Hermeneutics

In religious studies and social philosophy, **hermeneutics** (English pronunciation: /hɜrməˈn(j)uːtɨks/) is the study of interpretation theory, and can be either the art of interpretation, or the theory and practice of interpretation. **Traditional hermeneutics**—which includes **Biblical hermeneutics**—refers to the study of the interpretation of written texts, especially texts in the areas of literature, religion and law. Contemporary, or **modern**, hermeneutics encompasses not only issues involving the written text, but everything in the interpretative process. This includes verbal and nonverbal forms of communication as well as prior aspects that affect communication, such as presuppositions, preunderstandings, the meaning and philosophy of language, and semiotics.[1] **Philosophical hermeneutics** refers primarily to Hans-Georg Gadamer's theory of knowledge as developed in *Truth and Method*, and sometimes to Paul Ricoeur.[2] **Hermeneutic consistency** refers to analysis of texts for coherent explanation. A **hermeneutic** (singular) refers to one particular method or strand of interpretation. See also double hermeneutic.

The terms exegesis and hermeneutics are sometimes used interchangeably because exegesis focuses primarily on the written text. Hermeneutics however is a more widely defined discipline of interpretation theory including the entire framework of the interpretive process and, encompassing all forms of communication and expression; written, verbal, artistic, geo-political, physiological, sociological etc.
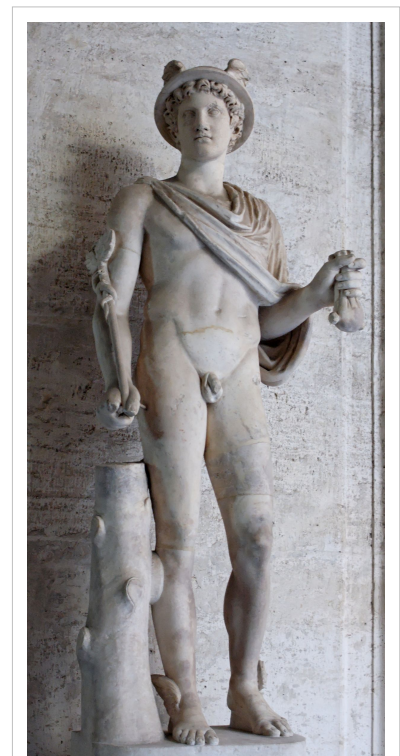
Etymology

The folk etymology places the origin (Greek: hermeneutike) with Hermes, the mythological Greek deity whose role is that of messenger of the Gods.[3] Besides being mediator between the gods themselves, and between the gods and humanity, he leads souls to the underworld upon death. He is also considered the inventor of language and speech, an interpreter, a liar, a thief and a trickster.[4] These multiple roles make Hermes an ideal representative figure for hermeneutics. As Socrates notes, words have the power to reveal or conceal, thus promoting the message in an ambiguous way.[5] The Greek view of language as consisting of signs that could lead to truth or falsehood is the very essence of Hermes, who is said to relish the uneasiness of the recipients.

Early use of the word hermeneutics places it within the boundaries of the sacred.[6] The divine message can only be understood on its own terms, received with implicit uncertainty regarding its truth or falsehood. This ambiguity of message is an irrationality, a sort of madness inflicted upon the receiver. Only one who possesses a rational method of interpretation—an early hermeneutic—could divine the truth or falsehood (thus the sanity) of a statement.[7]

Hermes, messenger of the Gods, the inspiration of the name Hermeneutics.

The traditional etymology of hermeneutics is derived from the Greek word ἑρμηνεύω (*hermeneuō*, 'translate' or 'interpret'), and is of uncertain origin.[8] It was introduced into philosophy mainly through the title of Aristotle's work Περὶ Ἑρμηνείας (*Peri Hermeneias*, 'On Interpretation', more commonly referred by its Latin title *De Interpretatione*). It is one of the earliest (c.360 BC) extant philosophical works in the Western tradition to deal with the relationship between language and logic in a comprehensive, explicit, and formal way.

