

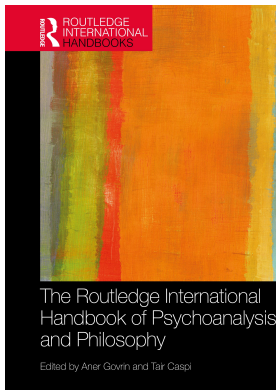
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4

PSYCHOANALYSIS FINDS A HOME

Emotional Phenomenology

Robert D. Stolorow

Phenomenology lets metaphysicians heal themselves.

Lee Braver (2012, p. 31)

Since its early beginnings, psychoanalysis has searched for a disciplinary identity in which to situate itself. Freud's (1895) "Project for a Scientific Psychology" embodied his early dream of finding a grounding for his clinical discoveries in the neuroscience of his day, a dream whose traces one can still detect in contemporary oxymoronic hybrids like *neuropsychanalysis* and *neuropsychenomenology*. When many psychoanalysts fled the Holocaust by relocating to the United States, psychoanalysis became part of the psychiatric establishment there, and only physicians were admitted for training or membership at the institutes of the American Psychoanalytic Association. In the early 1980s, a group of psychologists sued the American Psychoanalytic Association for restraint of trade, and the organization reluctantly opened its gates to psychologists and, somewhat later, to practitioners from all of the mental health professions. What, then, became of psychoanalysis's disciplinary identity? The question became more and more complex, as institutes and organizations of varied theoretical orientations sprung up outside the jurisdiction of the American Psychoanalytic Association and in countries other than the United States. In this essay, my focus will be on how psychoanalysis's disciplinary identity evolved *for me*.

A pivotal work bringing some intelligibility to this complexity was George S. Klein's (1976) posthumously published *Psychoanalytic Theory: An Exploration of Essentials*. Klein claims that Freud's psychoanalytic theory actually amalgamates two theories – a metapsychology and a clinical theory – deriving from two different universes of discourse. Metapsychology deals with the material substrate of experience and is couched in the natural science framework of impersonal structures, forces, and energies. Clinical theory, by contrast, deals with intentionality and the unconscious meanings of personal experience, seen from the perspective of the individual's unique life history. Clinical psychoanalysis asks "why" questions and seeks answers in terms of personal reasons, purposes, and individual meanings. Metapsychology asks "how" questions and seeks answers in terms of the nonexperiential realm of impersonal mechanisms and causes. Klein sought to disentangle metapsychological and clinical concepts, expunging the former and retaining only the latter as the legitimate content of psychoanalytic theory. For Klein, the essential psychoanalytic enterprise involves the reading of disclaimed intentionality and the unlocking

of unconscious meanings from a person's experience, a task for which the concepts of the clinical theory, purged of metapsychological contaminants, are uniquely suited. Klein's proposal for a radical "theorectomy" for psychoanalysis has significantly influenced such contemporary thinkers as Merton Gill, Roy Schafer, and those, including myself, who have sought to rethink psychoanalysis as a form of phenomenological inquiry.

Expanding on Klein's distinction, I would characterize psychoanalytic clinical theory as a hermeneutic framework and psychoanalytic metapsychology as a form of metaphysics,¹ in that it postulates changeless realities and universal truths. This division is characteristic of all the major psychoanalytic theories – they are mixtures of hermeneutics and metaphysics. Hermeneutics embodies the tragic, in that human experiencing is finite, transient, context dependent, ever changing, and decaying. Metapsychology evades the tragic by means of metaphysical illusion. Hermeneutics/metapsychology is a trauma-driven binary insofar as finite human existing, stripped of sheltering illusions, is inherently traumatizing (Stolorow, 2011).

Freud's metapsychological vision of the mind significantly expanded the Cartesian mind – Descartes's (1641) "thinking thing" – to include a vast unconscious realm.

