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Hermeneutical Approaches in Social Philosophy and their Ability for the Analysis of Chinese Society

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The problem of the hermeneutical methodology for research in social philosophy is raised and solved in the article. The formation of hermeneutics as a philosophical method is discussed. Particular attention is given to the procedures of the hermeneutic method. It is proved that modern social philosophical research necessarily has the hermeneutical method. At the present time the hermeneutical methodological standard is composed (term by V. Kuznetsov). The hermeneutical methodological standard includes classic and contemporary hermeneutical procedures, including empathy, hermeneutic circle, interpretation, personal understanding of the author's text and "getting used" in this text. Modern hermeneutics uses methods of psychoanalysis, including the concepts of Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung. The necessity of applying the hermeneutic methodology for social philosophical study of traditional Chinese culture, modern Chinese society and the Chinese political system is substantiated.

Keywords: hermeneutics, method, Wilhelm Dilthey, Gilles Deleuze, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Martin Heidegger, Friedrich Ludwig Gottlob Frege, Paul Ricoeur, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, Clifford James Geertz, Victor Witter Turner, meaning, text, culture, social philosophy.

1. General characteristics of the hermeneutical method. The main representatives of philosophical hermeneutics

In the modern socio- philosophical, humanitarian, social and cultural studies hermeneutical approach is particularly relevant because at the beginning of the XX century Wilhelm Dilthey[1], the creator of the method of "understanding of hermeneutics", designed the principle to distinguish between "natural sciences" and "the science of the spirit" through the hermeneutic method. Hermeneutics is the conceptually-methodological system of principles, meanings, concepts and procedures that allow researchers to study the social and cultural phenomena from the standpoint of understanding and interpretation of the values and meanings of these phenomena. Hermeneutics is a strictly humanitarian epistemological theory as it regards social organisms, human activity and cultural (including ethnic-cultural) spaces which have their senses which can be "distilled" and "understood" by the researcher. Hermeneutics

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is understood as the ability to find meanings and significances in signs, symbols and texts. During the XIX – XX centuries hermeneutics has developed into a whole philosophical direction associated with the ontology of understanding and epistemology of interpretations.

At different times in formation of hermeneutics Friedrich Schleiermacher[2] hermeneutics, Wilhelm Dilthey[3], Martin Heidegger[4], Edmund Husserl[5], Georg Gadamer[6], Paul Ricoeur[7], Gustav Shpet[8] and Gilles Deleuze[9] were involved. The genetic connection with the traditions of hermeneutics interpretation of sacred texts, including Philo, and with the entire volume of exegesis, which is currently one of the most influential theological disciplines, is undeniable.

In the modern philosophy it is taken to distinguish different types of hermeneutics, depending on the base of the discipline in which hermeneutics applied. Thus, the overwhelming majority of modern theological hermeneutics disciplines use the Bible as the main method, so this is even that there is distinguished theological hermeneutics[10]. Reasonable amount of time there exists the historical hermeneutics[11] and at present time the legal hermeneutics is actively developed[12].

The philosophical hermeneutics is of particular importance, as there are concentrated universal hermeneutical procedures common to all kinds of special hermeneutics. However, Georg Gadamer[13] and Paul Ricoeur[14], the creators of their own philosophical and hermeneutical theory, thought that the rules and procedures of hermeneutics are unique at every moment of their application and that it is impossible to create a single formal hermeneutical methodology. Their arguments are based on the premise that understanding the process is a process of concrete interaction between that who understands and that who is understood cannot be fully and

rationally constructed repeated. However, socio-philosophical hermeneutics analysis allows to identify a number of basic principles and epistemological procedures that, in fact, demonstrate the use of epistemological approach in a particular study.

