

**Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”**



Ph.D. Summary Dissertation  
**THE PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERSTANDING OF PSYCHIATRIC  
DISORDERS IN LIGHT OF HANS-GEORG GADAMER'S  
HERMENEUTICS NOTION OF MENTAL HEALTH**

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## Introduction

Historical changes in mental health care, notably the transition in the 1970s during the consumer movement from institutionalization to deinstitutionalization, were significant steps toward the understanding of psychiatry. Professionals in the sector focused on addressing mental illness by ensuring the patients become good people.<sup>1</sup> During this crucial time (the 1960s and '70s), the goals were to protect the rights of people with mental illnesses, promote their recovery, and empower them. Treatment methods majored in psychiatric rehabilitative solutions.<sup>2</sup> Collaboration between mental health professionals and their clients has become essential, emphasizing personal and environmental factors' role in healing. The dissertation critically studies modern psychiatric procedures, highlighting the difficulties that psychotherapy and psychopathology confront as a result of political and economic constraints. Mancini-Marie et al. observe that healthcare consumers have become more independent, with thinking that concentrates on mental diseases, reestablishing recovery, improving personal faith, and promoting self-past expectations.<sup>3</sup> "Self-past expectations" in this context describe people who make significant achievements beyond their prior boundaries or preconceived notions about their potential and prospects. It represents a turning point in life when one reevaluates potential and goals in light of newly discovered resilience, self-assurance, and self-belief. Inspired by theorists such as Han-Georg Gadamer, the paper pinpoints the potential loss of essential insights into

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<sup>1</sup> Edward, Shorter, "History of Psychiatry," *Current Opinion in Psychiatry* 21, no. 6 (2008): 593–97, <https://doi.org/10.1097/YCO.0b013e32830aba12>.

<sup>2</sup> Laura Hirshbein, "The American Psychiatric Association and the History of Psychiatry," *History of Psychiatry* 22, no. 87 Pt 3 (2011): 302–14,

<sup>3</sup> Adham Mancini-Marie et al., "Neural Correlates of the Affect Regulation Model in Schizophrenia Patients with Substance Use History: A Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging Study," *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* 67, no. 3 (2006): 342–50, <https://doi.org/10.4088/jcp.v67n0302>.

mental illnesses amid political and economic constraints. It proposes a re-evaluation through a hermeneutic lens.

The psychiatric-patient collaboration paid attention to labeled illnesses. As these changes took shape, recovery became a crucial aspect of the treatment. It depended on consumer-related meaningful activities, supportive relationships, mental health interventions, consumer hope, and their collaborative associative with the profession.<sup>4</sup> Organizations and agencies structured recovery. The origins of global mental health (GMH), its objectives, and the sociocultural critiques that it encounters show its commitment to healthy equality and human rights.<sup>5</sup> While examining the conflict between relativist and universalist perspectives, there were concerns regarding the cultural applicability of GMH procedures and certain Western prejudices. As GMH uses universal human rights, relativists utilize contextual approaches that align with local healthcare practices and decolonization.<sup>6</sup> It shows the need for transcultural psychiatric components. When providing these services in places like African communities, the care should adopt a holistic strategy comprising a metaphysical commitment to religious domains that can significantly affect the client.<sup>7</sup> Gadamer's hermeneutical understanding of mental health, going beyond outward symptoms and stressing the importance of comprehending patients' internal and

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<sup>4</sup> Kenneth S. Kendler, Kathryn Tabb, and John Wright, "The Emergence of Psychiatry: 1650-1850," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 179, no. 5 (2022): 329–35, <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.21060614>.

<sup>5</sup> Vian Rajabzadeh et al., "Understanding Global Mental Health: A Conceptual Review," *BMJ Global Health* 6, no. 3 (2021): e004631, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2020-004631>.

<sup>6</sup> Franco Mascayano, Julio Eduardo Armijo, and Lawrence Hsin Yang, "Addressing Stigma Relating to Mental Illness in Low-and Middle-Income Countries," *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 6 (2015).

<sup>7</sup> Camillia Kong et al., "The Hermeneutics of Recovery: Facilitating Dialogue between African and Western Mental Health Frameworks," *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 2021, 136346152110005, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13634615211000549>.

external contexts, was valuable for psychiatrists. The model entails having a deeper conversation with clients to explore the underlying causes of mental health issues, such as societal pressure, cultural expectations, and financial strain.<sup>8</sup>

The complexity of mental health concerns across social, psychological, and neurological dimensions shows the need to tackle the rising global prevalence of psychiatric diseases. Statistically, over 1 million people globally deal with different psychiatric disorders annually.<sup>9</sup> As of 2019, nearly 50% of healthcare centers and hospitals globally were handling and addressing the issue of mental health. In 2017, more than 280 million people were suffering from an anxiety disorder.<sup>10</sup> Generally, more people experience anxiety and depression disorders compared to other illnesses. Children and teenagers (10%-20%) have reported care of mental health globally, with most of them dealing with mood, anxiety, and behavioral issues.<sup>11</sup> By 2021, More than 970 million people had mental illnesses.<sup>12</sup> It marked a significant increase from the last 5-6 years. Many of these people lack access to proper mental health services. As such, illustrating the complexity of mental health concerns across social, psychological, and

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<sup>8</sup> Laurence J. Kirmayer and Duncan Pedersen, "Toward a New Architecture for Global Mental Health," *Transcultural Psychiatry* 51, no. 6 (2014): 759–76, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461514557202>.

<sup>9</sup> Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, ed., *The Human Being in Action: The Irreducible Element in Man Part II Investigations at the Intersection of Philosophy and Psychiatry*. Vol. 7, Springer Science & Business Media, 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Roya Vaziri-Harami, Saharnaz Vaziri-Harami, and Mohammadreza Tarom, "Prevalence of anxiety and depression among engineering students consuming cannabis," *Annals of Medicine and Surgery* 80 (July 2022): 4. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amsu.2022.104144>

<sup>11</sup> Ashmita Chaulagain et al., "Child and adolescent mental health problems in Nepal: a scoping review," *International Journal of Mental Health Systems* 13 (August 2019): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13033-019-0310-y>

<sup>12</sup> Pau Soldevila-Matias, Ana I. Guillén, and Renato de Filippis. "Mental health and internalized stigma in people with severe mental illness." *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 14 (April 2023): 1. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2023.1204091>

neurological aspects underscores the urgency of tackling the rising global prevalence of psychiatric diseases.

While emphasizing the need for conversation and empathic interpretation, Gadamer's hermeneutics gives a useful philosophical lens for assessing contemporary psychiatric treatments. Mental health practitioners are pragmatists who do everything that works for the fragmented needs of their clients.<sup>13</sup> From the Gadamer perspective, hermeneutics is vital to the psychiatric interventional process.<sup>14</sup> It improves the in-depth understanding of a patient's needs and struggles. It entails experts interpreting what they see from a client's external body.<sup>15</sup> The idea is to understand the signs that can portray the internal characteristics or behaviors that cause suffering or harm. Thus, mental health requires practitioners to use approaches that enable them to interpret the problem their client is experiencing.

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<sup>13</sup> Graham Thornicroft and Michele Tansella, "Components of a Modern Mental Health Service: A Pragmatic Balance of Community and Hospital Care: Overview of Systematic Evidence," *The British Journal of Psychiatry: The Journal of Mental Science* 185 (2004): 283–90, <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.185.4.283>.

<sup>14</sup> Matthew R. McWhorter, "Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and the formation of mental health professionals," *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology* (2020).

<sup>15</sup> Tony Lowe, "A Theory of Applied Mind of Programming: Understanding the challenges in learning to program," In *Proceedings of the 2019 ACM Conference on Innovation and Technology in Computer Science Education*, pp. 340-341, 2019.



## Chapter 1: Gadamer's Hermeneutics Notion Of Mental Health

### 1.1 Introduction

Over the past few decades, mental health issues have gained international attention. Psychiatric diseases have significantly increased in prevalence, and this growth has been associated with changes in demographics.<sup>16</sup> These conditions now account for one in every five years of impairment and impact about 5% of children and adolescents globally. Mental health affects people's productivity, hindering their ability to remain effective in their workplaces.<sup>17</sup> The wide-ranging effects include interpersonal relationships, work performance, community involvement, and individual well-being. The financial fallout is expected to be severe, costing the world economy more than \$1 trillion yearly in direct expenses like hospital stays and indirect ones like lost productivity.<sup>18</sup> Depressed people have minimal reasoning ability and cut across all ages.

There has been a dynamic relationship between neurological and evidence-based viewpoints in the growth of mental health research. The Research Domain Criteria project expands knowledge by defining mental health as an illness of the nervous system. Interprofessional collaborative efforts enhance mental health issues interpretation, increasing awareness and improving meaning that assists in minimizing its prevalence.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand,

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<sup>16</sup> GBD 2019 Mental Disorders Collaborators, "Global, Regional, and National Burden of 12 Mental Disorders in 204 Countries and Territories, 1990-2019: A Systematic Analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2019," *The Lancet. Psychiatry* 9, no. 2 (2022): 137–50, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(21\)00395-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(21)00395-3).

<sup>17</sup> Erica D. Musser and Joseph S. Raiker Jr, "Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: an integrated developmental psychopathology and Research Domain Criteria (RDoC) approach," *Comprehensive Psychiatry* 90 (2019): 65-72.

<sup>18</sup> GBD 2019 Mental Disorders Collaborators, "National Burden of 12 Mental Disorders in 204 Countries and Territories, 1990-2019," 137–50.

<sup>19</sup> Tobias Kaiser and Guoping Feng, "Modeling psychiatric disorders for developing effective treatments," *Nature Medicine* 21, no. 9 (2015): 2. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nm.3935>

focusing too much on the neurological component could prevent a comprehensive analysis and restrict research to psychology and society. A robust method of providing mental care comes from integrating clinical research-based and evidence-based procedures.<sup>20</sup> Notwithstanding its advantages, there is doubt regarding the viability and flexibility of evidence-based in routine mental health services, particularly in wealthy nations where resources frequently favor conventional, non-recovery-focused therapy.<sup>21</sup> Most interventions focus on day centers, resocialization, psychiatric acute care, and hospital and residency, with an insignificant number of mentally ill getting suitable evidence-based therapies.

Healthcare professionals sometimes miss thoughtful perspectives on mental health yet offer essential information.<sup>22</sup> Plato is an excellent example of the ancient philosophical underpinnings, which offer a robust framework for reasoning and belief justification in mental health issues. However, applying philosophy is not (entirely) significant in the healthcare industry, especially psychiatry. Hermeneutic theory, especially in the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer, places a strong emphasis on viewing mental illnesses from a contextual perspective and exploring the patient's surroundings to gain a more nuanced understanding. It focuses on the setting of care, which gives client-specific experiences intriguing meaning and significance to different people.<sup>23</sup> Including philosophical viewpoints promotes interdisciplinary cooperation and improves the all-encompassing treatment of patients with mental health problems. In the workplace-related stress case, a work-based intervention that seeks to determine control issues

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<sup>20</sup> McWhorter, "Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics," 1.

<sup>21</sup> Antonio Vita and Stefano Barlati, "The Implementation of Evidence-Based Psychiatric Rehabilitation: Challenges and Opportunities for Mental Health Services," *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 10 (2019): 147. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2019.00147>.

<sup>22</sup> Lowe, "A Theory of Applied Mind of Programming," 340-341.

<sup>23</sup> McWhorter, "Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics," 1.

and demand becomes valuable.<sup>24</sup> The contextual information allows the specialist to customize care for each client's unique needs and encounters.

Surroundings, which include their (personal) circumstances, social context, and experiences, shape an individual's perspective and experience of mental health disorders significantly.<sup>25</sup> Examining a patient's environment necessitates that mental health providers carefully consider all pertinent factors outside of symptoms to customize interventions to specific situations. This study applies Gadamer's hermeneutics concept of mental health to a philosophical analysis of psychotic diseases to gain a thorough understanding of the patients. The method stresses the value of reflective interpretation and investigating inner emotions and mental states. Psychotic diseases refer to a group of mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia and psychotic depression, that result in a loss of reality. Even though psychiatric illnesses as a whole include psychotic disorders, not all psychiatric disorders are psychotic. Instead, psychiatric disorders in this study cover a more extensive variety of ailments impacting behavior and mental health. Although they can also arise in some non-psychotic mental diseases, psychotic symptoms like hallucinations or delusions are characteristic of psychotic disorders.

## 1.2 Background Of The Study

The background of mental health history shows a shift from depending on religious and paranormal explanations to the current focus on neurological viewpoints. Initially, mental health

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<sup>24</sup> Pamela L. Mahan et al., "Work environment stressors, social support, anxiety, and depression among secondary school teachers," *AAOHN Journal* 58, no. 5 (May 2010): 198. <https://doi.org/10.1177/216507991005800504>

<sup>25</sup> Ümran Sema Seven et al., "Perception, attitudes, and experiences regarding mental health problems and web-based mental health information amongst young people with and without migration background in Germany. A qualitative study," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no. 1 (January 2021): 2. <https://dx.doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18010081>

issues were seen through a spiritual perspective or attributed to demonic possession, which hampered the investigation of evidence-based treatments.<sup>26</sup> Psychiatry from a supernatural power and religious viewpoint did not hold significant value. As such, Galen's typology became seminal, offering a more methodical approach that considered particular components when characterizing normalcy. Its components include being “optimistic and social,” “short-tempered and irritable,” “analytical and quiet,” and “relaxed and peaceful.”<sup>27</sup> In the modern era, neurological interpretations have been increasingly prevalent, taking advantage of scientific developments to establish biological reasons for mental illnesses. This dependence on neurology has, however, made it difficult to understand and treat psychiatric diseases.

The scientific and philosophical aspects of the mind have received more attention in recent years. A more complex understanding of mental health was made possible by Plato's philosophical division of the body and mind, which challenged conventional wisdom.<sup>28</sup> Through a philosophical lens, Gadamer's hermeneutics examines mental health from an all-encompassing perspective that factors in the experiences, symptoms, and environmental circumstances. The counselor interrogates what is evident in the worries, body, calm, and carelessness to determine the mind's state.<sup>29</sup> Philosophical inquiry argues that mental illnesses require studying from a broader range of viewpoints that should consider the social, cultural, and personal factors that influence people's mental health. This holistic approach to psychiatric diseases acknowledges the

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<sup>26</sup> McWhorter, "Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics," 34.

<sup>27</sup> Claire-Odile McCauley et al., "Surviving out of the Ashes"-An Exploration of Young Adult Service Users' Perspectives of Mental Health Recovery," *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing* (2020), 23.

<sup>28</sup> Musser, and Raiker Jr, "Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder," 71.

<sup>29</sup> Daphne Tan, "Dynamic Dualism": Kurth and Riemann on Music Theory and the Mind," *Music Theory Spectrum* 42, no. 1 (2020), 121.

interplay of internal and environmental elements, providing a more thorough understanding of efficient treatment and management techniques.

### **1.3 Thesis Statement**

Incorporating Gadamer's hermeneutics into psychiatric practice improves patient satisfaction and therapeutic outcomes by promoting a better understanding and empathy between psychiatrists and patients, ultimately leading to more successful diagnosis and treatment of mental diseases.

