There is something in these statements but they are inaccurate and so may be misleading. To clear things up let me take a concrete example. Thomas Aquinas effected a remarkable development in the theology of grace. He did so not at a single stroke but ~~mmmm~~ in a series of writings over a period of ~~abmmmm a dozen years or more~~. He rarely mentions that ~~he has changed his opinions and in this matter does not provide one of the few occasions on which he does~~. No doubt of a dozen years or more. Now, while ~~it~~ there is no doubt that Aquinas was quite conscious of what he was doing on each of the occasions on which he returned to the topic, still on none of the earlier occasions was he ~~y~~ aware of what he would be doing on the later occasions, and there is just no evidence that after the last occasion he went back over all his writings on the matter, ~~then~~ observed each of the long and complicated series of steps in which the development was effected, grasped their interrelations, saw just what moved him forward and, perhaps, what held ^{back} him ^A in each of the steps. But such a reconstruction of the whole process is precisely what the interpreter does. His ^{overall} view, his nest of questions and answers, is precisely a grasp of this array of interconnections and interdependences constitutive of a single development.

What I find true, then, in Schleiermacher's contention is that the interpreter may understand very fully and accurately something that the author knew about only in a very vague and general fashion. Moreover, this precise knowledge will be of enormous value in interpreting the text. But it does not follow that the interpreter will understand the text better than the author did for, while the interpreter can have a firm grasp of all that was going forward, it is rare indeed that he will have access to sources and circumstances that have to be known if the many accidentals in the text are to be accounted for. Again, with respect to Collingwood, it is true that the interpreter or historian reconstructs but it is not true that in thought he reproduces the past. In our example, what Aquinas was doing, was developing the doctrine of grace. What the interpreter was doing, was building up the evidence for an element in the history of the theology of grace and, while he can arrive at a grasp of the main movement and an understanding of many details, he rarely achieves and never needs an understanding of every detail. Judgement rests on the absence of further relevant questions.

The reader may feel, however, that ^I~~we~~ have been arguing from a very special case, from which general conclusions should not be drawn. Certainly, I have not been arguing about a case that is universal, for ^I~~I~~ have already affirmed that there are cases in which the hermeneutical problem is slight or non-existent. The question, accordingly, is how general ~~is~~ ^{are} the main lines of the instance from which I have argued. ~~First, then, there is always the distinction between the author's consciousness and his knowledge: the author always writes consciously; but to consciousness there has~~

argued.

First, then, my instance was from the history of ideas. It is quite a broad field and of major interest to theological method. But it is uncluttered by the complexities involved in interpreting instances of intersubjective, artistic, symbolic, or incarnate meaning. In these cases understanding the author is ~~is incomplete unless it is accompanied with feeling what he felt~~ inadequate unless the interpreter has some capacity to feel ~~what the~~ what the author felt and to respect the values that the author respected. But this is re-enactment, not in understanding and thought, but in feeling and value-judgements.

Secondly, even within the history of ideas, the selected instance was exceptionally clear-cut. But while the same clarity is not to be had in other types of instance, the points that here are clear either recur in other instances or enjoy possess different features that compensate. In the first place there is always the distinction between the ~~the~~ author's consciousness of his activities and his knowledge of them. Authors are always conscious of their intentional operations but to reach knowledge of them there must be added introspective attention, inquiry and understanding, reflection and judgement. Further, this process from consciousness to knowledge, if more than general and vague, is arduous and time-consuming; it leads into the impasse of scrutinizing¹ the self-scrutinizing self and into the oddity of the author who writes about himself writing; such authors are exceptional. Finally, the selected example was a slow development that can be documented. But any notable development ~~is~~ occurs slowly. The insight that provokes the cry, Eureka, is just the last insight in a long series of slowly accumulating insights. This process can

be documented if the author writes steadily while it is going forward. On the other hand, if he does not write until the development is completed, his presentation will approximate logical or even systematic form, and this will reveal the nest of relevant questions and answers.

So much for judging the correctness of an interpretation. We have concentrated on the possibility of this judgement. On actual judgement little can be said. It depends on many factors and, in a general discussion, they can be no more than hypothetical. Let us suppose that an exegete has grasped with great accuracy just what was going forward and that his understanding of the text can be confirmed by multitudinous details. Now, if really there are no further questions, his interpretation will be certain. But there may be further relevant questions that he has overlooked and, on this account, he will speak modestly. Again, there may be further relevant questions to which he adverts, but he is unable to uncover the evidence that would lead to a solution. Such further questions may be many or few, of major or minor importance. It is this range of possibilities that leads exegetes to speak with greater or less confidence or diffidence and with many careful distinctions between the more probable and the less probable elements in their interpretations.

2.8 Stating the Meaning of the Text

Our concern is with the statement to be made by the exegete qua exegete. As in the other functional specialties, so too in interpretation the exegete experiences, understands, judges, and decides. But he does so for a specific purpose. His principal concern is to understand, and the understanding he seeks is, not the understanding of objects, which pertains to the systematics of the second phase, but the understanding of ~~texts~~ texts, which pertains to the first phase of theology, to theology not as speaking to the present but as listening, as coming to listen to the past.

It is true of course that texts are understood in the seven other functional specialties. They are understood in research but, then, the aim of the textual critic ^{is} is to settle, ~~not~~ not what was meant, but just what was written. They are understood in history but, then, the aim of the historian is to settle, not what one author was intending, but what was going forward in a group or community. They are understood in dialectic but, then, the aim is ~~to~~ confrontation: interpreters and historians disagree; their disagreement will not be eliminated by further study of the data because it arises from the personal stance and horizon of the ^{interpreters} interpreters and historians; the purpose of dialectic is to invite the reader to an encounter, a personal encounter, with the originating and traditional and interpreting and history-writing persons of the past in their divergences. As understanding texts is relevant to the dialectic that invites or challenges the theologian to conversion, so too *it* is relevant to the foundations that objectify the conversion}

though, of course, objectifying a conversion is one thing and understanding a text is quite another. No less, understanding texts has its importance for the specialty, & doctrines, but there the theologian's concern is the relation between the ~~communities~~ ~~communities~~ community's origins and the decisions it reached in its successive identity-crises. In like manner, a systematic understanding of objects is something quite different from ~~an-understands~~ a commonsense understanding of texts, even though one learns about the objects from the texts. Finally, all this listening to the past and transposing it into the present have no purpose unless one is ready to tell people of today just what it implies for them; and so we have the eighth functional specialty, communications, concerned with the effective presentation -- to every individual in every class and culture through all media -- of the message deciphered by the exegete.

Now I have not the slightest objection to the existence of highly gifted ~~individuals~~ individuals that can perform and ~~do~~ do so superbly in all eight of these functional specialties. My only concern is that there be recognized that the eight performances consist of eight different sets of operations directed to eight interdependent but distinct ends. ^{This concern is,} ~~It is,~~ of course, a concern for method, a concern to obstruct the blind imperialism that selects some of the ends, insists on their importance, and neglects the rest.

