

**Paper to be presented at
The American Educational Research Conference
AERA SIG
Chaos & Complexity
April 1-5, 2002
New Orleans, USA**

Textual interpretation and complexity - radical hermeneutics

Jens Rasmussen

**The Danish University of Education
Department of Educational Sociology
Emdrupvej 101
DK-2400 Copenhagen NV
Denmark**

**Tel: +45 3969 6633
Fax: +45 3969 6657
E-mail: jera@dpu.dk**

Textual interpretation and complexity - radical hermeneutics

The methodological question, which is the subject of this article, concerns what information one can extract from a text. Put more precisely, the question is: What can one say on the basis of the observation of a text – be it a policy document, a transcribed interview, a theoretical position, etc. – in relation to the pattern of observation, which the producer of the text has applied. This question will be discussed in relation to the question of complexity since I strive to develop a method of textual analysis that can adequately account for the modern problem of complexity, but this will not be done in an a-historical fashion.

I shall show that the method developed on the basis of Niklas Luhmann's theory of operative constructivism is an extension of the development in the hermeneutic tradition from Schleiermacher to Gadamer to Ricoeur, but that it distinguishes itself from these in two important aspects. Firstly, by rejecting the ontological assumptions of the hermeneutical tradition, and, secondly, by virtue of the fact that it builds on a clear distinction between consciousness, language and communication. The method I seek to develop might therefore best be characterised as a radicalisation of hermeneutics.

By way of introduction, I shall sketch out the hermeneutic foundation to illustrate the ways in which it is similar to but especially the ways it differs from the constructivist methodology I will finally develop.

The hermeneutic tradition

Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768-1834) laid the foundation of modern hermeneutics.

Schleiermacher's brand of hermeneutics is usually referred to as *methodological hermeneutics* as distinct from the philosophical hermeneutics ascribed to Gadamer. Methodological hermeneutics is concerned with the construction of methods to aid successful interpretation. Schleiermacher's understanding of hermeneutics as the study of interpretation is rather broad as it includes all utterances by the other, written as well as spoken. Schleiermacher justifies this broad definition of utterances by asserting that that which he terms the alien between author and reader, which must be construed, may be found in more than "einer kunstmässigeren Schrift"¹ (Schleiermacher, 1977, s. 315). He himself refers to journalistic newspaper articles and advertisements. A piece of writing, another individual, a pedagogical theory or even a teaching situation must, according to Schleiermacher, be understood in the context of its time, and this understanding involves deciphering, construing and elucidating these objects as though they were texts.

In the hermeneutical tradition it has been common practice, also prior to Schleiermacher, to define the relation between interpreter and text as a circular movement, the so-called hermeneutic circle. However, even within this tradition there are numerous ways of defining this circular movement. Schleiermacher views the hermeneutic circle as a movement according to the principle that the constituent parts of speech are only intelligible in terms of the whole, and the whole can only be understood through its constituent parts, and furthermore he regards *meaning* as dependent on the connection between the constituent parts. Furthermore, Schleiermacher distinguishes between an objective and a subjective side in the interpretative circle. The objective side of interpretation seeks to understand speech "aus der Gesamtheit der Sprache"², i.e. based on linguistic structures, while the subjective or 'psychological' side seeks to understand speech as "eines Aktes fortlaufender Gedankenerzeugung"³ (ibid. p. 324), that is to say as an expression of the author's individuality. Schleiermacher's hermeneutics is fundamentally tied to the linguistic dimension since he views speech and language as synonymous and further regards language as both a precondition of thought (ibid. p. 326) and an objectification of thought through speech (ibid. p.314).

In addition to this distinction between an objective and a subjective side of interpretation, Schleiermacher distinguishes between a *comparative* and a *divinatory* approach. The comparative method relates to both the objective and the subjective side. This partly involves a comparison of that which is already understood with that which has not yet been understood with the aim of limiting non-understanding, and partly a comparison of pieces of writing and texts with the aim of determining whether an author approaches or distances himself from other related works. The divinatory, that is to say a prophetic or prescient, method equally involves both sides. This method involves an interpretation based on a hypothesis or guess, which subsequently must be examined with a

¹ [an ingenious drawn up text]

² [on the totality of language]

³ [a continuous thought production]

view to establishing whether it might be contested. Even if this is not the case one must, Schleiermacher warns, still approach hypotheses or guesses with caution and only assign a preliminary status to them. For Schleiermacher the ultimate aim and mark of successful interpretation is for the interpreter to understand "einen Autor besser (...) als er selbst von sich Rechenschaft geben könne"⁴ (ibid. p. 325).

According to Schleiermacher the hermeneutic circle from part to whole (and vice versa) may either spiral inwards or outwards. If the point of departure is wrong, we will end up with an inward spiral. To avoid this, the interpreter must be in possession of a basic premise to approach the world with. Schleiermacher finds one such premise in the requirement that the interpreter must have comprehensive knowledge of the culture and language that the work in question inscribes itself in. The mark of a good interpreter is his great insight into and intimate knowledge of his subject. Schleiermacher suggests two means of avoiding faulty interpretation. One is, as already mentioned, knowledge, the other is intuition. A good interpretation actually requires that the interpreter be able to discern the thought within a text in the same way that the author of the text did, that is to say, the interpreter must transform his own self into that of the other and thus prevent misunderstandings. This notion anticipates Husserl's idea of intersubjectivity and thus suffers from the same theoretical weaknesses, a point I shall return to below.

In his philosophical hermeneutics *Hans-Georg Gadamer* (1900-2002) contests Schleiermacher's conception of the hermeneutic circle. Gadamer points out that an attempt to understand a text does not involve empathetic identification with the author's spiritual constitution (subjective interpretation) but instead an appreciation of the *perspective* that lies at the heart of the other's opinion, a point that is particularly pertinent in the present context. Gadamer insists that the hermeneutic circle is neither subjective nor objective. Instead, it should be conceived as a description of understanding as an interplay between the text and the interpreter: "as the interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of the interpreter"⁵ (Gadamer, 1995, p. 293). Gadamer shifts the foundation of interpretation away from the subject and its preconceptions and towards communality, namely "the communality that binds us to the tradition"⁶ (ibid.). Furthermore, he stresses that this communality continuously evolves in relation to tradition and that this is in fact a precondition, which the interpreter himself produces through *his* understanding.