With this, the study hypothesizes that psychiatrists who adopt Gadamer's hermeneutic approach will be better able to get beyond outward manifestations of mental illness and have meaningful conversations with patients about the psychological and existential issues that are causing their problems. Therapists can customize interventions that speak to each patient's particular experiences and viewpoints through this cooperative process of interpretation and reflection, fostering increased therapeutic involvement, rapport, and trust.

### **1.4 Statement Of The Problem**

Psychiatry has faced difficulties over the last ten years as a result of its heavy reliance on neurological and clinical viewpoints and inability to stand alone. The credibility of the psychiatric field is questionable due to its incapacity to offer viable treatments for newly diagnosed mental illnesses. The emphasis on clinical approaches has gained prominence, especially when it comes to prescribing medications without investigating the causes or comprehending the mental states of the patients. DSM-5 from the American Psychiatric Association market drugs and target psychiatric disorder treatments.<sup>30</sup> Critical concerns,

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<sup>30</sup> Şerife Tekin and Bluhm Robyn, eds., 2019, *The Bloomsbury Companion to Philosophy of Psychiatry*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 78.

including the implications, treatment, and mitigation of mental diseases, have received less attention as a result of the transition from psychology to clinical practice, which the prevalence of the DSM-5 in the US best illustrates. Today, practitioners equate clinical work to drug prescriptions.<sup>31</sup> However, this ignores the critical comprehension of patients' difficulties, which runs counter to Gadamer's theory that calls for a close relationship, communication, and careful assessment of the patient's circumstances. The main issue is that psychiatry is unable to define its appropriateness and depends too much on other sciences, which calls into doubt the field's independence and efficacy.

According to research outcomes, a philosophical understanding of psychiatric diseases is critical to solving these problems. The prevalent neurological and clinical paradigms, which prioritize the duality of mind and body, are inadequate in tackling the intricate etiology of mental health disorders.<sup>32</sup> Philosophical viewpoints that support a holistic understanding of factors in the connections between stressful situations, social influences, and prior experiences on the human mind use Gadamer's hermeneutical approach. This method facilitates communication between the patient and the psychiatrist by analyzing verbal and nonverbal signs to identify the underlying issues. If one feels sorry when discussing the situation, such expressions depict a person's status or views about the problem.<sup>33</sup> There is an imperative need to move away from clinical neurology procedures and medication regimens and toward a more mind-centered approach to understanding and treating mental illnesses properly. Ultimately, recognizing and resolving the deeper meanings ingrained in the experiences and manifestations of the patients

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<sup>31</sup> McWhorter, "Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics," 56.

<sup>32</sup> Vijay, Mittal, and Lauren S. Wakschlag., 30.

<sup>33</sup> Jennifer Marie Martin, "Stigma and student mental health in higher education." *Higher Education Research & Development* 29, no. 3 (2010): 259.

permits the philosophical interpretation to harmonize psychiatry with the mission of reducing human suffering.

### **1.5 The Goal Of Study**

The study aims to explore how Gadamer's hermeneutics, which departs from psychiatry's typical emphasis on the brain, can provide a philosophical understanding of mental health issues. The study adds an element of interpretation, focusing on conversation and reasoning instead of depending only on outside cues. Such philosophical reasoning is crucial for understanding a client's inner soul and the challenges they are experiencing.<sup>34</sup> Gadamer's method broadens the view by taking a holistic approach to life and emphasizes the significance of including patients in healthcare decisions. These engagements seek to establish how the client feels through dialogue while focusing on a specific psychiatric issue.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the goal of this research is to offer an alternate perspective on mental health concerns while fostering empathy and understanding by presenting a philosophical interpretation of psychiatric diseases.

### **1.6 Study Objectives**

The overall aim of this research is to emphasize the need to examine psychiatric disorders using Gadamer's hermeneutic of mental diseases. This model prioritizes dialogue and understanding. The specific objectives include:

- a) To establish how to utilize Han-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutics to provide a philosophical interpretation of psychiatric disorders and improve the current psychiatry research.

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<sup>34</sup> Tekin and Robyn, *The Bloomsbury Companion*, 78.

<sup>35</sup> Ikuko Shinohara and Yusuke Moriguchi, "Adults' Theory of Infants' Mind: a comparison between parents and nonparents," *Child Development Research* (2017), 56.

- b) To establish whether Gadamer's hermeneutics notion on mental health could be a critical tool that can help psychiatrists analyze and find a better solution for psychotic disorders.
- c) To find out the relevance of Han-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutics in psychiatry and establish whether it can help offer new approaches to finding better mitigation and treatment of these diseases.

### **1.7 Scope Of The Research**

The study examines three main areas. The first is the occurrence and manifestation of psychiatric diseases, focusing on philosophical interpretation through hermeneutic reasoning. Secondly, it looks at mental health issues, specifically in light of the COVID-19 pandemic-related rise in psychotic disorders. Thirdly, it establishes alternative approaches to understanding and treating psychotic disorders using the hermeneutical approach suggested in the study. Hence, the scope proposes alternate viewpoints for efficient management and therapy and insights into the difficulties that come with psychiatric diseases.

### **1.8 The Need For Research On Patterns Of Mental Disorders**

The increasing incidence of mental health problems necessitates a change in how psychiatric disorders are understood and treated. Even though researchers and practitioners have done much work from a neurological and clinical standpoint, the research study emphasizes the importance of including philosophical aspects. The aim is to utilize Gadamer's hermeneutics to open up new possibilities for interpreting patients' needs. Statistics on mental health show that a sizable fraction of people worldwide suffer from mental illnesses, underscoring the need for earlier and more efficient therapies. The World Health Organization report shows that nearly 87% of the global population suffers from mental stress and pressure.<sup>36</sup> These challenges lead to

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<sup>36</sup> Tekin and Robyn, *The Bloomsbury*.



mental abnormalities. According to World Health Organization data, mental disorders are significant among the chronic diseases affecting almost 50% of the population, 15-25% affecting people in a year.<sup>37</sup> Based on these statistics, the study provides a detailed comprehension of psychotic diseases by examining them via a hermeneutic lens. It creates a new viewpoint for psychiatrists and clinicians primarily relying on natural scientific paradigms.

The study's importance also goes to the patients, encouraging a dialogical method that enables people to express their experiences fully. The hermeneutic prioritizes communication and understanding, allowing patients to share their pain and put it in the perspective of societal, cultural, or financial issues. It improves communication between the patient and the specialist and allows psychiatrists to treat the underlying issues instead of just the symptoms. Professionals have used the neurology lens to examine and solve psychiatric clinical practices.<sup>38</sup> The study advances the fields of psychiatry and psychology by proposing a hermeneutical approach that encourages experts to go beyond DSM-5 criteria and standard treatment methods. Specialists will be able to delve deeply into psychiatric problems and make better-educated decisions and actions that align with the particular obstacles that patients experience due to this comprehensive exploration.

### **1.9 The Motive Of Contemporary Understanding Of Mental Impairments**

The research is necessary because it aims to re-examine the current understanding of mental disabilities, especially in light of the difficulties brought on by the COVID-19 epidemic. As the pressure on the world's healthcare systems mounts, mental health issues are becoming

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<sup>37</sup> Alexander Crist, "A Hermeneutic Approach to Pain: Gadamer on Pain, Finitude, and Recovery," *Journal of Applied Hermeneutics* (2018), 8.

<sup>38</sup> Benjamin, Chin-Yee, et al., "From hermeneutics to heteroglossia: 'The Patient's View' revisited," *Medical Humanities*, 464.

more prevalent, requiring a new and reliable approach. The study presents a hermeneutical strategy, stressing a philosophical interpretation of the mind, in contrast to conventional techniques, which mainly concentrate on the brain as the source of mental health concerns. It is noteworthy that it applies to treating psychotic disorders as well, which aligns with the growing number of cases and the need for novel approaches to the diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses. The study acknowledges the value of the original, such as Plato and his writing on *Minos*, *Laws*, *Epinomis*, and *Letters*, where Chrotus implies that following specific systematic order results in the traces of how things originated.<sup>39</sup> Re-examining the idea of seeing the mind as a separate thing allows this study's philosophical investigation of mental health issues, which draws from historical viewpoints to add a layer of significance. It also calls for a critical reappraisal of mental health techniques, particularly Gadamer's hermeneutics, to determine how well it works for diagnosing, treating, and managing psychiatric diseases.

### **1.10 The Limitation And Assumption**

The principal research study limit is the lack of philosophical dialogues in the psychiatry healthcare field since the majority of studies primarily address mental health issues from a medical and neurological perspective. Such restrictions make comparing systematically and finding the best arguments more challenging. The difficulty in obtaining specialists for in-depth conversations, which is made worse by the now reducing COVID-19 pandemic, can force the selection of less suitable participants, which could restrict the scope of the study. The underlying premise of the study is that Gadamer's hermeneutics can provide a deep comprehension of

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<sup>39</sup> Anton-Hermann Chroust, "The Organization of the Corpus Platonicum in Antiquity," *Hermes* 93, no. H. 1 (1965): 34-46.

mental illnesses and suggest a departure from conventional medical practices to address the underlying causes and treatments of psychiatric disorders.

### 1.11 Theoretical Underpinning

The study's theoretical foundation combines the Theory of Mind (TOM), Ricoeur's research, and Gadamer's hermeneutics. Gadamer's hermeneutics provides a philosophical framework for comprehending mental problems through reflection while drawing from historical consciousness.<sup>40</sup> First proposed in 1978, the Theory of Mind explores how individuals assign mental states to themselves and others, which can help predict behavior. TOM, which uses role-playing to analyze causes, consequences, and opinion formation, is vital for psychiatrists to understand patients' thoughts as they observe their behaviors, traits, work rates, and non-verbal cues.<sup>41</sup> The study also incorporates the Dualistic Mind Theory. It emphasizes the distinction between the mind and body and challenges the prevalent neurological and clinical approaches that address mental health concerns as brain disorders only.<sup>42</sup> One of its crucial principles is epiphenomenalism, which suggests that mental events seem causally efficacious because certain mental events occur just before certain physical events and because humans are ignorant of the events in the brain that truly cause them. As such, it recommends isolating the mind and analyzing it as a standalone entity distinct from other parts of the body organs. According to this model, mental health issues can be better understood and treated holistically if psychiatrists consider mental health issues to be internal conflicts within the mind.

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<sup>40</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the human sciences: Essays on language, action and interpretation* (Cambridge University Press, 1981) 17.

<sup>41</sup> Shinohara and Moriguchi, "Adults' Theory of Infants' Mind," 12.

<sup>42</sup> Williams Gemma, "Theory of Autistic Mind: Unpicking Assumptions in Autistic Language Use Research." In *8th International Conference on Intercultural Pragmatics and Communication (INPRA 2018)*. 2018.

The first theoretical component (Theory of Mind) provides psychiatrists with an organized way to probe patients' thoughts. Psychiatrists can experience the difficulties personally, examine the reasons and effects, and create opinions based on their interpretation of mental health concerns through role-playing. The method improves empathy and decision-making in mental treatments in addition to helping to comprehend the patient's viewpoint. The Theory of Mind supports Gadamer's hermeneutics, which strongly emphasizes discourse, understanding, and interpretation in psychiatric practice by highlighting the importance of collaborative attention and nonverbal signs.

Meanwhile, the second theoretical component (Dualistic Mind Theory) contradicts the neuroscientific and therapeutic techniques currently prevalent in psychiatry. It suggests that professionals should treat mental health problems differently from brain ailments since the mind and body are two different things with opposing forces.<sup>43</sup> Dualistic Mind Theory promotes a change in perspective from brain traumas to a more complex view of mental health issues as internal mental conflicts. Psychiatrists can support holistic mental wellness by identifying and resolving internal issues and highlighting the significance of mental healing in addition to pharmacological therapies.<sup>44</sup> The Dualistic Mind Theory, which supports independent mental research and stresses the necessity for psychiatrists to view mental health issues differently, is consistent with the philosophical ideas of Gadamer that there is a need to distinguish the mind from the brain when addressing psychiatric disorders issues among patients.

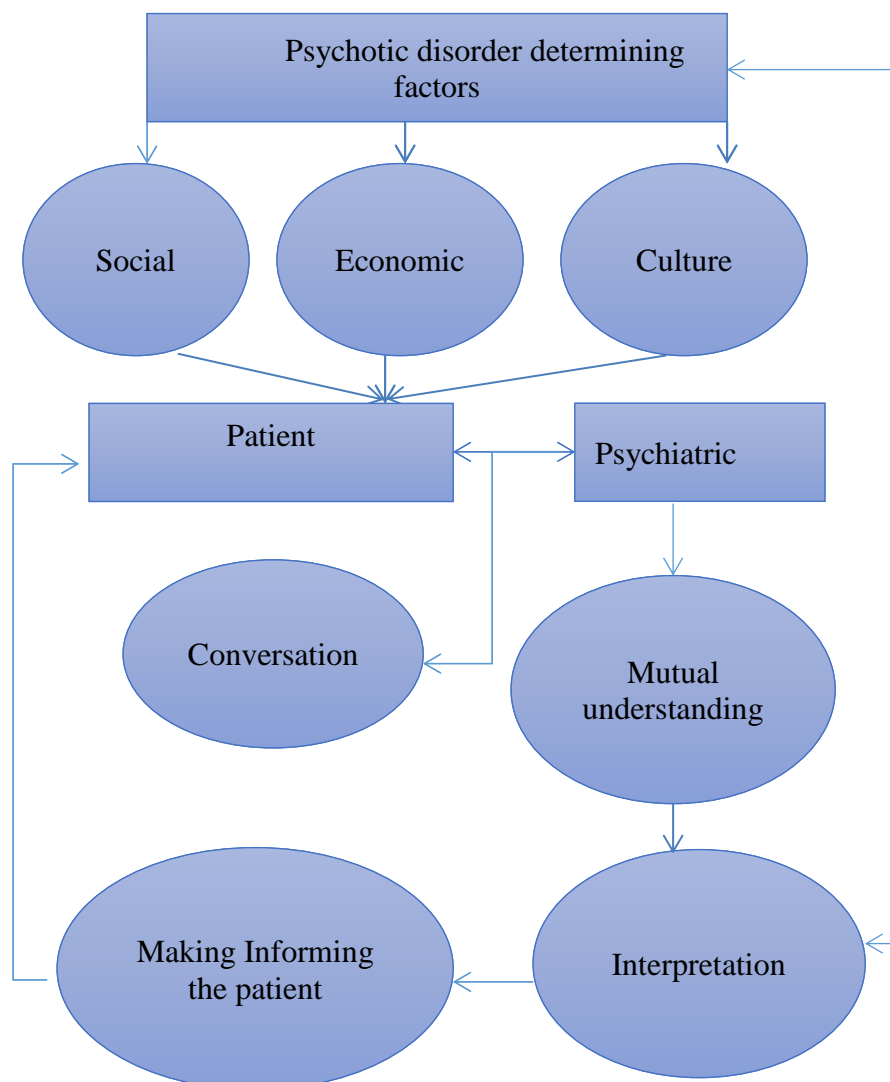
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<sup>43</sup> Athena Demertzi et al., "Dualism persists in the science of mind," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1157, no. 1 (2009): 2. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-6632.2008.04117.x>

<sup>44</sup> John Foster, *The immaterial self: A defence of the Cartesian dualist conception of the mind*. (New York: Routledge, 2002) 10.

