

# A Hermeneutic Reading of Psychoanalysis as a Response to Psychological Reductionism

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While psychoanalysis and philosophical hermeneutics have their own respective developmental histories, each has in common, within their respective fields, three particular “tensions” which, in many ways, organize their history and development. These tensions include: epistemology versus ontology, explanation versus understanding, and (hermeneutic of) suspicion versus trust. In order to explicate these “tensions” as they organize philosophical and psychoanalytic hermeneutics, the author will offer a historical exploration of philosophical hermeneutic development. Through this unfolding, insights which connect the development of philosophical and psychoanalytic hermeneutics will be offered. This exploration also implicitly offers a psychoanalytic hermeneutic which can be used as a response to the mainstream paradigm of psychological reductionism. As such, a psychoanalytic hermeneutic orientation towards meaning, context, history, relationality and phenomenology offer methods for a countering and re-framing of both psychotherapeutic process and method.

**KEYWORDS**

hermeneutics, hermeneutic circle, psychotherapy, epistemology, object-relations

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## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Psychology, since its very inception, has been heartily preoccupied with aligning its philosophical and epistemological framework within that of natural science. While these natural science epistemological structures, connected with certain methods, including in relation to the fields of clinical psychology and psychotherapy, have firm roots in enlightenment thinking, the current clinical paradigms (i.e cognitive, behavioral and neurobiological) seek to reduce individual experience and suffering to specific thought, behavioral and neurochemical concerns. The clinical methodologies, which emerge from these epistemologies, often involve the isolation of specific “symptom syndromes”, which are then linked to a mechanized treatment model, often involving either brief “symptom focused” psychotherapy designed to restructure “problematic” patterns of thought and behavior, or through psychopharmacological treatment that is designed to supposedly recalibrate certain neurochemical structures which are thought to be linked to specific “mental illness”.

These reductive ways of constructing both the understanding and treatment of psychological suffering are informed by, and are a response to, psychology’s unending feeling of inferiority to medical science. Hence, the constructs of psychology have evolved to attempt such a close replication of the methods of medical science that it has lost touch with its true subject, the individual being who is suffering and embedded within a particular cultural and historical structure. With this, it is the author’s contention that a hermeneutic psychoanalytic framework can offer a response and remedy to this misappropriation of empirical reductionism to the understanding and treatment of psychological suffering. However, a proposed integration of psychoanalysis and hermeneutics is both sensible and difficult as these fields have, in many ways, opposed one another in regard to the assumptions associated with how to structure the understanding of human experience.

While, on the surface, these two modes of interpretive thought can be seen as in opposition to one another, though the literature demonstrates that the relationship between philosophical and psychoanalytic hermeneutics is marked (Abrams, 1988; Stewart, 1989; Luyten, Blatt & Corveleyn, 2005). In essence, the assumptions, aims, and mechanisms of these two interpretive fields, while contentious, also have a great deal of overlap in regards to history, philosophical implication and clinical import. The intersecting threads of language, meaning, text and action (Ricoeur, 1991), in relation to both philosophical and psychoanalytic hermeneutics, demonstrates this connection directly. However, the way in which these aspects of hermeneutics organize the philosophy of the human condition, epistemology and psychoanalytic treatment, diverge from the way in which these considerations emerge in philosophical hermeneutics (though a great historical and philosophical tension also exists within philosophical hermeneutics itself).

In regard to this thesis, a close exploration of philosophical and psychoanalytic hermeneutics begins to disclose potential connections which emerge between these related, albeit in many ways opposing fields. While psychoanalysis and philosophical hermeneutics have their own respective developmental histories, each has in common, within their respective fields, three particular “tensions” which, in many ways, organize their history and development. These tensions include: epistemology versus ontology, explanation versus understanding, and (hermeneutic of) suspicion versus trust (Ricoeur, 1965).

This exploration points to a remedy for the current rampant psychological reductionism. In order to explicate these “tensions” as they organize philosophical and psychoanalytic hermeneutics, the author will offer a historical exploration of philosophical hermeneutic development. Through this unfolding, insights which connect the development of philosophical and psychoanalytic hermeneutics will be offered (including connections, diversions, and contradictions). In regard to this, what, in connection with the author’s aspirations, will emerge, is a historical picture of philosophical and psychoanalytic hermeneutics which is centered and connected by these aforementioned “tensions”

(epistemology-ontology, explanation-understanding, suspicion-trust). Through this exploration the author will also offer moments of insight into the ways in which a psychoanalytic hermeneutic framework can offer a critical response to this above-described psychological reductionism.

This will be developed through the exploration and explication of Dilthey's epistemological and "technological" hermeneutics, leading into Heidegger's "hermeneutic of existence" (ontological hermeneutic), which, in many ways, was a critical response to the epistemological centrality of Dilthey's considerations. An examination of Paul Ricoeur's philosophical hermeneutic, particularly as it relates to what, through a critical reading of Freud, developed as the "hermeneutic of suspicion", as well as Hans Georg Gadamer's ontological "fusion of horizons" will follow. Of note in this explication is the necessary, albeit implicit, conflation between the original text of hermeneutic endeavour, and the early monocular "text" of the psychoanalytic situation (the patient's free association).

