



Of Reality: The Purposes of Philosophy

Gianni Vattimo

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We tell one another to accept reality, not to fight for something that doesn't exist or might never be. Gianni Vattimo pushes back against this false wisdom, which lends tacit support to the status quo. Instead, Vattimo urges us to never stop questioning, contrasting, or overcoming reality, which is not natural, inevitable, or objective. Reality is a construct, reflecting, among other things, our greed, biases, and tendencies toward violence.

Drawing on Nietzsche and Heidegger, Vattimo develops in this volume a philosophy to combat the newest enemy of freedom and democracy: complacency toward reality. It is no accident, Vattimo argues, that the call to embrace reality has emerged at a time when the inequalities of liberal capitalism are at their most extreme. Vattimo's critical approach revives the interpretative power of the individual and destabilizes the existing order. Though he recognizes that his position invites charges of relativism, Vattimo counters with a reminder of the historical dimensions of truth. Truth is always bound to societal circumstances. It is always contingent and provisional, and reason and reasonableness are tied to historical context. Truth is therefore never objective, and resistance to reality becomes our best hope for countering the ongoing indifference to our fate.

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