Nonetheless, the Freudian mind remained a Cartesian mind, a self-enclosed worldless subject or mental apparatus containing and working over mental contents and ontologically separated from its surround. Corresponding to its Cartesianism is traditional psychoanalysis's objectivist epistemology. One isolated mind, the analyst, is claimed to make objective observations and interpretations of another isolated mind, the patient.

Psychoanalytic Phenomenology

With what do I fill the gap in psychoanalytic theory left by the excision of Cartesian metaphysics? The answer to this question emerged over the course of my half-century-long collaboration with George Atwood (Stolorow & Atwood, 2018). The beginnings of our collaborative work consisted in a series of psychobiographical studies that we conducted in the early and mid-1970s of the personal, experiential origins of the theoretical systems of Freud, Jung, Wilhelm Reich, and Otto Rank, studies that formed the basis of our first book, *Faces in a Cloud: Subjectivity in Personality Theory* (Stolorow & Atwood, 1979), completed in 1976. From these studies we concluded that since psychological theories derive to a significant degree from the emotional concerns of their creators, what psychoanalysis needed was a theory of emotional experience itself – a unifying framework capable of accounting not only for the psychological phenomena that other theories address but also for the theories themselves.

In the last chapter of *Faces* we outlined a set of proposals for the creation of such a framework, which we called *psychoanalytic phenomenology*. Influenced by the work of George Klein (1976), we envisioned this framework as a depth psychology of personal experience, purified of the mechanistic reifications of Freudian metapsychology. Our framework took the experiential world of the individual as its central theoretical construct. We assumed no impersonal psychical agencies or motivational prime movers in order to explain the experiential world. Instead, we assumed that this world evolves organically from the person's encounter with the critical formative experiences that constitute his or her unique life history. Once established, it becomes discernible in the recurrent themes that characterize the person's experiences. Developmentally, recurring patterns of interaction within the developmental system give rise to principles (thematic patterns, meaning-structures, cognitive-affective schemas) that unconsciously organize subsequent emotional and relational experiences. Such organizing principles are unconscious, not in the sense of being repressed, but in being *prereflective*; they ordinarily do not enter the domain of reflective self-awareness. These relationally derived, prereflective organizing principles are the

basic building blocks of personality development, and their totality constitutes one's character. Psychoanalytic therapy is a dialogical method for bringing this prereflective organizing activity into reflective self-awareness, particularly as it shows up within the therapeutic relationship. During the period when Atwood and I were writing the concluding chapter of *Faces*, we collaborated on an essay applying our phenomenological principles to the psychoanalytic situation and the therapeutic process (Stolorow, Atwood, & Ross, 1978). Psychoanalytic phenomenology entailed a set of interpretive principles for investigating the nature, origins, purposes, and transformations of the configurations of self and other pervading a person's experiential world. For us, psychoanalysis was becoming a form of philosophy – a form of phenomenological inquiry. Importantly, our dedication to illuminating personal phenomenology had led us from isolated mind to relational world.

Traditional Freudian theory is pervaded by the Cartesian “myth of the isolated mind”² (Stolorow & Atwood, 1992, chap. 1). Descartes's (1641) metaphysics bifurcated the experiential world into inner and outer regions, severed both mind from body and cognition from affect, reified and absolutized the resulting divisions, and pictured the mind as an objective entity that takes its place among other objects, a “thinking thing” that has an inside with contents and that looks out on an external world from which it is essentially estranged. The Freudian psyche is fundamentally a Cartesian mind in that it is a container of contents (instinctual energies, wishes, etc.), a thinking *thing* that, precisely because it is a thing, is ontologically decontextualized, fundamentally separated from its world. Our psychoanalytic phenomenology mends this Cartesian bifurcation, highlighting the context-embeddedness of the experiences it illuminates. Our dedication to illuminating personal phenomenology had led us inexorably from mind to world and thus from mental contents to relational contexts, from the intrapsychic to the intersubjective.³ From our phenomenological perspective, all of the clinical phenomena with which psychoanalysis has been traditionally concerned became intelligible as taking form within systems of interacting, differently organized, mutually influencing experiential worlds. Phenomenology had led us inexorably to contextualism.