## 2 | PHILOSOPHICAL AND PSYCHOANALYTIC HERMENEUTICS

Hermeneutics is a philosophy encompassing the act of interpretation. Traditional hermeneutics was concerned with the translation of "canonical texts", mainly sacred or religious writing. The purpose was to contextualize the meaning of ambiguous religious texts. Initially, theoreticians, religious scholars, and those who purported a desire to "unpack" the meaning of canonical texts, relied on methods that rested within the field of rhetoric (particularly connected with the writings of St. Augustine and Phillip Melancton). The structure of the emerging hermeneutic process was entrenched in the notion of placing ambiguous text within their appropriate context.

Eventually, specific hermeneutics were developed for religious texts (*Hermeneutica Sacra*), as well as law (*Hermeneutica Juris*) and classical texts (*Hermeneutica Profana*). Etymologically, the term "hermeneutics" has, indeed, a strong connection to mythology and religious practice. In connection with this history of terminology, Mazlich (1998) presents:

*The name itself is associated with the Greek god Hermes, who served as herald for the other gods. He is a highly ambiguous character. He seems first to have been a god of fertility, represented with phallic images. In the Odyssey, however, he appears mainly as the messenger of the gods—hence the name hermeneutics (p. 89).*

In regard to the development of philosophical hermeneutics, prior to, and during, the 17th century, "hermeneutics" remained preoccupied with the contextual illumination of these above-mentioned canonical texts, particularly sacred texts. However, already developed and evolving scientific and philosophical movements and "discoveries" would emerge that possessed the power to shake the foundation of the fervently held hermeneutic position.

Indeed, during that time, a widely held belief existed, as associated with powerful religious vigor, which endowed "God" as possessor of absolute truth. However, since modern man was created in "his" image, it seemed sensible that an approximation of truth could be achieved through the interpretation of, and relationship with, religious texts ("The Bible") (Mazlich, 1998). With this notion, the contemporary intellectual sovereignty concerned itself not with the acquisition of original knowledge, through scientific or other means of investigating the external, "natural", world, but through the decoding of already assembled texts. However, Galileo Galilei, through his public disdain for this positioning to knowledge, found the contemporary intellectual field lazy and questioned the vehement relation to the written word.

Galileo, certainly a product, and intellectual embodiment, of the enlightenment preoccupation with the ac-

quisition of “truth”, as it could emerge through an “objective” relation to the natural world, exclaimed distrust for any notion that placed the possibility of “truth” as existing within the already assembled cannon. Galileo’s distrust of books, indeed, extended to The Bible. Of course, due to the outstanding religious fervor of the time, this subject required exquisitely sensitive breeching (something which, as history has shown, was a complete failure, as, in 1633, Galileo was convicted of “vehement heresy”, and he remained under house arrest until his death in 1642) (Mazlich, 1998).

While his heresy was evident to 17th century papal sovereignty, Galileo’s invention of the telescope would form the bedrock for construction of “subject as observer”, with the ability to move outside the already constructed written work, and to generate hypotheses. In essence, while Copernicus decenters man from universal authority, with his “heliocentric” (sun as the center of universe) theory, Galileo’s telescope places man, again, within a knowing position. However, this position would require observation and interpretation. In many ways, through the enlightenment lens of empiricism, the notion of an observing being and the inexorability of interpretation, even within the scientific milieu, structures the later tension between natural and human, or as John Stuart Mill would exclaim, “Moral” sciences.

In relation to hermeneutic development, 18th and 19th century German philosophy would orient itself towards a differentiation between natural science (Naturwissenschaftten) and human science (Geisteswissenschaftten), particularly as it related to underlying epistemological assumptions and methodological principles. This countered the French position which extended similar methodological principles and assumptions to both natural and moral sciences. Indeed, Hegel (1807) laid groundwork for hermeneutic phenomenology with his concept of “Spirit” (Geist). Mazlich (1998), points to this connection between hermeneutics and Hegel’s “spirit”: “Hegelian spirit carries with it an implication of developing consciousness lacking in the philosophies’ rather mechanical progress of the human mind” (p.88). Connected with this conviction was the idea of a “spirit of the times’ ’ wherein mind, reason, and indeed the interpretive milieu, connected with the current cultural and historical climate.

Here, a connection between Hegel’s philosophy, with later hermeneutics, becomes visible in the concept of “recognition” (which will become more salient in the later discussion of Gadamerian hermeneutics and developments in relational psychoanalysis). Hegel, while touting, centrally, the importance of freedom and choice, his philosophy also implicates relationality in the conception of freedom. A man, for example, may be entitled to work and a place to live, but this entitlement requires the others, in a society, to also recognize this version of freedom. Indeed, for Hegel, this “recognition” also extends to general subjectivity because, while objects and experiences of “self” and “non-self” emerge somewhat naturally, without requiring the mirror of another, this is not so in relation to other, more nuanced, aspects of subjectivity. Full subjectivity requires mutual recognition and a relation to others. Within this historical framework which calls attention to the relationship between enlightenment empiricism, Hegel’s concepts of “spirit” and “recognition”, and the decided move away from encapsulating hermeneutics within a solely canonical crust, we see the beginning development of what would become “modern” hermeneutic praxis.

