The publication of Hans-Georg Gadamer’s *Wahrheit und Methode* in 1960 gave rise to the most rigorous and significant intellectual debate in Germany since the 1929 Heidegger-Cassirer disputation in Davos. In tracing the boundaries separating hermeneutic and social-sciences models of inquiry, the Gadamer-Habermas debate touched on major problems confronting humanistic knowledge today no less than half a century ago. What legitimates such knowledge? What are the underlying commitments and responsibilities of humanistic inquiry? What, if any, are the limits to method-based cognition within the humanities? In raising such “big-picture” questions, the Gadamer-Habermas debate also offers a salutary corrective to the hyper-specialized and detached professionalism characterizing much work in the humanities and social sciences as it is performed in the United States today.

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