



# **Gadamer and Wittgenstein on the Unity of Language: Reality and Discourse Without Metaphysics (Ashgate Wittgensteinian Studies)**

*Patrick Rogers Horn*

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In this innovative comparison of Gadamer and Wittgenstein, the author explores their common concern with the relation of language to reality. Patrick Horn's starting point is the widely accepted view that both philosophers rejected a certain metaphysical account of that relation in which reality determines the nature of language. Horn proceeds to argue that Gadamer never completely escaped metaphysical assumptions in his search for the unity of language. In this respect, argues Horn, Gadamer's work is nearer to the earlier rather than to the later Wittgenstein. The final chapter of the book highlights the work of Wittgenstein's pupil Rush Rhees, who shows that Wittgenstein's own later emphasis on language games, while doing justice to the variety of language, does less than justice to the dialogical relation between speakers of a language, wherein the unity of language resides. Contrasting Rhees's account of the unity of language with those given by Gadamer and the early Wittgenstein brings out the importance of understanding reality in terms of the life that people share rather than in terms of what philosophers say about reality.

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