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## Introduction

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# INTRODUCTION

Patricia Altenbernd Johnson

This issue of the *University of Dayton Review* presents papers in the area of philosophical hermeneutics. This was the theme of the Eleventh Annual Philosophy Colloquium of the Department of Philosophy of the University of Dayton, held in March 1982. All of the papers included in this issue were presented at the colloquium.

While "hermeneutics" has long been the word used to name the art of interpretation in disciplines such as theology and philology, it is only quite recently that the word has been broadened and adopted for philosophical use. Friedrich Schleiermacher, whose concern was primarily theological, begins to open the possibility of a philosophical hermeneutics which will show that the operation of human understanding does not differ between disciplines. Wilhelm Dilthey continues Schleiermacher's approach and adds the additional concern that hermeneutics as method be seen as appropriate not only for textual study but also for historical study. Dilthey seeks to develop hermeneutics as a method for all of the human studies. It is with Martin Heidegger's broadening of the term that one focuses on the philosophical issue at the root of hermeneutics. Before hermeneutics can propose to produce a method appropriate for human understanding, there must be a philosophical investigation of human understanding. It is on this articulation and its resulting implications which contemporary philosophers such as Hans-Georg Gadamer have focused. All of the papers in this issue work out of or react to Heidegger and Gadamer's work.

Richard Palmer acknowledges that, while hermeneutics has only recently emerged as a philosophical concern, it is already being suggested by voices such as Jacques Derrida that we must go beyond hermeneutics. Palmer argues that such a move is not called for and that Derrida does not himself manage to make the move. Robert Hollinger supports Palmer's emphasis on the continuing importance of hermeneutics by showing ramifications of philosophical hermeneutics for modern educational ideals and practices. Stephen Watson looks at a particular problem in Gadamer's thought, that of justification, and argues for the need to move to Derrida's insights. Gary Shapiro explains some of Derrida's thought to an American audience by making use of Charles Peirce's work. Thomas Olshewsky also makes use of Peirce as he distinguishes Gadamer's understanding of hermeneutics from Richard Rorty's understanding. John D. Caputo was an invited keynote speaker at the colloquium. His challenging paper examines the Kierkegaardian and Husserlian roots of Heidegger's philosophy of recovery. The papers by William Maker and David Depew deal with Gadamer's position and its relationship to Hegel. Both of these papers continue Caputo's stress on the importance of a consideration of the origins of hermeneutics as well as its current developments. The last two papers treat of ways in which philosophical hermeneutics is influencing work in other areas. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone relates hermeneutics to paleontology, and William L. Nothstine shows its impact in the area of Speech Communication. As a group, these papers represent the breadth of lively dialogue which is currently taking place within the approach known as philosophical hermeneutics.