History

Ancient

In *De Interpretatione*, Aristotle offers an early understanding that lays the groundwork for many contemporary theories of interpretation and semiotics:

> Words spoken are symbols or signs (*symbola*) of affections or impressions (*pathemata*) of the soul (*psyche*); written words are the signs of words spoken.
>
> As writing, so also is speech not the same for all races of men.
>
> But the mental affections themselves, of which these words are primarily signs (*semeia*), are the same for the whole of mankind, as are also the objects (*pragmata*) of which those affections are representations or likenesses, images, copies (*homoiomata*).
>
> —Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, 1.16^{a}4

Equally important to later developments are texts on poetry, rhetoric, and sophistry, including many of Plato's dialogues, such as *Cratylus*, *Ion*, *Gorgias*, *Lesser Hippias*, and *Republic*, along with Aristotle's *Poetics*, *Rhetoric*, and *On Sophistical Refutations*. However, these texts deal more with the presentation and refutation of arguments, speeches and poems rather than the understanding of texts as texts. As Ramberg and Gjesdal note, "Only with the Stoics, and their reflections on the interpretation of myth, do we encounter something like a methodological awareness of the problems of textual understanding."[9]

Some ancient Greek philosophers, particularly Plato, tended to vilify poets and poetry as harmful nonsense—Plato denies entry to poets in his ideal state in *The Republic* until they can prove their value. In the *Ion*, Plato famously portrays poets as possessed:

> You know, none of the epic poets, if they're good, are masters of their subject; they are inspired, possessed, and that is how they utter all those beautiful poems. The same goes for lyric poets if they're good: just as the Corybantes are not in their right minds when they dance, lyric poets, too, are not in their right minds when they make those beautiful lyrics, but as soon as they sail into harmony and rhythm they are possessed by Bacchic frenzy.
>
> —Plato, *Ion*, 533e-534a

The meaning of the poem thus becomes open to ridicule — whatever hints of the truth it may have, the truth is covered by madness. However, another line of thinking arose with Theagenes of Rhegium, who suggested that instead of taking poetry literally, what was expressed in poems were allegories of nature. Stoic philosophers further developed this idea, reading into the poets not only allegories of natural phenomena, but allegories of ethical behavior.

Aristotle differed with his predecessor, Plato, in the worth of poetry. Both saw art as an act of mimesis, but where Plato saw a pale, essentially false imitation in art of reality, Aristotle saw the possibility of truth in imitation. As critic David Richter points out, "for Aristotle, artists must disregard incidental facts to search for deeper universal truths"—instead of being essentially false, poetry may be universally true. (Richter, *The Critical Tradition*, 57.) In the Poetics, Aristotle called both the tragedy and the epic noble, with tragedy serving the essential function of purging strong emotions from the audience through katharsis.

Classical antiquity

Talmudical Hermeneutics

Rabbinical Eras
• Chazal
• Zugot
• Tannaim
• Amoraim
• Savoraim
• Geonim
• Rishonim
• Acharonim

A common use of the word *hermeneutics* refers to a process of scriptural interpretation. Its earliest example is however found not in the written texts, but in the Jewish Oral Tradition dated to the Second Temple era (515 BCE - 70 CE) that later became the Talmud.

Summaries of the principles by which Torah can be interpreted date back at least to Hillel the Elder, although the thirteen principles set forth in the Baraita of Rabbi Ishmael are perhaps the best known. These principles ranged from standard rules of logic (e.g., *a fortiori* argument (known in Hebrew as קל וחומר (*kal v'chomer*))), to more expansive ones, like the rule that a passage could be interpreted by reference to another passage in which the same word appears (Gezerah Shavah). The rabbis did not ascribe equal persuasive power to the various principles.[10]

Traditional Jewish hermeneutics differ from the Greek method in that the rabbis considered the Tanakh (the Jewish bibilical canon) to be without error. Any apparent inconsistencies needed to be understood by careful examination of a given text in the context of other texts. There were different levels of interpretation, some used to arrive at the plain meaning of the text, some that expounded the law given in the text, and others that found secret or mystical levels of understanding.