How and why did this inexorable movement from phenomenology to contextualism occur? The central reason, I have come to realize, is that a psychoanalytic phenomenology, as opposed to other forms of phenomenological inquiry, is always devoted to investigating affectivity – that is, worlds of emotional experience. During the period when Atwood and I were fleshing out our psychoanalytic phenomenology, I was working on an article with Daphne Socarides Stolorow (Socarides & Stolorow, 1984/85), in which we were suggesting that Heinz Kohut's central clinical contributions to the psychology of narcissism pertained essentially to affective experience. Furthermore, the experience of affect was grasped in this article as being inseparable from the contexts of attunement and malattunement in which it is felt. This understanding became seamlessly woven into the fabric of psychoanalytic phenomenology.

The shift in focus from the primacy of drive to the primacy of affectivity moves psychoanalysis toward a phenomenological contextualism and a central focus on dynamic intersubjective systems. Unlike drives, which are claimed to originate deep within the interior of a Cartesian isolated mind, affect – emotional experience – is something that from birth onward is co-constituted within ongoing relational systems. Therefore, locating affect at its center automatically entails a radical contextualization of virtually all aspects of human psychological life. For example, the focus on affect contextualizes the very boundary between conscious and unconscious. Unlike the Freudian repression barrier, viewed as a fixed intrapsychic structure within an isolated Cartesian container, the limiting horizons of emotional experiencing are conceptualized as emergent properties of ongoing dynamic intersubjective systems. Forming and evolving within a nexus of living systems, the horizons of experiencing are grasped as

fluid and ever-shifting, products both of the person's unique intersubjective history and of what is or is not allowed to be felt within the intersubjective fields that constitute his or her current living.

A consistently phenomenological approach has also been especially fruitful in the effort to grasp the context-embeddedness of emotional trauma (Stolorow, 2007, 2011). From a phenomenological perspective, developmental trauma is viewed not as an instinctual flooding of an ill-equipped Cartesian container, as Freud (1926) would have it, but as an experience of unbearable affect. Furthermore, the intolerability of an affect state cannot be explained solely, or even primarily, on the basis of the quantity or intensity of the painful feelings evoked by an injurious event. Traumatic affect states can be grasped only in terms of the relational systems in which they are felt. Developmental trauma originates within a formative intersubjective context whose central feature is malattunement to painful affect – a breakdown of the child-caregiver interaffective system, leading to the child's loss of affect-integrating capacity and thereby to an unbearable, overwhelmed, disorganized state. Painful or frightening affect becomes traumatic when the context of emotional understanding – the relational home – that the child needs to assist in its tolerance and integration is profoundly absent. Such contexts of developmental trauma are where pathogenesis takes form, a claim that calls for a radical revision of the concept of psychiatric diagnoses. In work too voluminous to review here, Atwood and I have shown that the intersubjective context plays a constitutive role in all forms of pathogenesis and in all aspects of the psychoanalytic process. Emotional phenomenology and relationally always already form an indissoluble unity, because relationality is constitutive of emotional experience. As I will discuss below, this understanding holds enormous implications for the formulation of a therapeutic comportment.

Within academic philosophy, perhaps the most important challenge to Descartes's metaphysical dualism was mounted by Heidegger (1927). Heidegger sought to re-find the unity of our being, split asunder in the Cartesian bifurcations, by unveiling the constitutive structure of our existence as a primordial contextual whole – Being-in-the-world. In Heidegger's vision, our Being and our world in their indissoluble unity “primordially and constantly” (p. 65) contextualize one another; human Being is saturated with the world in which we dwell, and the world we inhabit is drenched in human meanings and purposes. In light of this fundamental contextualization, Heidegger's consideration of affectivity is especially noteworthy.