Accordingly, when I ask about the expression of the meaning of a text by an exegete qua exegete, I am in no wise impugning or deprecating the occurrence or the importance of many other modes of expression. H. G. Gadamer has contended

that one really grasps the meaning of a text only when one brings its implications to bear upon contemporary living. This, of course, ~~is~~ is paralleled by Rheinhold Niebuhr's insistence that history is understood in the effort to change it. I have no intention of disputing such views, for they seem to me straightforward applications of Newman's distinction between notional and real apprehension. All I wish to say is that there are distinct theological tasks performed in quite different manners, that the kind of work outlined in the preceding sections only leads to an understanding of the meaning of a text, and that quite distinct operations are to be performed before ~~telling people~~ entering upon the specialty, communications, and telling people just what the meaning of the text implies in their lives.

H. G. Gadamer, op. cit., pp. 290-324.

I am relying on C. R. Stinnette, Jr., "Reflection and Transformation," The Dialogue between Theology and Psychology, Studies in Divinity No. 3, The University of Chicago Press ~~1969~~ 1968, p. 100.

Again, Rudolf Bultmann has employed categories derived from the philosophy of Martin Heidegger to express his apprehension of the theology of the New Testament. His procedure imitates ~~of~~ that of St. Thomas Aquinas who used Aristotelian categories in his scripture commentaries. I have not the slightest doubt about the propriety of a systematic theology, but the procedures to be employed in developing one are not outlined in an account of hermeneutics as a functional specialty. Similarly, I hold for a doctrinal theology, but I refuse to conclude that the language of the exegete qua exegete is to be that of Denzinger's Enchiridion of ~~of~~ theological textbooks. Finally, I believe in a theology

of encounter, but I refuse to confuse theology and religion. Theology reflects on the religion; it promotes the religion; but it does not constitute religious events. I consider religious conversion a presupposition of moving from the first phase to the second but ^{I hold that} that conversion occurs, not in the context of doing theology, but in the context of becoming religious. I point out to the exegete that ~~com~~ coming to understand himself may be the condition of his understanding the author, his words, and what the author meant. None the less, I conceive that coming to understand himself, not ^{as} part of his job as an exegete, but ^{as} of a higher order, an event ^{an event} in his own personal development.

The exegete qua exegete expresses his interpretations to his colleagues technically in notes, articles, monographs, commentaries. ^{The expression} ~~It~~ is technical in the sense that it puts to full use the instruments for investigation provided by research: grammars, lexicons, ^{comparative linguistics,} maps, chronologies, handbooks, bibliographies, encyclopedias, etc. The expression ^{on}, again, is technical inasmuch as it is functionally related to previous work in the field, summarizing what has been done and is accepted, bringing to light the grounds for raising further questions, integrating results with previous achievement.

The exegete also speaks to his pupils, and he must speak to them in a different manner. For notes, articles, monographs, commentaries fail to reveal the kind of work and the amount of work that went into writing them. That revelation only comes in the seminar. It can come to a great degree by working ^a ^{on} ~~taking part~~ with the director ^{on} some project of his still in process. But I think there is much to be said for the ~~view that every student do one seminar in which the topic~~

value of a seminar that repeats previous discovery. This is done by selecting some complex and basically convincing monograph, finding in the original sources the clues ~~the~~ and trails that led the author to his discoveries, assigning one's students tasks based on these clues and trails, so that they may repeat his discoveries. Even though it is only rediscovery, it is an exhilarating experience for students and also it is well for them in one of their seminars to have been confronted with a finished piece of work and to have understood why and in what sense it was finished.

However, the exegete has to speak not only to his colleagues in his own field and to his pupils but also to the theological community, to exegetes in other ~~fields~~ fields and to those engaged principally in other functional ~~specialties~~ specialties. Here there are, I suggest, two procedures, one basic and the other supplementary.

The basic procedure I derive from a description by Albert Descamps of the biblical theologian qua exegete. He argued that biblical theology must be as multiple and diverse as are, ~~the~~ ~~innumerable~~ for the alert exegete, the ~~innumerable~~ innumerable biblical authors. So there will be as many biblical theologies as there were inspired authors, and the exegete will aim above all to respect the originality of each of them.

He will appear to be happy to proceed slowly, and often he will follow the ways of beginners. His descriptions will convey a feeling for things long past; they will give the reader an impression of the foreign, the strange, the archaic; his care for genuineness will appear in the choice of a vocabulary as biblical as possible; and he will be careful

to avoid any premature transposition to later language,
that language is
even ~~more~~ though approved by a theological tradition.

Any general presentation will have to ~~follow~~
be based on the chronology and the literary history of the
biblical books. ~~It~~ If possible, it will be genetic in
structure; and for this reason questions of date and authenticity,
which might be thought secondary in biblical theology, really
have a decisive importance.

Further, general presentations will not be very general.
If they regard the whole bible, they will be limited to
some very precise topic. If their object is more complex,
they will be confined to some single ~~the~~ writing or group of
writings. If a biblical theology were to aim at presenting
the whole or a very large part of the bible, it ~~it~~ could do
so only by being content to be as manifold and internally
differentiated as some ~~the~~ "general history" of Europe or of the
world.

It is true, Bishop Descamps admits, that there are those
that dream of some sort of short-cut, of a presentation of
the divine plan running through the history of the two
testaments; and ~~many~~ ^{many} of them would claim that this is ~~the~~ ^{himself}
almost the proper function of biblical theology. But he ~~he~~ ^{is}
of a contrary opinion. A sketch of the divine plan pertains
to biblical theology only in the measure that a historian
can feel at home with it; not even the believer reaches the
divine plan except through the manifold intentions of the many
inspired writers.

Albert Descamps, "Réflexions sur la méthode en théologie
biblique," Sacra Pagina, I, 142 f., ~~Paris-Gembloux~~
Paris (Gabalda) and Gembloux (Duculot) 1959.

The foregoing account of the expression proper to an exegete speaking to the theological community seems to me eminently relevant, sane, and solid. Many perhaps will hesitate to agree with the rejection of general presentations of the divine plan running through scriptural history. But they too will come round, I think, when a distinction is drawn: such general expositions are highly important in the functional specialty, communications; but they are not the vehicle by which the exegete communicates his results to the theological community.

It remains, however, that the basic ~~expre~~ mode of expression, just described, has to be supplemented. While every theologian has to have some training in exegesis, ~~mm~~ ~~manmanmanmanmanmanman~~ he cannot become a specialist in all fields; and while the exegete of ancient texts very properly gives an impression of the foreign, the strange, the archaic, his ~~rea~~ readers cannot be content to leave it at that. This need would seem to be at the root of efforts to portray the Hebrew mind, Hellenism, the spirit of Scholasticism, and so on. But these portraits too easily lead to the emergence of mere occult entities. Unless one oneself is a specialist in the field, one does not know how to ~~qualift~~ qualify their generalities, to correct their simplifications, to avoid mistaken inferences. What is needed, is not mere ~~description but explanation, and by that I mean an intelligent~~ construction of stages of meaning in human development, such as I attempted in chapter five, and further developments and ~~correctxions~~ corrections of that construction by exegetes that both understand the method we are proposing and can implement it still further by drawing on the treasures of their extensive and precise knowledge.

description but explanation. If people were shown how to find in their own experience elements of meaning, how these elements can be assembled into ancient modes of meaning, why in antiquity the elements were assembled in that manner, then they would find themselves in possession of a very precise tool, they would know it in all its suppositions and implications, they could form for themselves an exact notion and they could check just how well it accounted for the foreign, strange, archaic things presented by the exegetes.