Biblical Hermeneutics

Biblical hermeneutics is the study of the principles of interpretation concerning the books of the Bible. While Jewish and Christian Biblical hermeneutics have some overlap and dialogue, they have distinctly separate interpretative traditions. The early Patristic traditions of Biblical exegesis have few unifying characteristics in the beginning but tend toward unification in schools of hermeneutical theory.

Apostolic Age

The earliest Christian period of Biblical interpretation is the Apostolic Age. Traditionally it is the period of the Twelve Apostles, dating from the Great Commission until the death of John the Apostle (about 100 CE) Since it is believed that John lived so long and was the last of the twelve to die, there is some overlap between the apostolic age and the first Apostolic Fathers.

The operative hermeneutical principle in the New Testament was prophecy fulfillment. The Gospels, particularly the Gospel of Matthew, make extensive use of the Old Testament for the purposes of demonstrating that Jesus was the Messiah. Examples include Matthew 1:23, 2:15-18, 3:3, 21:42, Mark 1:2-3, 4:12, Luke 3:4-6, 22:37, John 2:17, 12:15, and notably in Luke 4:18-21 and parallels where Jesus read extensively from Isaiah and makes the claim that the prophecy is fulfilled in the crowds hearing it. The Pauline epistles employ the same principle, as evidenced by 1 Corinthians 1:19 and Ephesians 4:8-10, as does Hebrews (see 8:7-13).

Apostolic Fathers

The Apostolic Fathers were students of the Apostles. This period is sometimes called the Sub-apostolic period.

The principle of prophecy fulfillment is carried over from the apostolic age and through the 2nd century. For example, Irenaeus dedicates an entire chapter in *Against Heresies* to the defense of Isaiah 7:14, one of the chief prophecies used to validate Jesus as the Messiah.[11] This is consistent with Irenaeus' general usage. More so than even he, though, the second century apologists tended to interpret and utilize most scripture as being primarily for the purpose of showing prophecy fulfillment. Important among these was Justin Martyr, who made extensive use of scripture to this end. Examples of this usage may be seen in his *Apology* in which chapters 31-53 are specifically dedicated to proving Christ through prophecy. He uses scripture similarly in *Dialogue with Trypho*.

> And when Herod succeeded Archelaus, having received the authority which had been allotted to him, Pilate sent to him by way of compliment Jesus bound; and God foreknowing that this would happen, had thus spoken: 'And they brought Him to the Assyrian, a present to the king.'[12]

Here Justin demonstrates that prophecy fulfillment supersedes logical context in hermeneutics. He ignores the christological issues that arise from equating Jesus to the calf idol of Bethel which is the "him" being brought to the king in Hosea 10:6.

It is likely that the high view of prophecy fulfillment is a product of the circumstance of the early church. The primary goal of early authors was a defense of Christianity against attacks from paganism and Judaism as well as suppressing what were considered schismatic or heretical groups. To this end, Martin Jan Mulder suggests that prophecy fulfillment was the primary hermeneutical method because Roman society had a high view of both antiquity and oracles.[13] By using the *Old Testament* (a term linked with Supersessionism) to validate Jesus, Early Christians sought to tap into both the oracles of the prophets and the antiquity of the Jewish scriptures.

Late Antiquity

Two divergent schools of thought emerged during this period which spans from 200 CE to the medieval period. Historians however divide this period into the Ante-Nicene Period and First seven Ecumenical Councils).

Schools of Alexandria and Antioch

Beginning as early as the third century, Christian hermeneutics began to split into two primary schools: Alexandria and Antioch. The Alexandrian Biblical interpretations stressed allegorical readings, frequently at the expense of the texts' literal meaning. Primary figures in this school included Origen and Clement of Alexandria. The Antiochene school stressed instead the more literal and historical meaning of the text. Theodore of Mopsuestia and Diodore of Tarsus were the primary figures in the Antiochene school.