Heidegger's term for the existential ground of affectivity (feelings and moods) is *Befindlichkeit*, a characteristically cumbersome noun he invented to capture a basic dimension of human existence. Literally, the word might be translated as “how-one-finds-oneself-ness.” As Gendlin (1988) has pointed out, Heidegger's word for the structure of affectivity denotes both how one feels and the situation within which one is feeling, a felt sense of oneself in a situation, prior to a Cartesian split between inside and outside. *Befindlichkeit* is disclosive of our always already having been delivered over to the situatedness in which we find ourselves.

Heidegger's claim that *Befindlichkeit* is equiprimordial with understanding (*Verstehen*) and discourse (*Rede*) as a mode of disclosing Being-in-the-world is a definitive answer to criticisms of his alleged neglect of the body in *Being and Time* (Aho, 2009). This is so because *Befindlichkeit* always shows up in lived experience in the form of a mood (*Stimmung*), and moods always include an experienced bodily component that is more or less integrated with language.

For Heidegger, *Befindlichkeit* – disclosive affectivity – is a mode of Being-in-the-world, profoundly embedded in constitutive context. His concept underscores the exquisite context-dependence and context-sensitivity of emotional experience – a context-embeddedness that takes on enormous importance in a phenomenological perspective like mine that locates affectivity at the motivational center of human psychological life.

Heidegger's Being and Time

In the year 2000, I undertook a yearlong study of Heidegger's (1927) magnum opus, *Being and Time*, a study that proved pivotal for me. *Being and Time* is an investigation of the meaning of Being (i.e., of the intelligibility of entities). Three aspects of Heidegger's investigation soon stood out for me as holding striking relevance for an evolving psychoanalytic phenomenology. First was his brilliant initial move in choosing the inquirer himself/herself as the entity to be interrogated as to its Being. Heidegger reasoned that, because an unarticulated, pre-philosophical understanding of our Being is constitutive of our kind of Being, we humans can investigate our own kind of Being by investigating our understanding (and lack of understanding) of that Being. Accordingly, the investigative method in *Being and Time* is a phenomenological one, aimed at illuminating the fundamental structures of our understanding of our Being. Just as *Faces in a Cloud* began with our investigations of the personal phenomenologies of psychoanalytic theorists *en route* to a recasting of psychoanalysis as a form of phenomenological inquiry, *Being and Time* begins with the phenomenology of the inquirer *en route* to a claim that ontology is possible only as phenomenology.

Second, Heidegger's ontological contextualism (which I discussed earlier) – his mending of the Cartesian subject/object split with the claim that our Being is always already a Being-in-the-world – immediately struck me as providing a solid philosophical grounding for our psychoanalytic contextualism, replacing the Cartesian isolated mind that undergirds Freudian theory.

Third, and even more important for me, when I read the passages in *Being and Time* devoted to Heidegger's existential analysis of *Angst*, I nearly fell off my chair! Both his phenomenological description and ontological account of *Angst* bore a remarkable resemblance to what I had concluded about the phenomenology and meaning of emotional trauma some two years earlier (Stolorow, 1999). In short, Heidegger's analysis of *Angst*, world-collapse, uncanniness, and thrownness into Being-toward-death provided me extraordinary philosophical tools for grasping the existential significance of emotional trauma. It was this discovery that motivated me to begin doctoral studies in philosophy and to write several articles, a dissertation, and two books (Stolorow, 2007, 2011) on Heidegger and what Atwood and I had come to call *post-Cartesian psychoanalysis*. My dual aim in this work has been to show both how Heidegger's existential philosophy enriches post-Cartesian psychoanalysis and how post-Cartesian psychoanalysis enriches Heidegger's existential philosophy.