2. The notion of "meaning" in the interpretation of Friedrich Ludwig Gottlob Frege and Gilles Deleuze

Necessary for the hermeneutic approach is the initial recognition of the fact that social, anthropological and cultural objects carry **semantic** content. There is a large philosophical and concrete scientific debate about how to understand the term of "meaning". The concept of "meaning" separated from the concept of "sense" of the German logician, mathematician and philosopher Gottlob Frege Friedrich Ludwig[15], who in 1982 wrote *The meaning and sense*[16], where he clearly distinguishes the sign, the sense and meaning. In particular, Frege writes: "The correct relationship between the sign, its meaning and sense must be such that the sign corresponded to a definite meaning, and meaning, in turn, – a certain sense, while one sense (one subject) corresponds not only one sign. The same meaning is expressed differently not only in different languages, but also in the same language"[17]. In terms of combined two points: 1) the subjective (the perceiver) image of an object, and 2) in the public interest on the subject. Meaning in the interpretation of Frege is almost identical to the concept of *eidos* in the philosophy of Plato. World of meanings, in the strict sense, does not belong to the world of subjective images, nor the world of objective things. This is the third eidetic world that is nevertheless real. Frege formulated another interesting principle that there are some language constructs that do not have meaning, but have sense.

The paper of Gilles Deleuze *The Logic of Sense*[18] was of particular importance to clarify the concept of *meaning*. Gilles Deleuze develops the basic status of a non-classical logic in terms of constant change, the eternal strength, becoming a permanent sense, lack of any maturity. Deleuze points out that the sense is only within the entirety of the language, it can be understood only from the inside of the communications system. Sense, as the thinker believes, develops where the communicating structure comes into contact, i.e. on their borders: "Sense, the expressed in a sentence, is incorporeal, complex and not reducible to anything else on the surface of the essence of things, clean event inherent proposal and dwells in him". [19] Mainly for the emergence of sense is Time, Chronos; the sense is formed at the boundary of the past and the future, and always 'leaves' the present. In f synthetic construction (sentence) the sense-maker is the Verb, an action in which there is a dependent word.

The sense is born in the game. This is one of the most important provisions of the *Logic of sense* by Deleuze. However, he does not use any of the classical theories of games and creates his own theory of a pure game, in which you can specify a number of principles: 1) pure game rules are not set in advance, 2) no one knows the chances of players to win the game, including themselves, 3) with each turn the game changes qualitatively, as every move changes the important situations in the game, and 4) the game has no winners or losers. Only pure game the senses are added and changed, this game takes place in thought and art.

Paradoxically Deleuze argues that the subject does not participate in the emergence of sense. Sense is generated by the vital functions of the human body, Deleuze understands the origin of a language as a result of sublimation and symbolizing human activity. In connection with this the formation of sense is always associated with certain physiological processes. The language within which the sense arises, exists in the surface area where the sounds are separated from the bodies that produce them, and fold in the words and syntax. Of particular importance is the language that is separated from the surface and goes into the depths of the body, where the language generators physiological processes live. Such language is inherent in the great pieces of art, it creates new models of things, events and processes, and thereby creates hitherto unknown world models and promotes renewal and change of this world.

3. Text as a characteristic o f cultural objects. Concept C. Geertz and V. Turner

The subject area of hermeneutics are social, anthropological and cultural objects, which in this context have got the quality of the **text**. Textualization of all phenomena such as social without exception (including economic and political), anthropological and cultural belongs to the essence of the hermeneutic approach. Of great importance for the creation of interpretive theory of social and cultural studies were the scientific papers of E. Evans-Pritchard[20], Clifford Geertz[21] and Victor Turner[22]. So E. Evans-Pritchard suggested the principle associated with the study of culture, which is not 'native' for the researcher. Investigation of the 'foreign' culture must be built as a dialogue between two equal entities. The purpose of research on the socio-cultural space is the most adequate understanding of another culture and its interpretation that is relevant to the socio-cultural environment of the researcher. E. Evans-Pritchard was skeptical to the idea of opening cultural universals common to all social organisms. Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner continued the tradition of 'understanding' of social (cultural) anthropology.

Clifford Geertz grounded understanding of the socio-cultural environment as a closed semiotic-symbolic system. All human outcomes have the character of signs and symbolic activity – economic, political and social processes have always been text structure. Therefore social-philosophical and socio-cultural studies represent a kind of 'text about texts'; thinkers always offer some **interpretation**. The task of the interpreters is to realize an understanding of emerging and unfolding socio-cultural phenomena, to open an understanding with the point of view of knowable cultural reality owners.

Victor Turner studied applied aspects of symbols, technologies and mechanisms of the functioning by a symbol in the social organism. He proceeded from the fact that the symbols themselves and their systems are constantly changing, they are included in all basic social processes that vary with and within them. Therefore, the symbols can only be understood from within the social organism, only in their real social existence.

