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**The Origins of Cultural-Historical Epistemology  
in the Works of G.G. Shpet**

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## INTRODUCTION

### *Research relevance*

The focus of the actual research is theory of knowledge in Gustav Gustavovich Shpet's philosophy. It became one of the main sources of cultural-historical epistemology project in the end of the XXth century<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of analyzing historical-philosophical succession of thought – in our case it is Gustav Shpet's ideas on nature, mechanisms and “logic of cognition”<sup>2</sup> and their interpretation in the works of contemporary cultural-historical epistemologists – becomes especially relevant in the context of epistemological thought practices and studies transformations<sup>3</sup> that took place by the turn of the XXth and XXIst centuries. Cultural-historical epistemology is a special orientation of methodological search in the philosophy of cognition domain. Its representatives see the necessity of search and elaboration of a general basis for the dialogue between developing the tradition and competing epistemological approaches as their main goal. “Positive” (*polozhitel'naya*) interpretation of philosophy by Gustav Shpet in the optics of cultural-historical epistemology transforms in a significant theoretical part of the whole project. The theoretical and practical research relevance of the dissertation becomes clearer as we address the actual condition of the approaches that do resolve their philosophical tasks in the framework of the goals and practices of epistemological mode of thinking. A claim

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<sup>1</sup> Pruzhinin, B.I., Shchedrina, T.G. 2021. Cultural-historical Epistemology and the Perspective of the Philosophy of Science, *Epistemology & Philosophy of Science*, vol. 58, no. 5, pp. 21-23. (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Gustav Shpet preferred to use exactly this expression “logic of cognition” (*logika poznaniya*) for describing the problems that nowadays are understood as epistemological ones. For this reason, we use this term in our investigation. Its content and meaning are more distinctly defined throughout the text.

<sup>3</sup> Pruzhinin, B.I., Shchedrina, T.G. 2022. Foreword. In: *Cultural-historical Dimension of Modern Science*, ed. by Pruzhinin, B.I., Shchedrina, T.G., Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, Belgorod, p. 7. (in Russian).

of the methodology of cognition's logic disclosure, that will later allow to reach the declared goals (they could substantially differ due to the direction which we talk about, but at the level of the subject of analysis there are more similarities than differences between them), is often based on addressing the history of philosophy. An appeal to the history of philosophy in these cases does not have just a declarative or even decorative character but acts as a source of inspiration and succession of certain thought traditions. From our point of view this could detect one of the mechanisms of thought's work, its succession, that will be discussed in its place. First of all, we analyze why Gustav Shpet concerned theory of knowledge as a starting point of philosophy, its content core, as well as how Gustav Shpet's legacy was understood and used in the construction of cultural-historical epistemologists' project. A clear articulation of Shpet's epistemological interests and the results that he obtained are necessary to have a basis for comparison his ideas and their interpretation in the tradition of cultural-historical epistemology.

According to the opinion of the leading Russian and Western epistemologists the actual condition of philosophical epistemology that formed in the 70's of the XXth century must be described and analyzed as a crisis one<sup>4</sup>. Not

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<sup>4</sup> For more details see: Mikeshina, L.A. 2018. *Contemporary Epistemology of Humanitarian Knowledge: Interdisciplinary Syntheses*, Moscow, Political Encyclopedia. (in Russian); Pruzhinin, B.I., Avtonomova, N.S., Bazhanov, V.A., Grifsova, I.N., Kasavin, I.T., Knyazev, V.N., Lektorsky, V.A., Makhlin, V.L., Mikeshina, L.A., Ol'khov, P.A., Porus, V.N., Sorina, G.V., Filatov, V.P., Shchedrina, T.G. 2016. "The Dignity of Knowledge as a Problem of Modern Epistemology". Round-table materials, *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 6. (in Russian); Lektorsky, V.A., Avtonomova, N.S., Chertkova, E.L., Dubrovsky, D.I., Filatov, V.P., Ivanov, D.V., Kasavin, I.T., Katunin, A.V., Kuznetsova, N.I., Levin, G.D., Pirozhkova, S.V., Porus, V.N., Pruzhinin, B.I., Smirnova, N.M., Trufanova, E.O., Zagidulin, Zh.K. 2018. Actual Tendencies of Epistemology's Development (round-table materials), *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 10. (in Russian); Kasavin, I.T., Porus, V.N. 2018. Contemporary Epistemology and Its Critics: about Crises and Perspectives, *Epistemology & Philosophy of Science*, vol. 55, no. 4. (in Russian); Pruzhinin, B.I. 2009. *Ratio serviens? Outlines of Cultural-historical Epistemology*, Moscow, ROSSPEN, p. 93.

going into details what was the real disposition of things in that period – several researchers question the “crisis” in the theory of knowledge<sup>5</sup> by attributing its existence to contemporary performative strategies – the thought on epistemology’s shutdown as a meaningful, relevant and unified philosophical entertainment became a fact of philosophical discursive practice on science. Up until today this view structures many conducted research. In our analysis with full attention to the reception of Gustav Shpet’s ideas in the tradition of cultural-historical epistemology we will undertake an attempt to show which inner mechanisms and philosophical logic could stand behind the discourse of the mentioned crisis in epistemology. This task actualizes a widespread approach that already became legitimate according to which it is necessary to explicit historical-philosophical logic that stands behind the conducted research. Thus, as a working hypothesis with a few reservations we take a presupposition about “crisis” in epistemology. Since in the basis of our analysis are practices of philosophical comparativistics the existence of the “crisis” is undoubtful because it is relevant both for cultural-historical epistemology and Gustav Shpet. The philosopher wrote a lot about the dominance of “negative” (*otritsatel’nye*), “adverse” and “privative” tendencies in contemporary philosophy. It is of principal importance that these categories keep their relevance in the tradition of cultural-historical epistemology. Moreover, Gustav Shpet’s thought, notwithstanding meaningful terminological differences from the standards of the nowadays philosophy, could be interpreted and read as a reaction of the crisis (in his understanding) processes that foremost concern the unity of philosophy. The dissertation shows that in the basis of this reaction were the *logic* of cognition and epistemological interest. All this pulls together Gustav Shpet’s theory not only with contemporaneity in the interpretation of cultural-

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(in Russian); MacIntyre A. 1977. Epistemological Crisis, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science, *The Monist*, vol. 60, iss. 4, pp. 453-455.

<sup>5</sup> Kasavin, I.T., Porus, V.N. 2018. Contemporary Epistemology and Its Critics: about Crises and Perspectives, *Epistemology & Philosophy of Science*, vol. 55, no. 4, pp. 9-13. (in Russian).

historical epistemologists, that we write research on, but allows to speak about a broader relevance of Russian thinker's philosophical legacy.