In his conception of communality/community life, Gadamer agrees with Schleiermacher in affirming the ontological status of language. On the one hand, he considers the relation between thought and language an internal unity, on the other hand, he asserts that man has access to the world by virtue of the fact that he has language.⁷ However, Gadamer is critical of Schleiermacher's conception of language as an instrument or medium for the expression of thought:

Language is an expressive field, and its primacy in the field of hermeneutics means, for Schleiermacher, that as an interpreter he regards the texts, independently of their claim of truth, as purely expressive phenomena.⁸ (Ibid. p. 196)

In contrast to this conception of language, Gadamer asserts that thought and language are inseparable. Thought is not subsequently couched in language, it is already constituted by language. Thought and sociality are language, and both are produced and transmitted in language.

Thus Gadamer refuses to accord the hermeneutic circle methodological status. He conceives of it as an ontological structural element (Strukturmoment) inherent in understanding. This is due to the fact that the author of a text is immersed in a culture, a biographical context and an historical point in time, which is not shared by the interpreter. The question is thus: How can we recover the *meaning* intended by the author in that which he or she expresses? This leads to a further problem, which can be expressed in the questions: How can the interpreter's horizon approach the textual horizon, and how can the two horizons be merged into an ideal whole?

⁴ [an author better than he understands himself]

⁵ "...als das Ineinanderspiel der Bewegung der Überlieferung und der Bewegung des Interpretieren" (Gadamer, 1965, p. 277)

⁶ "...der Gesamtheit, die uns mit der Überlieferung verbindet" (Gadamer, 1965, s. 277)

⁷ See Gadamer, 1965/1995, part III, ch. 3.

⁸ "Die Sprache ist ein Ausdrucksfeld, und ihr Vorrang im Felde der Hermeneutik bedeutet für Schleiermacher, dass er als Interpret die Texte unabhängig von ihrem Wahrheitsanspruch als reine Ausdrucksphänomene ansieht" (Gadamer, 1965, p. 184)

In contrast to Schleiermacher's conception of the hermeneutic circle as the continuous interplay between part and whole and between the text and the author's embeddedness in time and culture, Gadamer advocates a process whereby the interpreter shifts between his own horizon of understanding and the meaning of the text as well as between the interpreter questioning the text and the answers this gives rise to. Gadamer posits that the interpreter's horizon and the horizon of the text can converge when the interpreter tests his prejudices or 'pre-judgements' in encounters with the text and continues to adjust these until they yield a reliable reading of the text. The interpreter questions the text from within his own horizon of understanding. This horizon is limited by an interpretative bias, that is, interpretation can never be undertaken from a neutral position since it is always determined by tradition and history. Thus the interpreter does not freely choose his prejudices. The interpreter is always subject to the vicissitudes of history and tradition. The horizon is conceived as related to tradition, i.e. it is collective and transcends the individual; its force requires no justification. Thus the interpreter is able to confront his own horizon with the author's horizon with a view to uncovering bias on both sides and distinguishing productive (legitimate) prejudices that are conducive to understanding from inhibiting (illegitimate) prejudices that lead to misunderstandings.

Gadamer finds an explanation (not a methodology) for this process in the hermeneutic circle, which he conceives as a process whereby the interpreter moves back and forth between empirical/material description and theoretical/analytical concepts. In this process the interpreter tests his understanding in the encounter with the (his)story of the text, and this understanding is continuously revised on the basis of experiences gained from these encounters, and the process continues on the basis of these newly established foundations. This process of adjustment is individually and historically determined, that is, the interpretation of the text develops over time. Gadamer terms this the text's history of effect (*Wirkungsgeschichte*). Gadamer regards the understanding of a text as the result of a fusion between the interpreter's and the author's horizon, i.e. the fusion of past and present. The temporal dimension is crucial if this fusion is not to result in the two horizons being mistaken for one another.

For Gadamer, the mark of successful understanding is "to bring about agreement (*Einverständnis*) *in content*"⁹ (ibid. p. 293) based on membership of a community of tradition:

We begin with this proposition: "to understand means to come to an understanding with each other" (sich miteinander verstehen). Understanding is, primarily, agreement (*Verständnis ist zunächst Einverständnis*). Thus people usually understand (verstehen) each other immediately, or they make themselves understood (verständigen sich) with a view toward reaching agreement (*Einverständnis*). Coming to understanding (*Verständigung*), then, is always coming to an understanding about something.¹⁰ (Gadamer, 1995, p. 180)

Thus, we might say that Gadamer introduces the concept of *tradition* in the sense of communality, consensus or agreement – conceived as a question of true/false or right/wrong in relation to the subject of the text, the topic or the conversation – as an anchor or blocking mechanism within the hermeneutic circle, that which the interpretation as consensus can refer to and which cannot be explored further. The interpreter's bond with tradition is a bond tying him to a consensus, which is expressed in the concept of horizon. In contrast to Schleiermacher's subjective values, Gadamer accords tradition (pre-judgements) a privileged position from which to undertake interpretation. This is due to his contention that tradition is founded in language. Language thus becomes the ontological basis of Gadamer's hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics is based on the assumption that observation and interpretation are two distinct categories and, further, on the assumption that a text can only be understood from a participatory perspective. In this sense, hermeneutics takes the problem of complexity into account, which is why it does not claim objectivity in any other sense than that of horizontal fusion or, in Gadamer's words, "The concept of the *life-world* is the antithesis of all objectivism"¹¹ (Gadamer, 1995, p. 247). Since interpretation is always undertaken in the present and in tradition, which continuously evolves, there might in principle be other ways of questioning the text. Within the hermeneutic tradition, textual interpretation is thus subject to contingency.

⁹ "...im Verstehen ein *inhaltliches* Einverständnis gewinnen" (Gadamer, 1965, s. 277)

¹⁰ Wir gehen von dem Satz aus: Verstehen heisst zunächst, sich miteinander verstehen. Verständnis ist zunächst Einverständnis. So verstehen einander die Menschen zumeist unmittelbar, bzw. sie verständigen sich bis zur Erzielung des Einverständnisses. Verständigung ist also immer: Verständigung über etwas. Sich verstehen ist Sichverstehen in etwas. (Gadamer, 1965, s. 168)

¹¹ "...der Begriff der *Lebenswelt* allem Objektivismus entgegengesetzt" (Gadamer, 1965, p. 233)

In the 1960s, *Paul Ricœur* (1913-) sought to further develop hermeneutics through the incorporation of structuralist ideas. He asserts a complementary relation between structural analysis and hermeneutics (Ricœur, 1981, p. 160). But before elucidating this theory, let me clarify Ricœur's approach to text.