Ante-Nicene Period

The **Ante-Nicene Period** (literally meaning "before Nicaea"), or **Post-Apostolic Period**, of the history of early Christianity spanned the late 1st century to the early 4th century, with the end marked by the First Council of Nicaea in 325. Christianity during this time was extremely diverse, with many developments difficult to trace and follow. There is also a relative paucity of available material and this period is less studied than the preceding Apostolic Age and historical ages following it. Nevertheless, this portion of Christianity history is important, having a significant impact on the development of Christianity.

First seven Ecumenical Councils

This era begins with the First Council of Nicaea, which enunciated the Nicene Creed that in its original form and as modified by the First Council of Constantinople of 381 was seen as the touchstone of orthodoxy on the doctrine of the Trinity.

The **first seven Ecumenical Councils**, from the First Council of Nicaea (325) to the Second Council of Nicaea (787), represent an attempt to reach an orthodox consensus and to establish a unified Christendom as the State church of the Roman Empire.

The first scholar to consider this time period as a whole was Philip Schaff, who wrote *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church* [14], first published after his death in 1901. The topic is of particular interest to proponents of Paleo-orthodoxy who seek to recover the church before the schisms.

Medieval

Medieval Christian interpretations of text incorporated exegesis into a fourfold mode that emphasized the distinction between the letter and the spirit of the text.

This schema was based on the various ways of interpreting the text utilized by the Patristic writers. The literal sense (*sensus historicus*) of Scripture denotes what the text states or reports directly. The allegorical sense (*sensus allegoricus*) explains the text with regard to the doctrinal content of church dogma, so that each literal element has a symbolic meaning, see also Typology (theology). The moral application of the text to the individual reader or hearer is the third sense, the *sensus tropologicus* or *sensus moralis*, while a fourth level of meaning, the *sensus anagogicus*, draws out of the text the implicit allusions it contains to secret metaphysical and eschatological knowledge, or *gnosis*.

> The hermeneutical terminology used here is in part arbitrary. For almost all three interpretations which go beyond the literal explanations are in a general sense "allegorical". The practical application of these three aspects of spiritual interpretation varied considerably. Most of the time, the fourfold sense of the Scriptures was used only partially, dependent upon the content of the text and the idea of the exegete.... We can easily notice that the basic structure is in fact a twofold sense of the Scriptures, that is, the distinction between the *sensus literalis* and the *sensus spiritualis* or *mysticus*, and that the number four was derived from a restrictive systematization of the numerous possibilities which existed for the *sensus spiritualis* into three interpretive dimensions.
> __[15]

Hermeneutics in the Middle Ages witnessed the proliferation of non-literal interpretations of the Bible. Christian commentators could read Old Testament narratives *simultaneously* as prefigurations of analogous New Testament episodes, as symbolic lessons about Church institutions and current teachings, and as personally applicable allegories of the Spirit. In each case, the meaning of the signs was constrained by imputing a particular intention to the Bible, such as teaching morality, but these interpretive bases were posited by the religious tradition rather than suggested by a preliminary reading of the text.

The customary medieval exegetical technique commented on the text in *glossae* ("glosses" or annotations) written between the lines and at the side of the text which was left with wide margins for this very purpose. The text might be further commented on in *scholia* which are long, exegetical passages, often on a separate page.

A similar fourfold categorization is also found in Rabbinic writings. The fourfold categorizations are: *Peshat* (simple interpretation), *Remez* (allusion), *Derash* (interpretive), and *Sod* (secret/mystical). It is uncertain whether or not the Rabbinic division of interpretation pre-dates the Patristic version. The medieval period saw the growth of many new categories of Rabbinic interpretation and explanation of the Torah, including the emergence of Kabbalah and the writings of Maimonides.

Modern

The discipline of hermeneutics emerged with the new humanist education of the 15th century as a historical and critical methodology for analyzing texts. In a triumph of early modern hermeneutics, the Italian humanist Lorenzo Valla proved in 1440 that the "Donation of Constantine" was a forgery, through intrinsic evidence of the text itself. Thus hermeneutics expanded from its medieval role explaining the correct analysis of the Bible.