### **1.12 Conceptual Framework**

The hermeneutic analysis of psychiatric diseases involves a three-step procedure to provide patients with efficient care. The psychiatrist uses patient interaction to identify social relationships, historical experiences, and financial crises as contributing causes to the psychotic illness. A keen eye for language and nonverbal signs helps to read and comprehend the patient's history, which makes it easier to identify the underlying causes. The conceptual framework directs the psychiatrist in interpreting patients' problems within pertinent contexts by highlighting the interaction of variables such as social, political, and cultural elements shown in the Figure below. Informed choices and interventions promote comprehensive and efficient communication in psychiatric treatment.



*Figure 1.* The conceptual framework showing how Gadamer's hermeneutic can help explore the psychotic disorder in a patient. Source: (Xu et al.)

### 1.13 Operational Definitions

The following are the meanings of some of the key terms that will repeatedly appear in the text:

**A psychotic patient** - A patient diagnosed with psychotic disorders and needs help from a psychiatrist and psychotherapists, who will use the hermeneutics approach.

**A psychiatric disorder** - These are changes in mental patterns that lead to significant distress and affect individual functioning.

**Client** – The word client has been used in this study to refer to an individual, a couple, or a family seeking or engaging a mental health professional for their services. It shows a collaborative approach where the individual is actively involved in the care process.

**Dialogue** - The conversation between the patient and the psychiatrist to explore the patient's well-being and the cause of their psychotic disorder.

**Disease** – The disease in this study involves a pathological condition that affects the mind and requires medical intervention. It implies that one is deviating from one's normal psychological functions.

**Dysfunction** – The term describes abnormal or impaired function of an individual brain. In this study, it means that a disruption of an individual's mental health negatively affects their general and daily functioning.

**Hermeneutics** - The process of engaging with the patient, understanding them, interpreting their information, and analyzing it from different angles (emotional, rational, prejudiced) to decide on the patient's situation.

**Illness** – The study uses illness as a broad term involving individuals feeling unwell and impacting their lives. It shows a lived experience of health-related challenges.

**Interpretation** - It is the process of critically and emotionally analyzing the patient's story and situation from different perspectives and contexts to make an informed decision.

**Patient** - The concept refers to an individual, a couple, or a family receiving treatment. In this study, a patient implies an individual receiving professional care for their mental disfunction.

**Wellbeing** – This term refers to an individual's health, social, physical, and mental. His study shows one has a positive state of mental health and benefits from factors that make life satisfying.

The introduction chapter lays the groundwork for the study by presenting the problem statement, essential goals, and research questions that emphasize the need to investigate alternative treatments for psychotic diseases. The chapter also shows the study area's crucial relevance and draws attention to the rising number of cases of these illnesses, which requires additional research. It describes the theories, giving the research study a theory-based foundation and creating room for a theoretical interpretation of the subject. In chapter 2, the researcher examines mental health using philosophical tenets, historical materials, and journal articles and identifies gaps in the literature to inform future research on the topic.



## Chapter 2: Mental Health Analysis Using Philosophical Tenets

### 2.1 The Evolution Of Mental Health

The historical trajectory of mental health is evident through a complicated interaction between cultural beliefs, religious interpretations, and developing scientific understanding. Mental health problems were once thought to have supernatural origins, a belief that merged with cultural and religious ideas. The stigma surrounding mental illnesses and their connection to religion hampered effective treatment and restricted the range of available health therapies. Flannelly and Kathleen write that attachment theory clarifies the God-mental health connection.<sup>45</sup> According to these researchers, the development of mental health therapy requires a shift from mystical justifications to more complex philosophical viewpoints that subvert conventional wisdom and impede advancement. It is generally undesirable to impede advancement since it prevents innovation and progression in mental health care. In mental health therapy, a move away from mystical explanations and toward more nuanced philosophical perspectives is recommended to get beyond these obstacles and advance more profound understanding and successful interventions. Gadamer sets the groundwork for practitioners to adopt a philosophical approach where dialogue results in health and medical changes.<sup>46</sup> Ricoeur adds that physical medium and sound help these experts understand differential values as part of philosophy, not science.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Kevin J. Flannelly and Kathleen Galek, "Religion, evolution, and mental health: Attachment theory and ETAS theory," *Journal of Religion and Health* 49, no. 3 (2010): 337-350.

<sup>46</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Enigma of Health: The Art of Healing in a Scientific Age* (California: Stanford University Press, 1996): 16-18.

<sup>47</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation theory: Discourse and the surplus of meaning*, TCU Press, 1976.

When examining ancient mental health practices, they show various culturally influenced rituals and interventions, such as trephining in the Stone Age. Healers used trephining, which entails hole drilling in the skull, to allow evil spirits to leave.<sup>48</sup> These superstitious and mystic behaviors differed between communities and eras, illustrating the cyclical nature of the evolution of mental health. Other studies increased professional competition aimed at influencing psychiatric workarounds for mental disorders.<sup>49</sup> Moving away from outdated techniques and superstitions fostered a more educated knowledge of psychiatric diseases, which Hans-Georg Gadamer and others championed to improve counseling. As the evolution progressed, it included philosophical hermeneutics, offering a basis for understanding and treating mental health problems.

The modern mental health field has difficulties in converting cutting-edge research into valuable applications. Despite advances in understanding and alternative therapy, there remains a gap between research and clinical implementation. Existing psychiatric bodies' hostility, ethical issues, and regulatory obstacles slow down the adoption of innovative therapy. However, genetic science advances associate certain disorders with social and (or) biological distinctions, thus improving psychotic disorder interpretation<sup>50</sup>. In addition to introducing financial incentives, the interaction between pharmaceutical corporations and psychiatrists raises concerns regarding the

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<sup>48</sup> Ingrid G. Farreras, "History of mental illness," *General psychology: required reading*, 2019.

<sup>49</sup> Owen Whooley, "Diagnostic ambivalence: psychiatric workarounds and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders," *Sociology of Health & Illness* 32, no. 3 (2010): 452-49.

<sup>50</sup> B. J Casey, Nick Craddock, Bruce N. Cuthbert, Steven E. Hyman, Francis S. Lee, and Kerry J. Ressler, "DSM-5 and RDoC: progress in psychiatry research?" *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 14, no. 11 (2013): 810-814.

impact of business interests on mental health research. The ongoing problem of bridging the gap between research discoveries and effective therapeutic practice reflects the need for a more seamless transition in the mental health field.

## 2.2 Manifestation Of Psychiatric Diseases

In today's psychiatric treatment, mental illnesses are frequently addressed as brain disorders, which creates dilemmas for patients and healthcare systems. These disorders can have early or late-life manifestations, displaying symptoms such as mood swings, emotional detachment, and cognitive deterioration.<sup>51</sup> Accurate diagnosis and successful treatment depend on the recognition of psychiatric symptoms, such as cognitive impairment and depression. Even with these advances, understanding the neurological basis of psychiatric illnesses remains hampered by unreliable research.<sup>52</sup> Theoretical viewpoints, such as those represented by Gadamer's hermeneutics, support a well-rounded strategy and highlight the necessity of philosophy in directing continuous self-improvement in mental health treatment models.<sup>53</sup> Investigating causal relationships using philosophical frameworks such as the network approach yields essential information for better condition management.<sup>54</sup>

A comprehensive strategy is relevant to address mental health issues, ranging from research-driven interventions to efficient policies. The philosophy of Gadamer stresses the

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<sup>51</sup> Marangelie, Criado-Marrero, Theo Rein, Elisabeth B. Binder, James T. Porter, John Koren III, and Laura J. Blair, "Hsp90 and FKBP51: complex regulators of psychiatric diseases," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 373, no. 1738 (2018): 20160532.

<sup>52</sup> Nivedita Agarwal, John D. Port, Massimo Bazzocchi, and Perry F. Renshaw, "Update on the use of MR for assessing and diagnosing psychiatric diseases," *Radiology* 255, no. 1 (2010): 23-41.

<sup>53</sup> Gadamer, *Enigma of Health*, 3.

<sup>54</sup> Denny Borsboom, "A network theory of mental disorders," *World Psychiatry* 16, no. 1 (2017): 5-13.

necessity of ongoing self-correction and possibility balancing.<sup>55</sup> The goal should be to create mental health policies that connect the philosophy of nature with practical philosophy.

Legislative changes are necessary to address structural stigma, which stands in the way of care involvement to improve health literacy and appropriately interpret mental diseases. Research conducted in the United States indicates that policies constrain financing and acceptance of psychoanalysis in mental health treatment because they prioritize and value short-term and evidence-based interventions like CBT.<sup>56</sup> Strict licensing board requirements unintentionally impede psychoanalytic techniques, preventing patients from obtaining long-term therapy contacts that may be beneficial.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, adequate policies that are based on research findings are crucial in promoting a comprehension of mental illnesses and enabling tailored suitable treatment.

### **2.3 Scientific And Philosophical Viewpoints Of Psychiatric Disorders**

Scientific and philosophical perspectives influence decisions from patients (their families) and medical professionals, defining our understanding and treatment of mental illnesses. The reification of mental illnesses and the development of criteria similar to those found in the DSM are the results of scientific viewpoints that are grounded in clinical breakthroughs.<sup>58</sup> Scientific perspectives factor in mental health as part of symptom interactions.

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<sup>55</sup> Gadamer, *Enigma of Health*, 5.

<sup>56</sup> Daniel David, Ioana Cristea, and Stefan G. Hofmann, "Why cognitive behavioral therapy is the current gold standard of psychotherapy," *Frontiers in psychiatry* 9 (2018): 2. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2018.00004>

<sup>57</sup> Anna Elliot et al., "Interstate Licensure Portability: Logistics and Barriers for Professional Counselors," *Professional Counselor* 9, no. 3 (2019): 261, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1232236.pdf>

<sup>58</sup> Bruce N. Cuthbert and Thomas R. Insel, "Toward the future of psychiatric diagnosis: the seven pillars of RDoC," *BMC Medicine* 11, no. 1 (2013): 1-8.

However, these symptoms occur systematically from early to more advanced ones.<sup>59</sup> Critiques of this view focus on its shortcomings in understanding the complexity of mental diseases, even though they have made a significant contribution to evidence-based treatments and their accessibility. Alternative dimensional models have been put out, highlighting a more thorough strategy that considers numerous stakeholders' viewpoints for better disorder management to fill these inadequacies.<sup>60</sup> As such, recovery strategies must prioritize each patient's needs.

Conversely, philosophical stances provide a unique perspective on mental health, such as illustrations from Gadamer's hermeneutics. They question the sole dependence on scientific interpretations and call for an examination of mental well-being from the position of the mind rather than the body.<sup>61</sup> Philosophical ideas shed light on the ontological perspective and ethical aspects of mental illnesses, offering essential insights into their significance and causes.<sup>62</sup> The philosophical perspective also fosters multidisciplinary cooperation, bridging the knowledge gap between mental health concepts and human sciences and ultimately leading to a deeper comprehension of mental illnesses.<sup>63</sup> Past deliberations failed to cope with rapid changes in the psychotic field. A mental health philosophical analysis supports the distinction between outcome

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<sup>59</sup> Richard J. McNally, "Can network analysis transform psychopathology?" *Behavior Research and Therapy* 86 (2016): 95-104.

<sup>60</sup> Gadamer, *The Gadamer reader: A bouquet of the later writings* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2007) 195.

<sup>61</sup> David Bourget and David J. Chalmers, "What do philosophers believe?" *Philosophical Studies* 170, no. 3 (2014): 465-500.

<sup>62</sup> Gadamer, *The Gadamer reader*, 160.

<sup>63</sup> Dan J. Stein, "What is a mental disorder? A perspective from cognitive-affective science," *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 58, no. 12 (2013): 656-662.

and functional tests.<sup>64</sup> These differences extend to the varying psychotic disorders such as Schizophrenia spectrum, autism, and "attention deficit hyperactivity disorder" (ADHD).

A comprehensive understanding of mental diseases requires converging scientific and philosophical perspectives. Distinguishing between factual findings and philosophical interpretations presents challenges that can hinder the provision of holistic care and create ethical dilemmas for researchers. Hermeneutics eliminates misinterpretations, thereby contributing to agreement reconstruction as it removes barriers that often come with wrong translations.<sup>65</sup> Gadamer's hermeneutics links both domains, promoting a cooperative strategy that considers individual experiences and collective facts. A good diagnostic should consider clients' complaints as the counselor makes reflective decisions.<sup>66</sup> A more thorough knowledge that helps people, researchers, and society at large could result from such integration, which has the potential to revolutionize the field of mental health research.

## 2.4 The Philosophical Understanding Of Psychiatric Disorders

In the discipline of psychiatry, studies on novel approaches to treating mental health issues are a continuous and unending activity. Philosophical viewpoints offer unique insights beyond political and public opinion, significantly contributing to this conversation.<sup>67</sup> With the continued concern about mental diseases on a worldwide scale, developing new treatment modalities requires a philosophical understanding. According to Kendler et al.'s paper,

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<sup>64</sup> Fabian Freyenhagen and Tom O'shea, "Hidden substance: mental disorder as a challenge to normatively neutral accounts of autonomy," *International Journal of Law in Context* 9, no. 1 (2013): 53-70.

<sup>65</sup> Gadamer, *The Gadamer reader*, 328.

<sup>66</sup> Zofia Rosińska, "Recognition and Diagnosis from the Perspective of an Anthropological Philosophy of Culture" *Eidos. A Journal for Philosophy of Culture* 2, no. 2 (4) (2018).

<sup>67</sup> Gadamer, Hans-Georg, and Carlo DaVia, "The Socratic Question and Aristotle." *Continental Philosophy Review* 48, no. 1 (2015): 95-102.

philosophers have developed philosophical orientations that offer frameworks for categorizing mental illnesses and comprehending their underlying causes.<sup>68</sup> The critical freedom that philosophers invoke promotes the investigation of other models. It helps advance the nuanced study of mental health issues beyond the confines of conventional medical paradigms.<sup>69</sup> However, psychiatry must remain the medical field to promote health specialist development.

The traditional division frequently observed in contemporary psychiatry is challenged by the relationship between the mind and body in philosophy. According to perspectives in neuroscience, Stein et al.'s findings support this sentiment by indicating that the mind and body are inextricably linked.<sup>70</sup> Philosophical insights support a more conservative approach that acknowledges mental illnesses as having an impact on the body and the patient's mind. They also call for a change in terminology. Mental health clinicians believe that when other professionals use psychiatric disorders, they create a narrative that it is psychiatric only with appropriate diagnosing and management training for these illnesses.<sup>71</sup> Adopting a new perspective that views mental problems as physiological afflictions and brain-mind disorders requires embracing Gadamer's emphasis on openness.<sup>72</sup> This philosophical change calls for a reassessment of current frameworks and a departure from symptom-focused methods in favor of investigating the causal mechanisms of psychiatric diseases.