Ricœur defines text as any type of discourse fixed by writing. According to Ricœur, a text can be conceived as a dialogue, where the reader occupies the place of interlocutor and the writing takes the place of the spoken word and speech. Since the author of the text is absent when it is read and the reader is absent when it is written, the concept of interpretation becomes all the more pertinent as that which the author commits to paper constitutes discourse written with the intention of making a statement: one subject addresses another subject to state something about something.

This leads Ricœur on to the subject of reference. That which is the subject of discourse is that which discourse refers to. For Ricœur, that something is a reference to the world. Since the interlocutors are not present and their relation is only realised in the process of reading, the reference to the world refers back to that reality, which can be reconstructed around the interlocutors, and thus the purpose of interpretation is to bring about this reconstruction. In other words, the purpose of interpretation is "precisely to fulfil the reference" (ibid. p. 148).

At this point in his argument, Ricœur suggests the incorporation of structuralism as he distinguishes between two distinct ways of reading a text. The reader can treat the text as text in its own right, that is to say, without taking author and reference into account. Alternatively, the reader can fulfil the text by restoring it to living communication by (re)telling it. The first approach to the text would be an explanation, the second constitutes interpretation.

Ricœur links explanatory reading with structuralism, which provides an explanation of the text based on its inherent structure. Ricœur finds inspiration for this structuralist explanatory reading in the writings of the structural anthropologist *Claude Lévi-Strauss* (1908 -). Structuralism seeks to uncover basic regularity, those systems of relations which form structures that are assumed to hide behind myth, entire cultures or a single text. Structuralism seeks to uncover universal structural regularity.¹² However, Ricœur does not consider this kind of structural description to be adequate, precisely because it only offers the possibility of explanation, not interpretation.¹³ Thus it must be complemented by a comprehending hermeneutic reading. Ricœur posits that reading a text involves a dialectic of these two approaches, the structuralist and the hermeneutic. He asserts that this gives rise to a close mutual relation between explanation and interpretation. Like Gadamer, Ricœur operates with a distinction between observation – explanation in this context – and interpretation.

For Ricœur, a hermeneutic - or 'reflexive hermeneutic', as he terms his own brand of hermeneutics - reading of a text involves conjoining "a new discourse to the discourse of the text" (ibid. p. 158). Ricœur here asserts the traditional hermeneutic view that *meaning*, in the sense of the value system the text is based on, must be brought closer to the reader in his interpretation of the text through appropriating the unknown.

The sense of the text, that is to say, its internal relations or structure, thus becomes meaning, it is realised, so to speak, in the discourse of the reading subject: "in hermeneutical reflection – or in reflective hermeneutics – the constitution of the *self* is contemporaneous with the constitution of *meaning*" (ibid. p. 159). Thus Ricœur does not speak of the fusion of horizons as Gadamer did, but of the fusion of text-interpretation and self-interpretation, or rather, he doesn't speak of a fusion of discourses but of their approaching each other.

The central concepts in hermeneutics are, as stated, *language* and *meaning*. Already Schleiermacher stressed the importance of language and speech based on the assumption of an intimate connection between thought and language, and this is why the interpreter via language can access the author's intention (thought) with his text. For Schleiermacher, meaning is the relation between the parts. Meaning is related to the identification of authorial thought in the text. For Gadamer, meaning is that which finds expression in, for instance, a text, i.e. the

¹² This distinction between the text's surface and structure dates back to the French semiotician *Ferdinand de Saussure's* distinction between *parole*, which is empirical and individual, and *langue*, which is the hidden, the social and the structure to be uncovered through analysis.

¹³ He illustrates this with an analysis of Lévi-Strauss' interpretation of the Oedipus myth - a structuralist analysis exclusively dealing with the ways in which the elements and actants of the text are arranged and structured - and asserts that this type of interpretation might explain the myth, but doesn't provide an interpretation of it. However, the question of whether Lévi-Strauss' reading constitutes a (form of) interpretation is debatable, and I shall return to this issue.

descriptive as opposed to the normative, designated as opinion. For Ricoeur, meaning is constituted by the values a text is based on.

Furthermore, the relation between interpreter and text is conceived as a circular movement, and for Schleiermacher this is a movement between the constituent parts and the whole of the text. Gadamer rejects this conception of the methodological status of the hermeneutic circle; instead, he regards it as the ontological precondition of understanding. According to Gadamer, understanding is the result of the interplay between interpreter and text, i.e. between the interpreter's theoretical, analytical conceptions and empirical, material description, where the interpreter's horizon approaches the horizon of the text, ideally resulting in a fusion of the two horizons. In Ricoeur's approach, the circular movement becomes a dialectical double movement made up of a methodological, structural reading of the text and a comprehending, interpretative reading of the text. In the first type of reading, the text is assigned objective status and reading is thus removed from both the author of the text and its reference to the world. In the second type of reading, the text is interpreted subjectively, that is to say, the text is invested with meaning based on the interpreter's own philosophy of life and *Weltanschauung*.

Operative, constructivist hermeneutics

Over the last few years, hermeneutics has been challenged by a variety of epistemological constructivist theories seeking to reconstruct hermeneutics as a discipline concerned with methodological issues in the interpretation of texts.

Attempts at developing a constructivist method of interpretation radically challenge the basic premises of both methodological and philosophical hermeneutics. This concerns the view of the subject-object relation, the ontological conception of language and meaning as well as the understanding of truth. The constructivist challenge to hermeneutics is concerned with the possibility of establishing *methodologically controlled* statements on the meaning content of texts. It is thus methodologically oriented and, as a result, it rejects the ontological premises of earlier hermeneutic positions. In the following, I shall present the basic tenets of Niklas Luhmann's (1927-1998) operative constructivism as it relates to the problem of interpretation discussed above with a view to developing a radical hermeneutic method of textual interpretation.

Within the framework of a constructivist context, the traditional distinction between theory and empiricism is replaced by the distinction between theory and methodology. In the course of time, debates on the relation between theory and empiricism have revolved around the question of which theoretical position affords the most privileged access to reality. Constructivism transcends this debate by renouncing the notion that consciousness has access to the world as such. This does not equal a denial of the existence of a world beyond consciousness; the statement simply asserts that there can be no environment independent of an observer: without an observer there can be no observation.