Clifford Geertz has created hermeneutical analysis of socio-cultural phenomena methodology, which is based on the method of 'interpretation' or 'cultural analysis'. The researcher of a social organism is a mediator and an active participant in the socio- cultural processes, rather than an outside observer, establishing 'objective' laws of these processes and deviations in any direction from them. By this time the Western social anthropology waives certain research experience with the so-called 'participant observation'. 'Participant observation' suggests limiting detachment researchers from the study of culture, the maximum objective approach. Instead, developed a method of "supervisory participation," which stood at the origins of eminent social anthropologist Bronislaw Kaspar Malinowski[23], Margaret Mead[24], Ruth Benedict[25] and other representatives of socio-anthropological

research school *Culture-and-Personality*. Here, on the contrary, encouraged all kinds of social and cultural communication between researchers and the study of culture, including emotional experience, participation, recording their participation in the life of the social organism studied. Study turns into a cultural dialogue, the results of which were generated by both sides of this dialogue and equally owned by the two or more parties.

Thus, the nature of the text is all that is produced in the course of human activity, all that is of artificial origin. If a text meant amount of sign systems, endowed with a series of values, so the culture is a particular text system. Epistemological approaches to the study of the social organism transformed into hermeneutical procedure, revealing the values and meanings set forth in the current culture of the social organism.

Created, stored and broadcasted cultural texts have many important layers. Moreover, the sense does not have a static nature, it is dynamic and specific, its definition appears in the live social communication system, and the real senses can only be understood with the help of extremely adequate modeling of this lively social and communicative system. Therefore, the main and fundamental hermeneutical epistemological procedures are understanding and interpretation of the act. Interpretation is understood as the process of extracting (reconstitution) of the cultural senses of the text.

The concept of socio-cultural interpretive research of Clifford Geertz called for the radical revolution in social studies. He rejected the idea of holistic and closed culture by F. Boas and focused on *the idea of culture as a social action*. Culture is a system of signs, but these signs are created by a man in his actions. Analysis of the signs is always the analysis of human action and human perception. Analysis of the signs of culture is

the 'understanding' interpretative analysis. And what's more, it's not the one way process, but interlocutory where cultural understanding of the text occurs in the dialogue between those who deciphers these signs and the cultural text which exists in the social reality.

In this paper, *The Effects of the concept of culture on the concept of man* C. Geertz presents his understanding of the relationship 'nature – culture', the dichotomy that has become the subject of philosophical and scientific reasoning since antiquity. C. Geertz summarizes information about the origin of modern man and concludes that culture was not the 'appendage' to the already finished or almost finished man, but "it was involved, and, moreover, it was the most significant thing in the process of the production of this animal"[26].

Slow, steady development of culture in the time of the Ice Age changed the balance of forces in natural selection in a way that actually played a decisive role in the evolution of Homo.

"Improving the tools, mastering of collective hunting skills, development of gathering, the emergence of family organization, the use of fire and, what is the most important, although it is very difficult to trace, *the becoming high dependence on systems of meaning of symbols (language, art, myth, ritual) in orientation, communication and control – all of them made new environment for a man, to which he was forced to adapt.* As step by step, from the microscopic rate the culture cumulated and developed, those individuals in the population who could use it, got the advantages in natural selection: they were skilled hunters, persistent gatherers, agile manufacturers of tools and resourceful leaders, and it lasted until prohuman Australopithecus who had a small brain volume, turned into a human Homo sapiens, whose brain volume was substantially more.

There was a feedback system between the cultural pattern, the body and the brain, each of them participated in the formation and contributed to the development of each, and one of the best examples of this can be the fact as the interaction between progress in the use of tools, changing the anatomical structure of the hand and the increasing projection of thumb in the brain cortex.

Having created for themselves symbolically mediated programs that controlled the production of artifacts, the organization of social life and expression of emotions, a man predestined, even accidentally, the culminating stage of its biological purpose. He made himself very wisely, albeit unwittingly"[27].