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<sup>68</sup> Kenneth S. Kendler, Peter Zachar, and Carl Craver, "What kinds of things are psychiatric disorders?" *Psychological medicine* 41, no. 6 (2011): 1143-1150.

<sup>69</sup> Gadamer, *The Gadamer reader*, 8.

<sup>70</sup> Dan J. Stein, Katharine A. Phillips, Derek Bolton, K. W. M. Fulford, John Z. Sadler, and Kenneth S. Kendler, "What is a mental/psychiatric disorder? From DSM-IV to DSM-V," *Psychological Medicine* 40, no. 11 (2010): 1759-1765.

<sup>71</sup> Kenneth S. Kendler, "All We Have to Fear: Psychiatry's Transformation of Natural Anxieties Into Mental Disorders," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 170, no. 1, (2013): 124-125.

<sup>72</sup> Gadamer, *The Gadamer reader*, 82.

Schilbach et al.'s combination of emotional-embodied receptions provides a classical philosophy-based cognitive analysis.<sup>73</sup> This idea, which has its roots in developmental research, may improve our comprehension of the roles that human circumstances play in the emergence of mental illnesses. The Process-Relational worldview, with a background on philosophical ideas, explores inter-individual changes that lead to psychiatric diseases and advocates for a shift from outdated historical and contemporary models.<sup>74</sup> Past and current models have a shortcoming of not identifying the specific psychotic disorders' causal element and highly reliable treatment. Varga's research is an example of philosophical inquiry, which aims to differentiate between biological facts and social values to provide a cognitive science viewpoint on psychiatric diseases.<sup>75</sup> When professionals use hermeneutics in intellectual production, psychiatry may become more transparent as it gets the necessary legitimacy by incorporating multiple instruments and techniques.

Mental illnesses are usually complicated. As such, South and Jarnecke suggest that practitioners must look at all living things' traits to highlight the complex interactions between genetics and the environment.<sup>76</sup> A comprehensive approach to prevention, diagnosis, and therapy is necessary, given the recognition that genetic predispositions and environmental factors play

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<sup>73</sup> <sup>73</sup> Leonhard Schilbach et al., "Toward a second-person neuroscience 1," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 36, no. 4 (2013): 393-414.

<sup>74</sup> Willis F. Overton, "Processes, relations, and relational-developmental-systems," In *Handbook of Child Psychology and Developmental Science, Theory and method*, Hoboken, (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2015)

<sup>75</sup> Somogy Varga, "Defining mental disorder. Exploring the 'natural function' approach," *Philosophy, Ethics, and Humanities in Medicine* 6, no. 1 (2011): 1-10.

<sup>76</sup> Susan C. South and Amber M. Jarnecke, "Genetic and environmental influences on adult mental health: Evidence for gene-environment interplay as a function of maternal and paternal discipline and affection," *Behavior Genetics* 45 (July 2015): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10519-015-9716-8>.



significant roles in enabling these disorders. Wakefield and First's emphasis on harm in psychological problems provides a conceptual framework for differentiating between benign abnormalities and severe disorders that require medical attention.<sup>77</sup> A thorough, all-encompassing strategy is required since mental illnesses are complicated and need individualized, patient-centered care. According to Parnas et al., the convergence of philosophy and neuroscience emphasizes the significance of fundamental philosophical ideas in psychiatry.<sup>78</sup> Their view recognizes the unique characteristics of the brain and the demand for a coordinated approach to planned interventions. Such harmonization would make it less complicated to acknowledge mental disorder patterns, particularly after the patient has undergone the first episode. Incorporating philosophical interpretations allows psychiatry to meet the requirements of people with psychiatric illnesses and their social groups. It fosters a collaborative atmosphere between patients and practitioners where learning and care have (simultaneously) become valuable resources.<sup>79</sup> Ultimately, a philosophical approach enhances the clinical and neurological components, offering a more comprehensive comprehension of mental illnesses and opening the door to better treatment results.

## 2.5 Application Of Gadamer's Four Concepts In Mental Health Analysis

In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer explores the intricacies of human interpretation, highlighting how paradoxical and important these complications are in human sciences.<sup>80</sup> His

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<sup>77</sup> Jerome C. Wakefield and Michael B. First, "The importance and limits of harm in identifying mental disorder," *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 58, no. 11 (2013): 618-621.

<sup>78</sup> Josef Parnas, Louis A. Sass, and Dan Zahavi, "Rediscovering psychopathology: the epistemology and phenomenology of the psychiatric object," *Schizophrenia Bulletin* 39, no. 2 (2013): 270-277.

<sup>79</sup> Sidsel Tveiten, Magne Haukland, and Flittie Ragnhild Onstad, "The patient's voice-empowerment in a psychiatric context," *Vård i Norden* 31, no. 3 (2011): 20-24.

<sup>80</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer. *Truth and Method* (New Delhi: A&C Black 1975).

hermeneutics provides a conceptual framework for understanding personal experiences by looking for the underlying causes of historical problems.<sup>81</sup> Regan's earlier work confirms that Gadamer's basic ideas apply in interpreting human experiences.<sup>82</sup> It applies more specifically to mental health studies.

## **2.5.1 Hans Georg Gadamer Four Concepts**

### ***2.5.1.1 The Hermeneutic Circle***

Tatla explains that the hermeneutic circle highlights how history affects a particular circumstance.<sup>83</sup> Based on philosophical hermeneutics, this idea holds that people can be fully understood by looking at the historical background of their lives. Hans-Georg Gadamer asserts that history acts as a uniting factor between humankind and the outside world and that comprehending a concept entails people coming to an understanding and showing respect for one another.<sup>84</sup> Understanding history's significance becomes especially important when it comes to mental health, as it can disclose holistic patterns that help with the interpretation of the past and the diagnosis of mental health issues in patients.<sup>85</sup> As a result, hermeneutics supports interpreting one's practices to determine their traits, values, and behaviors.

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics emphasizes the importance of historical meaning, which also acknowledges the inevitability of bias in event analysis. The hermeneutic circle is a

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<sup>81</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 260.

<sup>82</sup> Paul Regan, "Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics: Concepts of reading, understanding, and interpretation," *Meta: Research in hermeneutics, phenomenology, and practical philosophy* 4, no. 2 (2012): 286-303.

<sup>83</sup> Helen Tatla, "Morality and architecture: evaluation of contemporary architectural practice within the scope of the ontological hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer," *Technological Educational Institution, Athens* (2011): 3-8.

<sup>84</sup> Hans-Georg, Gadamer. *Truth and Method*. (1975), 303.

<sup>85</sup> Kenneth D. Walsh and Patrea Andersen, "Group Facilitation as Hermeneutic Practice," *Group Facilitation: A Research & Applications Journal* 12 (2013).

beginning point for investigating mental health difficulties, emphasizing the need for comprehensive knowledge beyond simple compassion or empathy. It gives psychiatrists insight into historical circumstances, which helps them deal with fearful situations.<sup>86</sup> These practitioners can have a better understanding and treat mental diseases with more efficacious interventions by embracing the hermeneutic circle and navigating the intricacies of human experiences. Failure to integrate philosophy implies that people's existence and challenges remain untranslated.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, practitioners should associate the truth with and use it to develop mental health illness interventions.

### **2.5.1.2 Prejudice**

Prejudice is a fundamental idea influencing people's opinions and comes from Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. According to Gadamer, prejudice is embedded in people's perceptions and interpretations of the world.<sup>88</sup> It helps them interpret things they see in the world. Florsheim further says prejudice is inevitable in human cognition, even though it may obstruct objective information and research findings.<sup>89</sup> Prejudice has a significant impact on mental health, as evidenced by the continuation of conceptual misunderstandings and the lack of cooperation between general practitioners, psychiatrists, and other professionals. Psychopathologists and psychologists must overcome prejudice to adopt phenomenological attitudes, enable a more accurate understanding of mental health issues, and promote unbiased diagnoses. Human-based science must focus beyond traditional self-consciousness to determine

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<sup>86</sup> Gadamer. *Truth and Method*, 251.

<sup>87</sup> Gadamer. *Truth and Method*, 87.

<sup>88</sup> Davidsen and Reventlow, "Narratives about patients with psychological problems illustrate different professional roles among general practitioners," *Journal of Health Psychology* 16, no. 6 (2011): 959-968.

<sup>89</sup> David Borges Florsheim, "Psychopathology And Absolutisms: Universalism, Objectivism And Foundationalism In Mental Health 1," *Psicologia em Estudo* 25 (2020).

the connection between people's experiences in the world.<sup>90</sup> Prejudice is likely to limit an individual from attaining a free mental state and making non-judgemental and non-conflicting decisions.

The 1980s makeover of American psychiatry stressed the application of medication. However, change is needed to improve the accurate identification of mental diseases.<sup>91</sup> According to Gadamer's findings, increasing objectivity requires removing prejudice from psychoanalytic measures. Devoid of prejudices rooted in self-configurations, this impartiality is crucial for identifying mental illnesses and enhancing the accuracy of diagnoses.<sup>92</sup> Critics contend that human perception and bias are inherently linked, which affects how mental health professionals understand different disorders. Svenaeus's research supports Gadamer's viewpoint by highlighting the necessity of a phenomenological approach (such as aesthetic experience) to improve our comprehension of mental diseases.<sup>93</sup> Psychiatrists are essential in giving this new meaning and ensuring that stigmas associated with the field are eliminated. They also promote a legitimate interpretation of psychiatric diseases based on current research and accurate situational analysis.

### ***2.5.1.3 The Fusion Of Horizons***

In philosophical hermeneutics, Gadamer's notion of the fusion of horizons offers a significant perspective that highlights the necessity of extending meaning through the fusion of

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<sup>90</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 350.

<sup>91</sup> Kevin Aho, "The psychopathology of American shyness: A hermeneutic reading," *Journal/or the Theory of Social Behaviour* 2 (2010): 8308.

<sup>92</sup> D. S. M. T. F. American Psychiatric Association and American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders: DSM-5*. vol. 5, no. 5 (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

<sup>93</sup> Fredrik Svenaeus, "A defense of the phenomenological account of health and illness," *In The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy: A Forum for Bioethics and Philosophy of Medicine*, vol. 44, no. 4, pp. 459-478. US: Oxford University Press, 2019.

disparate points of view. Finding concrete evidence of mental diseases becomes crucial when it comes to mental health, as there are still unanswered questions. Gadamer encourages people (especially mental health professionals) to embrace the importance of vistas and to engage with other people's points of view entirely. Contemporary historical continuousness weakens the human goal of correcting mental disorders.<sup>94</sup> However, the "fusion of horizons" process adds value to psychologists and psychiatrists. It allows them to go beyond cultural and intellectual barriers to conduct a thorough analysis of mental illnesses, which leads to a more comprehensive understanding.<sup>95</sup> This open, dynamic, and committed philosophical approach can completely transform mental health explanatory frameworks by promoting a team-based, evidence-based method of diagnosing, treating, and managing psychiatric diseases.

A comprehensive analysis of measures before applying them improves human experiences. According to Guzys et al., the hermeneutics of Gadamerian philosophy offer a great approach to interpreting people's experiences and creating original treatments for mental illnesses.<sup>96</sup> This method helps create a more thorough understanding of mental health by gathering expertise from professionals in various sectors. Combining different perspectives to overcome the gaps in our understanding of mental health research is incredibly beneficial. All these combinations are the fusion of the horizon.<sup>97</sup> Mental health practitioners can better

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<sup>94</sup> Human Deléne, "The fusion of horizons: interpreting the archetype of the resurrection myth in contemporary visual art," (PhD diss., University of Pretoria, 2015)

<sup>95</sup> John Chambers Christopher et al., "Critical cultural awareness: Contributions to a globalizing psychology," *American Psychologist* 69, no. 7 (2014): 645.

<sup>96</sup> Diana Guzys et al., "Gadamerian philosophical hermeneutics as a useful methodological framework for the Delphi technique," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being* 10, no. 1 (2015): 26291.

<sup>97</sup> Dan Warrender, "Staff nurse perceptions of the impact of mentalization-based therapy skills training when working with borderline personality disorder in acute mental health: a qualitative study," *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing* 22, no. 8 (2015): 623-633.

understand psychiatric diseases by interpreting past evidence. They can also examine patients' inner experiences more effectively and keep an open mind to new ideas and viewpoints to remain objective and unbiased.<sup>98</sup> As de Araujo highlights, cooperation between psychiatrists and clinicians is essential to developing a more integrated, patient-centered care network.<sup>99</sup> These collaborations expand horizons in the field of psychiatry.

#### **2.5.1.4 The Play**

Gadamer's introduction of the game's premise explores the complex dynamics between mental health providers and their patients. Araújo's research highlights the necessity for innovative mental health care models prioritizing patients' autonomy.<sup>100</sup> These priorities should exist even in the face of growing complexity in treating psychological discomfort. Svenaeus's research stresses Gadamer's emphasis on re-establishing health through patients' viewpoints, underscoring the role reversal envisioned between doctors and patients.<sup>101</sup> Professionals play the role of mediators in this "game." They (doctors) try to help patients regain equilibrium so they may find the rhythm of life again and heal more quickly. The method recasts the roles of physicians and patients and fosters cooperation between specialists such as psychiatrists and philosophers to investigate different aspects of the mind and jointly look for answers to mental health problems.

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<sup>98</sup> Diana Rose and Jayasree Kalathil, "Power, privilege and knowledge: the untenable promise of co-production in mental "health,"" *Frontiers in Sociology* 4 (July 2019): 1. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2019.00057>.

<sup>99</sup> Adriano Kasiorowski de Araujo and Oswaldo Yoshimi Tanaka, "Host Process Evaluation in Mental Health in the Midwest of São Paulo: the analysis of the relation between UBS and CAPS," *Interface Comunic. Saúde, Educ* (2012).

<sup>100</sup> Meiriele Tavares Araújo et al., "The meaning of work for professionals in a substitute mental health service." *Revista da Escola de Enfermagem da USP* 47, no. 3 (2013): 664-670.

<sup>101</sup> Svenaeus Fredrik, "Human suffering and psychiatric diagnosis," In *Bioethics Forum*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 4-10. Schwabe Verlag, 2018.

However, Dreyfus and Rabinow's previous reading of Gadamer's *Truth and Method* illuminates the stagnation in today's mental health institutions (which frequently serve as detention centers) rather than providing honest answers.<sup>102</sup> Based on Gadamer's hermeneutic experience, the idea of play emphasizes the necessity of introspection and increased consciousness in these institutional contexts. Blegen, Katie, and Terese (in their seminal work) advocate for an unbiased approach in researchers' assessments of psychiatric diseases by showing Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy as a way to expand our awareness of the reality faced by mental health patients.<sup>103</sup> Mental health practitioners should rethink care paradigms by adopting this philosophical viewpoint, prioritizing individual needs, and creating customized solutions that factor in the complexity of mental illnesses. Ricoeur underlines specificities and combinatory possibilities, highlighting the value of having an open mind and ensuring that delicate topics related to mental health are handled impartially.<sup>104</sup> Therefore, practitioners can interact more effectively with the variety of mental illnesses that exist in society by going through this introspective process.

