



Epistemology Of Contemporary Hermeneutics (A Comparative Study between Gadamer and Derrida): Epistemologi Hermeneutika Kontemporer (Studi Perbandingan antara Gadamer dan Derrida)

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General Background: Hermeneutics, as the philosophy of interpretation, plays a pivotal role in understanding texts across disciplines, from theology to cultural studies. **Specific Background:** Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jacques Derrida stand as two influential yet contrasting figures in this tradition, with Gadamer emphasizing dialogue, tradition, and historicity, while Derrida underscores *différance*, instability of meaning, and deconstruction. **Knowledge Gap:** Despite their profound influence, comparative epistemological analysis of their methods, particularly in relation to interdisciplinary applications such as Islamic studies, remains underexplored. **Aims:** This study aims to examine and compare Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and Derrida's deconstructive approach, highlighting their epistemological implications and potential contributions to modern interpretation. **Results:** The findings reveal that Gadamer's model fosters historically grounded dialogue through the fusion of horizons, while Derrida's deconstruction opens interpretive spaces by exposing contradictions and indeterminacies within texts. **Novelty:** By placing these two thinkers in direct comparison, this research demonstrates how their divergent approaches can complement one another, offering both contextual depth and critical reflexivity in interpretation. **Implications:** The study provides a theoretical and practical framework for applying hermeneutics in philosophy, humanities, and religious studies, advocating a more inclusive, dynamic, and critical interpretive practice suitable for addressing contemporary academic and societal challenges.

Highlight :

- Gadamer emphasizes tradition, history, and dialogue in the process of understanding texts.
- Derrida reveals the instability of meaning through the method of deconstruction.
- Both contribute significantly to the development of contemporary hermeneutics

Keywords : Comparative, Hermeneutics, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jacques Derrida, Epistemology3

Introduction

Hermeneutics is the process of transforming something or a situation of ignorance into



understanding, where two different focal points of attention interact [1]. In essence, it refers to the event of understanding a text, with its primary concern being comprehension and interpretation. More broadly, hermeneutics is defined as an effort to explain and trace the underlying message and meaning of language or texts that are unclear, ambiguous, contradictory, or cause confusion for the listener or reader.[2]

Hermeneutics is not only part of what has traditionally been known as the sciences of the Qur'an and exegesis, but it has also evolved into a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field. This interdisciplinary nature is clearly reflected in contemporary hermeneutics, and its application to the social sciences and humanities cannot be disregarded [3]. It originates from the need to understand and compare two distinct approaches to hermeneutics: Hans-Georg Gadamer's concept of understanding and Jacques Derrida's deconstructivist approach.[4]

The hermeneutic figures Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jacques Derrida are two prominent thinkers in the fields of hermeneutics and philosophy, each with differing perspectives on text interpretation and understanding.[5] Some of the social influences associated with both include their impact on academia, debates and controversies, and critiques of authority. Through their ideas, Gadamer and Derrida have made significant contributions to how we comprehend texts, history, and social relations, encouraging us to continually question and critically explore existing assumptions. These contributions allow us to reflect more deeply on how we engage with texts, whether literary or religious, as part of our broader understanding of the world.[6]

Between these two figures, there are several literary facts related to their works and their influence on literature and critical theory. Gadamer's works have significantly shaped hermeneutic approaches in the study of literature, history, and theology. His emphasis on dialogue and tradition has assisted researchers in understanding texts as part of broader historical and cultural interactions. According to Gadamer, the interpretation of a text is always bound to tradition, meaning that no reader or interpreter can detach from the social, cultural, and historical contexts that shape their perspective of the text. This results in a broader and more inclusive understanding, where the text is seen as the product of interaction between the reader and tradition.[7]

