

Study Guide #1 – Question #1

Philosophical Hermeneutics in its simplest form is a way of viewing the world without our infused presuppositions in order to understand understanding better. It is not a finite goal of understanding, but a mere stripping away of the concepts that we have of life in order to understand understanding in a deeper more intimate way. Even the idea of philosophical hermeneutics is one that can disorient us because it is not and has never been able to be fully grasped. Why, because in order to fully understand philosophical hermeneutics you have to experience it to its fullest extent, but no one can step completely outside of his/her understandings. Someone who is completely outside of their understandings has no understanding of the self, and therefore cannot communicate with us. Humans live in their meanings and so with that we have to use our meanings to best understand philosophical hermeneutics. A major aspect of philosophical hermeneutics is the Bildungs process. In the Bildungs process there are two major areas of learning and they are 1) Self Formation, and 2) The normative dimension of philosophical hermeneutics. Self-Formation revolves around the ideas that we are and will always be connected to our understanding of the self and to try and uncover the phenomena about the self. The normative dimension of philosophical hermeneutics looks toward other people as having the same incurable problem of understanding the self and the cosmos in a closed, finite outlook, but philosophical hermeneutics attempts to tear away our understandings, as they are, and allow us to see life in its raw essence. In order to use philosophical hermeneutics you have to consistently pull away the ideas that are imbedded into your thinking in order to change your view of the cosmos or worlds around you. *The Eros of Wisdom* quotes Socrates saying that the mere questioning of “the ordinary everyday meanings that make a human life possible is what makes it most worth living”.

Phenomenology is merely a way to look at and question the phenomena, which are facts or situations that are observed, whose cause or explanation is in question (New Oxford American Dictionary “Phenomenon”). Phenomenology can also be described as a study of the conscious and experience. This is not the conscious of being awake, but the understanding of the self and trying to study the idea that we understand the self. It’s not possible to step outside of the self, but we can look within and try to see the way that we look at other situations and question them which is phenomenology.

Comment [dp1]: Try to state as briefly as possible what this is. Include the notions of hermeneutical circle, reflexivity, recognition of finitude and horizons of meaning. Then you might be in a position to say the PH is an attempt to understand understanding. What you say here just makes the reader wonder what you are talking about.

Comment [dp2]: It is not without presuppositions. Part of PH is to recognize the incoherence of the idea of presuppositionless starting points. Rather, PH is descriptive rather than initially theoretical and begins with the recognition that there are no uninterpreted phenomena. Lived experience is not something that then requires interpretation. Experience is always already meaningful, that is interpretive that is the condition of any further interpretation. From that recognition we can then go on to say the things that you are supposed to be getting to in this essay.

Comment [dp3]: What does it mean to strip away concepts? Are you trying to say something about the phenomenological starting point of hermeneutics? If so, distinguish this and then go on to say what philosophical hermeneutics is.

Comment [dp4]: You seem to be confusing the general interpretive nature of meaningful experience on the one hand and philosophical hermeneutics on the other, which is a philosophical reflection that leads to recognizing and understanding this condition which reflexively sees itself as interpretive in the very act of this interpretive seeing.

Comment [dp5]: Why try to put it this nearly incoherent way? Why not say: it is only possible to understand at all within horizons of meaningfulness, that is, within an already interpreted finite standpoint? Then go on to talk about self awareness and self understanding through the dialectical process of communication in language, the give and take that we are exposed to from birth. If you had set this up with a discussion of the hermeneutical circle, etc., at the beginning then you could build on that to make some sense of all the things you are trying to say here.

Comment [dp6]: What are you trying to say? That it is impossible to understand oneself if one does not understand anything? If so, that would be quite an obvious and useless thing to say.

Comment [dp7]: Start over. Read some clear statements of phenomenology (not phenomenon) and then state it clearly.