Is this a possible project? Might I suggest that the section on stages of meaning in chapter five offers a beginning? If transcendental method coupled with a few books by Cassirer and Snell could make this beginning, why might not transcendental method ~~employed by~~ coupled with the in many fields at once extensive and precise knowledge of many exegetes, not yield far more? The benefits would be enormous: not only would the achievements of exegetes be better known and appreciated but also theology as a whole would be rid of the occult entities generated by an inadequately methodical type of investigation and thought.

3. History

The word, history, is employed in two senses. There is history (1) that is written about, and there is history (2) that is written. History (2) aims ^{at expressing} ~~to express~~ knowledge of history (1). If need be, I shall resolve any ambiguity that might arise by writing not just history but either history (1) or history (2).

The precise object of historical inquiry and the precise nature of historical investigation are matters of not a little obscurity. This is not because there are no good historians. It is not because ^{good} ~~historians~~ ^{by and large} have not ^{learnt} ~~learned~~ what to do. It ^{mainly} is ^{because} historical knowledge is an instance of knowledge, and few people are in possession of a satisfactory cognitional theory.

A similar view has been expressed by Gerhard Ebeling. He considers it unquestionable that modern historical science is still a long way from being able to offer a theoretically unobjectionable account of the critical historical method, and that it needs the cooperation of philosophy to reach that goal. Word and Faith, London (SCM) 1963, p. 49. Originally, "Die Bedeutung der historisch-kritischen Methode," Zschr. f. Theol. u. Kirche, 47(1950), 34.

A more concrete illustration of the matter may be had by reading the Epilegomena in R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of History, Oxford (Clarendon) 1946. The first three sections on Nature and History, The Historical Imagination, and Historical Evidence, are right on the point. The fourth on History as Re-enactment is hopelessly convoluted.

3.1 Nature and History

A first step will be to set forth the basic differences between history and natural science, and we shall begin from a few reflections on time.

One can think of ^{time} in connection with such questions as what is the date, what is the time, how soon, how long ago. On that basis one ~~universe~~ arrives at the Aristotelian definition that time is the number or measure determined by the successive equal stages of a local movement. It is a number when one answers three o'clock or January 26, 1969. It is a measure when one answers three hours or 1969 years. One can push this line of thought further by asking whether there is just one time for the universe or, on the other hand, there are as many distinct times as there are distinct local movements. Now on the Ptolemaic system there did exist a single standard time for the universe, since ~~for~~ the outmost of the celestial spheres, the primum mobile, contained the material universe and was the first source of all ~~the~~ local movement. With the acceptance of the Copernican theory, there vanished the primum mobile, but there remained a single standard time, a survival Newton explained by distinguishing true and apparent motion and by ^{conceiving} defining true motion as relative to absolute space and absolute time. ~~Finally, with Einstein, absolute time vanished~~
Finally, with Einstein, Newton's absolute time vanished, and there emerged as many standard times as there are reference frames that are ~~not~~ in relative motion.

On the foregoing approach one is concerned not so much with time itself as with counting, measuring, and relating to one another in a comprehensive view all ^{possible} ^{such} instances of counting and measuring. Further, while the movement of a watch or of the earth involves a continuous thrust forward, so that the successive parts are related to one another, still attention to counting and measuring does tend to make each successive ^{appear} moment ^{as} extrinsic to the others as successive points in a line. Finally, if one were to make these observations in the presence of a natural scientist and if one then were to go on to complain that this approach to time says nothing about time itself, one probably would be told that natural science is not interested in such occult entities as time itself.

Now the foregoing notion of time certainly is of great importance to the historian: he has to date his events. But another ~~is~~ notion is also needed and it emerges when one reflects not on questions about "time" but on questions about "now." Aristotle asked whether there a succession of "now's" or just one, and he answered with a distinction. In so far as there is succession, there is difference; but its substratum is an identity. Again, he remarked that as time is the measure of the movement, so the ^{"now"} ~~now~~ corresponds to the body that is moving. ~~Aquinas carried the matter further.~~

More on the topic, Insight, pp. 155-158.

Aristotle, Physics, V, 11, 219b 12.

Ibid., 220a 3.

~~For Aristotle, if there were no time, there would be no "now."~~
~~But Aquinas needed distinctions between the continuous time~~
~~of things material things, the ordinal time of angelic reality,~~

Now this advertence to the identity of the substratum, to the body that is moving, removes from one's notion of time the total extrinsicism of each moment from the next. No doubt, each successive moment is different, but in the difference there is also an identity.

With this clue we may advance to our experience of time. There is ~~the~~ succession in the flow of conscious and intentional acts; there is ~~the~~ identity in the conscious subject of the acts; there may be either identity or succession in the object intended by the acts. Analysis may reveal that what actually is visible is a succession of different profiles; but experience reveals that what is perceived is the synthesis (Gestalt) of the profiles into a single object. Analysis may reveal that the sounds produced are a succession of notes and chords; but experience reveals that what is heard is their synthesis into a melody. There results what is called the psychological present, which is not an instant, a mathematical point, but a time-span, so that our experience of time is, not of a ~~raceway of instants, but a~~ ^{an often leisurely} succession of overlapping time-spans. ~~raceway of instants, but a now leisurely, a now rapid~~ succession of overlapping time-spans. The time of experience is slow and dull, when the objects of experience change slowly and in expected ways. But time becomes a whirligig, when the objects of experience change rapidly and in novel and unexpected ways.

~~Such is the temporal structure of our experiencing~~

Whether slow ~~or~~ and broad or rapid and short, the psychological present reaches into its past by memories and into its future by anticipations. Anticipations are not merely ^{of} the prospective objects of our fears and our desires but also the shrewd estimate of the man of experience ~~and~~ or the rigorously calculated forecast of applied science. Again, besides the memories of each individual, there are the pooled memories of the group, their celebration in song and story, their preservation in written narratives, in coins and monuments and every other trace of the groups' words and deeds left to posterity. Such is the field of historical investigation.

Now the peculiarity of this field resides in the nature of individual and group action. It has both a conscious and an unconscious side. ~~However~~ Apart from neurosis and psychosis the conscious side is in control. Now the conscious side consists in the flow of conscious and intentional acts that we have been speaking of since our first chapter. What ^{is} ~~differentiates~~ each of these acts from the others lies in the manifold meanings of meaning set forth in chapter five. Meaning, then, is a constitutive element in the conscious flow that is the ^{normally} controlling side of human action. Common meaning is a constitutive element in human community. It is this constitutive role of meaning in the controlling side of human action that grounds the peculiarity of the historical field of investigation.

Now meaning may regard the general or the universal, but most human thought and speech and action are concerned with the particular and the concrete. Again, there are structural and material invariants to meaning, but there also are changes that affect the manner in which the carriers of

meaning are employed, the elements of meaning are combined, the functions of meaning are distinguished and developed, the realms of meaning are extended, the stages of meaning blossom forth, meet resistance, compromise, collapse. Finally, there are the further vicissitudes of meaning as common meaning. For meaning is common in the measure that community ~~exists~~ exists and functions, in the measure that there is a common field of experience, common and complementary understanding, common judgements or at least an agreement to disagree, common and complementary commitments. But people can get out of touch, misunderstand one another, hold radically opposed views, commit themselves to conflicting goals. Then common meaning contracts, becomes confined to banalities, moves towards ideological warfare.