Meanwhile, Derrida's deconstruction has become an essential tool in literary criticism, cultural studies, and feminist theory, by demonstrating how texts always possess unstable meanings. Derrida enabled critics to explore multiple layers of meaning and contradictions within texts that are often overlooked in conventional interpretations. From Derrida's perspective, understanding a text does not rely solely on its surface meaning but also on the contradictions and uncertainties embedded within it.[8] This approach emphasizes that meaning in a text is never fixed and is always open to diverse interpretations. The works of Gadamer and Derrida, though different in their approaches, have both made significant contributions to how we understand and interpret texts and the world around us. While Gadamer employs a more traditional and dialogue-based approach, and Derrida adopts a more radical and deconstructive method, these differences highlight the vast range of interpretive possibilities available for existing texts and how each approach can enrich our understanding of the meanings contained within them.[9]

This study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of how Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jacques Derrida define, apply, and evaluate hermeneutics. By comparing their methods and criteria of truth, this research offers insights into the strengths and weaknesses of each approach, as well as their contributions to the study of text interpretation and meaning across various disciplines. Derrida's approach opens the door to exploring contradictions and uncertainties within texts that may be overlooked by other methods. In contrast, Gadamer's emphasis on dialogue with tradition and historical context provides a new way of understanding texts within a broader relational framework.

Research on the nature of hermeneutics according to Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jacques Derrida, as well as their methods and criteria of truth, holds significant importance encompassing both



theoretical and practical aspects within philosophy, literature, social sciences, and the humanities. Its significance extends broadly in academic and practical contexts, enriching theoretical understanding of text interpretation while also offering practical applications that can influence various fields of study and social life. This research contributes to developing more critical, reflective, and inclusive approaches to understanding texts and meanings within complex and dynamic contexts. It can also assist researchers and Islamic scholars in viewing religious texts such as the Qur'an and Hadith through a more complex lens, taking into account indeterminate meanings and the importance of engaging with tradition as well as social and cultural contexts. Such an approach may pave the way for more flexible and contextual interpretations capable of addressing contemporary challenges and diverse perspectives.

Methods

This study is a qualitative research employing a comparative approach and the philosophy of hermeneutics. The main focus of the research is to compare the perspectives of two prominent figures in the hermeneutical philosophical tradition, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jacques Derrida, particularly in their understanding of texts and meaning. Hermeneutics, as a branch of philosophy concerned with the process of interpretation, serves as a common ground for these two thinkers, despite their fundamentally different approaches. Gadamer represents the traditional hermeneutical approach, emphasizing the importance of history, tradition, and dialogue in the process of understanding, whereas Derrida offers a deconstructive approach that challenges the stability of meaning and the authority of texts.

The method employed in this research is library research, with data obtained from secondary sources such as books, scholarly journals, and relevant academic writings. The primary sources analyzed are Hans-Georg Gadamer's monumental work *Truth and Method* and

Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology*. These two works were chosen because they are considered the most comprehensive representations of each thinker's views on hermeneutics and methods of text interpretation. In addition, supporting literature is also utilized to strengthen the analysis and enrich the understanding of the broader context of their thought.

In the process of analysis, primary attention is given to the key concepts underlying the thought of Gadamer and Derrida. From Gadamer's perspective, concepts such as the fusion of horizons, hermeneutic dialogue, and the authority of tradition are of central importance. Meanwhile, from Derrida's standpoint, concepts such as *différance*, deconstruction, and the critique of logocentrism are the main focus. The analysis seeks to understand how both thinkers view the relationship between text, reader, and meaning. Gadamer's approach tends to construct an understanding that is dialogical and historical, whereas Derrida's approach emphasizes the instability of meaning and the necessity of a critical reading of the structures of language and hidden power.

Result and Discussion

A. Gadamer and Philosophical Hermeneutics

1.1 Biography of Hans-Georg Gadamer

His full name is Hans-Georg Gadamer, born in Marburg, Germany, on February 11, 1900, and passed away in Heidelberg, Germany, on March 13, 2002 [10]. Modern hermeneutics reached its peak in his monumental work that became highly influential and widely discussed across various contemporary disciplines such as literature, philosophy, social sciences, and theology. Hans-Georg Gadamer authored the renowned book *Wahrheit und Methode* [11]. He was a student of Heidegger and, during the summer semester of 1923, attended Heidegger's lectures on the hermeneutics of facticity.