This movement is central in the hermeneutic philosophy and method of Friedrich Schliermacher. While Schleiermacher retained a connection to religious practice, he broadened the possibility of hermeneutics beyond its narrow (religious) frame (Mazlich, 1998). However, while he broadened the potentialities of hermeneutic methodologies, he lamented the fragmented state of older, more classical hermeneutics. As Grondin (2007) identifies:

*[Schliermacher] bemoans that there are many special hermeneutics, but That hermeneutics does not yet exist as a general or universal discipline, That is, as an art of understanding itself that would establish binding rules For interpretation. Schleiermacher further laments that hermeneutics has hitherto Only constituted a vague collection of dislocated guidelines (P. 403).*

To encapsulate this further, Sclieirmacher desired to “proclaim hermeneutics as a general method, applicable

to the mental world of all humanity" (Mazlich, 1998; p. 84). Schliermacher, in respect to hermeneutic method, famously espoused the conception of a "hermeneutic circle", which, mainly, concerns the interpretation of texts, wherein each part would be considered in regard to the entire construction. This process, as the nominal structure infers, occurs in a "circular fashion". While later hermeneutic philosophers would restructure several assumptions of the hermeneutic circle (particularly Heidegger and Gadamer, as will be discussed below), Schliermacher's contribution to hermeneutic historical and methodological tenets cannot be devalued. This contribution extends to Schliermacher's conviction, as connected with hermeneutic method and philosophy, of the interpreter's "personal horizon", wherein the interpretation of texts is irrevocably connected with the reader's cultural and temporal position (Schliermacher, 1998). As embraced by history, Hermeneutic development would further unfold with the work of Schliermacher's student, Wilhelm Dilthey.

This link with methodological hermeneutics can be located in the work of Wilhelm Dilthey, who sought to identify and codify a specific methodology considered analogous to the positivist methods of the natural sciences. Dilthey, corroborating hermeneutics as a technology, advocated for the development of rigorous and standardized procedures regarding the hermeneutic method. In line with this, Dilthey saw that a rigorous development of procedures was necessary for human science methodology to be considered on par with that of natural science. It should be noted here, however, that Dilthey did not simply believe that these types of methodological procedures, regarding rigor and standardization, were necessary simply for the outward facade of equity with the natural sciences, but that said rigor and standard was actually needed for the "true" understanding of a text. In accordance with this thesis, Dilthey states, "thus, these disciplines, like history itself, depend for their methodological certainty upon whether the understanding of what is singular, may be raised to the level of universal validity". (1996: p.1). This focus on hermeneutics as a technology, as well as the underlying desire for a standard hermeneutic practice, connects with early psychoanalytic epistemology.

Freud too was interested in a standard application of interpretation (hermeneutics), albeit, unlike Dilthey, to the clinical situation. Indeed, for Freud, his epistemology was constructed through the same mechanisms as his clinical practice. One sees this connection in Freud's case study method, wherein knowledge of personality structure and clinical phenomena was developed through the very mechanisms that psychoanalysis purported, that of analyst neutrality and the use of free association. One can see this in the example of Freud's early "Dora" case, wherein, using insights that had already made their way into psychoanalytic clinical practice vis a vis knowledge obtained from Freud's study of Eugen Breuer's "Anna O" (Free Association, unconscious functioning) (Breuer & Freud, 1895), the development of psychoanalytic technique continued with the identification, through the Dora analytic situation and its associated case study document, of "transference" as the central mechanism of psychotherapeutic transformation (Freud, 1905). This case study approach, intersecting methodological and clinical sectors, is also seen in Freud's "Rat Man" (1909), wherein he had, again, through the epistemological structure of psychoanalysis, added to his differentiating theory of neurosis, wherein he separated hysteria, as connected with underlying sexual tensions, with "obsessions", which were linked to unconscious feelings of hostility and hatred towards an otherwise loved object. Again, this theory was mounted through the clinical episode.

This connection between psychoanalytic epistemology and practice is seen in the use of the term "research psychoanalysis" (Winnicott, 1949), wherein psychoanalytic clients, that maybe seemed outside of the already constructed milieu of psychoanalytic theory and technique, were taken on for the means of continuing to develop the "understanding" and "explanation" of psychopathology and clinical process (Winnicott, 1949). This could be considered in the light of the movement, in conceptualization, from neurotic to "borderline" and "psychotic" psychopathological mechanisms (Klein, 1946; Kernberg, 1976).

Freud's acknowledgment of unconscious forces that were connected with neurotic and hysterical function-

ing, in a more primal fashion, also connects psychoanalysis with hermeneutics. Freud's construction of an unconscious system rendered the need for interpretation inexorable from clinical psychoanalysis. With this, human experience was now seen as operating on two levels, that which was not available to conscious awareness, and that which was. However, the clinical situation of psychoanalysis, which was organized around, again, analytic neutrality, free association, and a spatial experience wherein the analysand is encouraged to "regress" to earlier, more primal modes of functioning, allows for the language of the unconscious to be acknowledged, decoded, and reconstructed through the already developed and evolving clinical theory. While the desire, in this fashion, for a systematic approach to hermeneutic methodology connects with Dilthey's concurrent desire for a rigorous method, Freud, unlike Dilthey, was concerned with psychoanalysis being considered within the system of natural sciences (just as he feared psychoanalysis being stuck in a proverbial limbo as a "Jewish science").