However, Biblical hermeneutics did not die off. For example, the Protestant Reformation brought about a renewed interest in the interpretation of the Bible, which took a step away from the interpretive tradition developed during the Middle Ages back to the texts themselves. Luther and Calvin emphasized *scriptura sui ipsius interpres*. Especially Calvin used *brevitas et facilitas* as an aspect of theological hermeneutics.

The rationalist Enlightenment led hermeneuts, especially Protestant exegetes, to view Scriptural texts as secular Classical texts. Scripture thus was interpreted as responses to historical or social forces, so that apparent contradictions and difficult passages in the New Testament, for example, might be clarified by comparing their possible meanings with contemporaneous Christian practices.

Schleiermacher

Friedrich Schleiermacher (November 21, 1768 – February 12, 1834) explored the nature of understanding in relation not just to the problem of deciphering sacred texts, but to all human texts and modes of communication. The interpretation of a text must proceed by framing the content asserted in terms of the overall organization of the work. He distinguishes between grammatical interpretation and psychological interpretation. The former studies how a work is composed from general ideas, the latter considers the peculiar combinations that characterize the work as a whole. Schleiermacher said that every problem of interpretation is a problem of understanding. He even defined hermeneutics as the art of avoiding misunderstanding. He provides a solution to avoidance of misunderstanding: knowledge of grammatical and psychological laws in trying to understand the text and the writer. There arose in his time a fundamental shift from understanding not only the exact words and their objective meaning to individuality of the speaker or author.[16] [9]

Dilthey

Wilhelm Dilthey[17] broadened hermeneutics even more by relating interpretation to all historical objectifications. Understanding moves from the outer manifestations of human action and productivity to explore their inner meaning. In his last important essay "The Understanding of Others and Their Manifestations of Life" (1910), Dilthey makes it clear that this move from outer to inner, from expression to what is expressed, is not based on empathy. Empathy involves a direct identification with the other. Interpretation involves an indirect or mediated understanding that can only be attained by placing human expressions in their historical context. Understanding is not a process of reconstructing the state of mind of the author, but one of articulating what is expressed in the work.

Dilthey divides the spiritual sciences into 3 structural levels: experience, expression, and comprehension. Experience means to feel the situation or thing personally. Dilthey suggests that we can always grasp the meaning of unknown thinking when we try to experience it. Dilthey's understanding of experience is very similar to Husserl's. Expression converts experience into meaning because when we express something it is no more a private and personal thing but an appeal to somebody outside of oneself. Every saying is an expression. Dilthey suggests that we can always return to an expression, especially its written form, and this practice has the same objective value as an experiment in sciences. The possibility of returning makes scientific analysis possible and therefore humanities may be labeled as science. Moreover, Dilthey assumes that expression may be "saying" more than the speaker intended because the expression brings forward meanings that the individual conscience may not fully understand. The last structural level of spiritual sciences according to Dilthey is comprehension, which in Dilthey's context is a dimension which contains both comprehension and incomprehension. Incomprehension means more or less wrong understanding. Dilthey presumes that comprehension produces coexistence: He who understands, understand others; he who does not

understand stays alone. According to Gadamer, Dilthey thought that we should decode our historical past, but he did not think about personal history.

20th Century

Heidegger

Since Dilthey, the discipline of hermeneutics has detached itself from this central task and broadened its spectrum to all texts, including multimedia and to understanding the bases of meaning.[18] In the 20th century, Martin Heidegger's philosophical hermeneutics shifted the focus from interpretation to existential understanding, which was treated more as a direct, non-mediated, thus in a sense more authentic way of being in the world than simply as a way of knowing.

Advocates of this approach claim that such texts, and the people who produce them, cannot be studied using the same scientific methods as the natural sciences, thus use arguments similar to that of antipositivism. Moreover, they claim that such texts are conventionalized expressions of the experience of the author; thus, the interpretation of such texts will reveal something about the social context in which they were formed, but, more significantly, provide the reader with a means to share the experiences of the author. The reciprocity between text and context is part of what Heidegger called the hermeneutic circle. Among the key thinkers who elaborated this approach is the sociologist Max Weber.