Heidegger's existential analytic teaches that, contrary to the Freudian/Cartesian vision of a self-contained "mental apparatus," human existence is always already situated, intelligible only in terms of the world in which it is embedded. Context-dependence and death are two dimensions of human finitude that Heidegger has brought into bold relief, much to the benefit of clinical psychoanalytic work. Emotional trauma produces an affective state whose features bear a close similarity to the central elements in Heidegger's existential interpretation of anxiety – the world is stripped of its significance and of its "homeness" – and it accomplishes this by plunging the traumatized person into a form of authentic (i.e., non-evasively owned) Being-toward-death. Post-Cartesian psychoanalysis gives an account of the relational contexts that make it possible for one to dwell in and bear the traumatizing emotional impact of human finitude, thereby illuminating the rich relationality of authentic existing. From the encounter between Heidegger's existential philosophy and post-Cartesian psychoanalysis, both emerge enriched (Stolorow, 2013).

Crumbling Metaphysical Illusions

The first Western philosopher to examine systematically the relationship between the tragedy of human finitude and the ubiquity of metaphysical illusion was Wilhelm Dilthey (1910). As is elegantly reconstructed by de Mul (2004), Dilthey's life's work can be seen as an effort to

replace the Kantian *a priori* – the timeless forms of perception and categories of cognition through which the world becomes intelligible to us – with “life categories” that are historically contingent and constituted over the course of a living historical process. There is a tragic dimension to Dilthey’s historical consciousness, in that it brings out the “tragic contradiction between the philosophical desire for universal validity [the metaphysical impulse] and the realization of the fundamental finitude of every attempt to satisfy that desire” (de Mul, 2004, p. 154). Dilthey’s recognition of this tragic contradiction leads him to elaborate a hermeneutic phenomenology of metaphysics. Dilthey’s historical reconstruction of the development of metaphysics aims at no less than its “euthanasia.” Although he holds that metaphysical desire is inherent to human nature, what he seeks to unmask are the illusions that this ubiquitous desire creates. Metaphysical illusion, according to Dilthey, transforms historically contingent nexuses of intelligibility – worldviews, as he eventually calls them – into timeless forms of reality. Anticipating Heidegger (1927), Dilthey holds that every worldview is grounded in a mood regarding the tragic realization of the finitude of life. The metaphysicalization of worldviews transforms the unbearable fragility and transience of all things human into an enduring, permanent, changeless reality, an illusory world of eternal truths. In permanentizing transience, language is employed to evade the traumatizing impact of human finitude.

The phenomenology of language investigates how the experience of language and its principles of organization play a constitutive, usually prereflective role in disclosing and opening up a world. Wittgenstein (1953), not often considered a phenomenologist, gives a brilliant account of how the constitutive power of language produces a “bewitchment of our intelligence” (sect. 109) through the creation of metaphysical illusion. He contrasts the meaning of a word found in its contexts of use with the projection of a picture:

A picture is conjured up which seems to fix the sense *unambiguously*. The actual use, compared with that suggested by the picture, seems like something muddled.

. . . . [T]he form of expression we use seems to have been designed for a god, who knows what we cannot know; he sees the whole of each of those infinite series and he sees into human consciousness.

(Wittgenstein, 1953, sect. 426)

Wittgenstein is claiming here that when one projects a picture as the meaning of a word, it gives one the illusion of a God’s-eye view of the word’s referent as a thing-in-itself, an illusory clarity that one much prefers over the “muddled” view given in the understanding that the actual meaning of a word is to be found in its multiple and shifting contexts of use. When the illusory picture is then imagined as ultimately real, the word has become transformed into a metaphysical entity. In place of the “muddled” view given by contexts of use – finite, contingent, unstable, transient – one can imagine the clear outlines of an everlasting entity. Metaphysical illusion, mediated by reified pictures, replaces the finitude and transience of existence with a God’s-eye view of an irreducibly absolute and eternally changeless reality (Stolorow & Atwood, 2018). A sense of the real is transformed into the *really real*. A bewitchment of intelligence by language is thereby accomplished!

In the absence of an understanding relational context that can hold and help integrate one’s emotional reactions, the shattering of metaphysical illusion that has served to evade the avowal of human finitude can be severely traumatizing. This can be seen in instances of individual trauma, but also collective trauma and trauma of Apocalyptic proportions. I will discuss instances of each.