## **2.6 Gadamer's Approach To Hermeneutic And The Search For Real Meaning**

Hans-Georg Gadamer's renown in hermeneutics is seen in his insistence on reassessing conventional wisdom and stressing the critical importance of comprehension and self-awareness. His "*A bouquet of the latter writings*" demonstrates his philosophical position, which calls for a break from outmoded ideas, especially when resolving the conflict between the natural sciences

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<sup>102</sup> Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*, Routledge, 2014.

<sup>103</sup> Nina Elisabeth Blegen, Katie Eriksson, and Terese Bondas, "Ask me what is in my heart of hearts! The core question of care in relation to parents who are patients in a psychiatric care context," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being* 11, no. 1 (2016): 30758.

<sup>104</sup> Ricoeur, *Interpretation theory*, 41.

and interpretations of mental health. Gadamer's method pushes back against disciplinary barriers by promoting a multidisciplinary, holistic view of mental health. He contends that this integration is essential to understanding the intricacies of mental illnesses, pinpointing the necessity for health nurses and psychiatrists to combine their unique techniques and multidisciplinary perspectives to solve the mystery of mental health problems. Gadamer calls for applying rational means to interpret and understand psychological issues.<sup>105</sup> These real meanings guide philosophical decisions.

In addition to challenging accepted wisdom, the Gadamerian hermeneutics framework seeks to offer credibility and understanding vital to the current international discussions surrounding mental health. The model facilitates validity, which is valuable for initiating a global mental health discussion.<sup>106</sup> Interpretative domains are necessary to overcome the limitations of temporal analysis and challenge the dominant scientific frameworks used to investigate mental health and navigate human experiences' intricacies. Relying on incorrect frameworks obstructs psychiatrists from obtaining the specific knowledge that can manage mental illness.<sup>107</sup> Advocating for retrieving ethical understandings and practical wisdom, nursing, social work, and

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<sup>105</sup> Graham McCaffrey, Shelley Raffin-Bouchal, and Nancy J. Moules, "Hermeneutics as research approach: A reappraisal," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 11, no. 3 (2012): 214-229.

<sup>106</sup> Camillia Kong et al., "The hermeneutics of recovery: Facilitating dialogue between African and Western mental health frameworks." *Transcultural Psychiatry* (2021): 13634615211000549.

<sup>107</sup> Iñaki Xavier Larrauri Pertierra, "On Gadamerian Hermeneutics: Fusions of Horizons, Dialogue, and Evolution (s) within Culture as Dynamic System of Meaning," *Eidos. A Journal for Philosophy of Culture* 4, no. 4 (2020).



psychiatry apply Gadamer's philosophy successfully.<sup>108</sup> It provides a pragmatic lens through which to approach the complex nature of mental diseases.

In his thoughts on hermeneutics, religion, and ethics, Gadamer discusses the historical views of mental illness and religion's critical role in shaping human consciousness. The world has complex problems, and human needs a different approach to address them.<sup>109</sup> The historical background shows cross-cultural viewpoints and ethical considerations in understanding mental illnesses, offering insights into modern research procedures. Practitioners' interpretive stances change the particulars and relationships used to interpret an issue.<sup>110</sup> Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy emphasizes the necessity for discussion, introspection, and interpretation while advocating for a practical science that connects theoretical ideas with real-world applications. The paradigm, which is crucial for psychiatrists treating psychotic diseases, underpins the role that language plays in technological developments and offers creative ways to lessen the burden that mental illness places on patients and the healthcare system.

The philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer offers a complex methodology that questions accepted research practices, especially in mental health research. Moules stresses the intricacy of embracing Gadamerian philosophical principles and emphasizes how this framework lacks defined beginnings and ends, making standard research procedures more difficult.<sup>111</sup> Gadamer's observations inspire scientists to investigate language's fundamental place

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<sup>108</sup> Graham McCaffrey and Nancy J. Moules, "Encountering the great problems in the street: Enacting hermeneutic philosophy as research in practice disciplines," *Journal of Applied Hermeneutics* (2016).

<sup>109</sup> Martin Heidegger, "Basic writings: from Being and time (1927) to The task of thinking (1964)." (1977). 18.

<sup>110</sup> Nancy J. Moules et al., "On applied hermeneutics and the work of the world," *Journal of Applied Hermeneutics* (2011).

<sup>111</sup> Nancy J. Moules et al., "Conducting hermeneutic research: The address of the topic." *Journal of Applied Hermeneutics* (2014).

in reality and provide insightful viewpoints for studying language analysis and human behavior. But as McCaffrey's investigations demonstrate, the complexity of mental health research demands that psychiatrists and other medical experts interact with Gadamer's ideas.<sup>112</sup> While these concepts support philosophical objectivity, they also address the historical obstacles that prevent mental health research from moving forward and offer resources to help close the gap between outdated approaches and current standards.

Untangling the complexity of mental health can be accomplished by combining historical context and contemporary perceptions by applying Gadamerian hermeneutics. Critical thinking improves professionals' ability to interpret and understand their thoughts and minds.<sup>113</sup> As demonstrated by McCaffrey's work, this method helps researchers promote kindness and empathy when attending to patients' needs in acute care settings. However, as recent research has highlighted, complexity results from the interplay between historical context and cultural associations, necessitating open communication and knowledge exchange among specialists.<sup>114</sup> Considering Gadamer's philosophical ideas forces one to reassess preconceived notions and beliefs, revealing unnoticed facets and disruptions in mental health research. Through a complex and varied approach, such involvement helps researchers to go beyond conventional interpretations and facilitates a deeper understanding of mental diseases.

The COVID-19 pandemic and other recent events have made mental health problems more prevalent worldwide. Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy in mental health research

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<sup>112</sup> Graham McCaffrey, "A hermeneutic reappraisal of nurse-patient relationships on acute mental health units, using Buddhist perspectives," (PhD diss., University of Calgary, 2012).

<sup>113</sup> Farreras, "History of mental illness," 9.

<sup>114</sup> Charlene A. VanLeeuwen, Linyuan Guo-Brennan, and Lori E. Weeks, "Conducting hermeneutic research in international settings: Philosophical, practical, and ethical considerations," *Journal of Applied Hermeneutics* (2017).

provides a transformative perspective that encourages dynamic interpretations and participative methods.

## 2.7 The Patterns Of Hermeneutical Consciousness In Light Of Gadamer's Approach

The philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer offers an essential perspective for viewing mental health concerns from a philosophical angle. Gadamer emphasizes the significance of historical context without undermining critical interpretations or contradicting knowledge by drawing on his crucial work *Philosophical Hermeneutics* from 1976. In addition to encouraging academics to investigate human experiences, this philosophical framework also supports interpretive efforts to understand mental health concerns from a philosophical perspective. Gadamer's hermeneutics critically analyses research themes and clarifies the applicability of knowledge within the study domain, even if his focus is on challenging the circumstances of expertise rather than recommending particular techniques.<sup>115</sup> However, this approach does not intend to disregard scientific approaches that justify viewpoints but establishes the practicability of the knowledge.

Ehrenforth's earlier research demonstrate how Gadamer's art philosophy provides compelling insights into the reality of the mental landscape.<sup>116</sup> Gadamer's focus on comprehension and how it affects learning has great potential to help understand how psychiatric diseases are interconnected, which makes research urgently needed. Professionals and scholars can use this philosophical idea to criticize current mental health scientific research and advocate

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<sup>115</sup> Janieiry Lima de Araújo, Elisabete Pimenta Araujo Paz, and Thereza Maria Magalhães Moreira, "Hermeneutics and health: reflections on the thinking of Hans-Georg Gadamer," *Revista da Escola de Enfermagem da USP* 46 (2012): 200-207.

<sup>116</sup> Karl Heinrich Ehrenforth, "Art and "Truth." Heidegger's Ontology in Light of Ernst Bloch's Philosophy of Hope and Hans-Georg Gadamer's Play-Metaphor. Three Impulses for a New Perspective of Musical Bildung," In *Philosophy of music education challenged: Heideggerian inspirations*, pp. 243-256. Springer, Dordrecht, 2015.

for greater freedom in investigating knowledge and the causes of human cognition. The process of hermeneutic inquiry plays a crucial role in understanding the essence of health and promotes challenging presumptions in mental health studies. Hermans acknowledges Gadamer's argument that a coherent history enhances our psychological experience.<sup>117</sup> The product of these changes and improvement of the encounters promotes unity in life. It solves the issues of disregarding philosophical stances in mental health research and establishes a vital link between psychology and clinical practice. Gadamer's philosophical perspective challenges the naturalistic framework and promotes a change in emphasis from brain architecture to lived experiences that contribute to mental diseases.<sup>118</sup> The approach provides fresh perspectives for the development of practical remedies.

The increased focus on mental health requires psychiatrists to apply philosophical ideas, especially those advanced by Gadamer. Psychological phenomena facilitate the explanation of neurological events.<sup>119</sup> Though scientific methods have been the focus of efforts, the sector lacks workable answers, which calls for including philosophical ideas. Gadamer's hermeneutics discourage reductionism in mental health research by encouraging researchers to reframe their findings through ongoing advancement and reflection. This philosophy, which emphasizes the direction required to perceive human experiences, particularly inside mental diseases, is in line with Heidegger's presumptions and adds to the dynamic study of intricate mental health

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<sup>117</sup> Hermans, Theo. *Hermeneutics*. Routledge, 2019.

<sup>118</sup> Zdenko Š. Širka, "Gadamer's Concept of Aesthetic Experience as a Possibility for the Orthodox Biblical Theology," *Review of Ecumenical Studies Sibiu* 6, no. 3 (2014): 378-407.

<sup>119</sup> Roger Frie, "A hermeneutics of exploration: The interpretive turn from Binswanger to Gadamer," *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology* 30, no. 2 (2010): 79.

difficulties.<sup>120</sup> The idea is that mental health emanates from human feelings. The Gadamerian philosophy would be crucial in helping the professional focus on the patient's mind to find solutions to these psychological disorders.

The foundation for determining the objective truth of human experiences comes from including cultural and historical components in mental health research, as supported by Gadamer's hermeneutics.<sup>121</sup> With an emphasis on subjectivity and contextual awareness, this method questions established psychiatric practices. Gadamer's fusion of horizons allows for distinct narratives within the research domain and facilitates a thorough understanding of mental diseases, explaining both good and bad experiences. The approach also has constitutive themes whose analysis helps professionals formulate their patients' positive and negative encounters.<sup>122</sup> Debunking relativism and advocating for interpretations from a philosophical standpoint, the logical premise that history helps us comprehend people's experiences becomes crucial in managing mental health issues.

## **2.8 Realities Of Psychiatric Disorders From Perspectives Of Mental Health Practitioners**

The views that mental health professionals express have a notable influence on how we comprehend mental illnesses. According to Gadamer's observations in "The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem," some individuals manipulate their knowledge to control the analysis of

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<sup>120</sup> Joan Margaret Humphries and Carol McDonald, "Unveiling new dimensions: A hermeneutic exploration of perinatal mood disorder and infant feeding," *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* 33, no. 6 (2012): 377-386.

<sup>121</sup> Richard Hovey, Treena Delormier, and Alex M. McComber, "Social-relational understandings of health and well-being from an Indigenous perspective," *International Journal of Indigenous Health* 10, no. 1 (2014): 35-54.

<sup>122</sup> Christine McCloud, Ann Harrington, and Lindy King, "Understanding people's experience of vitreo-retinal day surgery: A Gadamerian-guided study," *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 68, no. 1 (2012): 94-103.

life events.<sup>123</sup> Gadamer highlights the ability of information to change people by allowing them to exercise interpretive control over how they analyze the world. His emphasis on the mind as the focal point of philosophical discourse supports the importance of practitioners' experiences providing care for mentally ill patients.<sup>124</sup> As they perform duties like house calls and ward rounds, these professionals deal with the demanding nature of their employment, which leads to a variety of theoretical perspectives on mental illnesses. Marques et al. posit that patient fragility and treatment expenses impacting healthcare workers' perspectives require an imperative understanding of the realities of practitioners.<sup>125</sup> The comprehension begins with gathering philosophical data regarding psychiatric diseases and sheds light on the sad environment.

Using hermeneutic approaches (Gadamer's approach in particular) effectively explains how practitioners understand the philosophical thoughts of mental illnesses. The approach turns the focus from patients to the professionals running psychiatric facilities by using a hermeneutic-dialectic method that draws from practitioners' reality to encourage relational dialogues and find critical linkages between diverse elements in mental health. Their direct knowledge highlights the need to consider caregivers' viewpoints when studying mental diseases. It adds a nuanced component to mental health research that usually concentrates on patient experiences. Stenner et al. argue that psychotherapists face new challenges that require philosophical hermeneutics to

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<sup>123</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The universality of the hermeneutical problem," *The hermeneutic tradition: from Ast to Ricoeur* 33, no. 2 (1990): 94.

<sup>124</sup> Gadamer, "The universality," 14.

<sup>125</sup> Fernanda Pasquetti Marques et al., "A Unique Way to Analyze the Realities of Health Workers Within A Hermeneutic-Dialectic Perspective," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 20 (2021): 1609406921991373.

shape care expediencies.<sup>126</sup> Such inquiries ensure that Gadamer's concepts strengthen the interpretive approach of the research process. Psychotherapists will also focus on comparing experiences and insights that can enhance their decision-making to deliver appropriate and effective care.

There is a need to restructure the healthcare system to meet the needs of mental health patients. According to Tarantino, the conflict between historical details and terminology frequently results in exaggeration, which makes it challenging to apply philosophical ideas in the context of mental health treatment.<sup>127</sup> But Gadamer's philosophy calls for a break from outdated ideas that are insufficient for treating mental illnesses. The philosopher also emphasizes the need for aesthetic and historical knowledge to comprehend human character.<sup>128</sup> By merging practitioners' viewpoints, psychiatric research, and practice aim to integrate historical consciousness while simultaneously challenging established conceptions and bridging the gap between external qualities and the causative elements contributing to abnormalities. Philosophical medicine has altered the traditional meaning of mental health by focusing and capturing the first-person perspective.<sup>129</sup> These practitioners' perspectives are necessary for

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<sup>126</sup> Rob Stenner, Theresa Mitchell, and Shea Palmer, "The role of philosophical hermeneutics in contributing to an understanding of physiotherapy practice: A reflexive illustration," *Physiotherapy* 103, no. 3 (2017): 330-334.

<sup>127</sup> Giancarlo Tarantino, "Being Wise Before Wisdom: The Historical Development of Phronēsis from Homer to Aristotle, and Its Consequences for Hans-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutic Ethics," (PhD diss., Loyola University Chicago, 2017).

<sup>128</sup> Gadamer, "The universality," 148.

<sup>129</sup> Anja Schaich et al., "Mental health and psychosocial functioning over the lifespan of German patients undergoing cardiac catheterization for coronary artery disease." *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 9 (2018): 338. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2018.00338>

establishing the external attributes that could link genetic and non-genetic factors that result in mental illness.

