Hermeneutics and Critical Hermeneutics: Exploring Possibilities within the Art of Interpretation

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Abstract

Hermeneutics has much to offer those interested in qualitative inquiry, and is especially suitable for work of a textual and interpretive nature, yet writings in hermeneutics are frequently viewed as dense and impenetrable, particularly to North American audiences and those unfamiliar with the Continental Philosophical tradition. Drawing on Hans Georg GADAMER, as well as other hermeneutic thinkers, an introductory overview of five characteristics of a hermeneutic approach is offered in this paper. Further, it is suggested that hermeneutics can fruitfully be partnered with a critical approach. In this regard, a critical attitude and a metaxiological approach are explored and a conceptualization of critical hermeneutics is proposed. It is suggested that hermeneutics and critical hermeneutics implicitly underpin qualitative inquiry, both of which emphasize the interpretive act of understanding, and a dialogue on this subject is invited.

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Keywords

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Hans-Georg Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics is a popular qualitative research interpretive method aiming to explore the meaning of individual experiences in relation to understanding human interpretation. Gadamer identifies that authentic engagement wi... Hans-Georg Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics: Concepts of reading, understanding and interpretation. Paul Regan. Keywords: Gadamer , Philosophical hermeneutics , Reading , Understanding , Interpretation , Qualitative research. Full-Text Cite this paper Add to My Lib. Abstract: Hans-Georg Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics is a popular qualitative research interpretive method aiming to explore the meaning of individual experiences in relation to understanding human interpretation. The relevance of hermeneutics for interpreting social action is then discussed and, following this, a set of interpretive principles that act as an interpretive framework for the application of the proposed hermeneutic method is presented. The phenomenological and hermeneutic concepts described herein are applied in conjunction with the aforementioned interpretive principles to inform the hermeneutic research strategy outlined in the penultimate section. The purpose of interpretation here is emancipatory; conventional wisdoms within communities are challenged in order to address potential power asymmetries. Here texts and social action are treated as an endless play of signs that reveal and conceal knowledge through the play of difference and contradiction.