Indeed, Freud considered the analytic situation analogous to the laboratory settings of natural science investigation. With this, we see the tension between a hermeneutic of understanding versus explanation (and this tension exists both between psychoanalysis and hermeneutics and within hermeneutics itself). Understanding, as developed through philosophical hermeneutics, is more connected with human science rigor, as there is not necessarily an attempt to connect the "meaning" of the text to any concrete "why?". This was not so in the case of early psychoanalysis, where epistemological and clinical hermeneutics were organized around a natural scientific understanding of causation of psychopathology, as well as elucidation of the therapeutic mechanism that exists behind the analysis of the "transference neurosis" (Freud, 1940).

So, while Dilthey believed that the proper hermeneutical procedure should be one of rigor and standard, in line with those developed by natural science, he did not believe that the hermeneutic method replicated those of natural science. Hermeneutics, from this frame, attempts to elucidate a much different phenomenon, in regard to textual processes and history, than the simple objective use of the tools of the senses, directed towards an external object, so central in the methodology of natural science. Within this consideration, Dilthey (1996) further elucidates, "Human sciences have, indeed, the advantage over the natural sciences that their object is not sensory appearance as such, no mere reflection of reality within consciousness, but is rather first and foremost an inner reality, a nexus experienced from within. Yet, the very way in which this reality is given an inner experience raises great difficulty in his objective apprehension" (p.1).

Dilthey also points toward the importance, as stated in preceding passages, of "understanding" as it relates to hermeneutics; "understanding is what we call this process by which an inside is conferred on a complex of external sensory signs" (p.2). However, Dilthey qualifies that this is an "ordinary" usage and points to the overarching theme of "interest" related to hermeneutic inquiry. Dilthey's structure of understanding is central to hermeneutics due to his project related to consciousness of the self and "individuality, which he posits is only possible through the interaction with another "individuality". Indeed, from this perspective, "self-consciousness" is inextricably bound to the mirror of another, as self is the internal re-creation of an individual in the light of another version of individuality. Here, Dilthey states,

*The understanding of interpretatio-naturae - is a metaphor. Even the apprehension of our own states can only be called understanding in a figurative sense. To be sure, I say: "I can't understand how I could have acted thus," and even, "I don't understand myself anymore." Yet what I mean by this is that an objectification of my own being in the external world now stands before me as that of a stranger and that I am unable to interpret it, or alternatively that I suddenly find myself in a state that I stare at, so to speak, as something alien to me" (p.236).*

This reading of Dilthey's discussion of understanding becomes confusing as it takes on the tone of an attempt at an elucidation of some form of philosophical psychology, as if speaking about two beings coming into contact and mirroring an internalization, such as in postmodern conceptions of Object-Relations. What, here, is important to note as it connects with the hermeneutic process and inquiry, is the dyad between the reader (interpreter) and the sign structure (the written work). The focus on epistemology, and the desire for a specific interpretive methodology, regarding text, was questioned by later hermeneutic theorists, particularly Martin Heidegger (1927), who disseminated a "hermeneutic of existence" which simultaneously questioned the tenets of epistemological hermeneutics and the centrality of hermeneutics being connected with texts. Here we see the tension, in hermeneutics, between epistemology and ontology.

Following Dilthey, we see a decided move away from the centrality of epistemology, and the desire to place hermeneutics, and human science, in the realm of natural science, in the ontological hermeneutics of Martin Heidegger (1927). Central to this notion of hermeneutic Ontology is the conception, and differentiation, of "being". Here, a "being" is the object of natural science, taken up as an immediate physical totality where an assumption of empirical understanding concedes. "Being", on the other hand, is the experience of "being-in-the-world" that cannot be reduced to an objective ground.

This "Being-in-the-world" is termed, by Heidegger, "Dasein". In connection to this, "a being in being" is the "ontological ground upon which these sciences can be constructed" (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 65). Being for Heidegger, is not centrally an inter-subjective experience, as with Dilthey and later hermeneutic philosophers, but is, instead, a "being in, not being with" (Ricoeur, 1991, p.66). Language, in relation to this movement away from empirical notions of technological hermeneutics, is "secondary to articulation, [and] discourse is the articulation of what understanding is" (Heidegger, 1927).

With this, "Knowing," in Heidegger's "Hermeneutic of Existence", is not considered linked to intellect, but is an ability; "understanding". Dasein, a central concept in Heidegger's exploration of existence, as described above, which emphasizes the human existence as being, in the world, unable to be differentiated and isolated from their situatedness, illuminates the tension between ontic (that which is concretely available) and ontological (the deeper structure of experience).

In relation to Heidegger's conception of "hermeneutic of existence", according to Grondin (2007) "Understanding is not primarily the reconstruction of the meaning of an expression, it always entails the projection and self-projection of a possibility of my own existence." For Heidegger, hermeneutics is less concerned with texts, than with existence itself. In relation to this, "facticity", ("thrownness"), is capable of interpretation and is "desperately in need of it" (Grondin, 2007; p.405). The ontological always thrives on some interpretations that are explicit, but can be spelled out. This leads to a discussion of Heidegger's conception of the "hermeneutic circle" and "temporality."