When viewed through the prism of Gadamer's ideas, the thorough insights gained from practitioners' real-world experiences in mental illness constitute a vital complement to modern healthcare. Through an analysis of episodic occurrences and medical hermeneutics, the methodology highlights the differences and relationships essential for deciphering novel ideas in mental health. This philosophical viewpoint facilitates historical contemplation, which may pique the interest of experts and psychiatrists in mental health research. Gadamer's ideas connect differences and identities, shaping the connotation of concept interpretations.<sup>130</sup> Thus, by influencing the interpretation of data and introducing novel concepts in mental health research, integrating practitioners' reality provides a strategic way to encourage stakeholder participation.

## **2.9 Conceptual Framework Of Gadamer's Hermeneutics**

The hermeneutic analysis of psychiatric diseases presents complex obstacles that frequently hinder researchers' efforts to develop, suggest, or support effective interventions. Hermeneutic awareness has the full capacity to spark debates and end the truncation of invaluable philosophical ideas.<sup>131</sup> The recognition that mental disorders are the result of complex factors, such as prior experiences, economic downturns, strained social connections, and a variety of stresses in the external environment, is fundamental to this approach. Stefano et al.'s earlier research has shown that a crucial part of a psychiatrist's job is starting conversations that

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<sup>130</sup> Christopher Gibson, "The Common Ground between Plato's Ontology of Ideas and Hans-Georg Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics." (PhD diss., Université d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa, 20180.

<sup>131</sup> Gadamer, "The universality," 269.



allow patients to express their experiences with these elements.<sup>132</sup> When developing treatment guidelines for mental disorders, it becomes essential to comprehend these linkages between natural science and human factors interactions. Psychiatrists have experiences that they should utilize to read, interpret, and recognize each patient's situation. They should incorporate their background into the practice to identify the origin of specific psychiatric disorders.

The conceptual framework from Gadamer's hermeneutics helps interpreters understand and compare situations by helping to analyze psychotic diseases. This framework, based on Gadamer's interpretation model, enables interpreters to learn about patients' situations and promotes the interaction of many components.<sup>133</sup> Understanding the patient's condition and how it compares to others is not the primary objective. Instead, Gadamer's interpretation model shapes the discourse between psychiatrists and the way they analyze mental diseases. Interpreters should be one of the community members because they have a transparent grasp of the current and ongoing situation in their locality. The uniqueness of mental health necessitates the use of a thoughtful interpretation. Gadamer writes that examining inner necessity is paramount to succinctly comparing different elements that modern philosophy faces.<sup>134</sup> As such, the conceptual framework guarantees that the interpreter integrates philosophical hermeneutics to acquire more knowledge on what is ailing the patient.

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<sup>132</sup> George B. Stefano et al., "Microbiome: A potential component in the origin of mental disorders," *Medical Science Monitor: International Medical Journal of Experimental and Clinical Research* 23 (2017): 3039.

<sup>133</sup> Camilla Anker-Hansen et al., "Invisible cornerstones. A hermeneutic study of the experience of care partners of older people with mental health problems in-home care services," *International Journal of Older People Nursing* 14, no. 1 (2019): e12214.

<sup>134</sup> Gadamer, "The universality," 51.

Psychiatrists employ conceptual frameworks to contextualize and precisely explain the difficulties each of their patients faces. These conceptual frameworks provide insight into how social, economic, or cultural settings may contribute to mental health issues and influence patient treatment decisions. Sophisticated conceptual frameworks result in complex ways of addressing mental health issues constructively.<sup>135</sup> Complexity should be present since Gadamer's model focuses on understanding. The hermeneutic method fosters diverse interpretations and reduces prejudiced influences, thus mitigating the challenge of complexity in scientific and psychological arenas. Ideally, prejudice is part of the understanding process. As a result, it determines whether an approach can negatively or positively impact the targeted patients and issues.

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, essential to research, gives doctors a special viewpoint while examining mental illnesses. Using this conceptual framework preserves patients' inner experiences, helping to uncover the underlying causes of mental diseases and offering interdisciplinary resources centered around well-being and human fulfillment.<sup>136</sup> The collaborations promote and sustain dialogues among psychiatrists through research and (or) practice. Instead of making assumptions about mental, Gadamer provides a researcher with an avenue for determining the impact of social sciences in developing treatment methodologies. These frameworks offer a variety of viewpoints by focusing on psychiatrists and their investigation of different facets of brain function. As a result, they significantly advance our understanding of mental health research.

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<sup>135</sup> Jeong-Hee Kim and Kyunghye So, "Understanding the "other": Rethinking multiculturalism in South Korea through Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics," *International Journal of Multicultural Education* 20, no. 1 (2018): 102-117.

<sup>136</sup> Kitty Maria Suddick et al., "The work of hermeneutic phenomenology." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 19 (2020): 1609406920947600.

## 2.10 The Contributions Of Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics To Mental Health Research

Applying Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics to mental health research is essential given the dire repercussions of psychotic treatments that fail to improve mental illness and jeopardize the long-term viability of human welfare. The genuine nature of psychiatric diseases has been hidden for the past 50 years by researchers who have focused on erroneous components. Vandermause's earlier work emphasizes how crucial it is to incorporate philosophical hermeneutics into research procedures to facilitate interpreting human experiences and augmenting pre-existing knowledge.<sup>137</sup> This method enables patients to tell their stories, which is essential for thorough data gathering, and helps psychiatrists find links between different aspects and create treatments for mental health illnesses. Researchers become key players in the interpretive process by reorienting their focus from epistemology to improving the truth of issues. It ensures objective data gathering and promotes clinical interpretations of psychotic disorders.

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, rooted in tradition, make extracting the essence of human stories easier and make meaningful connections between experiences in the real world. This method encourages interactive discussion, which helps new study subjects to arise. Within operational techniques, structured interviews facilitate in-depth analysis, allowing researchers to explore intricate health concerns and providing invaluable resources.<sup>138</sup> Applying Gadamer's method encourages thorough assessments, improving mental health research and developing

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<sup>137</sup> Roxanne K. Vandermause and Susan E. Fleming, "Philosophical hermeneutic interviewing," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 10, no. 4 (2011): 367-377.

<sup>138</sup> Michaela Jackson et al., "Using a qualitative vignette to explore a complex public health issue." *Qualitative health research* 25, no. 10 (2015): 1395-1409.

multimodal treatments to improve patient welfare. These interventions address the urgent problems caused by mental diseases and shapes the future of mental health services. They also significantly contribute to key developmental achievements in research.

Any significant breakthrough in future mental care decreases the widening gap between mental illness and its impact on society and healthcare interventions. Hermeneutic phenomenological research yields insights that identify links between variables connected to human experiences and help close the gap between therapy and the societal burden of mental diseases.<sup>139</sup> Psychiatrist collect data from their mentally ill clients and develop predictive models that can determine the cause-effect relationship. Apart from addressing cultural, historical, and social settings, Gadamer's approach closes the understanding gap regarding subjective experiences and helps construct prediction models and generalize findings. Moltu et al. note that philosophical approaches that promote collaboration among stakeholders foster dialogue and contribute to improving the quality of the results of different mental health research.<sup>140</sup> By integrating service users' lived experiences, this collaborative approach broadens the knowledge base of researchers and strives to enhance the quality of each study.

The core idea of Gadamer's hermeneutics is empowerment, which helps scientists gather data, formulate theories, and look into risk factors related to mental illnesses. Gee et al. observe that the method closes gaps in the literature, adds to existing knowledge, and turns information

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<sup>139</sup> Carla Willig and Abigail Billin, "Existentialist-informed hermeneutic phenomenology," *Qualitative research methods in mental health and psychotherapy: A guide for students and practitioners* (2011): 117-130.

<sup>140</sup> Christian Moltu et al., "How to enhance the quality of mental health research: service users' experiences of their potential contributions through collaborative methods." *American Journal of Psychiatric Rehabilitation* 16, no. 1 (2013): 1-21.

into valuable applications.<sup>141</sup> Gadamerian hermeneutics integrates philosophical theories with real-world applications by empowering researchers to raise the standard of mental health research proof. This improvement in the quality of the evidence through ontological hermeneutics encourages more people to adopt the philosophical approach, which helps identify successful solutions and understand the underlying causes of problems.<sup>142</sup> Researchers use their findings to minimize the complexity of highly challenging mental health problems. Hence, Gadamer's hermeneutics facilitates the improvement of patient experiences and contributes to the sustainability of human life.

## **2.11 Philosophical Texts From Other Philosophers On Mental Health**

### **2.11.1 Martin Heidegger**

The well-known German philosopher Martin Heidegger wrote extensively on mental health. Heidegger stressed the importance of truth in exposing human imperfection and encouraging introspection.<sup>143</sup> His phenomenological research impacts our understanding of human experiences and mental health. Cestari et al. write that Heideggerian phenomenology emphasizes humans' caring, co-presence, and connectivity.<sup>144</sup> The argument suggests that disruptions in any of these aspects might result in mental illnesses. Heidegger looks at how basic ideas related to mental illnesses are defined by their intrinsic meaning, illuminating circumstances that are often ignored but have a negative impact on people's daily lives.

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<sup>141</sup> Perry M. Gee et al., "Exploration of the e-patient phenomenon in nursing informatics," *Nursing Outlook* 60, no. 4 (2012): e9-e16.

<sup>142</sup> Caroline Picton, Lorna Moxham, and Christopher F. Patterson, "The use of phenomenology in mental health nursing research," *Nurse Researcher*, 25, no. 3, (2017): 14.

<sup>143</sup> Heidegger, "Basic writings," 366.

<sup>144</sup> Virna Ribeiro Cestari et al., "The essence of care in health vulnerability: a Heideggerian construction," *Revista brasileira de enfermagem* 70 (2017): 1112-1116.

Heidegger's philosophy strongly emphasizes real human experiences, especially self-awareness, which may change how psychiatry is positioned going forward.

According to Holzhey-Kunz, the philosopher's point of view emphasizes how conflicting goals and aspirations result in pathological symptoms.<sup>145</sup> These outcomes indicate a connection between mental well-being and positive nodes, indicating drastic potential with modifications. Holzhey-Kunz suggests substitution (replacements) that entails letting go of unpleasant memories and accepting better options. Heideggerian phenomenology uses the idea that those who replace their current concerns become more independent as they reorient their concerns or worries. Impersonality contributes to positive encounters by removing oneself from emotional or biased attachments to promote more neutral and beneficial interactions in therapeutic environments. Therapists who adopt a more detached style can better uphold professional boundaries and offer objective assistance, which benefits their clients more. This viewpoint emphasizes the importance of keeping an impartial and sympathetic position to promote efficient treatment and assistance in mental health therapy. Examining this viewpoint from a critical angle shows the significance of care based on incorporating human values into mental health therapies. It helps explain why some people experience happy moods while others do not.

Like Gadamer's hermeneutics, Heidegger's interpretive phenomenology explores human experiences and attempts to infer their meanings in the context of mental health. Integrating the value of human existence impacts the relations between the profession and its patients. These philosophical frameworks clarify which events shape human experiences, opening fresh insights

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<sup>145</sup> Alice Holzhey-Kunz, "Philosophy and Theory: Daseinsanalysis—An Ontological Approach to Psychic Suffering Based on the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger," *The Wiley World Handbook of Existential Therapy* (2019): 55-67.

and conceptual avenues.<sup>146</sup> Uncovering fundamental meanings connected to internal and external elements in mental diseases is more accessible by extracting insights from research participants. Helping academics find similar and different themes from the experiences of mental health patients helps develop theoretical interpretations that can be used in clinical settings. Heidegger's "calculative thinking" exposes mental health philosophical underpinnings and the influence that comes with existing assumptions.<sup>147</sup> As such, philosophical concepts allow the profession to examine each piece of evidence and generate answers to unresolved mental health illnesses. Heidegger's philosophy reflects the learning theory that psychiatrists adopt to understand worldwide mental health diseases continuously.

The connections between Heidegger and Gadamer's ideas make comprehensive studies of mental diseases possible. Their similar viewpoints highlight the necessity of critical approaches to assess the available data and deal with unsolved mental health issues. According to Wong, Heidegger's approach included hermeneutics' metaphysical dimension and interpretation and understanding as essential concepts that elaborate life and death.<sup>148</sup> Psychiatrists can cast aside preconceptions and thoroughly examine preconditions by employing Heidegger's views, which can help illuminate predispositions to mental diseases. Bringing concepts and science together improves interpretations, gives hermeneutics a philosophical edge, and helps us comprehend the intricacies of the human condition in the face of mental disorders. Understanding Heidegger's theory of being in the universe clarifies human existence and may help identify the root causes of

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<sup>146</sup> Lorna Moxham and Christopher F. Patterson, "Why phenomenology is increasingly relevant to nurse researchers," *Nurse Researcher*, 25, no. 3, (2017): 6.

<sup>147</sup> Kurt CM Mertel, "Heidegger, Technology and Education." *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 54, no. 2 (2020): 467-486.

<sup>148</sup> Michael TH Wong, "Values, Meanings, Hermeneutics and Mental Health," In *International Perspectives in Values-Based Mental Health Practice*, pp. 341-349. (Cham: Springer, 2021).

mental disorders.<sup>149</sup> Examining this interaction between people and their surroundings enhances psychotherapy narratives by clarifying the reasons behind psychiatric anomalies and providing a more nuanced understanding of the symptoms of mental illnesses.

Heidegger's philosophical understanding of mental health strongly emphasizes the lack of a rigid set of precepts that would require constant affirmation or rejection of mental health ideas. However, Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology supports this openness that promotes a new classification of mental illnesses that improves treatment approaches and the understanding of psychiatric impairments.<sup>150</sup> Through exploring people's lived experiences, this philosophical method advances new conceptions regarding mental disabilities, which are essential for developing successful healing procedures. The descriptive character of Heideggerian phenomenology helps give philosophical significance to psychiatric research, allowing psychiatrists to examine and analyze each person's distinct experience and connect their conclusions with mental health issues. Studies should value safety since it facilitates the identification of potential mental health vulnerabilities.<sup>151</sup> Aligned with Heidegger's 'Being-with' philosophy, a focus on safety and establishing shared spaces in healthcare settings promotes authentic relationships that facilitate healing and rehabilitation in mental health treatments. It becomes essential to know the emotional, religious, and cultural demands of mental health patients to diagnose and treat disorders in short, successful- and long-term situations. Professionals should treat Mental disorders in these environments to guarantee the best possible

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<sup>149</sup> Tanya Sue D. Barayuga, "Gadamer and Healing," *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)* 10, no. 6 (2021): 78.

<sup>150</sup> Lucivaldo da Silva Araújo and Juliana Ferreira Bassalo, "Modes of care and mental health: Points for a psychosocial practice," *Revista do NUFEN* 11, no. 3 (2019): 137-153.