It is important that the theory of knowledge, that was historically based on the philosophical instrumentation and philosophical logic, ceases to use the achievements of philosophical thought. It also changes its goal. This happens according to several reasons that could hardly be concerned as value-neutral and not having consequences in modern science and culture<sup>6</sup>. In Gustav Shpet's interpretation the loss of the cognition value's philosophical understanding threatens if not a complete reject of its entity but at least its decline and transformation in the negative phase of its development. First of all, a number of classical ideas and concepts of philosophy were pushed back on the periphery of methodological conscience of science in the course of growing fragmentation, sociologisation and formal mathematization of normative knowledge<sup>7</sup>. A will to elude "assessments" and "surplus contexts" in judgements and analysis leads to the condition, where just a certain and defined number of questions could be addressed to epistemologists, and it does not really matter how relevant they are to the subject of the research. As a result, it impoverishes not only philosophy but the culture as well. One of the critical tasks of cultural-historical epistemology's approach becomes a call for the restitution of philosophical practices of self-descriptions of the subject and his modes of cognition, of which this subject is a part. The latter are understood as an important part of the research. As they cannot

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<sup>6</sup> Denn, M., Pruzhinin, B.I., Shchedrina, T.G., Sineolaya, Yu.V. 2016. Gustav Shpet and Lev Shestov: Friends and Antipodes (the Two Interpretations of Edmund Husserl's Phenomenology), *Philosophy Journal*, vol. 9, no. 4, p. 180. (in Russian).

<sup>7</sup> Mikeshina, L.A. 2010. *The Dialogue of Cognitive Practices. From the History of Epistemology and Philosophy of Science*, Moscow, ROSSPEN, pp. 84, 328-330. (in Russian); Mamchur, E.A. 2001. Whether We are Present at the Crisis of Physical Knowledge Paradigm's Foundation, *Philosophy of Science*, Moscow, iss. 7, p. 6. (in Russian); Balzer, W., Sneed, J.D., Moulines, C.U. 2000. *Structural Knowledge Representation*, Amsterdam–Atlanta, Rodopi; Pruzhinin, B.I., Shchedrina, T.G. (eds.) 2022. *Cultural-historical Dimension of Modern Science*, Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, Belgorod, Center for Humanities' Initiatives. (in Russian).

be defined simply in terms that have cultural-historical or *social* (in Gustav Shpet's understanding) dimension, the historical genesis of this big structures that born the strategies of self-description and legitimation of actions, has to be a subject of analysis but not just critique. Otherwise, the principle of impartiality of scientific or philosophical cognition is violated and epistemology becomes a project of normative transformation of thought of scientists and philosophers. A perspective of this Shpet's methodological novation goes further than the borders of epistemological ideas' universum. According to his indication of the impossibility to eliminate cultural and social layers of being the very possibility of impartial talk about subject is called into question. Instead, the actor of the process of cognition (and philosophizing) is always a concrete person, whose values and self-understanding have a decisive meaning. For Gustav Shpet it is even more important as he analyzes cognition as a concrete phenomenon in history that was formed and invented in the framework of philosophy.

Based on the above we can formulate a thesis according to which a contemporary understanding of epistemology is to a large extent contrary to the goals of philosophy (that stood at its beginning). Several approaches in contemporary epistemology do not believe necessary or even possible to use the described in the tradition mechanisms of cognition not only in the elaboration of new methodological strategies but even as a starting point for the reflection of its own condition. From a logical point of view this *coupure* could be legitimate if it goes about a whole-new and independent project in the cognition, but a fixation of this fact requires a special historical-philosophical investigation and methodological justification. It must be shown that new "philosophical" practices of reflection lost their connection with concrete-historical tradition of philosophical thinking. Burden of the proof in this case lays not on the sides of discussion but is a task of epistemology in general, because it goes about a general conceptual framework of contemporary philosophy of science. Cultural-historical epistemology acts not as a normative approach, but primarily as a methodological setup, that questions the foundations of studies-like and sociologically designed

methodological approaches. In this context cultural-historical epistemology as a project of philosophical theory of knowledge is an actual direction in contemporary philosophical thought which heuristic potential requires a thoughtful estimation. For the understanding of its tasks and sense we need historically and philosophically analyze the ideas that are in the basis of cultural-historical epistemologists intuitions. As a special attention to the sources of philosophical inspiration of the analyzed thought, this phenomenon belongs to methodological principles of cultural-historical epistemology, whether it is crucial to actualize its foundations.

Gustav Shpet's legacy, his understanding of positive (*polozhitel'naya*) philosophy<sup>8</sup>, "historical philosophy" and elaborated hermeneutical principles<sup>9</sup> were in the basis of cultural-historical epistemology's philosophical grounding. The "logic of cognition" of Gustav Shpet's historical philosophy became a prototype of cultural-historical epistemology methodological practices. The term "logic of cognition" will be often seen on the pages of this manuscript; thus, its meaning and genesis must be clarified. As a "logic of cognition" Shpet understands a complex of cognitional principles and practices that was historically born in the framework of Western rationality and philosophy. According to the philosopher's opinion its main principles (an installation on theoretical cognition, the importance of research, historicism of thinking etc., that is analyzed in detail in our research) remain their meaning and importance. Strictly speaking, if we will try to detect an articulated theory of knowledge in Gustav Shpet's works, our attempt will fall

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<sup>8</sup> Demin, I.V. 2019. Gustav Shpet's Hermeneutical Phenomenology: on the Road to Positive (*polozhitel'naya*) Philosophy of History, *Vestnik of Northern (Arctic) Federal University. Humanitarian and Social Sciences*, no. 2, p. 105. (in Russian); Kuznetsov, V.G. 2014. Hermeneutical Phenomenology and Gustav Gustavovich Shpet's Positive (*polozhitel'naya*) philosophy. In: *Gustav Gustavovich Shpet*, ed. by T.G. Shchedrina, Moscow, ROSSPEN, p. 168. (in Russian).

<sup>9</sup> Makhlin, V.L. 2009. *The Second Consciousness: The Approaches to Humanitarian Epistemology*, Moscow, Znack, p. 441, 466. (in Russian).



short: the general framework of Gustav Shpet's thinking did not presuppose a discrete description of his "epistemological theory" similar to what we can find in contemporary compendiums to philosophy or in the works of the philosophers that tend to a strict categorization of their thought. It seems that this differences and structuring of philosophical approaches is a way of interpretation – in a Wolf-Kantian mode of tradition – the legacy of thought, but not its natural and unquestioned form of existence. Correspondingly the fact that Gustav Shpet elaborated the philosophical principles of cognition must be shown with the help of history of philosophy's methodology and apparatus.

