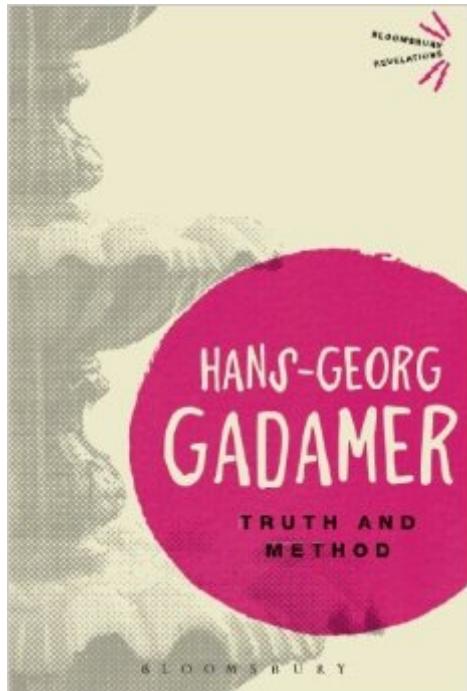


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Truth And Method (Bloomsbury Revelations)



Synopsis

Truth and Method is a landmark work of 20th century thought which established Hans Georg-Gadamer as one of the most important philosophical voices of the 20th Century. In this book, Gadamer established the field of 'philosophical hermeneutics': exploring the nature of knowledge, the book rejected traditional quasi-scientific approaches to establishing cultural meaning that were prevalent after the war. In arguing the 'truth' and 'method' acted in opposition to each other, Gadamer examined the ways in which historical and cultural circumstance fundamentally influenced human understanding. It was an approach that would become hugely influential in the humanities and social sciences and remains so to this day in the work of Jurgen Habermas and many others.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

To understand Gadamer one must be able to place him in a historical continuum of philosophical hermeneutics. Those who preceded him tended to view hermeneutics through a prescriptive light that is based on an organized and detailed sequence of steps that when followed in the "correct" manner would lead to the sanctioned correct result, a meaning that was fixed by the author at the time of its writing. Gadamer felt that such a quest might indeed arrive at a "truth" but this truth would inevitably be a misleading one. Instead, he favored a descriptive approach, one that took a more holistic look at what the author wrote and what the reader's life experiences were. The focus here was not on a prescriptive speculation of a text's purported meaning but on a reflective evolution of what normally occurs within a reader's mind each time that reader addresses a text. This reflection

on the interplay between reader and text was not a part of the earlier versions of hermeneutics but it was an integral component of Gadamer's immediate predecessor, Martin Heidegger, who in his groundbreaking text *Being and Time* postulated a being called *Being* that had a pseudo-existence that allowed one to "step out of the word" as it were and see the world as it truly was. This ability to see the world in such a fixed manner required one to examine objects from that world and to extrapolate from them their innate "is-ness" or state of being. Gadamer used hermeneutics to discourage readers from assuming that a standardized meaning of a text existed prior to and autonomous from the text itself. Hermeneutics morphed from a singularly accepted methodology of interrogating specific texts like the bible to a general totalizing approach based on an ongoing process of a fusion of horizons between reader and text.

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