

Beyond Interpretation



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著者:Vattimo, Gianni

出版者:Stanford Univ Pr

出版时间:1997-6

装帧:Pap

isbn:9780804729949

Hermeneutics has had a pervasive influence on contemporary philosophy, social and cultural theory, literary criticism, and aesthetics. It has become so widespread an instrument that its very meaning threatens to dissolve into vague generalities, empty of significance and wedded to a shallow relativism. In this book one of Europe's foremost contemporary philosophers provides hermeneutics with a fresh relevance and a substantive account of its philosophical meaning for science, ethics, religion, and art. Vattimo argues for a reading of hermeneutics that radicalizes it according to what the author calls its "nihilistic vocation," a term referring to the interpretive character of truth and taken from Nietzsche's statement that there are, in the modern period, no facts, only interpretations. Modernity, for Vattimo, is conceived as the advent of nihilism, and the central question of the book is to ask what it means to take this nihilistic vocation seriously. This involves not simply accepting the current status of hermeneutics, but evaluating why it appears when, and where, it does. By way of a response to a number of questions only briefly treated in the text, as well as to broaden the author's argumentation on various points, there is an appendix containing two previously published essays, "The Truth of Hermeneutics" and "The Reconstruction of Rationality."

作者介绍:

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