The hermeneutic circle as a concept in classical hermeneutics was deeply embedded in epistemology and method. In essence, the "hermeneutic circle" for Schleiermacher (1998) and Dilthey (1996), was conceived as the method of linking whole texts, and their smaller "parts" back to one another in a "circular" fashion. This method was connected with the epistemological construction of classical hermeneutics and was designed to illuminate "textual truths" mainly related to the intention of the author. The hermeneutic lies in the idea that the "intention" is not immediately available and requires some form of structured method for its potential elucidation. Heidegger would reject this concept and its associated epistemological necessity.

For Heidegger, the hermeneutic circle is inextricably bound up with being itself, it is connected with the "dasein" of experiential structure and is associated with the "facticity" (thrownness) of experience (Heidegger, 1927). The "Hermeneutic Circle", as such, for Heidegger, is not a method of understanding a text, from the outside, in an objective, detached fashion, but was, instead, embedded within the structure of Being itself, which goes through

circular processes of “concealment and unconcealment” (Malpas, 2018).

Another important aspect of Heidegger’s (1927) hermeneutic ontology emerges in his concept of “present at hand” versus “ready to hand”. In relation to this differential experiential structure, let us take Heidegger’s famous example of the hammer (in this case being used to build a shed). The hammer is considered “ready to hand” when it emerges as an instrument, an experiential extension of the body, used for the engagement with a task (building a shed). In essence, it is not experienced as an object, in the positive scientific sense, but rather, simply, as an appendage that aids the individual in his task which emerges within the life world. However, if the hammer breaks, or becomes unable to be used in a manner that engages being with a task, it becomes “present at hand”.

“Present at hand”, for Heidegger, indicates an objective experiential position where, still in consideration of the example of the hammer, it emerges as an “object” that requires “objective” investigation. When the hammer is broken, it becomes stripped of its ability to engage the individual with his life world task. Its pre-reflective experiential structure dissolves and becomes a removed “object”. Indeed, it restructures as an object for empirical investigation. In many ways, this tension between “present at hand” and “ready to hand” mirror the tensions in hermeneutic philosophy between an objective and technological, in a human science sense, where sign structure units are interpreted “from afar”, and an ontological perspective that proposes that, through an already given “fore-structure”, meaning emerges within the life world, through the experience of “Being”. Indeed, it is only when our experiential moment (through the structure of being-object-task fusion) breaks, that objectivity comes into the fold. Objectivity removes the individual from the being-object fusion.

Gadamer’s interest in Heidegger’s hermeneutics was central to his personal and philosophical development. Interestingly enough, despite Gadamer’s interest in Heidegger, when Gadamer studied with Heidegger, the well-known philosopher was unimpressed with the work of his young protegee. However, when Gadamer shifted his focus from philosophy, to philology, Heidegger’s impression of Gadamer took on a much more favorable tone. It was this background in philology that would coalesce into Gadamer’s important concepts as they relate to hermeneutics and language (Malpas, 2018). With this interest in language and hermeneutic structure, Gadamer, similar to Heidegger, rejected the rigid hermeneutic methodology that had been espoused by classical hermeneutic philosophers.

Indeed, it was Gadamer’s study of Plato, and his rejection of “hidden truths” for a more dialogic organization of understanding, that would begin the development of his particular hermeneutical structure and philosophy. In connection with Heidegger, and in relation to ontology and hermeneutic method, Gadamer (as discussed by Malpas, 2018) offers that “insight into structure of ontology, of Being, cannot be reduced to any pedagogical rules or tasks, as is proposed within more classical modes of hermeneutics” (p.4). In this, we see Gadamer’s connection with Ricoeur’s (1965) “Hermeneutic of Trust”. Rejecting the notion, in platonic philosophy, of a “hidden doctrine”, instead using the dialogues as illuminative of the platonic oeuvre, sets up the orientation toward the hermeneutic of trust which posits that what is communicated is, in and of itself, meaningful.

This hermeneutic of trust rejects the hermeneutic of suspicion, also explicated by Ricoeur (1965), as any notion, in a clinical and psychoanalytic sense, of “unconscious functioning” is considered misinformed and “anti-hermeneutic”. Indeed, in line with the hermeneutic of trust, relational and intersubjective psychoanalysis would, in many ways, reject the hermeneutic of suspicion, instead, choosing to orient clinical, interpersonal communication as between two present and available subjectivities constructing a narrative in tandem (in dialogue) (Benjamin, 2006). Though contemporary relational psychoanalysis abandons the unconscious as originally envisioned by Freud and his followers this mode of psychoanalytic thinking does not dismiss the unconscious all together, as these theorists have posited a “relational unconscious” which has roots in object relations theory.