Contemporary

Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics is a development of the hermeneutics of his teacher, Heidegger. Gadamer asserts that methodical contemplation is opposite to experience and reflection. We can reach the truth only by understanding or even mastering our experience. According to Gadamer, experience isn't fixed but rather changing and always indicating new perspectives. The most important thing is to unfold what constitutes individual comprehension. Gadamer points out in this context that prejudice is a (nonfixed) reflection of that unfolding comprehension, and is not *per se* without value. Being alien to a particular tradition is a condition of understanding. Gadamer points out that we can never step outside of our tradition; all we can do is try to understand it. This further elaborates the idea of the hermeneutic circle.

Paul Ricoeur developed a hermeneutics based on Heidegger's concepts, although his own work differs in many ways from that of Gadamer.

Andrés Ortíz-Osés has developed his Symbolic Hermeneutics as the Mediterranean response to north European Hermeneutics. His main statement regarding the symbolic understanding of the world is that the meaning is the symbolic healing of the real injury.

Bernard Lonergan's hermeneutics is less well-known, but in a series of masterly articles, Fred Lawrence has outlined a case for considering his work as the culmination and achievement of the postmodern hermeneutical revolution that began with Heidegger.[19]

Karl-Otto Apel elaborated a hermeneutics based on American semiotics, and applies his model to discourse ethics with political motivations akin to critical theory. Mauricio Beuchot coined the term and discipline of 'analogic hermeneutics', to refer to a particular kind of hermeneutics based on interpretation that takes into account the plurality of aspects of meaning. He draws categories both from analytic and continental philosophy, as well as from the history of thought. Important hermeneutic scholars include Jean Grondin, Maurizio Ferraris, and Ambrosio Velasco.

Critical theory

Jürgen Habermas criticized the conservatism of previous hermeneutics, especially Gadamer, because the focus on tradition seemed to undermine possibilities for social criticism and transformation. Habermas also criticized Marxism and previous members of the Frankfurt School for missing the hermeneutical dimension of critical theory. Habermas incorporated the notion of the lifeworld and emphasized the importance of both interaction and communication as well as labor and production for social theory. For Habermas, hermeneutics is one dimension of critical social theory.

Application

Archaeology

In archaeology, hermeneutics means the interpretation and understanding of material by analyzing possible meanings or social use. Proponents argue that interpretation of artifacts is unavoidably hermeneutic as we cannot know for certain the meaning behind them, instead we can only apply modern value in the interpretation. This is most common in stone tools, for example, where using descriptions such as "scraper" can be highly subjective and unproven. Opponents claim that a hermeneutic approach is too relativist and that their own interpretations are based on common-sense evaluation.

Architecture

Though the interpretation of buildings is clearly of abiding interest, there are several traditions of architectural scholarship that draw explicitly on the hermeneutics of Heidegger and Gadamer. Of note is the work of Lindsay Jones[20] on the way architecture is received and how that reception changes over time and according to context, i.e. how a building is interpreted by critics, users, historians, etc. Dalibor Vesely situates hermeneutics within a critique of the application of overly-scientific thinking to architecture.[21] This tradition fits within a critique of the Enlightenment,[22] but it has also informed design studio teaching. Snodgrass values historical study and the study of Asian cultures by architects as hermeneutical encounters with otherness .[23] He also deploys arguments from hermeneutics to explain design as a process of interpretation.[24] With Richard Coyne he extends the argument to a consideration of the nature of architectural education and design as a way of thinking.[25] The latter also expands to a consideration of the use of computers in design.[26]

International relations

Insofar as hermeneutics is a cornerstone of both critical theory and constitutive theory, both of which have made important inroads into the postpositivist branch of international relations theory and political science, hermeneutics has been applied to international relations (IR). Steve Smith refers to hermeneutics as the principal way of grounding a foundationalist yet postpositivist IR theory such as critical theory. Radical postmodernism is an example of a postpositivist yet anti-foundationalist IR paradigm.