Regarding Gadamer's thought in that book, Robert J. Dostal commented that Gadamer "contributed to the hermeneutical turn in philosophy and the humanities that extends beyond the direct influence of his work [12]." This philosopher came from a German middle-class family with a strong academic background. His father was a professor and researcher in the field of chemistry. Deeply devoted to the natural sciences, his father looked down on professors of the humanities as "Schwatzprofessoren" (gossip professors), and therefore hoped that his son would not pursue studies in philosophy or the humanities [13].

Gadamer's family life was not marked by Christian faith, even though they identified as Protestant. They could be said to have followed a "religion of reason" (Vernunftsreligion) [14]. Influenced by his father's devotion to the natural sciences, during his time at the Gymnasium Gadamer was more interested in military strategy than in the study of classical languages, leading his parents to hope he would become an officer. However, his father's concerns eventually materialized, as Gadamer's attention gradually shifted toward literature and classical languages, partly due to the allure of Stefan George's poetry, which was highly admired at the time.

1.2 Gadamer's Concept

Gadamer's concept of understanding, which will later be contrasted with Derrida's deconstructive approach, lies at the core of this study. The central question arises from this constellation: What exactly is Gadamer's concrete concept of understanding, and how can it be distinguished from Derrida's position? Where do similarities exist, and where are the irreconcilable differences? Gadamer's notion of understanding will be explained primarily on the basis of his lecture *Text and Interpretation* in Paris, while other writings serve as further elaboration. In 1960, Gadamer laid out the foundations of "Universal Hermeneutics" in his major work *Truth and Method*. Initially, this work was read more within religious circles, but it soon broke through into philosophy and eventually established Gadamer's reputation as the foremost representative of hermeneutics in the second half of the last century. This broad formulation of his thought represents a large-scale sketch of philosophical hermeneutics.

First, Gadamer's view of hermeneutics was deeply influenced by Heidegger and emphasizes the historical and contextual aspects of understanding. Gadamer regarded understanding as a historical process that is always bound to the context of time and

place. According to him, we cannot detach ourselves from history and tradition, which fundamentally shape the way we interpret and comprehend texts [13].

Second, Gadamer argued that prejudice, or pre-judgments, is not always negative. Prejudice is the initial condition that makes understanding possible. We always approach texts with prejudices shaped by our own traditions and histories. Gadamer's disagreement with Schleiermacher and Dilthey lay in their assumption that hermeneutics is merely a task of reproduction. Gadamer, instead, wrote about prejudice as a condition for understanding. His discussion in this regard marked a breakthrough in hermeneutics—the rehabilitation of prejudice, authority, and tradition as essential elements in the process of understanding [13].

The measure of the truth of a recognized and understood prejudice can serve as a foundation for gaining a deeper understanding of a text. Truth emerges as the result of an interaction between the reader's prejudice and the text. In principle, more accurate understanding is achieved when the reader acknowledges and critically examines their own prejudices, thereby enabling a more authentic dialogue with the text.

Third, the fusion of horizons. (a) Gadamer argues that understanding is a process of merging horizons between the reader (interpreter) and the text. (b) The reader's horizon, shaped by their historical and social context, encounters the horizon of the text, which is also bound by its own context. (c) In this process, a dialogue takes place between the reader and the text, resulting in



new understanding.

Truth is measured through the process of the fusion of horizons between the reader and the text. When the horizons of the reader and the text meet, a new understanding is created, which is regarded as a form of truth. In principle, genuine understanding is the result of an open and sincere dialogue, in which the reader becomes aware of their own prejudices and integrates them with the meaning that emerges from the text.

Fourth, understanding is a dialectical process that involves questions and answers. The reader poses questions to the text, and the text provides answers that, in turn, open up new questions, creating a dynamic and continuous process of understanding, where each answer generates further questions, allowing understanding to constantly evolve.