Love and Loss

With regard to individual trauma, it is likely that no one escapes the trauma of loss. Paradoxically, the philosopher who contributed more than any other to the formulation of relational or contextual ontology had almost nothing to say about love and loss in *Being and Time*. In my view, authentic Being-toward-death entails owning up not only to one's own finitude, but also to the finitude of all those we love. Hence, authentic Being-toward-death always includes Being-toward-loss as a central constituent. Just as, existentially, we are "always dying already" (Heidegger, 1927, p. 298), so too are we always already grieving. Death and loss are existentially equiprimordial. Existential anxiety anticipates both death and loss.

Love is a rich source of metaphysical illusion, which serves to eternalize the beloved. "I will love you forever," the lover feels – a feeling that immortalizes the beloved and the bond of love. When a beloved dies, the loss shatters this metaphysical illusion and destroys the world built around it. The impact of loss and grief on our emotional world was compellingly captured by Jacques Derrida (2001):

[T]he world [is] suspended by some unique tear . . . reflecting disappearance itself: the world, the whole world, the world itself, for death takes from us not only some particular life within the world, some moment that belongs to us, but, each time, without limit, someone through whom the world, and first of all our own world, will have opened up.
(p. 107)

Loss – especially traumatic or tragic loss – creates a dark region in our world that will always be there. A wave of profound sadness descends upon us whenever we step into that region of loss. There we are left adrift in a world hollowed out, emptied of light. It is a bleak region that can never be completely eradicated or cordoned off. The injunction to "let it go and move on" is thus an absurdity. There will always be retraumatizations that catapult us back into the darkness – the dark realm in which we need to be emotionally held so that the loss can be better borne and integrated.

Collective Trauma

Collective trauma is created when metaphysical illusions shared by a group of people – a nation, for example – are destroyed. A vivid example for Americans was the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, which, by horrifyingly demonstrating that America can be assaulted on its native soil, shattered collective illusions of safety, inviolability, and grandiose invincibility – illusions that had long been mainstays of the American historical identity. In the wake of such shattering, Americans became much more susceptible to what I call *resurrective ideologies* that promised to restore the grandiose illusions that had been lost. It was in this context of collective trauma and resurrective ideology that Americans fell prey to the abuses of power of the Bush administration. Fueling and exploiting the dread of retraumatization, Bush et al. declared war on global terrorism and drew America into a grandiose, holy crusade that enabled Americans to feel delivered from trauma and called upon by the Lord to rid the world of evil.

Apocalyptic Trauma

I first experienced a whiff of Apocalyptic trauma nearly four decades ago when I took my young son to a planetarium show at the New York Museum of Natural History. In the course of the presentation, it was predicted that in a billion years the sun would become a red giant and

completely engulf and destroy the solar system. This prospect filled me with intense horror. The sun's becoming an engulfing red giant represents not just the destruction of individual human beings but of human civilization itself. It also announces the shattering of metaphysical illusions of the permanence and indestructibility of earth itself – illusions that are currently crumbling in the face of worsening climate change. The human way of being cannot survive the impending homelessness with which climate change threatens us, a prospect so horrifying that people turn away from it altogether, thereby evading the threat and abandoning the search for solutions.

Emotional Dwelling

The recurrence of emotional trauma is ensured by the finitude of our existence and the finitude of all those with whom we are deeply connected. Authentic temporality, insofar as it owns up to human finitude, is traumatic temporality. “Trauma recovery” is an oxymoron – human finitude with its traumatizing impact is not an illness from which one can recover. “Recovery” is a misnomer for the constitution of an expanded emotional world that coexists alongside the absence of the one that has been shattered by trauma. The expanded world and the absent shattered world may be more or less integrated or dissociated, depending on the degree to which the unbearable emotional pain evoked by the traumatic shattering has become integrated or remains dissociated defensively, which depends in turn on the extent to which such pain found a relational home in which it could be held.