The movement of classical psychoanalytic theory from a one person to a two-person conception of psychotherapy, whereby two distinct subjectivities come together and create a fusion of cognitive and affective experi-



ences, can be seen in the development of Object-Relations Theory. While Klein (1937; 1940; 1946) began this developmental turn with her focusing on the mother infant dyad, her theory was still, at its core, a one-person psychology, as the internalization of the maternal experience was constructed through the infant's innate affective system's contact with the mother. Later Object-Relational theorists would push this move from the one-person to the two-person through the focus on the interdependent mother-infant dyad (Winnicott, 1960). Harry Stack Sullivan, from the perspective of interpersonal psychoanalysis, pushed this theoretical development even further, with his concept of the inter-dynamic affective system that flowed between the mother and the infant (Mitchell & Black, 1995).

As with Heidegger, Gadamer, as stated above, rejected the notion of a strict epistemological hermeneutic structure. With this, and taking from Heidegger, Gadamer implicated the hermeneutic circle as connected to the experience of understanding, as directly related to ontology and to being in the world, making sense of moments of "facticity", as opposed to a way to make concrete sense of whole texts through its interrelationship with the constituent pieces (Gadamer, 1960). Put another way, the "hermeneutic circle" is "seen as expressing the way in which all understanding was 'always already given' over to that which is to be understood (Malpas, 2018, p. 6). Being is experienced through the hermeneutic circle, not interpreted, from the outside, by concrete systems of "using" the hermeneutic circle. Indeed, this stance can also be applied to the current mainstream paradigm of psychological reductionism which chooses to construct its understanding of a "subject" in a detached, removed, "scientific" fashion.

Another important aspect of Gadamer's shift in hermeneutics is his detoxification of prejudice (Gadamer, 1960). In classical hermeneutic conceptions, "prejudice" is considered a tainting process, in relation to methodology. Gadamer rejects this notion, instead developing a perspective that places "prejudice" (pre-understanding) at the center of hermeneutic process. Gadamer (1960) offers, "A hermeneutically trained mind must from the start be open to the otherness of the text. But such openness presupposes "neutrality" about the objects of the study nor indeed self-obliteration, but rather includes the identifiable appropriation of one's own pre-opinions and prejudices" (p. 7).

For Gadamer, individuals are embedded in a particular historical, cultural, and social experience (bound to particular traditions and experiential structures) that prompts them to experience the world (or the text) in a particular fashion. This is a unique, but unavoidable process. In connection with this, Malpas (2018) offers, "all interpretation, even of the past, is necessarily prejudgmental in that it is always oriented to present concerns and interests" (p.15). An objective stance, from this perspective, is not only impossible, but also constrictive, as experience is always tied to history and social context. This leads to Gadamer's central concept of "Fusion of Horizons" and the connecting process of "Conversation" (Gadamer, 1960).

Gadamer's "Fusion of Horizons", Malpas (2018) explicates, "Awareness of the historically effected character of understanding is identical to an awareness of the hermeneutic situation and also refers to the situation by means of the phenomenological concept of horizon" (p.20). In essence, for Gadamer, the "Horizon" is the phenomenological situatedness that is embedded in the individual historical and social context. As there is no essence in regard to the reading of history, there is no essential horizon (Gadamer, 1960). However, the "horizon" is neither "static" nor "unchanging" (Malpas, 2018). This statement, links to the "Fusion of Horizons" wherein two separate subjectivities and phenomenological structures, as purported by Gadamer, come into contact, and through a conversation, where in a "common goal" emerges, each person's horizon "shifts" due to the contact with the other.

It is within the related concepts of "Fusion of Horizons" and "Conversation" that lines can be drawn between Gadamer's hermeneutic and contemporary (relational-intersubjective) psychoanalysis. This can be seen, concretely, in the psychoanalytic concept of "The Third" or "Thirdness". Jessica Benjamin (2007) elucidates the concept:

*Precisely because many things may serve as a third, I think not in terms of the things that serve as thirds but the psychic capacity to use them. We might speak of Thirdness as a quality of mental space, of in-*

*tersubjective relatedness. For it is necessary to distinguish the third from a theory or rules of technique, from superego maxims or ideals that the analyst holds onto with her or his ego, often clutching them as a drowning person a straw. For in the space of thirdness we are not holding on to a third, we are, in Emmanuel Ghent's term, surrendering to it (p.1).*

Like Gadamer's "Fusion of Horizons", "Thirdness" respects the unique intersubjective experience of meaning, as it is co-constructed within the psychoanalytic frame. This also leads to what Benjamin terms "Recognition" (2007). Indeed, the relational/Intersubjective turn in psychoanalysis provides a capstone in relation to the evolution of the theoretical and practical capacities of Countertransference.

As stated prior, Freud's clinical psychoanalytic paradigm, through the epistemological mechanisms, was organized around the development and dissolving of the "transference neurosis" (1912). Countertransference, on the other hand, was to be avoided, and was considered indicative of the analyst's own, unresolved, unconscious conflicts. As Freud's original epistemology was oriented toward the desire for natural scientific rigor, unresolved countertransference material was considered toxic to the development of clinical and theoretical psychoanalytic paradigms. In a move toward a two person conception or psychotherapy, Object-relational thinkers placed countertransference in a central psychoanalytic space, as this was considered not only unavoidable but also clinically valuable.