Thus the basic question a theory that is to do justice to this assumption must answer becomes, as already mentioned, the question of *how* methodologically controlled statements about the meaning content of that which is observed might be possible when observation itself does not take place from a privileged, universal meta-position of the kind afforded by Schleiermacher's supra-individual life or spirit, Gadamer's tradition or Ricoeur's structure and reference to reality. The difference between observer and world, between theory and empiricism, thus shifts to a difference between observer and methodology, namely a methodology determining *how it is possible to observe and describe the world and at the same time describe the ways in which the observer's consciousness affects that which is observed*.

Luhmann "solves" this problem with the aid of a paradox. He does not base his theory on a unified concept such as the subjectivity of consciousness, a general object in the world, intuition or horizontal fusion, but on a *unity of difference*. Reflecting on the beginning requires a theory that is already invested with a certain measure of complexity in the form of difference. In other words, it takes a difference to observe difference.

A unity of difference does not mean that the different, that which is separated by a distinction, is made up of opposites, it is rather a case of the different being connected in a unity, which mutually determines the two sides of difference. The two sides of a distinction are unified in the third, which is the distinction itself. A unity of difference is thus made up of three elements. That (1) which is distinguished from something else (2) and the distinction itself (3).

This line of thought lies at the heart of Luhmann's brand of systems theory. Thus he defines a system as a complex of operations characterised by its ability to distinguish itself from its environment through autopoiesis. Luhmann's theory of social systems is founded on the unity of difference that can be registered between system and environment (Luhmann, 1995, p. 6ff.).

Man kann dies mit Hilfe des Formbegriffs verdeutlichen, den George Spencer Brown seinen "Laws of Form" zu Grunde legt. Formen sind dadurch nicht länger als (mehr oder weniger schöne) Gestalten zu sehen, sondern als Grenzlinien, als Markierungen einer Differenz, die dazu zwingt, klarzustellen, welche Seite man bezeichnet, das heisst: auf welcher Seite der Form man sich befindet und wo man dementsprechend für weitere Operationen anzusetzen hat. Die andere Seite der Grenzlinie (der "Form") ist gleichzeitig mitgegeben. Jede Seite der Form ist die andere Seite der anderen Seite. Keine Seite ist etwas für sich selbst.¹⁴ (Luhmann, 1997, p. 60f.)

Thus, a system is a form. Additional differences can henceforth only be established from inside the form, because the form produces the system, which can then reproduce this difference inside itself as the basis for further operations. This definition clearly expresses a paradox: the distinctive difference is itself a difference; the distinct is the same. At the heart of Luhmann's theory lies this basic paradox, which he views as a functional formula or pragmatic concept that opens up the possibility of both observation and self-observation in theory-based research, that is to say, the possibility of observation that includes the possibility of observing how observation affects that which is observed.

Without immediate access to empirical reality it becomes impossible to empirically test theoretical hypotheses. As a result, the basis of the difference between theory and empiricism is lost and replaced by the question of how it becomes reality – not whether reality exists. This idea can be traced back to the phenomenologist Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). For Husserl, phenomenology was not a theory of things in the world, but a science leading the study of the ways in which phenomena (Realien) belong to the sphere of cognitive operations. This approach implies that the object observed becomes the result of the act of observation and, further, that the traditional dualism between observer and thing observed (subject/object dualism) is dissolved.

Luhmann's theory of operative constructivism radicalises hermeneutics by spelling out that observation always involves an observer, and as such it is always biased. An observation (operation) is already an interpretation; therefore it makes no sense to distinguish between observation and interpretation, since all interpretation involves observation. Ricœur's conclusion, in his exposition of Lévi-Strauss' reading of the Oedipus myth, that the myth has been explained but not interpreted (Ricœur, 1981, s. 155), is an example of the distinction between observation – that which Lévi-Strauss does in his structural analysis of the myth – and interpretation as complementary to observation. However, Lévi-Strauss' structuralist division of the myth into independent parts does in fact constitute an interpretation.

In operative constructivism, the text producer is conceived as an observer who communicates something. Texts are viewed as messages containing information that can be understood by the person reading them in his own way. But what exactly is meant by observation? Observation means the observation of an object, and this object is invested with substance when a distinction is discerned. Thus, observation is an operation made up of two components that cannot be understood independently of each other. The first component involves choosing sides and the second involves choosing a boundary distinguishing the chosen side from the one rejected. In other words, to observe is to discern a difference, which facilitates the description of one object as opposed to another or the separation of two things.

Differences arise across a boundary, which separates one thing from another, that which has been actualised from that which has not been actualised. The observer draws this boundary in a process of self-reference. This occurs by employing a unity of difference in the process of observation, and it is the observer himself who constitutes this unity of difference. However, since it is impossible to observe this unity of difference while it is operative, it constitutes a blind spot for the observer.

¹⁴ [This can be elucidated by help of the concept of form that George Spencer Brown bases his "Laws of Form" on. Forms are no longer to be seen as (more or less nice) objects, but as boundaries, i.e. marks of a difference that enforces you to be precise about what side you designate. It means on which side of the form you are situated and from where further operations can take their departure. The other side of the boundary (the "form") is at the same time given. Every side of the form is the other side of the other side. None of the sides is something in itself]

According to this view, a text is produced on the basis of selections carried out by the text producer, that is to say, on the basis of actualisations of possibilities open to the author. By the same token, reading and interpretation of a text constitute a reduction of the text's complexity based on the complexity at the reader's disposal. Thus interpretation is also a question of selections carried out by the reader on the basis of his actualisations.

In this theoretical construct, the concept of meaning is assigned a central position in much the same way as in hermeneutics, but it is deprived of its ontological status. Meaning is construed as a boundary between the actual and the possible. Meaning is neither the one nor the other: it is the relation between the actual and the possible. Meaning is a certain way of behaving, where attention is directed at one possibility among many, where the actual *receives/is invested with* meaning on a horizon of possibility.

[...] meaning is a representation of complexity. Meaning is not an image or a model of complexity used by conscious or social systems, but simply a new and powerful form of coping with complexity under the unavoidable condition of enforced selectivity. (Luhmann, 1990, p. 84)

Meaning does not refer to a relation between things and words, nor does meaning single out one possibility according to preference, meaning is literally the simultaneous unity of the actual and the possible.

