

Heritage and Its Interpretation in Gadamer

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Abstract

This study tries to investigate the position of heritage and its interpretation according to Gadamer. This is through analyzing the most important concepts which Gadamer presented to understand heritage and interpret it on new bases. Currently, the interpretation of heritage is the subject of many trends and schools. Each of which tries to present different visions about the relationship between heritage and the present time, how to deal with the influence of heritage, and how to answer the question whether is it the interpreted text or the source one that gives meaning to heritage?

Interpretation had existed before Gadamer, especially with Schleiermacher, Dilthey and Heidegger, but it took a new course with Gadamer. Therefore, this study aims at analyzing the new addition that Gadamer introduced and the influences it left on the philosophies concerned with heritage. What important to Gadamer is the thing that is common between us and heritage. This is because interpreting heritage is a practical question and not a contemplative one. The present imposes a particular awareness of heritage on us, which means that the present is part of heritage and not separated from it. Thus, interpretation refers neither to the heritage reader nor to the existing text inasmuch as it refers to the role and function which heritage might take in the present and its crises.

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