An appeal to Gustav Shpet's works in the last few decades must be defined as a significant part of Russian and partially Western historical-philosophical thought<sup>10</sup>. This is probably connected with the popularity of phenomenological investigations, hermeneutical research, and a general interest to the early-Soviet period thought. But the results of Gustav Shpet's thought analysis show that his philosophy goes deeper than just commonly attributed to it significant results in the development of a variety of directions. Perhaps this attribution goes valid without remarks only for the philosophy of language. Due to historical reasons Gustav Shpet's philosophy, that was a center of his era's reflection and presented a perfect example of philosophical history of philosophy, had a limited possibility of further influence. Gustav Shpet's institutional success on the position of the first Head ("*Direktor*") of the Institute of Scientific Philosophy of Russian Academy of Sciences did not receive development, and the atmosphere of a free opinion change and the possibility of conducting the discussions inside the country dramatically shrink every day during the 20's and 30's of the XXth century. Unfortunately, Gustav Shpet's life came to an end tragically. In 1937, when he was 58, he was executed.

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<sup>10</sup> Mjør, K.J. Philosophy, Modernity and National Identity: The Quest for a Russian Philosophy at the Turn of the Twentieth Century, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 92, no. 4, p. 626.

A conceptualized analysis of Gustav Shpet's thought allows to say that several philosopher's ideas on the tendencies of philosophy could be relevant for a better understanding of the actual agenda and the tasks and challenges that faces philosophy of cognition. On the historical-philosophical level it determines another component of the relevance of the conducted research: a thematical reconstruction of epistemological and methodological argumentation of Gustav Shpet's philosophy in the context of contemporary theory of cognition. It is necessary to understand the actual discussion in the field of methodology<sup>11</sup>. Just like social philosophers and sociologists appreciate the observations and analysis of the classics whose thought, it may seem, could not be directly attributed to the actual processes, a range of Gustav Shpet's findings and thoughts should be considered in a similar serious way. In the basis of this approach lays the fact that despite specific for the beginning of the XXth century language, which used Shpet, the distance between his and our time is not unbridgeable: moreover, exactly the events in the intellectual life of the beginning of the XXth century may be considered as a period that formed the general directions of disciplinary development, in the framework of which the universum of scientific knowledge exists today. To top it all the practice of tracing the genesis and interpretations of Russian philosopher's ideas may serve as an illustration of the cultural-historical epistemology's methodology functioning.

Gustav Shpet's thought always develops itself and then reveals to an observer in a critical dialogue with neo-Kantians, Husserl's interpretation of phenomenology, positivism. As a passionate thinker and a refined connoisseur of the history of philosophy, Gustav Shpet captured the mindset of the 10's and 20's of the XXth century, as well as the dynamic of philosophical history that engendered them. He gave it all his critical assessment from the perspective of his own philosophical view on the aims and regularities of the history of philosophy. It is acceptable to speak about Shpet's work about a creation of a philosophy of the

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<sup>11</sup> Mikeshina, L.A. 2010. *The Dialogue of Cognitive Practices. From the History of Epistemology and Philosophy of Science*, Moscow, ROSSPEN, p 340. (in Russian).

history of philosophy. He elaborated his original universal scheme, that made it possible to map various approaches. For Gustav Shpet the history of philosophy develops through the dialogue of “negative” (*otritsatel'naya*) and “positive” (*polozhitel'naya*) philosophy, each stage of which forms its own specific mode of thinking and mental tension, that allows each era to live through its thought independently and by doing so to enjoy the fruits that it can produce.

This general framework did not obscure the task of concrete analysis that should be considered a scientific, correct and valuable among others according to the contemporary requirements that became standard for actual historical-philosophical research. In the context of contemporary philosophy and theory of knowledge his thought becomes even more actual since exactly in the years of Shpet's creative writing a vector of philosophical practices' fragmentation was formed. It peaked in the contemporaneity and the theory of knowledge lost its role in a general project of building the disciplines that examine the sense of human life<sup>12</sup>. Shpet was not only an enthusiastic witness of scientific method achievements in linguistics, psychology, or natural sciences, but he was an included observer of the process of dephilosophisation of these areas. Gustav Gustavovich believed that this is temporary a stage in privativistic approach domination and the philosophy as an integrated component of Western (understood as a concrete cultural-historical phenomenon) rationality could and should be restituted in its own rights. This was one of the main goals that Shpet pursued in his polemics. The same goal is nowadays postulated by cultural-historical epistemology. If we turn to a broader context of thought, we could argue that contemporary epistemology in the project of returning to the historical philosophy is in a worse condition than ethics or political philosophy. In the disciplinary borders of these domains the fragmentation and pluralization of the approaches that during the XXth century engendered a number of formally centered theories

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<sup>12</sup> For more details see: Mikeshina, L.A. 2005. *Contemporary Epistemology. Scientific Knowledge in the Dynamics of Culture. Methodology of Scientific Research*, Moscow, Progress-Tradition, MPSI, Flinta. (in Russian).

we can see a return to the concepts that we believed to have lost their importance. Out come metaphors, metaphysical concepts and many readers or researchers prefer this “non-scientific” design to a rigoristic analytical image of concrete research or studies. Gustav Shpet could have greeted this process as a marker of returning to the positive (*polozhitel'naya*) philosophy by the means of the very philosophy. He could see in this process a return of a live dialogue of culture with (its) history. Cultural-historical epistemology realized this movement in the analysis of cognition practices. In other words, Shpet's critique, which is more than hundred years old, could and should be applied for the analysis of an available image of the world's and philosophy's condition, because Shpet argued against the very foundations of this process.

Thus, in a dissertation we provide a reconstruction and analysis of theoretical-cognitional and methodological principles of Gustav Shpet's philosophy in the context of actual methodological discussions which were initiated and developed in the approach of the cultural-historical epistemology. An appeal to the philosopher's ideas is conducted through the perspective of cultural-historical epistemology as a trend that reflexively treats its own historical sources and makes its aim to comprehend the integrity of culture, cognition and philosophy as parts and sides of a human life phenomenon. As a result, we analyze an appeal of cultural-historical epistemology to the return not only to a philosophical discussion in the borders of phenomenology or hermeneutics of cognitive practices and activities, but the analysis of a fundamental necessity of philosophy's role restitution in cognition.