The task of hermeneutics is precisely to discover or rather re-discover the original meaning of a text or of utterances, broadly defined. Meaning is conceived as that which finds expression. Thus, one might say that hermeneutics deals with the meaningful. But this presupposes a definition of meaning as something that already exists in the utterances to be interpreted. This is why the utterances in question can be understood. Schleiermacher thought that meaning had to be found in the relation made up by the constituent parts. However, he did not simply mean the constituent parts of text in relation to its totality, but also the constituent parts of text in relation to the author's biography and personality. For Schleiermacher interpretation thus becomes a psychological question of intuition and empathy, i.e. a question of the possibility of putting oneself in the place of the author. It is this notion of empathy that Gadamer seeks to modify by asserting that understanding is not a question of insight into the author's mind, but rather of insight into that perspective or horizon on the basis of which the author's opinion was formed. The interpreter may achieve this by a gradual adjustment of the interpreter's and the author's horizons in relation to each other, resulting in a fusion of horizons. Ricœur sees meaning as the value system a text is based on, and interpretation thus becomes a question of exposing these values. For Ricœur, it is not a question of the fusion of two horizons; instead the interpreter's own horizons must approach each other in a process whereby the interpreter brings his interpretation of the text face to face with his interpretation of himself.

In all three approaches, meaning is accorded ontological status as something that can be found. This conception of meaning is abandoned in Luhmannian systems theory and replaced with a conception of meaning as the product of observational operations rather than a quality in the world *per se*. Meaning is a construct, which is dependent on an observer. Meaning is the result of a system's re-introduction (re-entry) of its environment inside itself in a way that is apparent to itself. This line of thought cannot be based on the notion of an already existing world made up of substance or ideas, or, in Luhmann's words,

Für Sinnsysteme ist die Welt kein Riesenmechanismus, der Zustände aus Zuständen produziert und dadurch die Systeme selbst determiniert. Sondern die Welt ist ein unermessliches Potential für Überraschungen, ist virtuelle Information, die aber Systeme benötigt, um Information zu erzeugen, oder genauer: um ausgewählten Irritationen den Sinn von Information zu geben.¹⁵ (Luhmann, 1997, s. 46)

This has a number of implications for an understanding of the concept of horizon. Luhmann's use of the concept of horizon, illustrates his theoretical debt to Husserl. Husserl applies the concept of horizon as an expression of the further possible experiences one can acquire in engaging with the same object. That which consciousness is directed towards appears on the background of a number of other, non-thematised possibilities, which together make up the present horizon, i.e. everything that can be experienced in a gradual process. Thus Husserl uses the concept of horizon to designate everything that *can* be brought to mind. Here Husserl distinguishes between an inner horizon, which is the horizon of the present, and an outer horizon, which is the horizon of the absent, since

¹⁵ [To meaning systems the world is no giant mechanism that produces conditions from conditions and through that determine the system. By contrary the world is a tremendous potential of surprises, i.e. possible information, that systems require in order to produce information, or to be more precise, to give meaning to information by selected irritations]

consciousness, according to Husserl, is always intuitively aware of the fact that something is absent when something else is made present. The horizon may be viewed as a world, only it is an individual world, which is subjective and can never be thematised in its entirety (Zahavi, 1997, p. 103ff.) (Bengtsson, 1984, p. 22).

Gadamer too developed his concept of horizon with reference to Husserl (Gadamer, 1995, p. 245f.). As mentioned above, Gadamer rejects Schleiermacher's view that interpretation is a matter of assuming authorial thought. Gadamer considered this kind of identity between the author's and the interpreter's perception to be not just unrealistic but also unnecessary, since an adequate understanding more often than not suffices to ensure meaningful dialogue. I demonstrated that Gadamer conceives understanding as something that takes place in language at the same time as language is still developed and affected by man. Language does not determine man. Thus, Gadamer's theory of understanding must span individual linguistic thought as well as collective linguistic thought (tradition and culture). It is with that purpose in mind that Gadamer employs the concept of an horizon of understanding. The concept covers both the notion that understanding occurs within a boundary or horizon, which he regards as individual, and the notion that such an horizon is the starting point of any attempt at interpretation. The horizon is made up of those prejudices that impinge on any interpretation (Gadamer, 1995., p. 302).

Gadamer conceives of horizon as an individual boundary, which may differ in breadth from individual to individual, but which any individual is capable of expanding. As I understand it, expansion for Gadamer involves redrawing the boundary in such a way that the horizon comes to encompass a greater area. In other words, the world is conceived as being, and individuals can take possession of more and more of this being. Understanding implies making space for something foreign on an individual's already established horizon of understanding. Mutual understanding between interpreter and author (text) thus involves a fusion of their two horizons of understanding, i.e. through that which is common to their respective horizons.

Both these views, namely the notion of an ontological world which individuals can gain increasing access to through interpretative activity, and the idea of the fusion of horizons of understanding, are revised and radicalised in operative constructivism.

Meaning as conceived in operative constructivism keeps the world open and accessible to that which is not actualised; as a result, any given actualisation does not exclude the possibility of further reference. This is due to the fact that meaning is reproduced through actualisation and the further possibilities inherent in that which is not actualised. Meaning thus always includes itself as well as something different and more. The reason for this is that any system produces a difference between itself and its environment through its operations, which implies that, whenever the environment is re-introduced into a system (re-entry), it can only observe that which its operations let it see, neither more nor less. As a result, one must always be aware of the third factor, that which is excluded in the included: "(...) die Sinnwelt ist eine vollständige Welt, die das, was sie ausschliesst, nur *in sich* ausschliessen kann."¹⁶ (Luhmann, 1997, p. 49)

In the conception of form as formulated in operative constructivism, as I understand it, Gadamer's assertion of the importance of prejudice in all understanding finds expression in the excluded third, the blind spot. The blind spot is precisely a precondition of any observation, including the kind of observation that seeks understanding. The blind spot may be viewed as an expression of internal- or self-complexity, which is the precondition of any selection. The fact that it is blind means that it cannot be observed at the same time as something else is observed. Put more precisely, the blind spot may be viewed as the expression of everything that is taken for granted in the form of unarticulated background understanding in an actual observing operation. Observation thus always depends on an observer, that is to say, it depends on the preconditions that are expressed in the difference, which the observer applies in the process of observation.