<sup>151</sup> Bernadette Solomon, Daniel Sutton, and Brian McKenna, "The experience and meaning of recovery-oriented practice for nurses in acute mental health services," *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing* (2021).



results for patients and enhance their general wellness. Patients who receive adequate treatment can improve their quality of life, regain functionality, and experience symptom relief. Healthcare professionals can support patients on their path to recovery and stability and improve mental health outcomes by addressing illnesses in successful settings.

Heidegger's contributions to mental health research are more than mere philosophy since it provides a new angle vital in bridging the gap between methods and impacting patients' and practitioners' daily activities. There is a significant disconnect between interventions that create dilemmas for mental health patients and clinicians under certain treatments.<sup>152</sup> Such challenges affect the professions' daily practices. The 'leaping ahead' notion is one of his ideas that actively supports the participation of mental health patients in research, which is vital in situations where therapies are unavailable. Modern psychiatry faces crises that must be resolved by figuring out the organic roots of diseases. Here is where Heidegger's ideas may break through long-held beliefs, creating space for new ideas and redefining the paradigms of psychiatric research. Modern psychiatry crisis is a product of the lack of and failure to identify organic causes of these disorders.<sup>153</sup> Therefore, Heidegger's ideas offer a breakthrough by placing mental impairments within philosophical frameworks, allowing philosophical study to be bridged to practice and guaranteeing mental health sufferers receive the needed therapies.

### **2.11.2 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel**

George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's idealism-related philosophical findings thoroughly grasp consciousness and its function in advancing knowledge. Hegel's ideas show the importance

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<sup>152</sup> Sanaz Riahi, Gill Thomson, and Joy Duxbury, "A hermeneutic phenomenological exploration of 'last resort' in the use of restraint," *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing* 29, no. 6 (2020): 1218-1229.

<sup>153</sup> Kevin Aho, *Contexts of suffering: A Heideggerian approach to psychopathology*. (Rowman & Littlefield International, 2019).

of philosophy in dispelling abstractions from everyday life.<sup>154</sup> The philosopher's way of thinking improves the effort to understand mental illnesses. Hegel incorporates historical context and personal subjectivity to understand consciousness and modern worldview.<sup>155</sup> His view on the importance of history prompts a critical distinction between morality and philosophy, emphasizing the need for particular aspects of each person's life to be considered when interpreting mental health issues. Hegel's focus on ethics and the pursuit of self-actualization via passion and the senses emphasizes how crucial it is to consider a diverse background when understanding mental health difficulties.<sup>156</sup> Hegel makes the case for a multifaceted interpretation of human conduct. He uses the concepts in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which shows the gunman's body is a unit with inner and external expressions.<sup>157</sup> The philosopher recognizes the impact of culture on consciousness and behaviour, which is essential to comprehending mental diseases from various angles.

Research and therapy related to mental health can benefit from understanding Hegel's concept of pure reason, which emphasizes the steps that lead to independent cognition and purposiveness. His ideas on philosophy as a means of fostering self-awareness and independent thought help comprehend the reasons behind events, especially regarding mental health.<sup>158</sup> When examined through transcendental contemplation, Hegel's theories on rational self-consciousness

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<sup>154</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, (New York: Clarendon, 1987).

<sup>155</sup> Paul Redding, "Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel," In *The History of Evil in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, pp. 136-149. Routledge, 2018.

<sup>156</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: Lectures on the philosophy of spirit 1827-8*. Vol. 5. Oxford University Press, 2007.

<sup>157</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of spirit*, Duke University Press,

<sup>158</sup> Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures*.

can help unearth mental health problems that have gone unreported.<sup>159</sup> In particular, these theories may help detect triggers and how they contribute to behavioural changes linked to psychiatric diseases. The phenomenology of spirit reflects pure reason. As a result, professionals could use it to validate and justify some elements.<sup>160</sup> His appeal for transcendental idealism to replace dogmatism as the dominant paradigm offers a framework for investigating human experiences, the impact of social relationships on consciousness, and the need to avoid generalizations when understanding mental health issues.<sup>161</sup> Hegel's philosophical ideas contribute to our knowledge of mental health by highlighting the unique experiences of individuals, the historical context, and the complex nature of consciousness. They provide a more sophisticated understanding of psychiatric diseases that goes beyond crude generalizations by factoring in triggers, cultural influences, and the diversity of human behaviour.

Hegel's philosophical views provide a sophisticated perspective on accountability by extending to ideas of action and responsibility. He offers two opposing but complementary explanations; the first emphasizes accountability for deliberate goals and intents, while the second emphasizes accountability for unintended effects.<sup>162</sup> Hegel's viewpoint emphasizes the necessity for mental health professionals to think forward and anticipate the consequences of their choices in addition to the current results. It shows that our job is to discern between illusion and reality, promoting deliberate choice while recognizing the fluidity of ideas that change over

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<sup>159</sup> Kenneth R. Westphal, "Kant, Hegel and the Historicity of Pure Reason," *The Palgrave Hegel Handbook* (2020): 45-64.

<sup>160</sup> Kenneth R. Westphal, "Individuality, Individualism and Our Human Zoôn Politikon," In *The Palgrave Hegel Handbook*, pp. 133-148. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2020.

<sup>161</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of spirit*.

<sup>162</sup> Arto Laitinen and Constantine Sandis, "Hegel on Purpose," *Hegel Bulletin* 40, no. 3 (2019): 444-463.

time.<sup>163</sup> Using Hegel's theories in mental health research helps create systems that anticipate outcomes, make the distinction between internal and exterior acts, and direct practitioners to think about wider ramifications when making decisions that affect patients' well-being.

Furthermore, Hegel's philosophical ideas provide a foundation for comprehending mental health's criteria and supporting elements. For instance, his philosophical views on freedom, fear, and anxiety can assist in explaining why particular traits appear in mental illnesses.<sup>164</sup> Mental health practitioners obtain a greater understanding of these conditions, reducing the possibility of misdiagnosis and enhancing treatment effectiveness, by investigating human experiences and behaviors and using Hegelian concepts. As fear grows, people withdraw from the extremities of life, leading to respite and depression.<sup>165</sup> Philosophical and logical ideas from Hegel's writings help advance knowledge in this field and provide a deeper understanding of mental health by assisting in deciphering the complexity of mental diseases.

### 2.12.3 Maurice Merleau-Ponty

The philosophical contributions of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, which questioned Cartesian dualism and provided an alternative understanding of the human condition, profoundly influenced the nexus between philosophy and psychiatry. In contrast to Descartes' idea of the mind-body dualism, his concept of the body-subject emphasizes the connection between the

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<sup>163</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of spirit*.

<sup>164</sup> Gerald Ogbuja, "Are Babies Moral or Amoral: Revisiting Evidence-Based Emotional and Moral Literature," *Journal of Child and Adolescent Behavior* 7, no. 3, (2019): 1-7. [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Gerald-Ogbuja/publication/338208828\\_Are\\_Babies\\_Moral\\_or\\_Amoral\\_Revisiting\\_Evidence-Based\\_Emotional\\_and\\_Moral\\_Literature/links/5e06f22c299bf10bc37e350d/Are-Babies-Moral-or-Amoral-Revisiting-Evidence-Based-Emotional-and-Moral-Literature.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Gerald-Ogbuja/publication/338208828_Are_Babies_Moral_or_Amoral_Revisiting_Evidence-Based_Emotional_and_Moral_Literature/links/5e06f22c299bf10bc37e350d/Are-Babies-Moral-or-Amoral-Revisiting-Evidence-Based-Emotional-and-Moral-Literature.pdf).

<sup>165</sup> Hegel, *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel*.

human body, awareness, and the outside world.<sup>166</sup> Human are intentional, and things may attract them without reducing their essence to those specific things. The existential perspective of Merleau-Ponty opposes reductionism by claiming that people are dynamic individuals who are inextricably connected to their environment rather than static objects.<sup>167</sup> By depicting people as active beings whose subjectivity emerges through bodily contact with the environment, Merleau-Ponty's "embodied subjectivity" concept opposes the dualism between mind and body. This idea emphasizes the significance of lived experiences in comprehending mental health, bridging the gap between neurobiological explanations and a humanistic approach to psychiatric disorders.<sup>168</sup> The human experience dimensions include self-encounters (primitive self-awareness), object experience (bestowing meaning), and other people's experiences (intentional agents).

This philosophical viewpoint clarifies mental illness, especially in cases such as schizophrenia when a disembodied kind of existence is experienced due to a disruption in engagement with the outside world. According to Merleau-Ponty's theory, schizophrenia affects how meaning is assigned, and knowledge frameworks are constructed by upsetting the basic interconnection between a person and their surroundings. This upheaval involves several factors, such as the person's connection to the outside world, their value on events, and the personification of their existence. Mental illnesses such as schizophrenia can be viewed via Merleau-Ponty's lens as a disturbance of the complex interaction between meaning, action, world involvement, and embodiment.

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<sup>166</sup> Mark Mohan, Kaggwa, "Simplifying Addiction." *Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation* 12 (2021): 23.

<sup>167</sup> Ross Anderson, "The disruption of perception: How the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty can help us understand the phenomenon of intoxication and addiction," *Existential Analysis: Journal of the Society for Existential Analysis* 33, no. 2 (2022).

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

## 2.12 Conclusion

The state of mental health is still a major worldwide concern, affecting millions of people with a wide range of illnesses for whom there are no suitable therapies. This investigation explored the historical development of viewpoints on mental health, where cultural and religious beliefs previously impacted understanding, but it was difficult to pinpoint underlying causes. Psychiatry developed over time, changing throughout historical periods and cultural contexts. Despite advancements, psychiatry's historical emphasis on neurobiological explanations and limited functional literacy frequently prevented a thorough understanding of the complexity of mental problems, often limiting them to simple brain dysfunctions without addressing underlying causes.

Including philosophical viewpoints has become a viable way to improve our knowledge of and ability to treat mental health issues. Although scientific perspectives offered a significant understanding of the symptoms, they frequently failed to reveal the underlying causes of these illnesses. Conversely, philosophical lenses provided alternative dimensional models that addressed risk factors and open-ended concerns. The ideas of philosophers like Hans-Georg Gadamer—especially his hermeneutics—have significantly influenced the evolution of psychiatric research. These frameworks strongly emphasize comprehending complexity, considering historical, cultural, and social contexts, and overcoming prejudices and presumptions to produce meaningful data.

Applying philosophical ideas to psychiatry has changed how therapy and research are conducted. Instead of focusing only on symptoms, it stresses holistic interpretations and examines the connection between the body and brain. For example, Gadamer's hermeneutics emphasizes the significance of understanding historical and cultural influences and helps

academics avoid prejudices and presumptions. Its application helps researchers find new insights and solutions essential to lessening the impact of psychiatric diseases on society, in addition to helping interpret human experiences and bridging the gap between social burdens and efficacious treatments for these conditions.

Philosophical ideas from Georg Hegel and Martin Heidegger can be incorporated to gain a more profound knowledge of mental illnesses. Heidegger's emphasis on fundamental human encounters and the effect of interference between basic parts reveals weaknesses that are essential to understanding mental illnesses. His theory (based on learning frameworks) helps psychiatrists investigate these anomalies and formulate ideas crucial to healing. Similarly, Hegel's idealism, philosophies of action, and the purity of reason offer detailed viewpoints for understanding mental traits and possible therapeutic approaches. The intersection of Heidegger, Hegel, and Hans-Georg Gadamer's theories allows scholars to apply their philosophical frameworks to unresolved problems related to mental health disorders.

### Chapter 3: Effectiveness Of Gadamer’s Hermeneutics Notion Of Mental Health

#### 3.1 Perspectives Of Gadamer On Dialogue And Impact On Depression

Gadamer's philosophy illuminates the phenomenological metamorphosis observed in depression since it is based on the fusion of perspectives in discourse. Understanding occurs in a dual setup where one supplies broad accounts of unbroken discourse.<sup>169</sup> This paradigm reveals a moving shift in how one perceives others during depressed periods, emphasizing themes of deep distrust and loneliness. These narratives suggest that depression causes a profound change in how people see and relate to other people. A deep sense of alienation and detachment from the outside world is experienced by the depressed person, which breeds widespread mistrust of interpersonal interactions. This shift in awareness essentially modifies how the depressed person participates in conversation and interprets the intentions of others, leading to a deep sensation of isolation and an incapacity to establish genuine connections. A blend in prospects between two people and how the understanding occurs assists in interpreting such a transformation.<sup>170</sup> However, reciprocity in openness is the core of unbroken discourses.

Moreover, the narratives demonstrate a crucial difference between the experience of the depressed person and the dynamics present in an authentic dialogue. Trust, which is essential to an uninterrupted conversation, gets stifled in the depressed individual, which prevents them from opening up to others and truly combining their viewpoints. As a result, the depressed person avoids participating completely in conversation, which reduces their ability to see other people as

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<sup>169</sup> Anne Marie Gebara et al., “Effect of Insomnia Treatments on Depression: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis,” *Depression and Anxiety* 35, no. 8 (2018): 717–31, <https://doi.org/10.1002/da.22776>.

<sup>170</sup> Kelly M. Hoffman, “Social and Cognitive Affordances of Two Depression-Themed Games,” *Games and Culture* 14, no. 7–8 (2019): 875–95, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412017742307>.



real people. In this case, the profession remains in a limited orientation of the depressed person, creating more health risks.<sup>171</sup> This decline in trust affects how they perceive other people and their capacity for genuine communication, which keeps them feeling isolated and makes the dialogue less transforming.

In these narratives, depression is represented as a weakened type of intersubjectivity. It leads the depressed person not to participate in conversations that lead to true knowledge and change.<sup>172</sup> A sense of isolation arises from the collapse of trust and the ensuing incapacity to understand other people's points of view. Conversational encounters for depressed individuals become limited because they lack the shared context that is essential for real understanding and social interaction.<sup>173</sup> This distorted view of oneself and others sustains a deep sense of alienation and disengagement from the outside world. The resulting outcome is that it is impossible for the depressed person to interact with people genuinely or to see the environment as transforming.

Depression-related perspective shifting is frequently depicted as a severe sensation of loneliness, making the sufferer a "radical other" in social situations. Different horizons coexist inside a shared intersubjective prospect in everyday communication. Conversations between a person who is depressed (or sad) and someone who is not do not reveal a more profound difference in their experiences.<sup>174</sup> The depressed individual feels cut off from the shared framework and experiences deep miscommunication and disconnection, which hinders their

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<sup>171</sup> Gebara et al., "Effect of Insomnia Treatments on Depression," 720.

<sup>172</sup> Lisa M. Guntzviller, Lillie D. Williamson, and Chelsea L. Ratcliff, "Stress, Social Support, and Mental Health among Young Adult Hispanics," *Family & Community Health* 43, no. 1 (2020): 82–91, <https://doi.org/10.1097/FCH.0000000000000224>.

<sup>173</sup> Pratiksha Meshram and Radha Krishna Rambola, "Diagnosis of Depression Level Using Multimodal Approaches Using Deep Learning Techniques with Multiple Selective Features," *Expert Systems*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1111/exsy.12933>.