It is in this field of meaningful speech and action that the historian is engaged. It is not, of course, the historian's but the ~~exegetes-exegetes~~ exegete's task to determine what was meant. The historian envisages a quite different object. He is not content to understand what people meant. He wants to grasp what was going forward in particular groups at particular places and times. By "going forward" I mean to exclude the mere repetition of a routine. I mean the change that originated the routine and its dissemination. I mean process and development but, no less, decline and collapse. When things turn out unexpectedly, ^{pious} people say, "Man proposes but God disposes." The historian is concerned to see how God disposed the matter, not by theological speculation, not by some world-historical dialectic, but through ^{particular} human agents. In literary terms history is concerned with the drama of life, with what results through the characters, their

decisions, their actions, and not only because of them but also because of their defects, their oversights, their failures to act. In military terms history is concerned, not just with the plan of the battle now is the time for all good with the opposing commanders' plans of the battle, not just with the experiences of the battle had by each soldier and officer, but with the actual course of the battle as the resultant of conflicting plans now successfully and now unsuccessfully executed. In brief, where exegesis is concerned to determine what a particular person meant, history is concerned to determine what, in most cases, contemporaries do not know. For, in most cases, contemporaries do not know what is going forward, first, because experience is individual while the data for history lie in the experiences of many, secondly, because the actual course of events results not only from what people intend but also from their oversights, mistakes, failures to act, thirdly, because history does not predict what will happen but reaches its conclusions from what has happened and, fourthly, because history is not merely a matter of gathering and testing all available evidence but also involves a number of interlocking discoveries that bring to light the significant issues and operative factors.

So the study of history differs from the study of physical, chemical, ~~and~~ biological nature. There is a difference in their objects, for the objects of physics, chemistry, biology are not in part constituted by acts of meaning. There is ~~an important~~ similarity inasmuch as both types of study consist in an on-going process of cumulative discoveries, that is, of original insights, of original acts of understanding, where by "insight," "act of understanding" is meant a

prepropositional, preverbal, preconceptual event, in the sense that propositions, words, concepts express the content of the event and so ~~for~~ do not precede it but follow from it. There is, however, a difference in the expression of the respective sets of discoveries. The discoveries of physics, chemistry, biology are expressed in universal systems and are refuted if they are found to be incompatible with a relevant particular instance. But the discoveries of the historian ^{expressed} are ~~expression~~ in narratives that regard ~~particular~~ particular persons, places, and times. They have no claim to universality: they could, of course, be relevant to the ~~other~~ understanding of other persons, places, times; but whether in fact they are relevant, and just how relevant they are, can be settled only by a historical investigation of the other persons, places, and times. Finally, because they have no claim to universality, the discoveries of the ~~historian~~ historian are not verifiable in the fashion proper to the natural sciences; in history verification is parallel to the procedures by which an interpretation is judged correct.

Let us now turn to such human sciences as psychology and sociology. Two cases arise. These sciences may be modelled on the procedures of the natural sciences. In so far as this approach is carried out rigorously, meaning in human speech and action is ignored, and the science regards only the unconscious side of human process. In this case the relations between history and human science are much the same as the relations between history and natural science. However, there is much psychology ^{and sociology} that does recognize meaning as a constitutive ^{and normally controlling} element in human action. To their study the historian leaves all that is the repetition of routine in human speech and action and all that is universal in the

genesis, development, breakdown of routines. Moreover, the more psychology and sociology the historian knows, the more he will increase his interpretative powers. Conversely, the greater the achievements of historians, the broader will be the field of evidence on human speech and action that has been opened up for psychological and sociological investigation.

For an extensive anthology and a twenty-page bibliography on the foregoing and related topics, see Patrick Gardiner, editor, Theories of History, New York (Free Press) and London (Collier Macmillan) 1959. ^{Where authors there} ~~I do not discuss~~ diverge from the present approach, I think the reader will find ~~divergences from my views, first, because it would be~~ the root difference to lie in cognitional theory. ~~a lengthy business and, secondly, because it would be~~ ~~about differences in cognitional theory and not about history.~~

3.2 Historical Experience and Historical Knowledge

I conceive human knowing to be, not just experiencing, but a compound of experiencing, understanding, and judging. Hence if there is historical knowledge, there must be historical experience, historical understanding, and historical judging. Our present aim is to say something about historical experience and then something about the thought process from historical experience to written history.

Already there has been described the subject in time. He is identical, ever himself. But his conscious and intentional acts keep shifting in one way or another to make his "now" slip out of the past and into the future, while the field of objects that engage his attention may change greatly or slightly, rapidly or slowly. Not only is

the subject's psychological present not an instant but a time-span but in it the subject may be reaching into the past by memories, stories, history and into the future by anticipations, estimates, forecasts.

Now it is sometimes said that man is a historical being. ~~Its meaning~~ The meaning of the statement may be grasped most vividly by a thought experiment. Suppose a man suffers total amnesia. He no longer knows who he is, fails to recognize relatives and friends, does not recall his commitments or his lawful expectations, does not know where he works or how he makes his living, and has lost even the information needed to perform his once customary tasks. Obviously, if he is to live, either the amnesia has to be cured, or else he must start all over. For our pasts have made us whatever we are and on that capital we have to live or else we must begin ~~afresh~~ afresh. Not only is the individual an historical entity, living off his past, but the same holds for the group. For, if we suppose that all members in the group suffer total amnesia, there will be as total a collapse of all group functioning as there is in each individual in the group. Groups too live on their past, and their past so to speak lives on in them. The present functioning of the good of order is what it is ^{mostly} because of past functioning and only slightly because of the minor efforts now needed to keep things going and, when possible, improve them. To start completely afresh would be to revert to a very distant age.

Now I am not offering a medical account of amnesia. I am simply attempting to portray the significance of the past in the present and, thereby, to communicate what is meant by saying that man is a historical being. But being historical is the history that is written about. It may be named, if considered interiorly, an existential history -- the living tradition which formed us and through which we have formed ourselves. ~~now is the time for all~~ thereby brought us to the point where we began forming ourselves.

For a contemporary reaction against the destructive aspects of the Enlightenment and a rehabilitation of tradition as the condition of the possibility of an interpretation, see H. G. Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, pp. 250-290.

tradition, at least
This includes individual and group memories of the past, stories of exploits and legends about heroes, in brief enough of history for the group to have an identity as a group and ~~for~~ for individuals to make their several contributions towards maintaining and promoting the common good of order. But from this rudimentary history, contained in any existential history, any living tradition, we must now proceed attempt to indicate the kind of process that leads now is the time for all good men to series of steps by which one may, in thought, move towards the notion of scientific history.

In general it is a process of objectification, and we

It is from the ^vVécu to the ^tthématique, from the existenziell to the existenzial, from exercite to signate, from the fragmentarily experienced to the methodically known.

shall begin from the simpler instances of autobiography and biography before going on to the more complex matter of history which regards groups.

