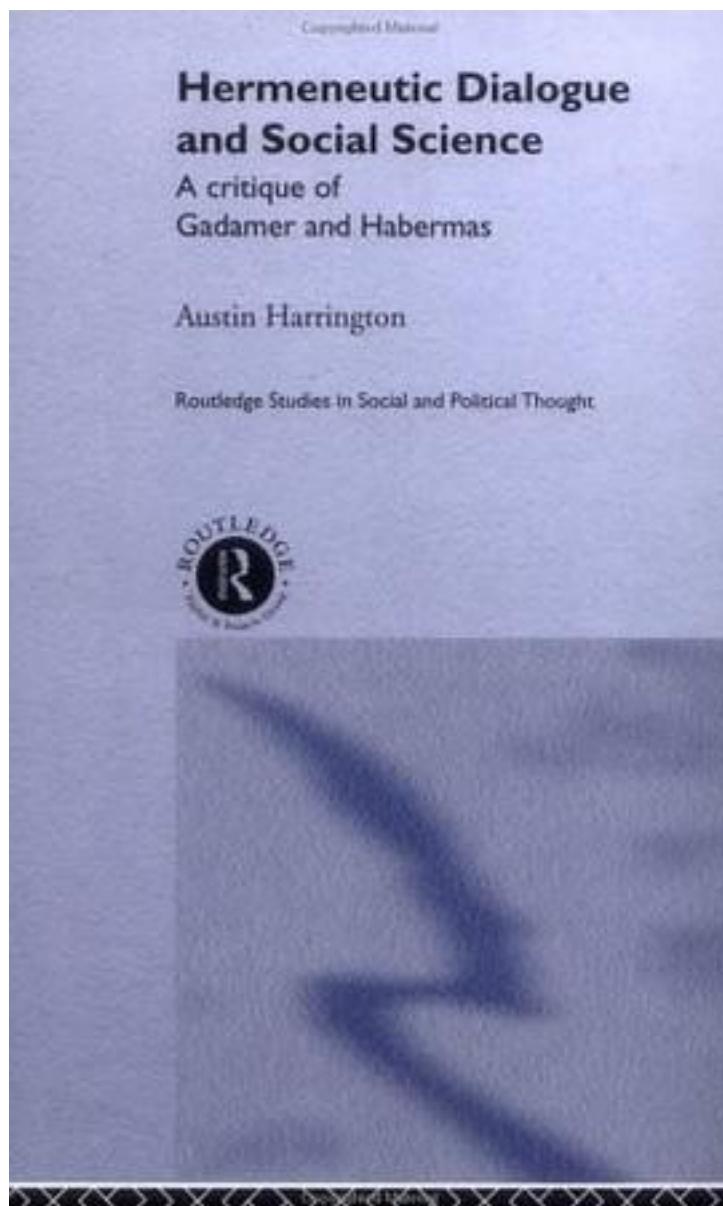


# Hermeneutical Dialogue and Social Science



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The German philosophers Gadamer and Habermas share an idea of the process of understanding as a 'dialogue' between the researchers of other cultures and the subjects whose lives and actions they study. This book offers a new challenge to their central argument. While previous studies of these philosophers have tended to concentrate on the differences between their two standpoints, this work questions the validity of the basic thesis they hold in common by critically re-examining their views of earlier figures in the German hermeneutic tradition. The book includes: \* examinations of the philosophers' responses to theorists from Wilhelm Dilthey to Max Weber and Alfred Schutz \* concise contextual information, including an account of debates over objectivity in social science from the Enlightenment to Durkheim, Weber and the Frankfurt School \* clear, detailed definitions of critical terms, including 'objectivity', 'positivism', 'empathy' and 'verstehen' \* a concluding assessment of the scope and limits of the idea of dialogical social science. Hermeneutics has become an increasingly popular area of study at undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate levels across a variety of related disciplines. This book, aimed primarily at sociologists, provides an in-depth, comprehensive and contextual treatment of this subject, and it will be of interest not only to social scientists but also to those pursuing interests in philosophy or the history of ideas.

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