Law

Some scholars argue that law and theology constitute particular forms of hermeneutics because of their need to interpret legal tradition / scriptural texts. Moreover, the problem of interpretation is central to legal theory at least since the 11th century. In the Middle Ages and Renaissance, the schools of *glossatores*, *commentatores* and *usus modernus* distinguished themselves by their approach to the interpretation of "laws" (mainly, Justinian's Corpus Iuris Civilis). The University of Bologna gave birth to a "legal Renaissance" in the 11th century, when the Corpus Iuris Civilis was rediscovered and started to be systematically studied by people like Irnerius and Gratianus. It was an interpretative Renaissance. After that, interpretation has always been at the center of legal thought. Savigny and Betti, among others, made significant contributions also to general hermeneutics. Legal interpretivism, most

famously Ronald Dworkin's, might be seen as a branch of philosophical hermeneutics.

Psychology

Similarly to computer scientists, psychologists have recently become interested in hermeneutics, especially as alternatives to Cognitivism. Hubert Dreyfus' critique of conventional artificial intelligence has been influential not only in AI but in psychology, and psychologists are increasingly interested in hermeneutic approaches to meaning and interpretation as discussed by philosophers such as Heidegger (cf Embodied cognition) and the later Wittgenstein (cf discursive psychology). Hermeneutics is also influential in Humanistic Psychology.[27]

Religion and theology

The process by which theological texts are understood relies on a particular hermeneutical viewpoint. Theorists like Paul Ricoeur have applied modern philosophical hermeneutics to theological texts (in Ricoeur's case, the Bible).

Safety science

In the field of Safety Science, especially the study of Human Error, scientists have become increasingly interested in hermeneutic approaches. It has been proposed by the ergonomist Donald Taylor that mechanist models of human behaviour will only take us so far in terms of accident reduction, and that safety science must look at the *meaning* of accidents for conscious human beings.[28] Other scholars in the field have attempted to create safety taxonomies that make use of hermeneutic concepts, in terms of their categorisation of qualitative data.[29]

Sociology

In sociology, hermeneutics means the interpretation and understanding of social events by analysing their meanings to the human participants and their culture. It enjoyed prominence during the sixties and seventies, and differs from other interpretative schools of sociology in that it emphasizes the importance of the context[30] as well as the form of any given social behaviour. The central principle of hermeneutics is that it is only possible to grasp the meaning of an action or statement by relating it to the whole discourse or world-view from which it originates: for instance, putting a piece of paper in a box might be considered a meaningless action unless put in the context of democratic elections, and the action of putting a ballot paper in a box. One can frequently find reference to the 'hermeneutic circle': that is, relating the whole to the part and the part to the whole. Hermeneutics in sociology was most heavily influenced by German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer.[31]

The field of marketing has adopted this term from sociology, using the term to refer to qualitative studies in which interviews with (or other forms of text from) one or a small number of people are closely read, analyzed, and interpreted.

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[10] see, e.g., Rambam Hilkhot Talmud Torah 4:8

[11] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III.21, http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.ix.iv.xxii.html?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=22&scrV=24#ix.iv. xxii-p34.1, see also as examples II.34 and IV.9

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External links

- Meta: Research in Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, and Practical Philosophy (http://www.metajournal.org/display_page.php?title=home) International peer-reviewed journal
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- Law and Hermeneutics in Rabbinic Jurisprudence: A Maimonidean Perspective (http://faur.derushah.com/articlesbyhakhamjosefaur.html#law) by Jose Faur, describing the legal theory and hermeneutical process in rabbinic jurisprudence
- Abductive Inference and Literary Theory – Pragmatism, Hermeneutics and Semiotics (http://www.digitalpeirce.fee.unicamp.br/p-infwir.htm) written by Uwe Wirth (http://www.digitalpeirce.fee.unicamp.br/wirth.htm)

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