Towards an autobiography, a first step is a diary. Day by day one records, not every event that occurred -- one has other things to do -- but what ~~deemed~~ seems important, significant, exceptional, new. So one selects, abbreviates, sketches, alludes. One omits most of what is too familiar to be noticed, too obvious to be mentioned, too recurrent to be thought worth recording.

Now as the years pass and the diary swells, retrospect lengthens. What once were merely remote possibilities, now have been realized. Earlier events, thought insignificant, prove to have been quite important, while others, thought important, turn out to have been quite minor. Earlier events have to be recalled and inserted both to supply the omitted context of the earlier period and to make later events more intelligible. Earlier judgements, finally, have to be complemented, qualified, corrected. But if all this is attempted, one has shifted from keeping a diary to writing one's memoirs. One enlarges one's sources from the diary to add to the diary all the letters and other material one can acquire. One ransacks one's memory. One asks questions and to meet them one starts reconstructing one's past in one's imagination, depicting to oneself ^{now this now that former} ~~one's former~~ Sitz im Leben, to find answers and then ask the further questions that arise from these answers. As in interpretation, so here too there gradually ^{are} built up contexts, limited nests of questions and answers, each bearing on some multi-faceted but determinate topic. In this fashion the old, day-by-day,

organization of the diary becomes quite irrelevant. Much that had been overlooked now has been restored. What had merely been juxtaposed now is connected. What had been dimly felt and remembered now stands in sharp relief within ^{perhaps} hitherto unsuspected perspectives. There has emerged a new organization that ~~distinguishes periods, that is, sets of interrelated contexts, where each context is a limited nest of questions and answers.~~ distinguishes periods by broad differences in one's mode of living, in one's dominant concern, in one's tasks and problems, and in each period distinguishes contexts, that is, nests of questions and answers bearing on distinct but related topics. The periods determine the sections, the topics determine the chapters of one's autobiography.

Biography aims at the ^{much} same goal but has to follow a different route. ~~Where the autobiographer recounts what he thought and felt and did and failed to do, the biographer different route. In the autobiography we read, "I thought," "I saw, heard, remembered, anticipated, imagined, felt, gathered, judged, decided, did...." In the biography statements shift to the third person. Instead of stating what is remembered or has been recalled, the biographer has to ^{do} research, gather evidence, and ~~reconstruct~~ reconstruct in imagination each successive Sitz im Leben, ask determinate concrete questions, and so build up his set of periods each contained a set larger or smaller set of related contexts.~~ In the main there are three main differences between autobiography and biography. The biographer is free from the embarrassment that may trouble an autobiographer in his self-revelation. ~~The biographer has to write not so much a "life" as a "life and times" to make his subject~~ ^{more} ~~intelligible to a later~~

A The biographer may appeal to later events that ^{put} in a new light the judgements, decisions, deeds of his subject, to reveal him to be more or less profound, wise, far-sighted, astute than one otherwise would have thought. Finally, since the biographer has to make his subject intelligible to a later generation, he has to write not just a "life" but rather a "life and times."

While in biography the "times" are a subordinate clarification of the "life," in history this perspective is reversed. Attention is centered on the common field that, in part, is explored in each of the biographies that are or might be written. Still this common field is not just an area in which biographies might overlap. There is social and cultural process. It is not just a sum of individual words and deeds. There exists a developing and/or deteriorating unity constituted by cooperations, by institutions, by personal relations, ^{and/or} by a functioning or malfunctioning good of order, by a communal realization of originating and terminal values and disvalues. Within such processes we live out our lives. About them each of us ordinarily is content to learn enough to attend to his own affairs and perform his public duties. To seek a view of the actual functioning of the whole or of a notable part over a significant period of time is the task of the historian.

~~As the biographer, so too the historian proceeds from~~ (2-1)
~~the data made available by research.~~

As the biographer, so too the historian proceeds from (1) from the data made available by research, (2) through imaginative reconstruction and cumulative questioning and answering, (3) towards related sets of limited contexts. But now the material basis is far larger in extent, far more complex, more roundabout in relevance. The center of interest has shifted from the individual to the group, from private to public life, from the course of a single life to the course of the affairs of a community. The range of relevant topics has increased enormously and, on many, specialized knowledge may be a necessary prerequisite to undertaking historical investigation. Finally, history itself becomes a specialty; historians become a professional class; the field of historical investigation is divided and subdivided; and the results of investigations are communicated in congresses and accumulated in periodicals and books.

5.3 Critical History

~~Already I have spoken of the existential history, of the theories, stories, legends necessary for a group to possess an identity and so function as a group.~~

A first step towards understanding critical history, then, lies in an account of precritical history. For it the community is the conspicuous community, one's own. Its vehicle is narrative, an ordered recital of events. It recounts who did what, when, where, under what circumstances, from what motives, with what results. Its function is practical: a group can function as a group only by possessing an identity, knowing itself and devoting itself to the cause.

cause, at worst, of its survival, at best, of its betterment. The function of precritical history is to promote such knowledge and devotion. So it is never just a narrative of bald facts. It is artistic: it selects, orders, describes; it would awaken the reader's interest and sustain it; it would persuade and convince. Again, it is ethical: it not only narrates but also apportions praise and blame. It is explanatory: it accounts for existing institutions by telling of their origins and development and by contrasting them with alternative institutions found in other lands. It is apologetic, correcting false or tendentious accounts of the people's past, and refuting the calumnies of neighboring peoples. Finally, it is prophetic: to hindsight about the past there is joined foresight on the future and there ~~are~~ ^{are added} the recommendations of a man of wide reading and modest wisdom.

Now such precritical history, even purged of its defects, ~~would not be a functional specialty. At least, it is not the functional specialty, history, though it might well meet very real needs in the functional specialty, communications.~~ though it might well meet very real needs in the functional specialty, communications, at ~~least~~ does not qualify as the functional specialty, history. For that specialty, while it operates on the four levels of experiencing, understanding, judging, ^{and} deciding, still operates on the other ^{three} with a principal concern for judging, for settling matters of fact. It is not concerned with the highly important educational ~~task a proper appreciation and maintenance of their heritage~~ task of communicating to fellow citizens or fellow churchmen a proper appreciation of their heritage and a proper devotion

its
to ~~the~~ preservation, development, dissemination. It is concerned to set forth what really happened or, in Ranke's perpetually quoted phrase, wie es eigentlich gewesen. Finally, unless this work is done in detachment, quite apart from political or apologetic aims, it is attempting to serve two masters and usually suffers the evangelical consequences.

See, for example, G. P. Gooch, History and Historians in the Nineteenthth Century, London (Longmans) ¹1913, ²1952, chapter VIII on the Prussian School.

Next, this work is not just a matter of finding testimonies, checking them for credibility, and stringing together what has been found credible. It is not just that, because historical experience is one thing ~~and~~ and historical knowledge is quite another. The string of credible testimonies merely ^{re-edits} ~~re-edits~~ historical experience. It does ~~They do~~ not advance to historical knowledge which grasps what was going forward, what contemporaries for the most ~~part~~ ^{did} ~~do~~ not know. Many early Christians may have had a fragmentary experience of the manner in which the elements in the synoptic gospels were formed; but ~~but~~ Rudolf Bultmann was concerned to set forth the process as a whole and, while he found his evidence in the synoptic gospels, still that evidence did not ^{presuppose} ~~involve~~ any belief in the truth of the evangelists' statements.