Bildung is a continuous process that is never completely finished and the longer you have been engaged in it the more you strive to acquire more. It is a German word that could never be translated into any of the other European languages, but we can use language to understand the basic elements of it. It is the process of learning, teaching, discovering, forming, and growth. It is used to describe one's growth in every aspect of life, whether it be in ethics, skills, knowledge, etc.. Gadamer defined the Bildung process, in basic, as a openness and stretching of ones horizons and never stop learning, also "the truly educated person is undogmatic". There are two major types of Bildung talked about in the *Eros of Wisdom* and they are intellectual Bildung and Philosophical Bildung. Intellectual Bildung is simply the process of learning that we attain during our time in academia. It is that gathering of knowledge used to bring order to a society. The downside to this type of Bildung is that it can leave people with concrete ideas and truths that cannot be moved, therefore leaving them a dogmatic person. The other form of Bildung is philosophical. Philosophical Bildung questions all reasons and avenues to gain understanding of the cosmos. It is in philosophical Bildung that we get self formation and the normative (basic/original) degree of philosophical hermeneutics in which I already described in philosophical hermeneutics (*ph*: lines 14-21). It is only through philosophical Bildung that one can truly grasp the spirit of the Bildungs process. This spirit is the eros of wisdom, the love and passionate desire to understand the actual essence of understanding.

Linguisticality is the ability to communicate through language. All language is, is mans attempt to create a standard set of meanings for the worlds that we live in. Without language we struggle to understand life. Some like to assume that linguistics encompasses all communication whatsoever. If this is the case then without linguistics we cannot have meanings in this world therefore linguistics are the most essential form of our meanings. The *Eros of Wisdom* talks about how Gadamer said that without language there are no meanings. This idea has led many to come up with similar conclusions, but relatively they all say that without language there is no meaning. It is with language that we philosophize about our world and language that allows us to understand the wonder of our world and the worlds we live in. In the end, all of these (philosophical hermeneutics, phenomenology, Bildung, and linguisticality) play important roles in shaping our understanding of the world and it is essential that we use these tools in order to remove our established concepts of the world in order to expand our horizons (limits)...

REWRITE

Comment [dp8]: This is so poorly expressed I cannot begin to unravel it. Start over. Read the definitions of Bildung and try to state what the most central features of this process are

Comment [dp9]: You throw lots of things together in most of the sentences in this paper that leads away from rather than toward any clarity. This is just one example.

Comment [dp10]: You are again putting ideas together in sentences that do not lead to much clarity. All I can see is that there is a gist to what you are saying, but nothing very clear comes out.

Comment [dp11]: This is fairly clear and does set you up to say something that should come next. But what comes next is muddled.

Comment [dp12]: Intellectual Bildung is the development of important useful skills and knowledge. It is distinct from but overlaps with the richer sense of philosophical Bildung. Such skills are not necessarily connected to any dogma.

Comment [dp13]: This is a jumble of semi coherent ideas and does not get us to any significant understanding of Bildung.

Comment [dp14]: Without language such struggle is impossible at all.

Comment [dp15]: Linguistics merely studies the surface features of language as well as its semantical and syntactical features. It is an empirical theoretical science with specific methodologies. The idea of linguisticality is not a theoretical empirical science in this way. It is a recognition of our inability to grasp the very condition of meaningful awareness except via that condition itself. As Gadamer says: Language is the nearest thing and therefore the hardest to see/understand. (present in everything and cannot be made into an object for science in the fullest sense of language, i.e., linguisticality).

Comment [dp16]: Again, we are not discussing the science of linguistics.

Comment [dp17]: State it more radically so you really show what the insight is: Without language there is no THOUGHT, no meaningful self-conscious awareness.

Comment [dp18]: What does this mean? Why does this make any sense?

Comment [dp19]: I think everyone could agree to this. But most people would not grasp the central insight about linguisticality. That is what you need to try to clarify.

Comment [dp20]: You can probably just eliminate this. It doesn't add anything significant OR rewrite it so it does.

Comment [dp21]: This whole paragraph misses the essential point of linguisticality. Need to rethink this and rewrite.