In turn, the other social anthropologist, the representative of symbolic anthropology Victor Turner[28] examines in great detail the symbolic nature of rituals. He defines rituals as "stereotyped sequence of actions that cover gestures, words and objects, and are executed in a specially prepared place and are designed to impact on supernatural beings or in the interest of purposes and performers"[29]. V. Turner comes from the fact that all rituals observed by him and other researchers of traditional cultures, are of symbolic character. One and the same ritual action can have many meanings. On the other hand, one or another socially important sense can be expressed in different signs. Main in the ritual is that, how the participants understand the correlation of a thing and its senses, its actions and senses, and the result and its sense.

Exploring a number of specific rituals which are characteristic for some South African tribes, V. Turner concludes that all used things and all actions committed there are the symbols and symbolic chains. He writes: "Each symbol expresses a lot of topics, and each topic is expressed by many symbols. Cultural fabric is woven from symbolic basis and thematic weft. Plexus of symbols and topics is rich repository of information not only about the

environment, how it is perceived and valued by the ritual performers, but also about their ethical, aesthetic, political, legal and ludic (sphere games, sports and culture, etc.) ideas, ideals and rules. Each symbol is a repository of information for artists and researchers, however, in order to accurately determine the set of topics of this ritual or ritual episode should clarify the relationship between symbols and their ritualistic forms, including verbal symbolic behavior"[30]. In his further arguments Turner concludes that the interpretation of the whole fabric of symbolic senses of rituals may lead to an understanding of the cosmogonic system and see that the cosmogony of a unified content for very many ethnic and cultural groups in South Africa, occupying a fairly large territorial space. Currently symbolic anthropology has actively developed and has the applied importance in field studies, which are conducted by anthropologists around the world.

Thus, in the second half of XX century, hermeneutics becomes one of the leading approaches to social research, and the theory of socio-cultural space is experiencing a definite shift from the principles of postulating unique cultural systems and closed to the principles of social and cultural development, and culture as a social action to create a sign-symbolic space of social reality. Known definition of culture by C. Geertz: "culture is a web of senses".

Modern researches are connected with this socio-philosophical concept of culture as a mobile information structure, actively functioning within society.

4. Hermeneutical methodological standard (V. Kuznetsov) and its basic procedures

Another feature of the hermeneutic approach to the analysis of social organisms in their dynamics is the interactive nature of hermeneutic interpretation. Wilhelm Dilthey, when he created an 'understanding of hermeneutics', paid much attention to 'empathy' – the psychological process where the researcher recreates the psychological characteristics of experience of the author-creator of the text inside himself, when he literally 'gets used' to create a situation of the text, inside of which he follows the author-creator's path of this text and becomes a co-creator of the understanding text. The condition of empathy is congeniality, i.e. a combination of two individual worlds (the interpreter and interpreted) in a single spiritual world, the unity of talents, abilities, style of thinking, ideological, stylistic, philosophical and conceptual similarities.

Hermeneutic approach in social and philosophical studies is accompanied by a number of interesting scientific discussions, including those related to so called 'principle of better understanding'. This is indicated by Valery Kuznetsov in his review article *Hermeneutics and its path from a particular method to philosophical brunch*[31]. Without any logical proof this principle was formulated by one of the founders of philosophical hermeneutics Friedrich Schleiermacher. It is that the interpreter must know the interpreted text and the spiritual world of the author better than the author himself. How is this possible? The author of the text uses his mother tongue as a 'natural' language, unconsciously. Also unconsciously he treated to cultural ideals, standards and values which he embodied in his text. In addition, the form and content of the text had a significant impact of personal circumstances of the author's life that he, too, could not rationally fix. Therefore, applying the 'principle of better understanding', the interpreter makes the subject of rational design that was previously hidden safely in the world of author's individual unconscious. Thus there is a significant increase in the socio-philosophical and concrete scientific knowledge. In the first half of the XX century appeared a new trend

in social studies, which was called *sociology of depths* (*deep sociology*) and which connected at its methodology as classical methods of social research and also the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud and the psychoanalytic philosophy of Carl Gustav Jung. Results of the *sociology of depths* were so impressive that at present they are actively used by both political and economic practitioners. Their importance increases in the context of the social construction of cultural, ethnic, religious and personal identities. In modern Russian social philosophy approaches typical of the *sociology of depths* is developed by the famous theorist-Eurasian A.G. Dugin[32].