Fifth, Gadamer's effort to rehabilitate authority and tradition has significant implications for the concept of historical consciousness (*historisches Bewusstsein*). Understanding the content of works from the past also means understanding the influence these works have had throughout history. This latter aspect received little attention from Schleiermacher and Dilthey, yet Gadamer elevated it into a central focus of his thought. He referred to it with the German term *Wirkungsgeschichte*, which is translated as "history of effects" or "historicity."

Gadamer emphasized that understanding is always historical. Every interpretation is influenced by the historical context of both the reader and the text. Understanding is not the discovery of an objective meaning but rather a dialogical process shaped by historical context. The standard of truth arises from the recognition that understanding is always conditioned by history. A proper interpretation takes into account the history and traditions that shape both the text and the reader. In principle, a profound historical awareness enhances the accuracy of interpretation, as it considers the background and the evolution of meaning.

B. Derrida and Radical Hermeneutics

1.1 Biography of Jacques Derrida

Jacques Derrida, a Jewish-born philosopher, was born in El-Biar, Algeria, on July 15, 1930, and moved to France in 1949 to pursue his education. He studied at the *École Normale Supérieure* and the Husserl Archive, later teaching at various institutions, including the Sorbonne and the *École Normale Supérieure*. Derrida rose to prominence in 1966 through his lecture at Johns Hopkins University and gained greater recognition in 1967 with the publication of several of his major works, including *Of Grammatology*. His writings critiqued logocentrism and structuralism, introducing the concept of deconstruction, which became central to his thought. Derrida received numerous awards and honorary degrees from various universities. Toward the end of his life, he participated in a documentary about his biography and passed away on October 8, 2004, due to liver cancer. His influence on contemporary philosophy remains highly significant, establishing him as one of the most influential philosophers of the 21st century.

1.2 Derrida's Concept

All hermeneutical efforts can be crystallized in a statement Gadamer made in Paris in 1981: "The ability to understand," he said, "is a fundamental human capacity, something that sustains communal life with others, and above all, something that occurs through language and the partnership of dialogue [15]."

The starting point of Derrida's thought is Saussure's philosophy of linguistic structuralism, which defines meaning as constructed through the relations of signs to one another as well as their differences within a conceptual scheme. Unlike Saussure, Derrida emphasized the impossibility of maintaining a strict distinction between the signifier and the signified. For Derrida, the means of



expression (signifier) and its meaning (signified) cannot be separated; the mode of expression is just as significant as the meaning itself. The choice of expressive forms—whether poetic, rhetorical, or ironic—is equally as important as the meaning conveyed. Jacques Derrida, a French philosopher, is known as the founder of deconstruction, a critical approach to texts and meaning. This constitutes the essence of hermeneutics according to Derrida.

First, Derrida's thought extends far beyond the topics of hermeneutics and understanding discussed here. Addressing it in this context inevitably sets aside much of his philosophy to focus only on the aspects relevant to this review [13]. Derrida developed the method of deconstruction, which seeks to reveal contradictions, ambiguities, and instabilities within texts. Deconstruction demonstrates that the meaning of a text is never fixed or final but always open to multiple interpretations. Derrida examines how texts construct meaning through binary oppositions and then shows how these oppositions are unstable and self-contradictory. Deconstruction is not the destruction of a text but rather the uncovering of various possible interpretations arising from the instability of meaning. It constitutes a radical hermeneutic, not only rejecting the search for some primordial meaning in interpretation but also exposing the impossibility of achieving coherence in a text's meaning, thereby rendering interpretation an infinite process.

The standard of truth is not regarded as a fixed entity but as something always open to reinterpretation. Truth is a process of uncovering ambiguities and instabilities within the text. The principle of truth in deconstruction lies in the ability to perceive multiple layers of meaning and contradictions in the text, while also recognizing that meaning is always provisional and subject to change.