<sup>174</sup> Hoffman, "Social and Cognitive Affordances of Two Depression," 877.

capacity for social interaction. They do not do this on purpose. Instead, they decide to avoid conversation, motivated by a feeling that there is no point in interacting with them.<sup>175</sup> Such views are a risk that limits the horizon idea, where the other person in an interaction should respond.

The lack of a unifying background also impacts the non-depressed person, who finds it difficult to relate to the experiences of the depressed person. The non-depressed person feels uncertain and wary of the depressed person because there are no common horizons. Ongoing exposure to the depressed person's criticism may make them seem unapproachable, further isolating them. But reducing the depressed person to nothing more than a problematic object runs the risk of ignoring the moral complexity entwined with their feelings and experiences.<sup>176</sup> The struggle of the depressed individual stems from their deep sense of disconnect. While they endeavor to have a connection, they believe it is unachievable in their sad state. An individual's experience comes with the idea that they are powerful enough to transform their surroundings.<sup>177</sup> This phenomenological explanation draws attention to the paradoxical state of mind that a depressed person experiences—a need for connection but a sense of being unable to achieve it. It is essential to avoid trivializing or downplaying the experiences of the depressed person. Instead, it becomes crucial to continue being honest and trustworthy while dealing with and supporting those who are depressed. Rather than further isolating the depressed person, this method

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<sup>175</sup> Fernando Parada et al., “Using Persuasive Systems Design Model to Evaluate ‘Cuida Tu Ánimo’: An Internet-Based Pilot Program for Prevention and Early Intervention of Adolescent Depression,” *Telemedicine Journal and E-Health: The Official Journal of the American Telemedicine Association* 26, no. 2 (2020): 251–54, <https://doi.org/10.1089/tmj.2018.0272>.

<sup>176</sup> Gebara et al., “Effect of Insomnia Treatments on Depression,” 723.

<sup>177</sup> Kayla Reed-Fitzke, “The Role of Self-Concepts in Emerging Adult Depression: A Systematic Research Synthesis,” *Journal of Adult Development* 27, no. 1 (2020): 36–48, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10804-018-09324-7>.

emphasizes the possibility of re-entering a shared perspective, acknowledging the individual's struggle, and seeking connection despite the perceived disconnect.

An interaction between depressed and non-depressed patients in psychotherapy may benefit greatly from a Gadamerian viewpoint in terms of speech and intersubjectivity. Embracing openness and refinedness to engage a depressed person rebuilds and facilitates trust and transparency, even if it means confronting one's preconceptions.<sup>178</sup> According to Gadamer, mutually beneficial interactions in which both sides develop and support one another's viewpoints arise from empathy and understanding. Maintaining continuous conversation with the depressed person can help to modify their view of themselves and others, which will open up an engagement where change is more likely to occur. Recognizing the complexity of depression is crucial when thinking about it. Depression does not necessarily manifest in the same way as in a cartoon character like Eeyore in Winnie the Pooh's movie series. Many depressed people are skilled at hiding their inner struggles and putting on a happy exterior to hide their inner pain.<sup>179</sup> It may not be helpful to address the issue of missing clues or indications. However, it is important to understand a patient's personal journey and acknowledge their mental health struggles.

The self-dialogue of a person dealing with depressions influences how they see themselves. The degree of depression correlates with the intricacy and frequency of this internal discourse. This conversation can start with early life events and family influences, resulting in self-perception issues. These unfavorable viewpoints harden with time and form a critical inner

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<sup>178</sup> Jan Reidar Stiegler, Helge Molde and Elisabeth Schanche, "Does an Emotion-Focused Two-Chair Dialogue Add to the Therapeutic Effect of the Empathic Attunement to Affect?," *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy* 25, no. 1 (2018): e86–95, <https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.2144>.

<sup>179</sup> Şerife Tekin and Robyn Bluhm, "Introduction to Philosophy of Psychiatry," in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Philosophy of Psychiatry* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2019).

voice that stifles development and self-acceptance. People struggle with these inner monologues as they age and realize they are a necessary part of self-discovery.<sup>180</sup> This internal dialogue becomes a coercive force, pressing the mentally challenged person to comply. Hence, the more the distressed person gives in to their demands, the stronger the dialogue becomes.

### 3.2 Benefits Of Philosophical Understanding Of Mental Disorders

Gadamer's philosophical lens opens new avenues for treating and preventing mental diseases by providing a new understanding. His philosophy is based on the idea that reality is always changing and evolving due to a constant conversation between our own awareness and real-world experiences. People's perception is a "fusion of tradition as passed on with history" that needs full appropriation.<sup>181</sup> Gadamer argues that truth arises through our subjective contact with the world, promoting intersubjectivity, rather than being alone in the objective world. Hence, truth is something that people do or create. Our encounters must come from others if they are to be experienced.<sup>182</sup> Empirical research highlighting the importance of emotions and values in comprehending our environment supports this perception, emphasizing our cognitive, emotional, and instinctive openness to the world.

Our reality is continuously shaped by the dialogical process of learning from experience, suggesting that truth results from our interactions with others and experience rather than an intrinsic quality of an object. But misguided preconceptions or the entrance of extraterrestrial

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<sup>180</sup> Arie Nouwen et al., "Prevalence of Depression in Individuals with Impaired Glucose Metabolism or Undiagnosed Diabetes: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the European Depression in Diabetes (EDID) Research Consortium," *Diabetes Care* 34, no. 3 (2011): 752–62, <https://doi.org/10.2337/dc10-1414>.

<sup>181</sup> Gadamer, Hans-Georg, *Truth and Method*. Trans. and ed. J. Weinsheimer, J & D. G. Marshall.

<sup>182</sup> Hans-Georg, *Truth and Method*.

experiences might also interfere with our comprehension, significantly affecting our views.<sup>183</sup>

Whether internalized or externalized, these misconceptions can cause psychological and physical suffering that impairs our ability to operate and form connections. Gadamer criticizes the current concentration on merely biological or psychological components while ignoring the social-cultural aspects of human experience and instead pushes for a philosophically grounded approach to treating mental disorders.

Learning from experience means that we can capture the initial stages of mental disorders by observing their origin and life and interpreting them differently. Gadamer believes that we need a transcendence-based movement, that does not rely solely on our initial perception of mental illness.<sup>184</sup> The process represents:

"...a kind (or level) of experience which does not merely represent something but allows the object represented to become present. (...) To experience something is to perceive it, but the object becomes present only when possible. Only then can it be grasped, not just in one way but as having potentialities (meaning potentials) that are not yet actualized: the object is experienced as an event" (9).<sup>185</sup>

Understanding mental illnesses entails a paradoxical process. It implies that to comprehend these problems fully, we must dissociate from ourselves and see them as distinct from who we are. This distancing forces us to adopt a reflective mindset, which allows us to see our mental health problems as things outside of ourselves. While it may be challenging to reach total self-reflection, anyone can learn to be more introspective. We need to step back from our

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<sup>183</sup> Hans-Georg, *Truth and Method*.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> Josef Bleicher, "Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutic," *Contemporary Hermeneutics*, 2017, 108-116. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315112558-9>.

first impressions and become aware observers of our responses and conclusions about these conditions to detach and acquire fresh insight. We start to separate ourselves from these conditions by evaluating our emotional responses and how others respond, and we see this process of detachment as it takes place. It shows that professionals should observe their reactions to mental illness through distance, objectivity, and impartiality instead of identifying with what transpired.<sup>186</sup> Such detachments from initial beliefs also show acceptance of mental disorders as something new.

In addition, to examine mental disorders as distinct entities, we must question our preconceived notions by assuming new information and changing our ways of thinking. This requires us to step back from our first opinions and observe these circumstances objectively and impartially.<sup>187</sup> We can approach these disorders as something foreign by distancing ourselves from our initial ideas, which encourages the development of a new lens through which to reinterpret and comprehend our initial thinking. Dissociating and cultivating this new viewpoint allows us to approach our personal experiences with mental illness from a detached standpoint, enabling in-depth reevaluation of these disorders.

### **3.3 Critical Analysis Of Hans-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutics Notion Of Mental Health**

The application of Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics to the discourse around mental health questions the dominance of conventional techniques and highlights the significance of interpretation and discussion in comprehending psychiatric diseases. According to Gadamer's theoretical perspective, mental health problems involve more than just physical problems. It contains complicated human meanings and prior experiences.<sup>188</sup> Gadamer's hermeneutics raises

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<sup>186</sup> Hans-Georg, *Truth and Method*.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>188</sup> Kong et al., "The Hermeneutics of Recovery."

critical problems about the suitability of scientific methods for understanding people's complex experiences. It contends that there is a gap in our knowledge of human events because the dominant scientific models, emphasizing epistemological neutrality, cannot consider the complex, dynamic conceptual frameworks that characterize human experiences.

The hermeneutic method in Gadamer's work stresses expanding views and recognizing the influence of language and culture on human perceptions are two important goals of discourse. It questions the scientific approaches in psychiatry's supposed impartiality and promotes a dialogical approach that recognizes the conceptual schemas and innate biases that affect interpretation. In particular, within mental health care and psychiatric nursing, this conversation, which aims to dispel preconceptions and confront "otherness," enriches perspectives and leads to a more thorough and less skewed knowledge of human experiences. Prejudice is a non-issue provided the profession can recognize and identify it because failure to consider self-reflection can worsen the situation.<sup>189</sup> Therefore, Gadamer's philosophy shows the ethical dimension of dialogue as essential to the healing process to facilitate authentic discourse and ongoing engagement throughout the rehabilitation process in mental health therapy.

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<sup>189</sup> Holm and Severinsson, "A Hermeneutic Approach to Mental Health Nursing Practice," *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing* 18, no. 10 (2011), 843-850, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2850.2011.01736.x>.

## **Chapter 4: Conclusion**

### **4.1. Aim And Objectives**

The study set out to explore particular study objectives to offer a deeper understanding of psychiatric diseases by applying the philosophical ideas put out by Gadamer. For this reason, the study's three specific goals were to investigate the following:

- Establishing how to utilize Han-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutics to provide a philosophical interpretation of psychiatric disorders adds to the current research on psychiatry.
- To establish whether Gadamer's hermeneutics notion on mental health could be a critical tool that can help psychiatrists analyze and find a better solution for psychotic disorders.
- To find out the relevance of Han-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutics in psychiatry and to establish whether it can help offer new approaches to finding better mitigation and treatment of these diseases.

### **4.2. Summary Of The Main Findings**

The research findings show the shortcomings in identifying the underlying causes of mental health disorders due to poor literacy levels, delving into the history of psychiatry and its relationship to cultural and religious beliefs. Pharmaceutical businesses and psychiatric professionals worked together to research further, changing how these ailments were treated. Instead of addressing them as brain disorders, the focus was now on cognitive functioning and traumatic experiences. Philosophical ideas are being incorporated into the treatment of mental disorders since, despite these attempts, the underlying causes of psychiatric illnesses are still unknown. The hermeneutic circle, fusion of vistas, play, and prejudice are only a few of the priceless tools that Gadamer's hermeneutics offers and are crucial in explaining some aspects of



mental illnesses. It is still difficult to include historical background and cultural connections in this philosophical approach. Thus, scholars should contextualize social, historical, and cultural facts to gain a more thorough understanding.

The conceptual framework connects the human and natural sciences by stressing human experiences and adding to the body of knowledge already known in mental health research. It considers prior experiences, economic problems, and dysfunctional social interactions. Philosophers other than Gadamer, such as Heidegger, Hegel, and Merleau-Ponty, provide unique philosophical viewpoints for understanding mental illnesses by highlighting the importance of idealism, awareness, embodied subjectivity, and patient experiences. Philosophical understanding supports a holistic view of mental health, which integrates psychological, biological, social, and cultural aspects for in-depth understanding and care of mental health disorders.

#### **4.3 Limitations And Recommendations For Further Research**

The research yielded significant insights into the incorporation of philosophical frameworks in psychiatry and demonstrated the necessity for innovative techniques to understand mental health disorders better. However, it has some limitations. First, the dependence on secondary sources presented challenges, restricting access to in-depth philosophical discussions relevant to psychiatry. Previous research ignored a broad philosophical perspective that favors medical, psychological, and neurological perspectives. The lack of philosophical resources made conducting the in-depth comparison study needed to produce accurate findings difficult. It was challenging to match the study questions with the available information. It resulted in significant gaps in the relevancy and applicability of the results. The COVID-19 pandemic worsened these restrictions by making speaking with specialists directly

difficult. It made it more difficult to gather the in-depth information and insights needed for this investigation. Future studies should utilize primary methods such as surveys and interviews with knowledgeable psychiatric stakeholders to improve the depth and precision of outcomes significantly.

#### **4.4 Implications**

The study's conclusions have theoretical and applied ramifications for psychiatric illnesses. It contributes to existing information already in the academic realm by pinpointing the need for additional research that focuses on the philosophical understanding of mental health, primarily through the lens of Gadamer's hermeneutics. This clarifies a crucial topic that needs more academic research. From a practical standpoint, this means that mental health practitioners should deviate from traditional methods based on medicine, psychology, and neurology. The study emphasizes the drawbacks of conventional techniques and suggests using philosophical methods instead, stressing the perspective of Gadamer's hermeneutics to identify the origins and treatments of mental illnesses. The study is also important because it points to the need for mental health policies to move from scientific and neurological frameworks to philosophical ones.

### **5. Publications**

#### **5.1 Published Article**

I have published two articles. The first one is: Charley, Edmond M. "Gadamer's Hermeneutics Notion of Mental Health." *Sofia Philosophical Review* XV, no. 1, 103-113. <https://sphr-bg.org/16/128/473.html>. The second article is: Charley, Edmond M. "Mental Health Analysis Using Philosophical Tenets." *Philosophical Alternatives* XXXIII, (2024), 57-65. <https://doi.org/10.58945/NPSW2407>

## **5.2 Articles To Be Published**

I have yet to publish the following one article:

Charley, Edmond M. "Effectiveness of Gadamer's Hermeneutics Notion of Mental Health."

### **My Contribution To The Field Of Research**

1. My contribution to research involves promoting a philosophical lens such as Gadamer's hermeneutics, to examine the intricacies of mental health. I assist in reducing gaps in the literature and the need to make psychiatry more effective by highlighting the necessity for additional research from a philosophical stance in understanding psychiatric diseases.
2. My study contribution also entails showing the practical application of philosophical theories in mental health. Such practicality has the potential to alter treatment paradigms. Therefore, my research contribution underscores the largely untapped strength of philosophical frameworks in psychiatry, offering fresh perspectives on comprehensive understanding and therapeutic approaches.
3. My research contribution is stressing the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in the field of mental health. I bring attention to the possibility of creative approaches that incorporate different viewpoints and promote a more all-encompassing approach to mental health care by establishing a connection between psychiatry and philosophy.
4. My study emphasizes the value of ethical issues in psychiatric practice and research. I call for a more detailed examination of the ethical ramifications of various treatment approaches.

5. My research has also highlighted the importance of understanding mental health from a cultural sensitivity and awareness perspective. While emphasizing the influence of cultural settings on mental illnesses, I advocate for methods that consider the many and diverse cultural backgrounds of people to encourage inclusivity and patient-family centered treatments for different populations.

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