

Biohermeneutics and hermeneutics of biology

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Introduction: From semiotics backward to the hermeneutics of biology

There is a domain in modern biology, which, being regarded from the point of view of semiotics, is usually defined as biosemiotics (Hoffmeyer 1996; Sebeok 1972; Sebeok and Umiker-Sebeok 1992; Stepanov 1971; Sharov 1990).

But first, let me state that in the cultural tradition there are at least five different ways to conceive sign-like structures (Table 1, after Chebanov and Martynenko 1990a, b), semiotics being only one of them. And second, modern semiotic studies of language in man, actually considering the unity of communicative and cognitive phenomena in their broad actual context — this is what I mean by ‘pragma-linguistics’ (Susov 1983) — come very close to the hermeneutic approach (Chebanov and Martynenko 1990b). That is why I find sufficient reason to qualify the domain of biology I have mentioned above as biohermeneutics (in the broad sense), which includes biohermeneutics *stricto sensu* and the hermeneutics of biology (Chebanov 1993, 1994, 1995, 1998; Martynenko and Chebanov 1998; cf. Boden 1985).

The basic concept for the investigation I am exposing here is ‘enlogue’ (Chebanov 1984, 1995; Russo and Chebanov 1988). The enlogue can be interpreted as quasi-dialogue taking place in quasipersonal situations when the participants have no such rational means of communication as, for instance, natural language: take the interaction between a living being (LB) and a sensible being (SB, i.e., biologist) — the interaction is not verbal, though obviously generates some information in the SB.

Biohermeneutics: Semiotic means in living being

The status of biohermeneutics

Biohermeneutics studies the semiotic aspect of LB as the centaurus-object (after G. P. Shchedrovitsky — Chebanov 1988; Shchedrovitsky 1995). The