#### *Extent of prior research into the problem*

The historical studies of Gustav Shpet's thought have a beautiful but rather complicated history. To a large extent the Russian thinker's legacy remained unavailable for readers during the whole Soviet period of Russia's history. During his lifetime not many Shpet's works were published, and an access to these works

during Soviet era in various second-hand bookshops, not even speaking about public libraries, was limited. In post-war research literature we will hardly find any mentions of Gustav Shpet. The situation started to change just in the 90's with the beginning of the process of main Shpet's works publishing and the first attempts to put his thought into the context of actual thought<sup>13</sup>. In the first years of the XXIst century mostly thanks to the efforts of Tatiana Gennadievna Shchedrina basically was published a collection of Shpet's works, which includes thirteen volumes. It is also important that due to her work the Russian intellectual community not just simply received what was once lost but obtained something that was never published: many of Shpet's works were never published and other texts existed only as manuscripts and outlines that had no chance of getting published. By now the corpus of Shpet's works – including his correspondence – is available to everyone. The main published works have a critical apparatus that allows to work directly with the senses of Gustav Gustavovich's philosophy and, if needed, to conduct a more specialized textological research. To the particularities of Shpet's handwriting legacy belongs a hardly understandable penmanship, the understanding of which requires a special skill training. The prepared volumes of the main philosopher's works have a decryption of the marks that he left. It all eases the work and general plan understanding. Thus, to the present day the main archeographical work of Gustav Shpet's works presentation to the eyes of scientific community was finished. Nowadays a researcher who knows Russian will not face any trouble that could have prevented him from understanding the

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<sup>13</sup> For more details see: Gidini, M.K. 1992. The Peculiarities of G.G. Shpet's Hermeneutics, *The Beginnings*, no. 2. (in Russian); Rodi, F. 1996. Hermeneutical Logic in Phenomenological Perspective: Georg Misch, Hans Lip and Gustav Shpet, *Logos*, no. 7. (in Russian); Kuznetsov, V.G. 1991. Hermeneutical Phenomenology in the Context of G.G. Shpet's Philosophical Overviews, *Logos*, no. 2. (in Russian); Kalinichenko, V.V. 1992. Gustav Shpet: from Phenomenology to Hermeneutics, *Logos*, no. 5. (in Russian); Kuznetsov, V.G. 1991. *Hermeneutics and Humanitarian Cognition*, Moscow, Moscow University Publishing House. (in Russian).

general outline of Shpet's work. He will also find a qualified support in a critical apparatus and a vast research literature already published on the subject.

It is worth mentioning that not only publishing projects of restituting the historical justice and honoring one of the central representatives of the Russian philosophy of the beginning of the XXth century defined the attention of the philosophical community that Shpet got. An initial interest to his philosophy was born in a polemical will to find non-religious components on the history of Russian thought to have a more complex and integral image. Gustav Shpet himself kept distanced and had a critical position to religious philosophy in the Russian context<sup>14</sup>. For these reasons systematical and rigid phenomenological, hermeneutical and at last historical-philosophical thought of Gustav Shpet was perfectly suitable. This fact is specifically mentioned by one of the best Russian thought historians, philosopher Vladimir Karlovich Kantor<sup>15</sup>. We will not thematically examine the discussion on the relation between religious and non-religious bases of Russian thought, but we must notice that the publishing process and a subsequent analysis of Gustav Shpet's works allow to say that Russian thought of the beginning of the XXth century was not extraneous to systematical thought practices, for the absence of which Russian tradition is – sometimes rightfully, and sometimes not – often criticized<sup>16</sup>. Even a cursory meeting with Shpet's works and the debates he was participant of testimony that on a level of critical discussion and the understanding of the very aim of philosophy Russian thought was not strictly limited to the political, religious or “intelligentsiya”

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<sup>14</sup> Kyrlezhev, A.I. 2002. Russian Religious Philosophy: Near the Church Walls, *Neprikosnovenny zapas*, vol. 22, no. 2, p. 103. (in Russian); Kantor, V.K. 2005. Gustav Shpet: Russian Philosophy as a Marker of Russia'n Europesation, *Vestnik Evropy*, no. 13-14. (in Russian).

<sup>15</sup> Kantor, V.K. 2005. Gustav Shpet: Russian Philosophy in the Context of Culture, *Voprosy literatury*, no. 3, p. 265. (in Russian).

<sup>16</sup> Sizemskaya, I.N. 2010. On the Inner Agreement of Russian Philosophy and Literature, *Philosophy and Culture*, no. 5, p. 81. (in Russian).

problematic. Gustav Shpet's philosophy makes it clear that Russian philosophy was organically included in a unified space of European philosophy.

Several dissertational projects are already written on Gustav Shpet's philosophy. Many of them are worth mentioning, including a Doctoral Thesis by T.G. Shchedrina "Philosophical-methodological Project of Gustav Shpet" (2003), a candidate thesis by E.A. Schastlivtseva "The Worldview Sources and Foundations of G.G. Shpet's Phenomenology" (2003), a candidate thesis by T.N. Patrakhina "Hermeneutical Philosophy of G.G. Shpet" (2005). In leading philosophical periodic regularly appear new works on G.G. Shpet's works analysis. Historical-philosophical interpretation of G.G. Shpet's legacy laid the foundations for a further thematical research work of Russian philosopher's thought, and the efforts on the reconstruction of previously unavailable legacy delivered many researchers the necessary sources. All this eases thematical research work and the analysis of G.G. Shpet's legacy.

In the context of Gustav Shpet's ideas meaning for cultural-historical epistemology we need to mention the work that Shpet made on the actualizing of research strategies for concrete studies. Annually beneath the roofs of the replacing each other institutions is held a conference "*Shpetovskie chteniya*". It is usually published a collection of research papers after. The 17<sup>th</sup> volume of the series "Russian Philosophy of the First Half of the XXth Century" was completely dedicated to Gustav Gustavovich Shpet<sup>17</sup>. In relation to the celebration of the 100-year jubilee of the Institute of Philosophy, the first Head of which was Gustav Shpet, were made findings that proved his role in the task of Institute's organization and made the archive papers available to readers. These papers shed light on Shpet's understanding of philosophy's role<sup>18</sup>. Shpet tried to organize the Institute of Scientific Philosophy's work accordingly to his ideas: to stimulate the

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<sup>17</sup> Shchedrina, T.G. (ed.) 2014. *Gustav Gustavovich Shpet*, Moscow, ROSSPEN. (in Russian).

<sup>18</sup> For more details see: Chernyaev, A.V., Shchedrina, T.G. (ed.) 2021. *Institute of Scientific Philosophy. The Beginning*, Moscow, Political Encyclopedia. (in Russian).

interdisciplinary dialogue and not to neglect the role of concrete studies. By now the condition of Shpet-studies allows to say that Russian thinker's legacy became a legitimate part of Russian philosophical landscape, and it also came into the orbit of foreign research in phenomenology, hermeneutics and philosophy of language interest<sup>19</sup>. The conducted reconstructive, analytical and interpretational work make it possible to research separate fields of Shpet's philosophy and to apply to the reception and influence of his thought.

*The object and topic of the investigation*

**The object** of the investigation is philosophical-methodological foundations and premises of cultural-historical epistemology.

**The topic** of the investigation is philosophical-methodological foundations and premises of cultural-historical epistemology in theoretical-cognitional project of G.G. Shpet.