Second, the position of being both inside and outside the tradition in relation to meaning is best represented by Derrida's neologism to explain deconstruction, namely *différance*. In *La Voix et le Phénomène*, Derrida discusses *différance* in connection with his objections to Husserl's phenomenology [13]. *Différance* indicates that meaning in language is always deferred and dependent on differences. The meaning of a word is not determined directly by its reference but by its relation to other words within the network of language. Derrida introduces the concept of *différance*, which combines both "difference" and "deferral" in meaning. Meaning in language is never complete or fully present because it always depends on differences with other signs and is perpetually deferred in the process of interpretation.

The measure of truth lies in the recognition that meaning is always deferred and dependent on difference. There is no final meaning; every interpretation is provisional. The principle of truth is the understanding of how meaning is formed through an interconnected network of signs and is always situated within a process of deferral.

Third, Derrida criticizes logocentrism, which is the tendency to assume that there is a fixed center or origin of meaning within a text. According to Derrida, there is no stable center of meaning, and texts always involve an infinite play of signs. He demonstrates that every text contains multiple competing centers of meaning, and that meaning is always provisional and open to reinterpretation.

The measure of truth is found in uncovering and critiquing the assumption that there is a fixed center of meaning within a text. Truth lies in the recognition that meaning is always plural and fragmented. The principle is that a correct interpretation is one that identifies and challenges the tendency to seek a central or stable origin of meaning in a text.

Fourth, Derrida emphasizes that a text is always connected to other texts

(intertextuality), and its meaning constantly shifts depending on the context of reading. A text never stands alone but is always intertwined with other texts. There is no single or definitive understanding, as each reading introduces new interpretations. The understanding of a text always involves a network of relationships with other texts, making meaning inherently contextual and



shifting.

C.Hermeneutics in Islamic Studies

In the continuation of this discussion, the researcher will examine Gadamer's and Derrida's theories of hermeneutics and their relevance to Islamic studies. In the context of Islam, hermeneutics—a set of methods, theories, and philosophies focused on the problem of understanding texts.[3] emerged as early as the initial period when the Qur'anic text was difficult and complex to comprehend, thus requiring explanation, translation, and interpretation to be understood. Human understanding plays a crucial role in engaging with an ever-changing reality, and this understanding depends not only on subjective perspectives but also on objective realities that assist human beings in making sense of the world.

Interpersonal experience plays a crucial role in shaping language that can be understood without additional explanation. Hermeneutics, or the study of understanding and interpretation, emphasizes that language enables humans to convey meaning in diverse ways [16]. The tendency toward mutual understanding in language is essential, especially through commonly shared and widely recognized forms of speech. Problems arise when philosophers or highly knowledgeable individuals use language that is not comprehensible to others, rendering communication ineffective. According to Hans-Georg Gadamer, understanding is only possible when differing perspectives find a common language to communicate and achieve mutual comprehension. Human beings possess the ability to reflect upon and justify their understanding through linguistic freedom and the capacity to master a language.

According to the views of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jacques Derrida, the significance of hermeneutics for Islamic studies varies depending on the philosophical approach to texts and interpretation. As a hermeneutic thinker, Gadamer supports several key aspects, particularly that hermeneutics is a vital and profound method of understanding. He emphasizes the importance of dialogue and interaction between the reader and the text in achieving richer and deeper comprehension. Gadamer argues that every understanding is the result of the history of effects (*Wirkungsgeschichte*), which involves both the reader and their context. He maintains that true understanding can only be attained through appreciation of tradition. In the context of Islamic studies, this means hermeneutics can play a crucial role in interpreting religious texts by respecting and engaging with the rich and diverse traditions of Islam.

Gadamer would support the idea that understanding a text must involve contextualization. According to him, the interpretation of a text cannot be separated from its historical, social, and cultural context. Gadamer's concept of the "horizon" emphasizes the importance of merging the horizon of the past (the text) with the horizon of the present (the reader) in the process of understanding. In the context of Islamic studies, this means interpreting Islamic texts within their original historical and cultural settings, while also taking into account contemporary social and cultural contexts.