However, Klein (1946), still connected to more classical clinical modes, considered the countertransference, if bracketed appropriately, to be less about the relationship developing in the room, and more an indication of the internal object-relational structure of the patient. Later psychoanalysts, such as Winnicott (1949) would move the concept of countertransference into a more "relational sphere". Modern conceptions of countertransference, largely, in regards to relational practice, are more concerned with what develops within the psychotherapeutic frame, as it relates to the subjects engaging in the experience, as opposed to how what transpires within the psychoanalytic frame connects with past relational internalized prototypes (although this too can be a consideration within contemporary relational psychoanalysis) (Benjamin, 2006, 2007).

Moving through the exploration of the interconnections and tensions in and between psychoanalysis and hermeneutics, Dilthey's "technological" hermeneutic, while concerned with Human science rigor, contains a thread of positionality with psychoanalysis as Freud's own desire was also for a rigorous hermeneutic clinical methodology. Just as the tension between epistemology and ontology, in hermeneutics, shifted focus to the understanding of "existence" as opposed to a need to encapsulate a methodology, so, too, would psychoanalysis, eventually, switch its focus from a more removed, scientific, epistemology and methodology to a more, two person, or "co-constructed" clinical endeavor. While Paul Ricoeur remains on the side of ontology, to a certain degree, taking an intermediate space between phenomenology and post-structuralism, he occupies a position of dialectics between hermeneutics of understanding and explanation.

In relation to this, "Philosophical-anthropological" themes run throughout Ricoeur's work, as his focus seems to center around the "capable human being" which encompasses all the faculties that are used by man to live out their lives and to present a communal order. As such, ethics, will, and good and evil are central mechanisms in Ricoeur's oeuvre. In relation to self, and hermeneutics, Ricoeur "rejects the notion that the self is immediately transparent to itself or fully master of itself" (Pallhauser & Dauenhauer, 2016, p. 1). For Ricoeur, the self becomes available to itself only through its relation to the world and those in its proximity. The "I" for Ricoeur, is embedded in an individual's lived existence and is correlated with what is termed "Reflexive Consciousness", which is the awareness of oneself as existing, thinking, and acting (Pallauer & Dausenhauer, 2016, p.2). This conception of the individual only becoming aware of itself through contact, mirrors Dilthey, in certain ways, and also connects with the move, in psychoanalysis, towards Object-Relations, which posits that human beings are pulled toward contact with one

another and that, through contact, the "self" and the "internal working model" develops (Winnicott, 1960; Kohut & Wolfe, 1978).

As such, Ricoeur's early philosophical studies enabled him to construct hypotheses regarding the differences between "things" and "subjects", thereby augmenting earlier hermeneutic discourse related to the epistemological and ontological battles in human and natural science conceptions of the human condition. However, while Ricoeur focused on the agency of man, and the centrality of consciousness, he did not believe that human beings were simply constructed through their consciousness and symbolic order.

Culture and history, for Ricoeur, provide a framework for existence, thereby indicating that man does not live in a postmodern vacuum with no connection to history or the overarching organizations of cultural systems (Ricoeur, 1991). Indeed, our existence is marked by our attempts to appropriate the overarching cultural and historical givens in a way that fits our own needs and means. Man, in this way, as recognized in a socialized fashion, is considered in the light of attempts at both relational recognition as well as a recognition of individuality, mirroring the position on development of later Ego and Object Relational thinkers such as John Bowlby (1969) and Margeret Mahler (1979).

In regard to this "our exercising our finite freedom has worth and efficacy only by reason of our embodiment in a natural and cultural setting that is largely not our own making, but this is a world we seek to appropriate through our words and deeds and through our use of productive imagination" (Pallauer & Dauenhauer: 2016; p. 5). Language, in this way, connects with history as it is through language that one makes sense of history and culture, as it provides a structural organization. In regards to this, per Ricoeur (as outlined by Pallauer & Dauenhauer, 2016), "To make sense of the fullness of language, therefore, philosophy has to develop a theory of interpretation since actual discourse is not always, if ever, univocal and its meanings do change over time when discourse outlives the speakers and situations in which it was originally produced" (p. 9). While Ricoeur may have been, specifically, discussing interpretation in regard to the methods of philosophical hermeneutics, this statement can be considered in the light of psychoanalytic theoretical change. and development.

Indeed, the very nature of discourse as both a living and changing dynamic, per Ricoeur, can account for the way in which Freud's original meta-psychology had transitioned into a multi theoretical system that either focused in on one particular aspect of Freud's theory, modifying it, in consideration of their own cultural-historical structure, brought forth and existing through the symbolic narration of the particular cultural situation, and transforming the clinical focus, or the adoption of the linguistic aspects of Freud's thinking for the purpose of a post-structuralist (Lacan) or post-modern (Relational/Intersubjective psychoanalysis) conceptualization. However, in relation to hermeneutic development, Ricoeur did not see language as a self-contained system of signs, symbols, and potential meanings. From this frame, language is a dynamic system that has links both within and outside itself. Interpretation, from this framework, is linked to a two-level system, relegated to ethics, text (discourse), and goals.