Through the radicalisation of the concept of meaning as a medium of observation, which depends on difference, it becomes possible to transcend the ontological premises of traditional hermeneutics. This theory of meaning facilitates a conception of the world as horizon, not in the sense of an outer limit, but as a border that may be transgressed. As a consequence, any observation represents the world because the other side is always represented too. It is precisely in this sense that meaning constitutes a "form of the world" (Luhmann, 1995, p. 61), because it spans the difference between system and environment.

¹⁶ [the meaning world is a fully complete world, which only can exclude what it excludes *in itself*]

It should now be clear that the theory of meaning outlined here relates to the problem of complexity in a way that is on a par with the problem itself. This is because meaning conceived as form implies that whenever something is observed the result is a concurrent representation of inconceivable complexity, which facilitates further observation.

This conception of meaning has consequences for the structuralist approach, which Ricœur proposes to combine with hermeneutic methodology. In Ricœur's line of thought, a text must be both explained and interpreted, and he considers structural analysis potentially useful for the explanation of texts. I believe this is due to his obvious awareness of the problem of complexity in textual interpretation. Structural analysis is supposed to reduce the complexity of the text prior to interpretative analysis and ease analysis. As mentioned above, according to Ricœur, a problem of reference arises in the reading of a text, which is due to the absence of the author in the process of reading. After the introduction of writing it became impossible to immediately refer to an "I" or a "we", who makes an utterance. The reference, which according to Ricœur must be fulfilled in the analysis of a text, is assigned the status of reality: it constitutes a reference to the world.

This line of thought is in tune with structuralism, which attributes to the analyses of myth, culture or texts a reference to reality; it is this reference, which is safeguarded by the concept of structure (Luhmann, 1995, p. 280). The inherent logic is that when an analysis, as for instance in the case of Levi-Strauss' analysis of the Oedipus myth, can uncover complexity-reducing, short, concise patterns or structures, which are not considered arbitrary, then these are assumed to confirm a reference to reality. Structuralism builds on the ontological presumption that reality is ordered, and, as a result, when it discovers structures exhibiting a certain order in the process of analysis, these are read as a sign that the analysis is dealing with reality.

Structuralism attributes the discovered structures to reality and thus neglects to consider the fact that the structures are precisely discovered, that is to say, they have been observed by an observer and should therefore be attributed to the observer. These considerations imply that Ricœur's proposal of "fulfilling the reference" in fact implies that this fulfilment must be sought in the author of the text through an observation of the differences the author has applied in his observation.

Ricœur's view of the aim of interpreting a text as appropriating the other by letting the different discourses approach each other becomes a matter of self- and other reference in operative constructivism. The fusion of the interpretation of a text and the interpretation of oneself is demystified through the conceptualisation of that unity constituted by the observer's oscillation between other reference and self-reference, that is to say between the content aspect of the observation (the interpretation of the text) and the consciousness aspect of the observation (self-interpretation). This distinction between self-reference and other reference occurs when the environment is re-introduced into the observer because this enables the observer to focus his attention on either the systemic aspect (self-reference) or the environmental aspect (other reference). In other words, a precondition of observations undertaken on the basis of *meaning* is the distinction between self- and other reference. Thus, in the interpretation of a text, it is the interpreter who seeks to observe the self-knowledge of the text through other reference and at the same time observe his own understanding through self-reference.

Interpretation as understanding

I shall now regard any kind of text as communication. This designation constitutes a clarification in relation to Ricœur's view of text as discourse fixed by writing. The view of texts as communication implies that they are viewed as a social event. Thus, they are not read as authors' utterances or structural manifestations, but as recursive communicative selections, which, on the one hand, refer back to previous communications and, on the other, open up the possibility of further communicative attachments.

Policy documents are regarded as the means by which the political system, being one of the systems of society fulfilling the specific function of producing and carrying out collectively binding decisions, communicates its decisions to the public. Transcribed interviews are viewed as the textual version of the communication between informant and interviewer. Viewing these texts as communication implies that the utterances are not attributed to psychic or conscious events, but solely to something, which can be observed as communication.

Communication is not defined in terms of the well-known sender-recipient model of communication, but as a selective event, as the synthesis of three selections, namely the selection of information, the selection of utterance and the selection of understanding (Luhmann, 1995, ch. 4). Communication occurs when I (ego) understand that another (alter) has uttered an information. It is the third selection of understanding that realises the distinction

between information and utterance. The addressee is part of the communication. Communication thus proceeds in such a way that the first selection involves the choice of *information* and the second the choice of *utterance*. The third selection in communication is the choice of *understanding*. First, one party chooses information and utterance followed by the other party choosing understanding, then the other party chooses information and utterance followed by the other party choosing understanding, and so on. The dissemination of communication can occur orally, but this implies the presence of the participants in the communication. Media of dissemination such as writing, print and mass media contribute to increasing the probability of geographically unlikely communication, because they can extend the circle of participants in communication.

Policy documents enable the environment of the political system to observe the political system. Not its consciousness, nor the thoughts it might harbour, but its communicative *mise en scène*, which, among other factors, is also determined by the system's anticipation of possible readers. In the same way, the transcription of an interview facilitates observation of an informant. Not the informant's consciousness in the form of thoughts, emotions and ideas, but that which the informant communicates. Furthermore, one should be aware that observation of the informant includes the informant's observation of the interviewer. Thus, in a concrete sense, the interviewer is anticipated in the informant's communicative selections, and as a result information is conditioned by considerations of the informant's expectations in relation to this type of interview.

Written communication differs from oral communication in a number of ways. Oral communication is characterised by multiple possibilities of selection of information and selection of utterance, while in written communication the selection of message is reduced to text. As a consequence, the factors motivating the message become less interesting, and as far as they are observed at all they are observed as part of the process of interpretation of the text. Oral communication presupposes simultaneity in the generation of the three selections, by contrast, written communication facilitates a postponement of understanding, which results in a tremendous increase in the possibilities of attachment and agreement. This is due to the fact that the person transmitting information does so with a view to a future which is already past for the one seeking to understand the utterance. Since communication involves all three selections, including the selection of understanding, written communication is further characterised by an unavoidable delay. The result is a spatial and temporal disengagement of the communicative components.