R. Bultmann, Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition, Göttingen (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht) ⁴1958. The first edition was about 1921. On the same topic, see ~~I de la~~ I. de la Potterie, (ed.), De Jésus aux Évangiles, Gembloux (Duculot) 1967, where Formgeschichte plays an intermediate role between Traditionsgeschichte and Redaktionsgeschichte.

Thirdly, only a ^{series} ~~process~~ ^{discoveries} of ~~discovery~~ can advance the historian ~~to~~ from the fragmentary experiences, that are the source of his data, to knowledge of a process as a whole. Like a detective confronted with a set of clues that at first leave him baffled, the historian has to discover ^{in the clues,} ~~in them,~~ piece by piece, the evidence that will yield a convincing account of what happened.

Since the evidence has to be discovered, a distinction has to be drawn between potential, formal, and actual evidence. Potential evidence is any datum, here and ~~at~~ now perceptible. Formal evidence is such a datum ~~in~~ in so far as it is used in asking or answering a question for historical intelligence. Actual evidence is formal evidence invoked in arriving at a historical judgement. In other words, data as perceptible ^{proximately} are potential evidence; data as perceptible and ^{intelligible} are formal evidence; data as perceptible, ^{as understood,} ~~intelligible,~~ and as grounding a reasonable judgement are actual evidence.

What starts the process is the question for historical intelligence. With regard to some defined situation in the past one wants to understand what was going forward. Clearly, any such question presupposes ^{some} historical knowledge. Without it, one would not know of the situation in question, nor would one know what was meant by ~~"to~~ "going forward." History, then, grows out of history. Critical history was a ~~leap~~ leap forward from precritical history. Precritical history was a leap forward from stories and legends. Inversely, the more history one knows, the more data lie in one's purview, the more questions one can ask, and the more intelligently ~~one can ask them?~~

one can ask them.

The question for historical intelligence is put in the light of previous knowledge and with respect to some particular datum. It may ~~lead~~ or may not lead to an insight into that datum. If it does not, one moves on to a different question. If it does, the insight is expressed ~~into~~ in a surmise, ~~and~~ the surmise is represented imaginatively, and the image leads to a further related question. This process may ^{or may not} be recurrent. If it is not, one has come a dead end and must try another approach. ~~If~~ If it is recurrent, and all one attains is a series of surmises, then one is following a false trail and once more must try another approach. But if one's surmises are coincident with further data or approximate to them, one is on the right track. The data are ceasing to be merely potential evidence; they are becoming formal evidence; one is discovering what the evidence ~~may~~ might be.

Now if one is on the right track long enough, there occurs a shift in the manner of one's questioning for, more and more, the further questions ~~come~~ come from the data rather than from images based on surmises. One still has to do the questioning. One ~~is~~ still has to be alert. But one has moved out of the assumptions and perspectives one ~~has~~ had prior to one's investigation. One has attained sufficient ~~into~~ insight into the object of one's inquiry to grasp something of the assumptions and perspectives proper to that object. And this grasp makes one's approach to further data so much more congenial that the ~~more~~ further data suggest the further questions to be put. ~~behaviorsayvthemp~~
To describe this feature of historical investigation, ~~is~~

let us say that the cumulative process of datum, question, insight, surmise, image, formal evidence, is ecstatic. It takes one out of oneself. It sets aside earlier assumptions and perspectives ~~to bring~~ by bringing to light the assumptions and perspectives proper to the object under investigation.

The same process is selective, constructive, and critical. It is selective: not all data are promoted from the status of potential evidence to the status of formal evidence. It is constructive: for the selected data are related to one another through ^{an interconnected} ~~related~~ set of questions and answers or, ~~from another~~ expressed alternatively, by a series of insights that complement one another, correct one another, and ^{eventually} coalesce into a single view of a whole. Finally, it is critical, for insights not only are direct but also inverse. By direct insight one grasps how ~~the~~ things fit together, and one murmurs one's "Eureka." By ~~the~~ inverse insight one is prompted to exclaim, How could I have been so stupid as to take for granted.... One sees that things are not going to fit and, eventually, by a direct insight one grasps that some item fits not in this context but in some other. So a text is discovered to have been interpolated or mutilated. So the pseudo-Dionysius ~~certain~~ ~~So coins can be transferred from more ordinary history to~~ ~~So certain coins can be found to pertain not to more ordinary history but rather to the history of propaganda. So writers are found valuable, not for the history of the objects they wrote about, but for the evidence provided by their intentions, their methods, their omissions, their mistakes.~~

one can ask them.

The question for historical intelligence is put in the light of previous knowledge and with respect to some particular datum. It may ~~lead~~ or may not lead to an insight into that datum. If it does not, one moves on to a different question. If it does, the insight is expressed ~~into~~ in a surmise, ~~and~~ the surmise is represented imaginatively, and the image leads to a further related question. This process may ^{or may not} be recurrent. If it is not, one has come a dead end and must try another approach. ~~It~~ If it is recurrent, and all one attains is a series of surmises, then one is following a false trail and once more must try another approach. But if one's surmises are coincident with further data or approximate to them, one is on the right track. The data are ceasing to be merely potential evidence; they are becoming formal evidence; one is discovering what the evidence ~~may~~ might be.

Now if one is on the right track long enough, there occurs a shift in the manner of one's questioning for, more and more, the further questions ~~1~~ come from the data rather than from images based on surmises. One still has to do the questioning. One ~~is~~ still has to be alert. But one has moved out of the assumptions and perspectives one ~~has~~ had prior to one's investigation. One has attained sufficient ~~into~~ insight into the object of one's inquiry to grasp something of the assumptions and perspectives proper to that object. And this grasp makes one's approach to further data so much more congenial that the ~~monotonous~~ further data suggest the further questions to be put. ~~then say when~~
To describe this feature of historical investigation, ~~is~~

is¹ extradited from the ~~5th~~ first century and relocated at the end of the fifth: he quoted Proclus. So an esteemed writer comes under suspicion: the source of his information has been discovered; in whole or in part, without independent ~~x~~ confirmation, he is used not as evidence for what he narrates but in the roundabout fashion that rests on his narrating -- his intentions, readers, methods, omissions, mistakes.

Note that the word, critical, has two quite different meanings. In precritical ~~history~~ history it means that one has tested the credibility of one's authorities before believing them. In critical history it means that one has shifted data from one field of relevance to another. On this topic R. G. Collingwood is brilliant and convincing. See his two studies, "The Historical Imagination" and "Historical Evidence," in The Idea of History, Oxford (Clarendon) 1946, pp. 231-282.

Now I have been attributing to a single process of developing understanding a whole series of different functions. It is heuristic, for it brings to light the relevant evidence. It is ecstatic, for it leads the inquirer out of his original perspectives and into the perspectives proper to his¹ object. It is selective, for out of a totality of data it selects those relevant to the understanding achieved. It is critical, for it removes from one use or context to another the data that might otherwise be thought relevant to present tasks. It is constructive, for the data that are selected are knotted together by the vast and intricate web of interconnecting links that cumulatively came to light as one's understanding progressed.