Gadamer would agree that dialogue between different perspectives and interpretations is essential. He would view hermeneutics as an important means of facilitating dialogue between Islamic traditions and the modern context. This aligns with his view that genuine understanding occurs through dialogue and the exchange of perspectives among various parties. For him, hermeneutics enables a deeper and more contextual understanding of Islamic texts, such as the Qur'an and Hadith, by taking into account the history, culture, and traditions that surround them.

Gadamer would understand the importance of preserving the sacredness and originality of texts, such as the Qur'an, in the process of interpretation. He would emphasize that interpretation must respect the values and beliefs inherent within the text [3].

The perspective of Jacques Derrida, as a deconstructionist, offers a different viewpoint. Derrida



would see the significance of hermeneutics in Islamic studies through the lens of deconstruction, emphasizing that every text inherently contains uncertainty and ambiguity. He would encourage readers to question the meaning of the text and to seek out the multiple hidden layers of interpretation. For Derrida, there is no single

definitive interpretation, as meaning is always provisional and subject to change.

Derrida would emphasize the importance of intertextuality, in which Islamic texts cannot be understood in isolation but are always connected to other texts and broader cultural contexts. In Derrida's view, hermeneutics allows Islamic studies to explore a complex and interconnected web of meanings. He would encourage Islamic scholarship to question assumptions about the originality and authenticity of Islamic texts. Derrida would stress that the meaning of a text is always open to reinterpretation and that every reading is a contextual and provisional interpretation. He would highlight the necessity of recognizing uncertainty and ambiguity in the interpretive process. For Derrida, every interpretation results from the play of signs and is always open to reinterpretation.

D. Epistemological Implications in Understanding Texts

In this study, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jacques Derrida are discussed within a comparative framework. The study highlights the fundamental differences regarding the concepts of truth and knowledge, as well as the relationship between the reader, the text, and meaning in the process of interpretation. These two figures represent opposing poles of thought, yet both have had a significant influence on modern hermeneutical discourse. Gadamer rejects the idea that understanding is merely reproductive, as proposed by Schleiermacher and Dilthey, and instead argues that truth in interpretation emerges through a dialogical process between the reader and the text. For him, understanding is formed through the encounter between the horizon of the reader—shaped by prejudice, history, and tradition—and the horizon of the text [13].

Truth, in this framework, is seen as the result of a dynamic interaction between the reader (and the text) and the present, rather than as an objective entity that stands independently. When readers acknowledge their biases and open themselves to the text, a shift in meaning occurs that enables new understanding. Thus, according to Gadamer's hermeneutics, knowledge is the product of an open and dynamic process of interpretation that always involves historical context. In Gadamer's view, the relationship between text and reader is reciprocal: the text is a partner in a living dialogue, not a dead object to be mechanically interpreted [11]. Meaning is constructed through interaction and is not something hidden to be solved; each interpretation generates an understanding that is never complete but always open to further elaboration within this dialectical process.

In addition, Gadamer revitalizes the concepts of authority and tradition, which many modern thinkers regard as obstacles to understanding. For him, tradition serves as a bridge that enables conversation between generations and contexts. Therefore, according to Gadamer's approach, understanding a text also means understanding the history of its influence (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) on our present thought.

Conversely, through the concept of deconstruction, Jacques Derrida offers a more radical approach to meaning and understanding. According to Derrida, the meaning of a text is never fixed and never fully present. He introduces the notion of *différance*, a play on words that indicates meaning is always both "different" (from other signs) and "deferred" (never fully present). This implies that there is no clear point at which meaning can be definitively established. Within this framework, truth is no longer dialogical and historical as depicted by Gadamer; rather, it becomes open-ended and infinite. Truth does not emerge from the fusion of horizons but from the recognition that no meaning is consistent. For Derrida, interpretation is a continuous process that exposes the contradictions, ambiguities, and inconsistencies within the text. Knowledge, in this sense, is the awareness of the multiplicity of meanings and their inherent limitations.



