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# MARTIN HEIDEGGER AND THE HERMENEUTIC REVOLUTION

*Frederick G. Lawrence*

## ABSTRACT

The paper outlines Heidegger's role in the hermeneutic revolution. Postmodern hermeneutics (Barth, Heidegger, Gadamer, Lonergan) returns to the premodern hermeneutics of love or consent insofar as it highlights the link between philosophy, theology and ordinary living, or the way interpretation is influenced by self-understanding, and rejects the phenomenology of perception in favour of a hermeneutic or linguistic philosophy. Heidegger, in his Augustine interpretation, came close to accepting the way grace and sin condition human facticity, but in the end conflated finitude and fallenness. Such ambiguity, together with his notorious insouciance about propositional truth, has spawned a followership of gloatingly negative nihilists.

# **HANS-GEORG GADAMER AND THE HERMENEUTIC REVOLUTION**

*Frederick G. Lawrence*

## **ABSTRACT**

The paper outlines Gadamer's role in the postmodern hermeneutic revolution. Going beyond Heidegger, Gadamer fashioned an integral hermeneutics. Thus he integrated both the notion of the Good and the role of intelligence into praxis. Again, he stressed the game-play nature of language with its capacity for truth as against Heidegger's strictures against the fossilization of language. Further, he admitted that the game-play structure of life was most strikingly illustrated in the Christian experience of grace and faith. Such an integral hermeneutics overcomes subjectivism as well as rationalist separations of reason and faith. Thus Gadamer is a master in his own right.

**THE HERMENEUTIC REVOLUTION AND BERNARD  
LONERGAN: GADAMER AND LONERGAN ON  
AUGUSTINE'S *VERBUM CORDIS*—  
THE HEART OF POSTMODERN HERMENEUTICS**

*Frederick G. Lawrence*

**ABSTRACT**

The recovery, by both Gadamer and Lonergan, of Augustine's doctrine of the inner word is the heart of postmodern hermeneutics, indicating the intrinsically dialogical nature of human consciousness. Through his analysis of *phronesis*, Gadamer remedied Heidegger's rejection of propositional truth; through his recovery of the second inner word of judgment, Lonergan differentiated and generalized *phronesis* for all fields of knowing and acting. Since, further, habitual exercise of correct judgment does not occur without a conversion, and given the priority of religious conversion as gift, postmodern hermeneutics becomes in Lonergan a critically and methodically mediated hermeneutics of love.

**THE HERMENEUTIC REVOLUTION**  
**The Ontological Hermeneutics of Heidegger**

*Johnson J. Puthenpurackal, OFM Cap.*

ABSTRACT

This study on Heideggerian hermeneutics clarifies the meaning of the term ‘hermeneutics’, outlines its historical development, and highlights Heidegger’s shift from epistemological to ontological hermeneutics, from Husserlian phenomenology to hermeneutical phenomenology. In his early phase, Heidegger developed hermeneutics as a ‘creative response.’ In his later phase he tends to emphasize the *responsive* over the *creative*. The last section of the paper, after giving some very relevant and enriching reflections of assessment, concludes with a reminder that as one keeps on journeying on Heideggerian *way*, the *way* of hermeneutics itself unfolds.

**“UNDERSTANDING IS A HAPPENING IN TRADITION”  
The Philosophical Hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer**

*John F. Sequeira, OCD*

ABSTRACT

The paper presents the philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer. Making use of Heidegger’s notion of the ontological structure of the hermeneutic circle, Gadamer insists on the legitimacy of prejudice and the priority and the authority of tradition. Understanding is not so much an act of subjectivity as a belonging or interplay between text and interpreter. Our consciousness is affected by history, and is aware of so being affected (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*), and understanding is a fusion of horizons, which takes place in dialogical play between text and interpreter, each being put in question by the other.

# HABERMAS AND HERMENEUTICS

## The Need for Critical-Hermeneutical Dialectics

*Keith D'Souza, SJ*

### ABSTRACT

The paper engages in a dialectical exchange between Habermasian critical theory and Ricoeurian hermeneutics, in the hope of establishing parameters for dialogue and in the conviction that dialogical processes are necessary for facilitating productive exchanges between cultures and nations. The first section provides a historico-thematic introduction to the primary themes of Habermas' thought specifically related to hermeneutical theory. The second section critically examines these themes from a hermeneutical perspective. The third section explores the nature and role of a 'critical-hermeneutical dialectic' in the service of the creation of dialogical processes necessary for personal, interpersonal and social development.

**THE END OF PHILOSOPHY**  
**A Postmodern Response to the Relativism Debate**

*Stanislaus Swamikannu, SDB*

ABSTRACT

Though self-questioning is the hallmark of philosophy, the contemporary debate about the end of philosophy is different in that it sees philosophy not as a 'natural kind' but as plural and discontinuous. It is skepticism as a therapy for ending the philosophical urge. It refuses to accept transdisciplinary, transcultural, ahistorical criteria and advocates the trivialization of philosophy. It is related to the linguistic turn which includes not only analytic philosophy but also the pragmatic turn exemplified by Habermas and the rhetorical turn advocated by Derrida.

## **POSTMODERNISM AND RELATIVISM**

*George Karuvelil, SJ*

### **ABSTRACT**

The paper is a response to Fred Lawrence's attempt to address the legitimate concerns of postmodern thinkers by using Lonerganian resources. It acknowledges that Lonergan's philosophy has the resources to address many of the issues raised by the postmoderns, without falling into sinful forms of relativism and agnostic forms of pluralism. It also suggests that there could be other forms of relativism and pluralism that do not fall into those categories, and that these must be factored into any adequate response to the postmodern concerns of our contemporaries