Now it is the distinguishing mark of critical history that
~~It is to be noted, however, that in critical history~~

this process occurs twice. In the first instance one is coming to understand one's sources. In the second instance one is using one's understood sources intelligently to come to understand the object to which they are relevant. ~~From the~~
~~first~~ In both cases the development of understanding is heuristic, ecstatic, selective, critical, constructive. But in the first case one is identifying authors, locating them and their work in place and time, studying the ~~the~~ milieu, ascertaining ^{their} the author's purposes in writing and their prospective readers, investigating their sources of information and the use they made of them. In a previous section on Interpretation we spoke of understanding the author, but there the ~~aim~~ ulterior aim was to understand what he meant. In history we also seek to understand the authors of sources, but now the ulterior aim is to understand what they were up to and how they did it. It is this understanding that grounds the critical use of ~~sources, the fine discrimination that enables an investigator to employ the same source in several quite different manners~~ sources, the fine discrimination that distinguishes an author's strength and weaknesses and uses him accordingly. Once this is achieved, one is able to shift one's attention to ~~one's objective original~~ ^{main} objective, ^{namely,} to endeavor to understanding the process ^{selective, and} referred to in one's sources. Where before one's developing understanding was heuristic, ecstatic, selective, critical, constructive in determining what authors were up to, now it is heuristic, ecstatic, ^{selective, and} critical, ^{selective, and} constructive in determining what was going forward in the community.

Needless to say, the two developments are interdependent. Not only does understanding the authors contribute to understanding the historical events, but ^{in coming to understand} ~~understanding~~ the events there arise questions that may lead to a revision of one's understanding of the authors and, consequently, to a revision of one's use of them.

Again, while each new insight uncovers evidence, moves away from one ~~xxxxx~~ previous perspectives, selects or rejects data as relevant or irrelevant, and adds ~~constructively~~ to the picture being constructed, ~~still the emphasis shifts from one of these functions to another as the investigation proceeds.~~ that is being constructed, still what gains attention is, not each single insight, but the final insight in ^{each} ~~a~~ cumulative series. It is such final insights that are called discoveries. With them the full force of the 'cumulative series breaks forth and, as the cumulation has a specific direction and meaning, discoveries now are of new evidence, now of a new ~~viewpoint~~, perspective, now of a different selection or critical rejection in the data, now of ever more complicated structures.

So far we have been thinking of structuring as the intelligible pattern grasped in the data and relating the data to one another. But there is a further aspect to the matter. For what is grasped by understanding in data, also is expressed by understanding in concepts and words. So from the intelligible pattern grasped in the data, one moves to the intelligible pattern expressed in the narrative. At first, the narrative is simply the inquirer mumbling his surmises to himself. As surmises less and less are mere surmises, as more and more they lead to the uncovering of further evidence, there ~~being~~ begin to emerge trails, linkages, interconnected wholes. As the

spirit of inquiry catches every failure to understand, as it brings to attention what is not yet understood and, as a result, ^{is} so easily overlooked, one of the interconnected wholes will advance to the role of a dominant theme running through other interconnected wholes that thereby become subordinate themes. ~~As this their investigation progresses now is the time.~~ As the investigation progresses and the field of data coming under control broadens, not only will the organization in terms of dominant and subordinate themes keep extending, but also there will emerge ever higher levels of organization. So among dominant themes there will emerge dominant topics to leave other dominant themes just subordinate topics; and the fate of dominant themes ^{awaits} most of the dominant topics, as the process of organization keeps moving, not only over more territory, but up to ever higher levels of organization.

It is not to be thought that this process of ~~mmg~~ advancing organization is a single uniform progress. There occur discoveries that complement and correct previous discoveries and so, as understanding changes, the organization also must change. Themes and topics become more exactly conceived and more ^{happily} expressed. The range of their dominance may be extended or curtailed. Items once thought of major interest can slip backwards ^{to} less ~~prominent~~ prominent roles and, inversely, other items can mount from relative obscurity to notable significance.

The exact conception and happy expression of themes and topics are matters of no small moment. For they shape the further questions that one will ask and it is those further questions that lead to ~~fur~~ further discoveries. Nor is this all.

Part by part, historical investigations come to a term. They do so when there have been reached the set of insights that hit all nails squarely on the head. They are known to do so when the stream of further questions on a determinate theme or topic gradually diminishes and finally dries up. The danger of inaccurate or unhappy conception and formulation is that either the stream of questions may dry up prematurely or else that it may keep flowing when really there are no further relevant questions.

It follows that the cumulative process of developing understanding not only is heuristic, ecstatic, selective, critical, and constructive but also is ~~not~~ reflective and judicial. The understanding that has been achieved on a determinate point can be complemented, corrected, revised, only if further discoveries on that very point can be made. Such discoveries can be made only if further relevant questions arise. If, in fact, there are no further relevant questions then, in fact, a certain judgement would be true. If, in the light of the ~~historians~~ historian's knowledge, there are no further relevant questions, then the historian can say that, as far as he knows, ^{is} the question ~~can be~~ closed.

There is, then, a criterion for historical judgement, and so there is a point where formal evidence becomes actual evidence. Such judgements occur repeatedly throughout an investigation, as each minor and then each major portion of ~~the work is completed. As long as the work is in process,~~ later discoveries may force a correction and revision of earlier ones. Again, once a work is completed, the discovery of further sources or the emergence of new perspectives from ~~subsequent events may make a new investigation necessary.~~

the work is completed. But as in natural science, so too in critical history the positive content of judgement aspires to be no more than the best available opinion. This is evident as long as an historical investigation is in process, for later discoveries may force a correction and revision of ~~xx~~ earlier ones. But what is true of investigations in process, has to be extended to investigations that to all intents and purposes are completed.

For, in the first place, one cannot exclude the possibility possibility that new sources of information will be uncovered and that they will affect subsequent judgement understanding and judgement. So archeological investigations of the ancient Near East complement ~~Old~~ Old Testament study, the caves of Qumran have yielded documents with a bearing on New Testament studies, ~~when~~ while the ~~unpub~~ unpublished writings found at Kenoboskion ^{restrain} ~~constrain~~ pronouncements on Gnosticism.

But there is, as well, another source of revision. It is the occurrence of later events that place earlier events in a new perspective. The outcome of a battle fixes the perspective in which the successive stages of the battle are viewed; ^{military victory in} ~~the outcome of~~ a war reveals the significance of the successive battles that were fought; the social and cultural consequences of the victory and the defeat ^{are the of} ~~measure~~ the effects of the war. So, in general, history is an on-going process. As the process advances, the context within which events ~~are~~ are to be understood keeps enlarging. As the context enlarges, perspectives shift.

However, neither of these sources of revision will simply invalidate earlier work competently done. New documents fill out the picture; they illuminate what before was obscure;

they shift perspectives; they refute only what was venturesome: ^{do not} or speculative; they cannot simply dissolve the whole network of questions and answers that made the original set of data massive evidence for the earlier account. Again, history is an on-going process, and so the historical context keeps enlarging. But the effects of this enlargement are ~~multiform~~ neither universal nor uniform. For persons and events have their place in history through one or more contexts, and these contexts may be narrow and brief or broad and enduring with any variety of intermediates. Only inasmuch as a context is still open, ~~will later events through new light on earlier persons and events~~ or can be opened or extended, do later events throw new light on earlier persons, events, processes. As Karl Heussi put it, it is easier to ~~for~~ understand Frederick William III of Prussia than to understand Schleiermacher and, while Nero will always be Nero, we cannot as yet say ~~as~~ the same for Luther.

