

Gadamer, Heidegger, and Derrida

Gadamer (1900-2002)

“It is enough to say that we understand in a *different way, if we understand at all*” [“Es genügt zu sagen, daß man *anders* versteht, *wenn man überhaupt versteht*”].

Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2d English ed. (Joel Weinsheimer & Donald G. Marshall transl., Continuum 2004 [1960]), p. 296.

Weinsheimer and Marshall problematically introduce the first person plural, twice, while Gadamer had elected to retain the third person impersonal throughout — after his mentor Martin Heidegger, perhaps, who makes conspicuous use of the expression “das Man” in his own work. For example, see Hubert L. Dreyfus, “Interpreting Heidegger on *Das Man*”, (1995) 38 *Inquiry* 423; Douglas Robinson, *Critical Translation Studies* (Routledge, 2017), pp. 113-23.

And then, there is the addition of the word “way” in the expression “a *different way*” (the German term would be “Weg”, which is not in Gadamer’s text).

“It suffices to say that one understands *differently, when one understands at all*”.

[genügen = to suffice: Es genügt = It suffices]

[überhaupt = at all: Er hat überhaupt keine Ahnung = He has no idea at all]

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Heidegger (1889-1976)

“We [...] are at most always only ‘nearby’” [“Wir (...) sind höchstens immer nur ‘dabei’”].

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Derrida (1930-2004)

“[B]etween my world and every other world, there is initially the space and the time of an infinite difference, of an interruption incommensurable with all the attempts at passage, of bridge, of isthmus, of communication, of translation, of trope, and of transfer which the desire for world or world sickness [...] will attempt to pose, to impose, to propose, to stabilize. There is no world, there are only islands”.

[“(E)ntre mon monde et tout autre monde, il y a d’abord l’espace et le temps d’une différence infinie, d’une interruption incommensurable à toutes les tentatives de passage, de pont, d’isthme, de communication, de traduction, de trope et de transfert que le désir de monde ou le mal de monde (...) tentera de poser, d’imposer, de proposer, de stabiliser. Il n’y a pas de monde, il n’y a que des îles”].

Jacques Derrida, *La Bête et le souverain*, ed. by Michel Lisse, Marie-Louise Mallet, and Ginette Michaud, vol. 2 (Paris: Galilée, 2010 [2002]), p. 31.

“[I]t is monadology, the fact that in my monad, in the world as it appears to me, between that monad and yours, there is no relation possible [...]. But from monad to monad, and even when monads speak to one another, there is no relation, no passage”.

[“(C)’est la monadologie, le fait que dans ma monade, dans le monde tel qu’il me paraît, entre cette monade-là et la vôtre, il n’y aucun rapport possible (...). Mais de monade à monade, et même quand les monades se parlent, il n’y a aucun rapport, aucun passage”].

Jacques Derrida and Maurizio Ferraris, *Le Goût du secret* (Andrea Bellantone and Arthur Cohen eds, Hermann 2018 [1994]), p. 84.