It follows from the relational constitution of emotional trauma – individual, collective, or Apocalyptic – that one's therapeutic comportment to it will also be a relational one. How can a therapeutic relationship be constituted wherein the analyst can serve as a relational home for unbearable emotional pain and existential vulnerability? I have proposed an active, relationally engaged form of therapeutic comportment that I call *emotional dwelling*. In dwelling, one does not merely seek empathically to understand the other's emotional pain from the other's perspective. One does that, but much more. In dwelling, one leans into the other's emotional pain and participates in it, perhaps with the aid of one's own analogous experiences of pain. The language that one uses to address another's experience of emotional trauma meets the trauma head-on, articulating the unbearable and the unendurable, saying the unsayable, unmitigated by any efforts to soothe, comfort, encourage, or reassure – such efforts invariably being experienced by the other as a shunning or turning away from his or her traumatized state.

If we are to be an understanding relational home for a traumatized person, we must tolerate, even draw upon, our own existential vulnerabilities so that we can dwell unflinchingly with his or her unbearable and recurring emotional pain. When we dwell with and hold others' unendurable pain, their shattered emotional worlds are enabled to shine with a kind of sacredness that calls forth an understanding and caring engagement within which traumatized states can be gradually transformed into bearable and nameable painful feelings. Formerly dissociated emotional pain becomes seamlessly integrated with whom one experiences oneself as being. Psychoanalytic therapy is disclosed here as applied emotional phenomenology.

Notes

- 1 That Freud's metapsychological theory of instinctual drives is a form of metaphysics is explicitly reflected in some of his remarks (Freud, 1937) explicitly linking his theory to the metaphysical thinking of the philosopher of ancient Greece, Empedocles. In the history of philosophy, metaphysics – the search for a changeless ground of entities and processes – has taken many forms. The one that I find most enlightening is the one appearing in Wilhelm Dilthey's (1910) conception of “metaphysical illusion.” According to Dilthey, metaphysics evades the tragedy of human finitude by transforming the unbearable

fragility and transience of all things human into an enduring, permanent, changeless reality, an illusory world of eternal truths. Metaphysical illusion, according to Dilthey, transforms historically contingent nexuses of intelligibility – *worldviews*, as he eventually calls them – into timeless forms of reality. The metaphysicalization of worldviews transforms the transience of existence into an enduring, permanent, changeless reality, an illusory world of eternal truths. Heidegger (1961) appears to make use of Dilthey's conception of metaphysical illusion (without citation) in his interpretation of Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence as an injection of permanence into impermanence, a "permanentizing of Becoming into presence" (p. 156). In this Age of Scientism, the brain itself acquires the status of a metaphysical entity, transforming the transience and context-dependence of experience into the relative solidity of the body.

- 2 This claim is often misunderstood as an attribution of social isolation to Freud and before him to Descartes. The isolation named in formulating a Cartesian myth of the isolated mind is not social; it is ontological. Cartesian minds, including the Freudian mind, are isolated ontologically – that is, in their intelligibility – from their context. The antithesis of ontological isolation is context-embeddedness.
- 3 Atwood and I coined the term *intersubjective perspective* in the context of examining the impact on the therapeutic process of conjunctions and disjunctions between the emotional worlds of patient and analyst. Our use of the term *intersubjective* has never presupposed the attainment of symbolic thought, of a concept of oneself as a subject, of intersubjective relatedness in Stern's (1985) sense, or of mutual recognition as described by Benjamin (1995). Nor have we confined our usage to the realm of unconscious nonverbal affective communication, as Ogden (1994) seems to do. We use *intersubjective* very broadly, to refer to any psychological field formed by interacting worlds of experience, at whatever developmental level those worlds may be organized. For us, *intersubjective* denotes neither a mode of experiencing nor a sharing of experience but the contextual precondition for having any experience at all. In our vision, intersubjective fields and experiential worlds are equiprimordial, mutually constituting one another in circular fashion.

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