Written communication increases uncertainty in relation to understanding the selected meaning, because the running comprehension check of oral communication is difficult or impossible to achieve. This check involves a process whereby the participants in communication continuously test whether their choice has been understood by observing the response of the person they are communicating with, that is to say, through an inspection of whether that which one has said appears to have been understood by the other on the basis of the other's replies. In written communication, this type of check can only occur in a delayed form (for instance in debates in newspapers or journals) or not at all (the author does not reply or might be dead). Furthermore, in the double possibility of directing the selected understanding at either information or message, focus is shifted towards information. Content is accorded a prime position over and above the way in which it is passed on. Finally, and this is perhaps the most important consequence of the use of text, communication in the form of written text can itself become the subject of communication. Thus, the primary aim of textual interpretation is not to contribute to on-going communication with the author, but rather to further continued communication in other contexts.

When communication is viewed as a synthesis of three selections, it is realised once understanding has been accomplished. Understanding is the mark of successful communication. The decisive factor for continued communication is thus not reaching an agreement (*Einverständnis*). We must distinguish between response to continuing communication and acceptance or rejection of it, since agreement, consensus, acceptance or rejection do not form part of a theory of communication, they are behavioural or action categories. Communication may continue as a process despite the fact that no agreement has been reached (Luhmann, 1995, p. 147).

The question that presents itself in relation to the interpretation of texts is thus how understanding a text on the basis of the conception of communication outlined above might be possible. If we follow the logical train of thought above, understanding is also an operation of observation, a specific way of operating. The specific consists of the way self-reference is handled. The interpreter, conceived as a system capable of understanding, observes the text with a view to establishing how the producer of the text handles his self-reference. When reading and interpreting policy documents, for instance, the interpretation is a matter of observing the self-reference of the political system as it finds expression in the communicative selections. The interpreter achieves this by observing how the text producer internally produces his distinctions, the ways in which he asserts himself in the difference

between system and environment for himself. Understanding occurs when the interpreter applies as guiding difference: “*die System/Umwelt-Differenz eines anderen Systems*”¹⁷ (Luhmann, 1986, p. 80). Thus interpretation must re-introduce this separation in itself, and this is only possible on the basis of the interpreter’s own self-reference. Understanding is therefore always system-relative, i.e. relative to the interpreter, in much the same way as any other kind of observation. Of course, the guiding difference, which facilitates understanding as observation, is consequently another system’s system/environment distinction. Understanding is a matter of two re-entries, one involves the system’s own system/environment distinction within the system and the other the observing system’s system/environment distinction. Understanding a text is thus a matter of observing the distinctions employed by the text’s author. Since the words of the text do not transmit meaning to the interpreter but call forth meaning in the interpreter, understanding becomes the result of the interpreter’s internal complexity and the expectations the interpreter brings to the observed on the basis of this. This concept of understanding is explicitly related to the interpreting observer. Everything the interpreter views as understanding constitutes understanding for the interpreter, including misunderstandings.

As a consequence of these considerations, agreement (Einverständnis) becomes an empirical impossibility, as this would imply a state where one consciousness could simultaneously appear via another. When something is deemed to be understood, this does not involve a declaration of agreement. Understanding is the interpreter’s personal achievement, and it is determined by a relation to the interpreter’s own self-reference. This means that all understanding is the expression of a simplification, and that understanding always must be viewed as a solution of the interpreter’s own problems as well. The political system’s understanding of its environment is constructed with a view to solving problems in the political system, in the same way, the scientific system’s understanding of the systems in its environment must be viewed as proposed solutions to problems in that system.

When texts are viewed as communication, interpretation becomes the realisation of the textual communication, but as a selection it is contingent – other ways of understanding are equally viable. Furthermore, it must be stressed that that what is understood is that which is communicated, not the person transmitting the text. Consciousness and communication occur as structural events in psychic and social systems respectively, which due to their operative closure remain impenetrable to each other. Thus textual analysis is not a matter of extricating human, intimate or subjective meaning but solely communicative, self-referentially related events. As a consequence, a criterion of truth such as inter-subjectivity is lost despite the fact that the criterion is supported by the notion of the life-world as common experiential background. A fusion of horizons must also be considered impossible within the theoretical framework of operative constructivism, or perhaps one should rather say that horizon in the sense of agreement becomes a matter of observing differences applied to oneself and others.

To sum up, the analytical approach presented here dispels a number of illusions. Firstly, the illusion of a correspondence between utterances and a real world, between concepts and reality. I do not contest the existence of a world but merely point out that the world is not a given independent of an observer. Secondly, but in extension of this point, the illusion of a privileged vantage point from which observation can take place in our complex modern society is also dispelled. The observer is himself part of the world and thus a part of that which is observed. Thirdly, the illusion of the possibility of making universal or complete utterances about the world is contested. Utterances only concern the segment under observation, and furthermore that which is uttered is contingent. Fourthly, the illusion of the possibility of horizontal fusion and thus the illusion of inter-subjectivity as a criterion of truth is dismissed.

The basic premise is that observation and interpretation are two sides of the same coin. This implies that critique of the results obtained by means of this analytic method must be of an altogether different nature than before, since the critique must be aimed at the distinctions employed, not at the underlying ideology or latent structures. The traditional notion of critique is replaced by a theory of second-order observation, that is to say, observation of the observer, or, more precisely, observation of the distinctions the observer bases his observations on.

Analytic method

Scholarly analysis is applied to the sphere of communication, which implies that the production of knowledge does not involve engaging with a stable “reality” but with communicative descriptions in the form of differences. The approach to “reality” is filtered through the observation of observation. But the researcher who observes observations operates in the same “world” as the one whose differences are being observed; otherwise their observation would not be possible. The researcher does not occupy some privileged position in relation to his field

¹⁷ [the system/environment-difference of another system]

of observation; he too must apply differences and thus make himself subject to blind spots; no observer can observe that which escapes his observation.

Textual analysis therefore becomes a matter of observing the ways in which the producer, be it the political system or an informant, observes in his text. Put more precisely, it is a matter of observing what difference the text applies and designates. One might even go as far as saying that only through the observation of observation, i.e. through textual analysis, does it become possible to identify that which is designated as well as the latent structures of observation, i.e. that which is excluded from the observation and the observation's blind spot (Luhmann, 1991).

Concretely, I propose three steps of textual analysis. The first step involves a reading of the text with a view to observing how specifically selected guiding differences or interpreter's differences are observed in the texts. This observation in itself constitutes an interpretation rather than a description, as was asserted by Ricoeur. Its task is to reduce complexity in the chosen texts. Utterances within the scope of the differences selected by the interpreter are extracted from the text. The second step involves making these utterances the subject of interpretation as an observation of that or those difference(s) employed by the text producer. The third step involves an interpretation of the sum of these differences.