*The aims and problems of the investigation*

**The aim** of this investigation is to outline and analyze philosophical-methodological ideas of cultural-historical epistemology in the works of G.G. Shpet.

In order to attain the set aim, the dissertation will sequentially solve the following series of **problems**:

1. To conduct historical-philosophical reconstruction of theoretical-cognitional ideas of Gustav Shpet's philosophical project emphasizing on the phenomenological and hermeneutical foundations of his thought.

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<sup>19</sup> Radunović, D. 2017. The Emergence of Modern Scientific Communities in Late Imperial and early Soviet Russia: The Case of the Moscow Linguistic Circle, *Revue des études slaves*, vol. 88, no. ½, pp. 139-142.



2. To analyze the main Gustav Shpet's works from the perspective of the creation of "logic of cognition" methodological project based on phenomenology of consciousness and hermeneutical premises.
3. To make a comparison between epistemological ideas of Gustav Shpet and Edmund Husserl, the representatives of neo-Kantianism and the inspirer of phenomenological method in sociology Émile Durkheim.
4. To analyze Gustav Shpet's critical method on the material of his work with the tradition of "negative" (*otritsatel'naya*) positivist philosophy of Auguste Comte.
5. To reconstruct the transformation of phenomenological analytics of conscience in Gustav Shpet's definition of the principles of linguistic, historical and cultural "logic of knowledge".
6. To compare "logic of knowledge" in Gustav Shpet's philosophy with the problematics of cultural-historical epistemology.

#### *Theoretical and methodological basis for the investigation*

Theoretical and methodological basis for the investigation is grounded in the methods of contemporary history of philosophy's work, philosophical hermeneutics and the methodological principles of understanding elaborated in Gustav Shpet's project. The latter became a part of cultural-historical epistemology's instrumentarium. To the methodological basis of the dissertation belongs cultural-historical epistemology that is developed by Boris Isaevich Pruzhinin, Tatiana Gennadievna Shchedrina and many other researchers in the field of actual theory of knowledge (V.A. Lektorsky, P.P. Gaidenko, L.A. Mikeshina, N.S. Avtonomova, V.N. Porus, M. Denn, K.G. Frolov, N.I. Kuznetsova, V.S. Styopin, I.N. Griftsova and many others). The key role on the methodological approach of the dissertation belongs to the concept of "cognitive

practices' dialogue", that was proposed by L.A. Mikeshina<sup>20</sup>. In Mikeshina's work was elaborated one of the first experiences of understanding Russian philosophy as a source of inspiration and the optics of analysis for actual methodological and epistemological ideas in cognition. Exactly the experience of this concept is taken as an example of the conducted comparative research of the ideas of G. Shpet and A. Comte, G. Shpet and E. Husserl, G. Shpet and neo-Kantians, etc. For the realization and solving of the first mentioned above problem we used a method of conceptual analysis of the main philosopher's works and invented by G. Shpet theory of understanding philosophy in its inner logic and its relation to the outer cultural context. Gustav Shpet was among the first thinkers who developed and then applied in practice a logical way of understanding the texts in the unformal logic of the content: for the understanding of the meaning the general approach to a whole massive of text is required, which leads to thinking through the "logic of content"<sup>21</sup>.

The solving of the second mentioned problem of the investigation requires the use of logic of content's and "logic of cognition's" (G. Shpet) apparatus as well as the methodology of the history of ideas approach. The third problem is solved by comparative analysis and matching key points of historical interpretations of E. Husserl's philosophy, neo-Kantians, É. Durkheim in the context of the methodology that G. Shpet proposed. In the heart of the solving the fourth and fifth problems lies the incorporation of private theoretical logics in the dialogue-like functioning of philosophy. To fulfill the task, we used methods of historical-philosophical reconstruction, conceptual and textological analysis, receptions of G. Shpet's ideas in contemporary philosophy and the methods of historical hermeneutics. The solving of the last problem required the use of philosophical

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<sup>20</sup> Mikeshina, L.A. 2010. *The Dialogue of Cognitive Practices. From the History of Epistemology and Philosophy of Science*, Moscow, ROSSPEN, pp. 9-12. (in Russian).

<sup>21</sup> For more details see: Griftsova, I.N. 1998. *Logics as a Theoretical and Practical Discipline: towards the Question of Formal and Informal Logics Relation*, Moscow, Editorial URSS. (in Russian).

hermeneutic and conceptual history of ideas theory that were applied to the interpretation of Gustav Shpet's ideas in contemporary theory of knowledge.

*Academic novelty of the current investigation*

The academic novelty of the current investigation be that it is a first synthesis of historical-philosophical reconstruction of theoretical-methodological project of G.G. Shpet's "logic of cognition" and its interpretation in the tradition of cultural-historical epistemology. As a result, it is shown that G. Shpet's legacy is a part of contemporary theoretical-cognitive discourse, and its potential could be considered high in contemporary reflection on science's functioning.

1. It was shown that Gustav Shpet developed a wholesome, integrated project and its integrational component was organically intrinsic to Shpet's mode of thinking interest to the phenomenon of cognition and its mechanisms. Russian philosopher addressed phenomenology as a part of positive (*polozhitel'nyi*) dialogue in philosophy to actualize intrinsic positive (*polozhitel'nye*) principles in contemporary (to his time) science.

2. By a thematical research of the works "Appearance and Sense", "The Consciousness and Its Owner", "History as a Problem of Logic" (Parts I and II) it was shown that Gustav Shpet came to an original understanding of "logic of cognition". Its basis is formed by a universal structure of cognitive acts of a subject. Reflexivity, temporality (understood as a personal historicity), linguistic correspondence to the context and a meaningful dimension of activity are the key features of cognitive practices. By analyzing the work with these parts of the phenomenon of cognition in the project of Russian philosopher it was defined that a "social" layer of being is a keystone and theoretical basis for G. Shpet's theory of cognition and then – for cultural-historical epistemology.

3. The comparison of the principles of cognition in G. Shpet's and A. Comte's, É. Durkheim's, E. Cassirer, neo-Kantian's philosophies was undertaken. On its basis the conceptual scheme of cognition in Shpet's was demonstrated. This

allowed to conclude that G. Shpet's methodology is applicable for the analysis of history of philosophy, culture, and the foundation of the contemporary theory of cognition.

4. The sense of "logic of cognition" in Gustav Shpet's philosophy was verified and updated. To it belong language, history, social being and culture. Its universal character was shown on several examples.

5. On the basis of historical-philosophical reconstruction of G. Shpet's "logic of cognition" it was shown that a number of problems of contemporary epistemology is rooted in the realization of the negative (*otritsatel'naya*) philosophy's principles, the critique of which from methodological positions of "logic of cognition" was proposed by G. Shpet.