Another basic concept of hermeneutics and its main procedure is the building a *hermeneutic circle*. This concept is also associated with the name of Friedrich Schleiermacher, who rightly believed that understanding is based on the eternal dialectic of part and whole: where the part can be understood only from the inside of the whole, but the whole just as dependent on each of its parts. And the achieved understanding builds new integrity of the text, changing all its elements, and hence changes again the element which we have recently found understood. Friedrich Schleiermacher, introducing the concept of *hermeneutic circle*, thus pointed out that the process of understanding is infinite and cannot be stopped at any moment his[33].

In the philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey the notion of *hermeneutic circle* is concretized and specified. The thinker indicates that the *hermeneutic circle* is constantly expanding by incorporating the process of understanding the philosophical and psychological positions of the author and interpreter, socio-cultural environment of each understanding the dialogue participant. *Hermeneutic circle* draws in the understanding of subjects that aim to know themselves through others, but at the same time learning the Other is through themselves, not the other way[34].

The creator of fundamental ontology, ontology of understanding, the great German philosopher Martin Heidegger saw in the *hermeneutic circle* not epistemological incident and epistemological ban but the ability to understand the primary, the main conditions of understanding in general and existential-rooted understanding of human existence. Understanding is the mission of a man, his existential feature among other existing. Sharing the essential and nonessential for understanding the circumstances, a person gets an opportunity to separate the genuine understanding from its simulation for the first time[35]. Understanding allows you to see the temporary movement that creates pre-understanding, holistic, indivisible, in which understanding persons are always 'included' with their own understanding.

The student of Heidegger, creator of the deployed version of modern philosophical hermeneutics Georg Gadamer similarly treats the opportunities of hermeneutical circle. He wrote: "Time is not primarily the most abyss over which it is necessary to build a bridge as soon as it separates and removes one from the other, it is in fact the basis of the events in which our current understanding roots"[36]. Prejudice is inevitable in the process of understanding. The task is not to get rid of prejudices. This is impossible because the impulse itself is to understand the actual problems which can be solved by referring to historical cultural text. The interpreter's task is to distinguish between true and false prejudices, introduce himself into the historical process, see the historical dimension that 'hurts' him today and raises questions about the need to understand. The naivete of the so-called historicism is that it leaves a reflection and, relying on their methodical techniques forgets about its own historicity. From this false notion of historical thinking, we must appeal to another – to thinking, what should be better

understood. Truly historical thinking must think its own historicity[37]".

Thus, G. Gadamer continues Heidegger's tradition of hermeneutics ontologization, highlights the task of creating the philosophical hermeneutics and promotes inclusion in the historical, cultural and social cognition of the significant amount of epistemological procedures associated with reflection on the 'refinement' of the scientist into the process of acquiring knowledge, the inclusion of socio-cultural, historical, social, psychological, social and philosophical context in the form of acquiring knowledge and even in the knowledge of the content itself. Currently, the social nature of the received and used knowledge has no doubt. Method of objective historicism is complemented by the hermeneutical procedures which 'grasp' the scientist's own position and identify how this position has affected the results of the research methods and procedures.

In the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur there are made the attempts to integrate the philosophical hermeneutics of intellectual discoveries in the XX century in psychoanalysis and its various invariants, as well as in structuralism and post-structuralism. In the works of *Conflict of interpretations. Essays on hermeneutics*[38], *Theory of interpretation. Discourse and surplus value*, *Time and the story*[39] and other, Paul Ricoeur puts the hermeneutics in the study of non-linguistic phenomena, as regards this follow the inner nature of the character of the symbol interpreted. The symbol consists of what can be expressed in a language, but not less, and perhaps most of it is through the language of the ineffable space that generates the task of discovering the real connection between language and living experience. Paul Ricoeur believes that the main task of hermeneutics is to find the link between a language and the way we have done in the whole living experience.