Readings at step one do not occur without assumptions or preconceived ideas. The text is read on the basis of differences selected by the interpreter. The reading of a text is not arbitrary; it is based on consciously selected differences. Reading a text based on these differences makes it possible for the interpreter to observe which differences the text applies in relation to the interpreter's differences. This process is distinguished from a vague observation based on the text's complexity or a completely arbitrary reading.

It is important to note that reading is based on a selection or decision from the outset: that which is observed in a text is that which is looked for, namely that which the differences employed lead the researcher to see. Observations may be performed more or less thoroughly, more or less sensitively, and the observations further depend on the researcher's own understanding of the guiding differences employed. Another reader might very well point out a phenomenon that has been overlooked. Similarly, disagreements might arise between two readers due to differing conceptions of guiding differences. However, it is possible to observe a text again, return to the text, but this too will take place on the basis of a difference. The difference originally selected may be employed again with a view to examining the sensitivity of the first observation or reading, and this will most likely result in a broader, more comprehensive description or a more precise description. Of course, a new difference may be employed, but the result will be a different reading from the first one because one is now looking for something else, and this can bring new or broader knowledge to bear on the chosen field of study.

Readings of policy documents on the basis of the chosen guiding differences make it possible for the researcher to descriptively observe that which is communicated by the text, but one must bear in mind that this sort of description is not divorced from understanding. It constitutes what we might term *comprehending description*, which I, in a paradoxical formulation, choose to call an *empirical construction*. This term is deliberately chosen to underline that empiricism is not to be confused with reality. Observed reality, here policy documents and interviews, is not reality in itself but a constructed reality. The analytic method subscribes to the notion that there is no such thing as pure, objective description since description is always based on a selection or a decision and follows it through to its logical conclusion. This is why I propose to call a descriptive reading by the name of empirical construction. Textual interpretation does not involve a hermeneutic circular movement, since the researcher only has access to a (selective) description based on selected differences.

The next step of the analysis, step two, involves a determination of how the empirical construction is to be designated. Can an utterance such as "contributes to the individual pupil's all-round personal development" be captured in the difference *individualisation*? This question cannot be answered by returning to the text. Whether the description selected on the basis of the difference selected by the interpreter is covered by the selected difference depends on a decision, which must be taken by the research or team of researchers.

The differences selected by the interpreter constitute the blind spots of the research project. They are chosen and taken for granted from the outset, and they are not subjected to further interrogation. If other guiding differences had been chosen, something else would have been observed, something that would differ from that which is observed on the basis of the differences chosen by the interpreter. Observation is only possible if there is an initial difference, be it implicit or explicit. However, the difference chosen by the interpreter determines which

circumstances or phenomena are constructed. If other differences are applied, which of course is feasible, other circumstances or phenomena will be constructed as a result. The application of differences chosen by the interpreter reduces complexity on the one hand at the same time as these render the observer indifferent to other relevant observational differences; one state of affairs is an inevitable consequence of the other.

In step two of the analysis, it makes no sense to trace the results of the interpretative process back to the text. What kind of certainty would that afford the interpreter? If the results are to be examined further, they must be traced back to the selected designations in the form of differences with a view to observing what lies behind the designations. The result of research and interpretative processes is that which has been observed and designated by the researcher as interpreter. I will term this designation a *hypothetical construction*. The point is to facilitate the distinction between observation from a familiar position, corresponding to the differences initially selected, which facilitates analysis in the form of empirical construction, and the development of a new position in the form of hypothetical constructions. Based on the observations at step one, the interpreter hypothesises a designation of these observations. This designation does not constitute the truth about the object of analysis but a qualified interpretation or hypothesis.

Further observation of the hypothetical construction, i.e. those designations employed in relation to the empirical construction, implies observation of the observer, that is to say of the researcher engaged in interpretation with a view to interrogating the designated differences. This type of analysis confronts us with a key problem, namely that the analysis deals with a "reality" that has already shaped itself, already produced a description of itself, and that it is this description that is being analysed, regardless of the fact that something resembling a structure in the form of regularities has been discovered.

Observation at step one constitutes a first order observation, which serves the purpose of selecting data concerning the utterance's selection of information. This data belongs to the class of "what"-utterances in the sense of 'what does the text tell us in relation to the previously selected guiding differences'. At step three, this data, in the form of empirical construction, is examined in a new observation. This observation facilitates a reduction of the data's complexity to an accessible interpretation of the text through the attribution of differences. The attributed differences should thus be conceived as the researcher's interpretation of the constructed empiricism, that is to say observation of the differences employed in policy texts or transcribed interviews.

The attribution of difference requires the application of an explicit apparatus of difference, which makes it possible to check the chosen methodology with a view to uncovering the interpreter's own blind spots, that is to say uncovering that which remains hidden from the researcher's view when he views the visible.

Bibliography:

- Bengtsson, J. (1984). *Husserls erfarenhetsbegrepp och kunskapsideal. Den teoretiska erfarenhetens begränsningar och den praktiska erfarenhetens primat* (Fenomenografiska notiser 1). Gothenburg: Institutionen för pedagogik, Göteborgs universitet.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (1965 (1960)). *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).
- Gadamer, H.-G. (1995 (1960)). *Truth and Method*. New York: Continuum.
- Luhmann, N. (1986). Systeme verstehen Systeme. In N. Luhmann & K. E. Schorr (Eds.), *Zwischen Intranparenz und Verstehen* (pp. 72-117). Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Luhmann, N. (1990). *Essays on Selfreference*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Luhmann, N. (1991). Wie lassen sich latente Strukturen beobachten. In P. Watzlawick & P. Krieg (Eds.), *Das Auge des Betrachters* (pp. 61-74). Munich: Piper.
- Luhmann, N. (1997). *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Luhmann, N. (1995 (1984)). *Social Systems*. (J. Bednarz with D. Baecker, Trans.). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Ricœur, P. (1981 (1970)). *Hermeneutic and the human sciences*. New York: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.
- Schleiermacher, F. D. E. (1977 (1829)). Über der Begriff der Hermeneutik mit Bezug auf F.A: Wolfs Andeutungen und Asts Lehrbuch. In F. D. E Schleiermacher (publ. by Manfred Frank), *Hermeneutik und Kritik* (pp. 309-346). Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Zahavi, D. (1997). *Husserls Fænomenologi*. Copenhagen: Gyldendal.