6. It is shown that G. Shpet's methodological project became a part of contemporary discussions on the nature of the limits of knowledge, meaning, sense and methods of cognitional activity in the cultural-historical epistemology.

#### *Theses to be defended*

1. The original interpretation of E. Husserl's phenomenology by Gustav Shpet had in its basis an interest for cognitional problematics. Precisely in the philosophical analytics of intentionality and reflexivity of subject's experiences, that phenomenology could register, Gustav Shpet found a basis for the building of his theory of knowledge.

2. Polemical interest concerning a return to positive (*polozhitel'naya*) philosophy was a theoretical basis of Shpet's philosophical project. In its turn the historical center of this attitude from Antiquity was theory of knowledge. The works of Gustav Shpet should be considered as a renovation and update of the methodology of knowledge according to the actual polemic situation of his time. It pursued the return of a significant role of theory of knowledge and advocacy of philosophy's role as a key cultural phenomenon in life of society, culture, and human beings.

3. As his intellectual opponents G. Shpet chooses the founders of the most significant, in that time, philosophical schools: positivists and neo-Kantians. The interest to their works and the practice of historical and philosophical analysis undertaken by Russian philosopher simultaneously serve as an illustration of his methodology, general outline and as a commentary to the development of philosophy. On their basis the importance and meaning of context, cultural situation, language and personal history can be outlined and expressed.

4. G. Shpet shows the dialogical nature of philosophy's development. He highly assesses É. Durkheim's approach. By using G. Shpet's methodology the dissertation undertakes a comparison of G. Shpet's elaborations and the similar E. Cassirer's ideas. Their similarity testimonies that there were alternative principles to negative (*otritsatel'naya*) philosophy in cognition.

5. The current crisis in theory of knowledge is based on a tendency of depersonalization of a cognitive subject, abolition of cultural significance and value of theoretical science. The understanding of the origins of this process remains a blind spot for the actual epistemology. But an appeal to Gustav Shpet's legacy, who presented the analysis of the tendencies that were dominant in the beginning of the XXth century could serve as a great help for mapping the problem places in the actual research and to lay the foundations for the realization of alternative integrating projects.

6. Cultural-historical epistemology is a development of positive (*polozhetel'naya*) philosophy in G. Shpet's understanding and consciously inherits his key intuitions and methodological ideas. Among them it is worth enumerating the importance of conceptual theoretical genesis, importance of subject's self-description, a limited influence of sociality understood in a sociological way and, at last, a philosophically based status of cognition as a cultural phenomenon, that has an imperishable value.

### *Theoretical and practical relevance of the investigation*

The theoretical relevance of the dissertation is limited to several aspects. First of all, the obtained during the investigation thematical reconstruction of G. Shpet's theoretical and cognitional overviews can serve as a basis for further historical and philosophical research work of Russian philosopher's legacy, as well as a source of inspiration for developing contemporary theory of knowledge. Secondly, the presented analysis of G. Shpet's ideas defines and actualizes the conceptual opposition of positive (*polozhitel'naya*) – negative (*otritsatel'naya*) philosophy, the philosophical interpretation of which in the works of G. Shpet can be a framework for the understanding of actual processes in contemporary thought. Thirdly, a hermeneutical understanding of G. Shpet's ideas reception in the tradition of cultural-historical epistemology, as well as the analysis of G. Shpet's own historical work on the ideas of significant philosophers of the past, can serve as a material for broadening the methodology of cognition in the history of philosophy. At last, the clear articulation of methodological principles of cognition in G. Shpet's philosophy and cultural-historical epistemology contributes to a current methodological discussion about the phenomenon of cognition, the phenomenon of a cognizing subject (a human being) and the meaning of philosophy to science and culture nowadays. The results of the dissertation can be used in preparing scientific and pedagogical materials on Russian philosophical tradition of the XXth century, as well as in elaboration of textbooks, study programs on history of Russian thought and culture, organization of practical and methodological seminars dedicated to the listed topics. Among other things the results of the investigation can be found practically useful as a methodological companion for researchers who are concerned with the question of understanding their place in the structure of contemporary science.

## MAIN CONTENTS OF THE WORK

The **Introduction** to the dissertation delineates its relevance, analyses to which extent the problem is worked through in the literature, defines the key aim and the problems of the investigation, gives a characteristic of theoretical-methodological bases of the work, and outlines its main sources. It also grounds the academic novelty of the research, formulates key theses to be defended and outlines scientific, theoretical and potential practical meaning of the work. The data for the approbation is enumerated in this part as well.

**The first Chapter** of the dissertation, “**Principles of Cognition in Gustav Shpet’s Philosophical Project**” presents a historical-philosophical reconstruction of theoretical and cognitional principles in the legacy of Gustav Gustavovich Shpet. By analyzing believed the most significant works of G. Shpet it is shown that his interest to cognition and its problematics in the 1910’s not only constituted a significant part of his work but became a foundation for the upcoming transfer to the theory of language, philosophical rethinking of history of philosophy, particular topics of the hermeneutics in the 1920’s. Thus, the holistic integrity of Gustav Shpet’s philosophy is articulated. During the analysis, the thematical unity of Shpet’s philosophical project is shown, it is argued that such works as “Appearance and Sense”, “History as a Problem of Logic. Part I”, “History as a Problem of Logic. Part II”, “Hermeneutics and Its Problems” developed the same topic in the epistemological context. Its content can be described in such a way: the phenomenon of cognitional activity is a cultural-historical one and has no meaning out of its philosophical genesis in the course of culture. The Chapter shows that Gustav Shpet used his understanding of dialogical and cultural-historical bases of cognitional activity of a human as a logical foundation for the critic of competing philosophical projects. We outlined and presented an analysis of phenomenological and hermeneutical specific of “logic of cognition” in a philosophical project of Russian philosopher, pointed out the topics in which he disagreed with E. Husserl’s phenomenology. The Chapter also presents a comparative characteristic

of Gustav Shpet's thought with its competitors: theories of neo-Kantians. It was shown that the foundation of the "sphere of conversation" (*sfera razgovora*) by Shpet has its center around the question of nature, possibilities, and limits of cognition. By referring to the most actual contemporary research in the tradition of cultural-historical epistemology it is shown that G. Shpet's novelty is meaningful and important for actual philosophical theory and methodology. The Chapter summarizes methodological principles of cognition in G. Shpet's philosophy.

