

Collaboration, Criticism and the World of Friendship

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This paper is an attempt to uncover a world that would be worth affirming within our world that continually faces crises and social transformations. Religious, ethnic, cultural, political, and even academic spheres of our everyday world face crises and are in a continual process of transformation. In light of the social transformations and crises that recur in our society, this paper seeks to focus on our attempts to make sense of these crises and changes. It seeks to investigate how we understand the world and the other, and what impedes this process of understanding and also what grounds this process. Drawing on the works of Hans George Gadamer, this paper seeks to describe the process of understanding as a generative, dialectical, expanding, and deepening kind of experience, rather than as a step-by-step progressive process. In this process, the paper argues, criticism is not the best order of being in the world, as it hinders the dialectic process of inquiry and understanding, while showing how collaboration would be a better alternative to deepen understanding. Collaboration is highlighted in the specific relationship of friendship. When a person is defensive of their positions and operates from a position of criticism, such an attitude impedes the process of collaboration and halts the dialectic process of understanding. This paper uses a Socratic dialogue as a case study which illuminates the kind of world where there is openness to collaboration and willingness to converse dialectically, which is the world of friendship. This paper attempts to incorporate the works of Gadamer, McHugh, Raffel, Foss, Blum, Bonner and Arendt in discussing the dialectical process of understanding and also to illuminate the world of friendship which thrives on collaboration rather than on criticism. An attempt will be made to ground the analysis on examples from everyday life.

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