Karl Heussi, Die Krisis des Historismus, Tübingen (Mohr) 1932, p. 58.

Besides the judgements reached by a historian in his investigation, there are the judgements passed upon his work by his peers and his successors. Such judgements constitute critical history at the second degree. For they are not mere wholesale judgements of belief or disbelief. They are ~~based on an understanding of how the work was done, how well relevant questions were answered, now is the time for all~~ based on an understanding of how the work was done. Just as the historian, first, with respect to his sources and, then, with respect to the object of his inquiry, undergoes a development of understanding that at once is heuristic,

and, ecstatic, selective, critical, constructive, ~~and~~ in the limit, judicial, so the critics of a historical work undergo a similar development with respect to the work itself. They do so all the more easily and all the more competently, the more the historian has been at pains not to conceal his tracks but to lay all his cards on the table, and the more the critics already are familiar with the field or, at least, with neighboring fields.

The result of such critical understanding of a critical history is, of course, that one can make an intelligent and discriminating use of the criticized historian. One learns where he has worked well. One has spotted his limitations and his weaknesses. One can say where, to the best of present knowledge, he can be relied on, where he must be revised, where he may have to be revised. Just as historians make an intelligent and discriminating use of their sources, so too the professional historical community makes a discriminating use of the works of its own historians.

Early in this section we noted that asking historical questions presupposed historical knowledge and, the greater that knowledge, the more the data in one's purview, the more questions one could ask, and the more intelligently one could ask them. Our consideration has now come full circle, for we have arrived at an account of that presupposed historical knowledge. It is critical history of the second degree. It consists basically in the cumulative works of historians. But it consists actually, not in mere belief in those works, but in a critical appreciation of them. Such critical appreciation is generated by critical book reviews, by the critiques that professors communicate to their students and justify in their

by their explanations and arguments, by informal discussions in common rooms and more formal discussions at congresses.

Critical history of the second degree is a compound. At its base are historical articles and books. On a second level there are critical writings that compare and evaluate the historical writings: these may vary from brief reviews to long studies right up to such a history of the historiography of an issue as Herbert Butterfield's George ~~thms~~ III & the Historians. Finally, there are the considered opinions of professional historians ^{on historians and their critics} -- opinions that influence their teaching, their remarks in discussions, their procedures in writing on related topics.

London (Collins) 1957. For a variety of views on the history of historiography, see Carl Becker, "What is ~~Historiography~~ Historiography?" The American Historical Review, 44(1958), 20-28; (ed.), reprinted in Phil L. Snyder, Detachment and the Writing of History, Essays and Letters of Carl L. Becker, Cornell University Press 1958.

Before concluding this section it will be well to recall what precisely has been our aim and concern. Explicitly, it has been limited to the functional specialty, history. There has been excluded all that pertains to the functional specialty, communications. I have no doubt that historical knowledge has to be communicated, not merely to professional historians, but in some measure to all members of the historical community. But before that need can be met, historical knowledge has to be acquired and kept up to date. The present section has been concerned with the prior task. It has been concerned to

indicate what set and sequence of operations secure the fulfillment of that task. If it is commonly thought that such a task is all the more likely to be performed well if one comes to it without an axe to grind, at least that has not been my main reason for distinguishing between the functional specialties, history and communications. My main reason has been that they name
~~are~~ are different tasks performed in quite different manners and, unless ~~this~~ ^{their} distinction is acknowledged and maintained, there is just no possibility ~~at all~~ of arriving at an exact understanding of either task.

Again, it is ~~a~~ a commonplace for theorists of history to struggle with the problems of historical relativism, ^{to} note the influence exerted on historical writing by the historian's views on possibility, by his value-judgements, by his Weltanschauung or Fragestellung or Standpunkt. I have omitted any consideration of this matter, not because it is not extremely important, but because it is ~~unbrought~~ brought under control, not by the techniques of critical history, but by the techniques of ~~dialectic~~ our fourth functional specialty, dialectic.

The concern, then, of the present section has been strictly limited. It presupposed the historian knew how to do his research and how to interpret the meaning of documents. It left to later specialties certain aspects of the problem of relativism and the great task of revealing the ~~be~~ bearing on of historical knowledge ^{on} for contemporary policy and action. It was confined to formulating the set of procedures that, caeteris paribus, yield historical knowledge, to explaining how that knowledge arises, in what it consists, what are its inherent ~~inherent~~ limitations.

If I have been led to adopt the view that the techniques of critical history are unequal to the task of eliminating historical relativism totally, I affirm all the more strongly that they can and do effect a partial elimination. I have contended that critical history is not a matter of believing credible testimonies but of discovering what hitherto had been experienced but not properly known. In that process of discovery I have recognized not only its heuristic, selective, critical, constructive, and judicial aspects, but also an ecstatic aspect that eliminates previously entertained perspectives and opinions to replace them with the perspectives and views that emerge from the cumulative interplay of data, inquiry, insight, surmise, image, evidence. It is in this manner that critical history ^{of itself} moves to objective knowledge of the past, though it may be impeded by such factors as ~~views on~~ mistaken views ~~on~~ possibility, by mistaken or misleading value-judgements, by ~~inadequate~~ an inadequate world-view or standpoint or state of the question.

In brief, this section has been attempting to bring to light the set of procedures that lead historians in various manners to affirm the possibility of objective historical knowledge. Carl Becker, for instance, agreed he was a relativist in the sense that Weltanschauung influences the historian's work, but at the same time maintained that a considerable and indeed increasing body of knowledge was objectively ascertainable. Erich Rothacker correlated Wahrheit with Weltanschauung^h, granted that they influenced historical thought, but at the same time affirmed the existence of a correctness (Richtigkeit) attached to critical procedures and proper inferences. In a similar vein Karl Heussi held that philosophic views would not affect critical procedures though they might well have an influence

on the way the history was composed; and he advanced that while the relatively simple form, in which the historian organizes his materials, resides not in the enormously complex course of events but only in the historian's mind, still different historians operating from the same standpoint arrive at the same organization. In like manner Rudolf Bultmann held that, granted a Fragestellung, critical method led to univocal results. These writers are speaking in various manners of the same reality. They mean, I believe, that there exist procedures that, caeteris paribus, lead to historical knowledge. Our aim and concern in this section has been to indicate the nature of those procedures.

Quoted from Carl Becker, "Review of Maurice Mendelbaum's The Problem of Historical Knowledge," Philosophical Review, 49(1940), 363, by C. W. Smith, ~~On History~~ Carl Becker: On History and the Climate of Opinion, Cornell Univ. Press 1956, p. 397

Erich Rothacker, Logik und Systematik der Geisteswissenschaften (Handbuch der Philosophie), Munich and Berlin 1927, Bonn 1947, p. 144.

Karl Heussi, Die Krisis des Historismus, Tübingen (Mohr) 1932, p. 63.

Ibid., p. 56.

Rudolf Bultmann, "Das Problem der Hermeneutik," Zschr. f. Theol. u. Kirche, 47(1950), 64; also Glauben und Verstehen, II, Tübingen (Mohr) 1961, p. 229.