Extralinguistic phenomena associated with the movement of desires and impulses (i.e., what, in fact, psychoanalysis deals with), and related structures of the language itself (i.e., what structuralism does) are revealed as the result. From this position, Paul Ricoeur defines psychoanalysis as one of many possible forms of hermeneutics; however, psychoanalysis is not sufficient to fully clarify the symbolism of archaic structures that are rooted deeply in our dreams. P.Riker believes that current structuralism, which considers each language as a closed system, is also insufficient to hermeneutics. Universal hermeneutics, the thinker says about, should seek to recover the lost unity of the living language.

After Gadamer's *Truth and Method* being translated in English, hermeneutical methodology is widely used and it is used in English-language research practice in philosophy and literary criticism, art history, etc. Special line in the development of philosophical hermeneutics is its theological versions, which have been included by E. Koret, who uses the ideas of Martin Heidegger and Georg Gadamer to the doctrine of man in the modern Thomism. Serious hermeneutical approach has value in philosophy of O.V. Bolnov, H. Lipps, G. Michael, G. Shpet and K.O. Apel. Outstanding representative of the neo-Marxist Frankfurt School, Jurgen Habermas sees hermeneutics productive opportunities for criticism of false forms of consciousness and distorted forms of social communication. In debate with G. Gadamer Jurgen Habermas raises the question of how the interpreter is able to really critically evaluate his own tradition, inside which he makes certain hermeneutical procedure.

Thus, in the development of hermeneutics develops certain hermeneutical methodological standard, the concept and content of which are considered by Valery Kuznetsov in the previously mentioned scientific article *Hermeneutics and its*

path from a particular method to philosophical direction" Valery Kuznetsov identifies the following three positions of the hermeneutical methodological standard[40].

1. The use of hermeneutical methodology is the hallmark of the humanities and distinguishes them from the natural sciences. In this regard, the concept of the humanities is specified in their definition as science texts. Therefore, social, cultural and anthropological research should be based on a study of the appropriate text structures, understanding the culture as a system of texts.

2. Hermeneutical methodology focuses on the interactive nature of the researcher of the study.

3. Objective understanding of the linguistic structure of the text accompanies mainstreaming extralinguistic factors that significantly affect these structures. Taking into account the significant amount of extralinguistic factors the hermeneutical methodological standard agrees that there can be quite a lot of the variants of interpretation of one and the same text. A specific set of logic, semiotic and psychological is applied for interpretation.

Valery Kuznetsov reveals some provisions of the hermeneutic logic, including a special kind of induction, a special kind of typing, the difference of three procedures – an explanation, understanding and interpretation, and the need for rational design of unconscious elements, including using social psychology and ethnic studies of cognitive processes[41].

5. Findings

It seems that cross-cultural socio-philosophical study of Chinese society should be based on the above hermeneutical methodology. It should be noted that throughout the history of social and philosophical, socio-anthropological and cultural studies of China's domestic scientists work hermeneutical methodology present in an implicit form. The paramount socio-cultural text artifacts, traditional (primarily canonical) and modern will be taken as the basis for the study of the specificity of traditional and contemporary Chinese society. It should be noted that due to the complexity and layering of the Chinese socio-cultural space of the total volume of Russian research is not enough. The application of modern hermeneutical methodology is necessary for the effective study of basic concepts of traditional Chinese culture.

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Герменевтические подходы в социальной философии и их возможности для анализа китайского общества

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В статье ставится и решается проблема герменевтической методологии для исследований по социальной философии. Подробно рассматривается становление герменевтики как философского метода. Особое внимание уделено процедурам герменевтического метода. Доказывается, что современное социальное философское исследование обязательно имеет герменевтический метод. В настоящее время складывается герменевтический методологический стандарт (термин В. Кузнецова). Герменевтический методологический стандарт включает в себя классические и современные герменевтические процедуры, в том числе эмпатию, герменевтический круг, интерпретации, личное понимание авторского текста, «вживание» в этот текст. Современная герменевтика использует методы психоанализа, в том числе концепции З. Фрейда и К.-Г. Юнга. В статье обосновывается необходимость применения герменевтической методологии для социального философского исследования традиционной китайской культуры, современного китайского общества, китайской политической системы.

Ключевые слова: герменевтика, метод, В. Дильтей, Ж. Делез, Г. Гадамер, М. Хайдеггер, Л.Г. Фреге, П. Рикер, Ф. Шлейермахер, К. Гирц, В. Тернер, смысл, текст, культура, социальная философия.