Derrida also critiques “logocentrism,” a tendency in Western philosophy to place “logos” or a central meaning at the core of every interpretation. He rejects the notion that there is a definitive way to uncover the original meaning or essence of a text [17]. In deconstruction, texts are read intertextually, meaning they are always interconnected and intersecting with one another. As a result, meaning becomes a web of signs without a clear beginning or end. In Derrida’s thought, the relationship between reader, text, and meaning resembles a field of play (the play of signifiers) rather than a dialogical space as described by Gadamer. The reader is not a participant in dialogue seeking mutual understanding with the text; rather, they are explorers who continually alter and reinterpret seemingly stable structures of meaning. This method does not yield an accurate understanding of a single meaning; instead, it fosters the recognition that meaning itself is always part of the interpretive process.

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that Gadamer’s approach is

fundamentally philosophical hermeneutics, emphasizing dialogue, tradition, and historicity as means to achieve true understanding. This approach considers truth as the result of a continually evolving fusion of horizons, and knowledge as the product of reflective engagement with both text and context. In contrast, Derrida presents a deconstructive hermeneutics that rejects the stability of meaning, demonstrating that every understanding is the product of constructions full of uncertainty and conflict. Truth is not communicated dialogically; rather, it emerges through the disclosure of uncertainty and the dynamic interplay of signs. This method produces non-foundational knowledge, meaning it does not rely on a fixed basis but remains perpetually open to reinterpretation.

These two methods carry significant epistemological implications. While Gadamer encourages readers to engage in a historically and contextually grounded dialogue with the text, Derrida urges readers to question the foundational assumptions that shape meaning, even deconstructing the underlying structures of thought. For instance, Gadamer’s approach can be applied in Islamic studies to read the Qur’an in dialogue with contemporary social contexts and established exegetical traditions. Meanwhile, Derrida’s approach can be employed to uncover ideological biases in classical interpretations and create space for more inclusive and contextually sensitive alternative readings.

The interpretation of Islamic texts, such as the Qur’an and Hadith, constitutes a crucial process in the intellectual and spiritual life of Muslims. However, interpretation constantly faces challenges: how to understand the meaning of the text within changing contexts and how various interpretations relate to one another. In such a situation, the hermeneutical approaches developed by Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jacques Derrida offer two interconnected and highly relevant perspectives.

The objective of this study is both strategic and comprehensive. Beyond merely comparing two prominent figures in hermeneutics, the research uses this comparison as a means to address epistemological, methodological, and practical issues related to textual studies. Furthermore, the author seeks to contextualize the philosophical analysis within modern Islamic studies, demonstrating that modern hermeneutical methods can enrich our understanding of religious texts in a more human-centered and contextual manner. This article clearly illustrates that hermeneutics is not merely a theory of interpretation; it is a way of thinking about meaning, truth, and the relationship between humans, texts, tradition, and the social world.

Conclusion

In this study, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jacques Derrida are two key figures in hermeneutics who hold differing perspectives on text interpretation. Gadamer emphasizes that dialogue, history, and tradition are essential. He believes that readers understand a text through the encounter between their own viewpoints and the context; meaning emerges from a dialogue that evolves over time. As



readers become aware of their prejudices and context, truth unfolds. Derrida asserts that meaning is never fixed. He employs a deconstructive approach, demonstrating that a text always allows for multiple interpretations, rejects a single truth, and encourages critical, reflective, and open-minded reading. While Derrida's approach is useful for critiquing dominant interpretations and creating space for diverse meanings and perspectives, Gadamer's approach is well-suited for understanding texts contextually and valuing tradition within the framework of Islamic text interpretation. In summary, both of these thinkers are equally important, and their approaches can complement each other to produce a deeper, more open, and contextually relevant understanding of texts. Conclusions can be drawn by integrating insights from their diverse perspectives.

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