

Editors' Introduction

The¹ meaning of life has been an unavoidable question throughout human thought. The question of this meaning arises directly from the experience of our mortality, from our condition as vulnerable animals. What meaning are we capable of grasping while dwelling in the midst of this finitude? Are we capable, in some way, of finding a fold or gap through which the light of transcendence can reach us? How do we recognise ourselves through the narratives we construct from this tension between finitude and transcendence? Philosophy has not ignored these questions, and clear examples of this are the proposals of Paul Ricoeur and Hans-Georg Gadamer. As key contributors to this dialogue, their thoughts will allow us to understand and weave together perspectives on narrative identity, death and transcendence as guiding threads. These reflections find refuge in anthropology and philosophical hermeneutics. Philosophical anthropology, which is unique, allows us a variety of styles and interpretations. Illuminating hermeneutic brings us closer to a careful reinterpretation of these questions from a new perspective.

The inevitability of death and human finitude are a task of human thought that allow us to rethink issues such as illness, health,

¹ This issue stems from the international conference *Paul Ricoeur and Hans-Georg Gadamer: narrative identity, death, transcendence*. The conference took place at the Complutense University of Madrid on May 7, 8, and 9, 2024. It was organized by Beatrice Sofia Vitale, María Begoña Collantes Sampedro, and Jorge Benito Torres.

and healing, with which Gadamer has maintained a profound dialogue. Gadamer's proposal, which advocates a hermeneutic ontology, ultimately paints a picture of human beings as symbolic beings of understanding. In this sense, the notions of memory and history are linked to the medium of language in which we already exist. All of this leads to a hermeneutic anthropology that is necessarily linked to the question of human transcendence.

Similarly, Ricoeur has addressed the relationship between narrative identity, death and transcendence and its unfolding in the figures of the survivor, the dying, the imaginary, or a transcendence immanent to the narrative and the sense of recognition and otherness. Issues such as suffering, guilt, evil or sin, together with forgiveness, hope or memory, will articulate a large part of his ethical and anthropological proposal. These varied interests exemplify his way of doing philosophy, exploring the human by delving into the richness of experience in its many facets. With the skill that only masters possess, Ricoeur and Gadamer give us the task of continuing to think about our own era, of continuing to do philosophical anthropology in response to a challenge that is now ours.

The works that readers will find here, drawn from a wide range of research, aim to offer an overview of these issues. They provide a good sample of the quantity and quality of studies being carried out in the field of hermeneutic anthropology. Each work is a hermeneutically open window through which we can tackle the challenge left to us by the masters.

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