

**Jean Grondin, *Hans-Georg Gadamer: Eine Biographie*** (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999).

*Hans-Georg Gadamer: Eine Biographie* is a remarkable biographical account of Gadamer's intellectual inheritance, long life, and prolific academic career.

In an attractively vibrant and clear way, Grondin acquaints us with the biographical details of Gadamer's life and his luminous and tantalizing response to the pressing problems of humanity – his inimitable, dialogic mode of philosophizing, which profoundly influenced contemporary philosophy and inspired generations of interpreters.

Grondin's stylish book shows that Gadamer's life (1990-2002), which spanned the century troubled with two global conflicts and witnessed the inasmuch praiseworthy as jeopardizing advancement of technology, is a stimulating and rewarding journey to think the exigency of the hermeneutic inquiry and its application (*ars applicandi*) in the liveliness of human everydayness.

Grondin undertakes the most challenging task of answering the troublesome question of the relationship between Gadamer and Heidegger. Their confirmed collusion with Nazism ebbed the power of his philosophical stand while being filtered through the disagreeableness of his personal history. Responding to the necessity of providing a more thorough examination of the specificity of the historical moment which heavily pressed on the two thinkers, *Eine Biographie* offers a detailed account of Gadamer's scholarly career which coincided with the period of National Socialism in Germany.

Grondin's book is a captivating example of the manifold possibilities which arise in compiling a biographical sketch and instantiates a particular problematization of what biography is or can be. Grondin's exceptional exploration of the intersecting paths of the two icons of contemporary hermeneutics, which began with Heidegger's supervising of Gadamer's habilitation dissertation, "The Interpretation of Plato's Philebus," sheds new light on the intense nature of Heidegger-Gadamer collaboration. This highly intriguing cooperation poses unending questions as to the extent to which the dazzling career of Gadamer's mentor influenced that of the equally brilliant student. Interestingly, by offering an insight into Gadamer's relationship with his phenomenal but uncongenial teacher, Grondin's biography becomes a fascinatingly paradigmatic study of the master and student relationship *per se*.

Grondin's book cogently emphasizes that Gadamer's concentration on the significance of tradition and prejudice for a hermeneutic interrogation demonstrates his moving beyond Heidegger's philosophy. Acknowledging the indispensability of tradition and pre-judgments in representing human historicity, Gadamer indicates that historicity is inescapably interwoven with the human perception of finitude. Gadamer, as Grondin lucidly explains, views tradition and prejudice as the pre-conditions of

any act of understanding. With a real zest of the Gadamerian scholar, Grondin highlights the importance of Gadamer's notion of historically effected consciousness (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*) as one of his major contributions to contemporary hermeneutic thought.

Without a shadow of a doubt, Grondin's dashing and comprehensive biography encourages us to delve deeply into Gadamer's awe-inspiring career and leaves us spell-bound in equal measure by the profundity of Gadamer's thought and the intimate portrayal of *the life of a philosopher*.