Here we see a congruency between Ricoeur's philosophical hermeneutics and psychoanalysis, as psychoanalysis believes that original intention, that is, the "text" of the psychoanalytic situation, is to disguise the dynamics of the underlying (unconscious) system. Therefore, the "intention" of the "author" (patient) is part of the hermeneutic methodology of psychoanalysis, in particular relation to the understanding and analysis of resistance, but this is only for the purpose of allowing the analyst and patient to uncover the underlying layer of "text". Freud's theory of "manifest" and "latent" dream content illustrates this layering of potential hermeneutic material. From this lens, language offers both a pre-existing structure for interpretation as well as the possibility for a new meaning of reality, as language is considered, from Ricoeur's perspective, to be a symbolic system with referential vitality both within and outside itself. This also connects to Ricoeur's identification of Freud's "Hermeneutic of Suspicion". Ricoeur, in his direct critique, rejected the hermeneutic as being related to Freud's attempts at a natural science explanation, while also applauding his recognition of the existence of layers of consciousness that require some form of hermeneutic

understanding.

While philosophical and psychoanalytic hermeneutics have a complex and lengthy history, with many diversions and contradictions, their histories are organized, again, around similar tensions. However, if one takes the entire complex history into account, several themes emerge that frames a psychoanalytic hermeneutic, from a clinical perspective, as a rich response to mainstream psychological reductionism. As opposed to reducing individuals to neurochemical makeup or simple cognitive and behavioral structures, requiring adjustment and calibration (which therefore reinforces the notion that the “problem” exists solely within the individual, therefore protecting the social structure from any implication), a psychoanalytic hermeneutic pays respect to the depth of individual experience. With this, a psychoanalytic hermeneutic, particularly from Gadamer’s (1960) perspective, which has become enveloped into modern relational psychoanalysis, points to the inexorable interconnection between culture, history, social structure, and experience of self.

From a clinical perspective, a psychoanalytic hermeneutic also offers several themes that organize case formulation and clinical technique, which also highlight the many ways in which this hermeneutic structure runs counter to mainstream psychological reductionism. These themes include: The use of self, a focus on the unconscious, organization around the development of meaning, the centrality of affectivity and emotion, a focus on relationality, an emphasis on context, a focus on ontology, and an appreciation for the phenomenology of experience. As such, a psychoanalytic hermeneutic, in relation to clinical psychology, offers practitioners and psychologists an opportunity to attend to both the rich history and context of each individual, as well as invites the clinician to be a participant in the therapeutic process, thereby detoxifying psychotherapy from becoming a mechanism of purely scientific discourse. As we have seen, scientific discourse, when it parallels too closely to psychotherapeutic methods, restructures subjects into objects, removing context, history, affect, relationality, and “Being” itself.

### 3 | CONCLUSION

The relationship between philosophical and psychoanalytic hermeneutics, as discussed above, is complicated, nuanced, and, in some ways contradictory. Classical hermeneutic preoccupation with text interpretation, morphed into a focused development of an epistemological-hermeneutic methodology. As seen in Dilthey (1996), this preoccupation was both at the behest of a need to place human science on the same level of intellectual rigor as that of natural science, as well as in response to the continued belief in the possible elucidation of a truth of text. A similar relationship with methodology is seen in Freud’s epistemological method, though from the framework of a natural science discourse.

This focus on epistemology, from both human science and natural science, shifted focus, within hermeneutics and psychoanalysis, toward a more ontological hermeneutic understanding as indicated by the philosophy of Martin Heidegger (1927), and the relational theories of Sullivan (Mitchell & Black, 1995), Jessica Benjamin (2006; 2007), and Paul Wachtel (2010). Within the history of psychoanalysis and hermeneutics, we see the developed tension between “epistemology and ontology”. In regard to the proposed tension between epistemology and ontology, this is also seen in Gadamer’s (1960) “Fusion of Horizons”, which also has a tether to object relational and contemporary relational practice.

The tension between the “hermeneutic of suspicion vs trust” is central to Paul Ricoeur’s reading of psychoanalysis and recognizes Freud’s monumental clinical discussion of layers of consciousness in need of a hermeneutic, however, the suspicion lies in the assumption that the text as given, is merely a facade in need of decoding to illuminate the true meaning. This tension between “suspicion and trust” is also indicated in the shift in psychoanalysis from

an understanding of a dynamic unconscious to a “relational unconscious”.

Through the exploration of Dilthey’s methodological hermeneutic, focused on human science rigor, we were then led into a discussion of Heidegger’s response to the preoccupation with epistemology, which culminates in his hermeneutic of existence. This then led to a focus, in Gadamer’s work, on language as an organizing system and the detoxification of prejudice, in regard to hermeneutic engagement. We then finished the exploration of hermeneutics with Paul Ricoeur’s more dialectical approach to hermeneutics, pleading for the centrality of both “explanation” and “understanding”. Through this examination, the author presented links between the hermeneutic historical and philosophical underpinnings and described connection to psychoanalysis. Indeed, the same tensions (epistemology vs ontology, explanation vs understanding, and suspicion vs trust) exist as organizing features of both hermeneutic structures (philosophy and psychoanalysis). This exploration also implicitly offers a psychoanalytic hermeneutic which can be used, in a clinical and theoretical fashion, as a response to the mainstream paradigm of psychological reductionism. A psychoanalytic hermeneutic orientation towards meaning, context, history, relationality, and phenomenology offer methods for a countering and reframing of both psychotherapeutic process and method.

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