**The first Paragraph** of the first Chapter, "**Phenomenological Principles of Cognition in Gustav Shpet's Philosophy**" presents a conceptual textological analysis of the main tractatus of the early period of Russian philosopher's work, the book "Appearance and Sense" (1914). Gustav Shpet is known as a philosopher who was the first to introduce phenomenology to Russian intellectual culture. We showed that the independent beginning of the development of philosophical principles of cognition in the philosophy of Gustav Shpet was based on the project of German phenomenology, with the tradition of which the philosopher came into contact during his internships in Göttingen and Edinburgh. It is shown that Gustav Shpet, contrary to popular opinion, was not a dogmatic representative of the school of phenomenology, but creatively comprehended Edmund Husserl's philosophical project and considered necessary to develop it independently, relying on several fundamental provisions that formed the basis of the existing phenomenological school. These include the emphasis on the philosophical nature of the perception of things, the absence of a dogmatic conceptual scheme attributing private and external meanings to things, as well as the method of phenomenological reduction itself. The chapter provides arguments in favor of the fact that for Gustav Shpet, the most productive part of the emerging phenomenological project was the possibility of developing a theory and practices of cognition that were not burdened with external meanings of critical and non-critical philosophy in the form it developed in the doctrine of the neo-Kantians.

**The second Paragraph** of the first Chapter, "**The Problem of Cognition and the Critic of neo-Kantianism by Gustav Shpet**" carries out a comparative



analysis of the views of Gustav Shpet and the Neo-Kantian school on the nature and methodology of cognition. Gustav Shpet believed that Kant's philosophy is the central source, the starting point of contemporary to his time philosophical tradition. Proceeding from this premise, Russian philosopher attributed critical comprehension of Kant's and his followers' project to one of the priority tasks of the independent development of thought. It is proved that one of the meanings of Gustav Shpet's polemical criticism of neo-Kantianism was a desire not only to refute the false ideas he believed, but also to show the effectiveness of the philosophical methodology of cognition developed by Shpet's own project. The appeal to the logic of phenomenologically understood history led Gustav Shpet to the need for a phenomenological historicization of all knowledge based on the criterion of its temporality. The chapter reconstructs the relationship of this argument in connection with the claim of the Baden school of neo-Kantianism to special existence of values as conventional entities. For G. Shpet, the principle of neo-Kantians, i.e., "back to Kant", the form of which formed the basis of the shared by Shpet Husserl's call "back to things themselves", should receive a historical and philosophical interpretation in which the theory of I. Kant will become only part of general historical process of the philosophy's formation. It is shown that Gustav Shpet saw potential of negative relativization of knowledge in the thought of neo-Kantianism and considered this branch of philosophy development to be a dead end. As one of the inter-conclusions we substantiated a statement, according to which, in the criticism of Baden neo-Kantianism, we first encounter a theoretical and at the same time practical embodiment of the methodology of historical and philosophical cognition developed by Gustav Shpet.

In the **third Paragraph** of the first Chapter, "**Hermeneutical Principles of Cognition in Gustav Shpet's Philosophy**" it is shown that Gustav Shpet's hermeneutics was a continuation of the previously developed phenomenological attitudes in cognition. The task of hermeneutics was to discover and interpret the meaning of the tradition of the history of philosophy, the mechanisms of the emergence and functioning of intellectual concepts. Based on the analysis of

hermeneutic principles of Gustav Shpet's philosophy, it is shown that the logic of the transition from phenomenology to hermeneutics was predetermined because the task of philosophical cognition consisted in understanding the meaning of unique phenomena, but not in constructing a categorical grid in which these phenomena could be placed. The categorical system itself should become an object of critical consideration in modern philosophy. Based on the analysis of Gustav Shpet's arguments about the nature of meaning, the need for understanding in human cognitive activity, it is demonstrated that phenomenological principles were integral to his entire philosophy. Based on the materials of the works "History as a Problem of Logic. Part I" and "History as a Problem of Logic. Part II" we show how hermeneutic method is being applied by Gustav Shpet in his analysis of the history of thought. It is reconstructed that, according to the thought of Gustav Shpet, the philosophical basis of the methodology of cognition lies in the analysis of ways of thinking within the framework of the forms of philosophy and culture that specifically existed in history. It turns out that, just as it happened in Aristotelism, Enlightenment thought, or Kant's transcendental scheme, the meaning of phenomena is privatized and distorted as they are included in large-scale private philosophical schemes.

The meaning of cognition is the inclusion of a phenomenon in the scheme from the standpoint and based on the interest of the scheme itself, but not understanding the essence of the phenomenon. The chapter synthesizes the phenomenological and hermeneutic views of Gustav Shpet on the problems of theory of knowledge, demonstrates the unity of the method and the consistency of the Russian philosopher's thought. Based on the work of the consciousness of the researcher himself, a scientist, Shpet shows how general principles of consciousness and cognition are embodied in methodological work. Its distinctive features are reflection and dialogicity.

In the **fourth Paragraph** of the first Chapter, **“The Problem of Cognition and Gustav Shpet’s “Sphere of Conversation (*sfera razgovora*)”** was carried out a thematic reconstruction of the circle of topics surrounding Gustav Shpet’s life,

which were related to the development of theoretical and cognitive problems. It is shown that contrary to popular opinion, the systematic nature of Gustav Shpet's philosophy was not unique in Russian thought at the beginning of the 20th century, the language of self-description and analytical characteristic of which had literature in its center of attention. It is demonstrated that the interest in theoretical problems was a characteristic of many Russian scientists and philosophers with whom Gustav Shpet was in a vibrant dialogue. When using theoretical methodology developed by Gustav Gustavovich, a logic of special interest in theory of knowledge in his philosophy is justified: it would have been impossible without special cultural mentality of the epoch. The conclusion of this paragraph is a thesis according to which Gustav Shpet's philosophy reached its highest theoretical level precisely in a lively dialogue with the culture surrounding the philosopher in relation to questions of nature and the boundaries of knowledge. One of the distinguishing features of G. Shpet's approach to dialogue with colleagues and opponents was the emphasis on the presence of common grounds for dialogue. Even in cases when philosopher categorically disagreed with alternative views, he considered it necessary (primarily for the methodology of cognition) to refute the arguments of the opponent on the basis of logic (in its philosophical sense). It is shown that the "sphere of conversation" is the most important concept for the hermeneutic understanding of the phenomenon of Gustav Shpet's philosophy, which should be considered one of the pinnacles of Russian thought. The relevance of this concept for the development of a modern methodology of cultural-historical epistemology is also substantiated.

