

# Hans-Georg Gadamer's evenemential beauty. Thought irradiations on the numinous in contemporary art

*Luca Siniscalco – Università degli Studi di Bergamo*

## **Abstract**

Our research project intends to investigate the Hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) by enhancing its interdisciplinary importance at the junction of the main branches of the European humanistic tradition. The reasons for the heuristic power of Hermeneutics go back to the programmatic function which Gadamer himself attributed to it: to go beyond the narrow borders of the opposing theoretical tendencies of contemporary philosophy – subjectivism and naïve realism. In this regard, the “hermeneutic work” performs an essential function, both from a gnoseological and ontological point of view, since a new form of knowledge can rise only through an essential change of the existing relation between subject and object. Hermeneutics thus approaches the problem of truth in its evenemential dimension: that is, the unfolding of *aletheia* can be realized only in the event, in that ontological dimension in which the real undergoes an increase of being through the transition between the multiple

states of being itself. This theoretical legacy can be derived from hermeneutics for the benefit of contemporary transcultural studies in general: the result is an interdisciplinary perspective, which places the human being at the center of the theory of artistic-literary processes, without renouncing to the complexity.

After a deepening of this speculative framework, our research turns to the specific discussion of the relation which, in Gadamer's work, exists between aesthetics and the philosophical-religious sphere. Particularly, we intend to develop the intuition that the hermeneutical method reaches its explanatory peak in the encounter between these two fields of knowledge: aesthetics, understood as ontology of art, and philosophy of religion, assumed as an instance of clarification of the relation subsisting between man and the sacred.

In this context, four main theoretical points will be explored: 1) philosophy of the image; 2) myth; 3) religion (especially in its Christian form); 4) ontology of beauty.

The investigation of the speculative relation existing between the evenemential nature of beauty and the centrality of the figures of the numinous (myth, symbol, religion) will be aimed at developing a systematic attempt to clarify the relation between two heterogeneous spheres of existence (and of culture), which modernity has often radically understood as incommunicable, and which instead Gadamerian hermeneutics tends to relate in a more subtle and fruitful way, without however forgetting their peculiarities. In the context of transcultural humanistic studies, this investigation can also become a relevant case study for the definition of a rigorous methodology applicable to other research topics.

This investigation will be especially applied to the aesthetic poetry of two contemporary artists, Anselm Kiefer (1945) and Hermann Nitsch (1938-2022). It is in fact our conviction that the hermeneutical paradigm hereby discussed can be identified simultaneously as a productive issue of their artworks and as an interpretative tool, in order to better understand them. By inserting in the Gadamerian hermeneutical circle the cultural inputs and images of the two artists, with particular attention to their effort to preserve symbolical memories and their need to elaborate new expressive languages in order to recreate archaic emotional, psychological

and mythic-religious conditions, the artistic event becomes again a topology where the sacred can manifest itself through beauty in a post-secular society.