In the second Chapter of the dissertation, **“‘Logic of Cognition’ in Gustav Shpet’s Philosophical Project”** is carried out a substantive reconstruction of the methodological principles of G. Shpet's theory of cognition in the context of a more general epistemological problematic. It is shown that the phenomenological analysis of consciousness, as a basic phenomenon of human nature, is a starting point for determining the logic of cognitive activity for Gustav Shpet. Based on the analysis of Gustav Shpet's works, as well as through contextual comparison of his

ideas with the approaches of positivists, the definition of social fact in Émile Durkheim's theory, the attitude to understanding cultural forms in Ernst Cassirer's philosophy, it is shown how Gustav Shpet's theory of cognition can be comprehended today in the light of new epistemological problems. The historical and philosophical reconstruction of the “logic of cognition” in Gustav Shpet's philosophy shows that for the philosopher cognition should be considered in the multiple logic of consciousness, history, language and culture, which form the core of the philosophical methodology of socio-humanitarian and, potentially, any other kind of cognition. Philosophically, since the logic of subject functioning is holistic and universal, for G. Shpet there is no fundamental difference between the knowledge provided by sciences of nature and sciences of the spirit.

The **First paragraph** of the second Chapter, “**Analytics of Consciousness as a Ground of ‘Logic of Cognition’ in Gustav Shpet’s Philosophy**” proves that the objective application of the phenomenological method –previously developed in the work "Appearance and Sense" – for the construction of a philosophical theory of cognition is based, firstly, on the analytically understood universalism of perceptions that occur in the equally organized and subjectively reflexive human consciousness. Secondly, the patterns, themselves isolated from the structure of consciousness, become the basis for the external level of the construction of the theory of cognition. Gustav Shpet initially addresses the concept of consciousness from an interdisciplinary perspective, complementing and illustrating his phenomenological intuitions with an acquaintance with the thought of Georgy Ivanovich Chelpanov, interpreting the psychological experiments of Wilhelm Wundt. The paragraph shows that the analysis of consciousness for Gustav Shpet was not an end in itself, but a way of developing a universal theoretical and cognitive view of the world around him. The paragraph illustrates the previously shown significance of Edmund Husserl's phenomenological methodology for Shpet’s theory. The two–level structure of human perceptions – primary and reflexive-secondary – is analyzed; it is shown that the temporal characteristic common to all experiences can be included in the orbit of the theory of cognition

through the general conceptual framework of language history. Unfolding the logic of the work of consciousness, Shpet points to its unstoppable intentionality, the essence of which is the reflection of the previously reflected. At the subject micro-level historical, temporal consciousness and the attitude to reflection as the basis of any understanding of oneself are born from this point. The "social" in G. Shpet's philosophy receives the status of being. It becomes possible precisely because the non-eliminable reflexive practices can be realized only through an appeal to the specific culture and language in which the cognizing subject lives and speaks. For G. Shpet an abstract and formal subject in the theory of knowledge becomes a person, a scientist whose lifeworld should be interpreted from a methodological standpoint. Based on the analysis of the structure of consciousness in a cognitive way, the social understanding of the "I" in the philosophy of Gustav Shpet is demonstrated. The undertaken historical and philosophical reconstruction of the concept of social "I" shows the originality of the Russian philosopher's thought and sets the starting point for understanding the reception of his philosophy in the tradition of cultural-historical epistemology.

**In the second Paragraph of the second Chapter, “Historical ‘Logic of Cognition’: Gustav Shpet and Auguste Comte”** is carried out a thematic reconstruction of the criticism of positivism by Auguste Comte and his followers in a philosophical project of the history of philosophy by Gustav Shpet. We argue the relevance of the appeal to Comte's thought from the standpoint of the philosophical theory of cognition. In the semantic coordinates of Gustav Shpet's philosophy, Auguste Comte's project and its broad influence – worth noting that it continues to remain a scientific and cultural fact up to the present time – are interpreted as a cultural and philosophical dominant of the epistemological consciousness of *otritsatel'naya*, or negative (Gustav Shpet's term) philosophy. It is shown that normative understanding of the social sciences as insufficiently formed natural disciplines abolishes the very claim to understand the meanings of the phenomena observed and experienced by human beings.

According to Shpet, Comtianism is a privative, withdrawing philosophy, whose imaginary wealth of meanings is logically based on the possibility of infinite construction of negations, but not on the desire to grasp the meanings of phenomena synthetically and positively. Shpet emphasizes that criticism of the phenomenon from the position of its inconsistency with the positivist scheme in practice adds little to the understanding of the phenomenon itself, but only tautologically describes O. Comte's method. Based on Gustav Shpet's own methodological analysis, the analytical mechanisms of changing the philosophical picture of the world in positivism are reconstructed. It is shown that the phenomenal manifestations of positivist thinking are internally contradictory, because being philosophical in their foundation and meaning (this is the understanding carried by the philosophy of Auguste Comte as the highest point of the negative logic of Enlightenment), they ignore their own nature. Accordingly, Gustav Shpet articulates the importance of a critical attitude to Kantianism and Positivism, the criticism of which from an epistemological standpoint can become one of the starting points of modern theory of knowledge and positive (*polozhitel'naya*) philosophy.

**The third Paragraph of the second Chapter, “Social ‘Logic of Cognition’ in Gustav Shpet’s and Émile Durkheim’s Thought”** carries out a synthesis of social attitude to a subject in an epistemological way. The phenomenological analysis of "social being" is defined as Gustav Shpet's original philosophical contribution to philosophy. Then, based on the material of comparing Shpet's understanding of the social with the definition of "social fact" in Émile Durkheim's theory, it is shown that the positivist perspective of looking at history and culture is not the only possible optic of scientific thinking. On the contrary, considering its ineradicable, generic shortcomings, the emphasis on the special status of culture, which stems from the temporal nature of the subject and his needs in a social context for orientation in the world, the concept of "social fact" and the claim for understanding in social sciences can be attributed to the development of the logic of positive (*polozhitel'naya*) philosophy.

É. Durkheim's thought laid the foundations for a phenomenological understanding of sociological method. The unity of the mindset of É. Durkheim and G. Shpet is shown. It was based on a common intuition of the recognition of an independent meaning for the social, as well as an attitude to (self-)understanding of the meaning of actions and phenomena. The paragraph shows that Gustav Shpet's appeal to the legacy of Émile Durkheim was polemical and was supposed to form social logic of the theory of knowledge. Meaningfully, Gustav Shpet defined the meanings of social facts as the basic units of cognitive activity in philosophy, with which only a real, hermeneutic understanding of reality can truly begin.

**In the fourth Paragraph of the second Chapter, “Cultural ‘Logic of Cognition’ in Gustav Shpet’s and Ernst Cassirer’s Thought”** is carried out a historical and philosophical reconstruction of the embodiment of the logic of positive (*polozhitel'naya*) philosophy in relation to culture in the works of two thinkers. Based on the comparison of the methodology of the sciences of culture, developed by Ernst Cassirer in the 30's of the XXth century, and the philosophical history of philosophy by Gustav Shpet, the general theoretical significance of culture in cognitive practice is substantiated. It is particularly noted that Russian thinker formulated similar ideas earlier than Ernst Cassirer, in the 10's of the XXth century, while Cassirer came to them twenty years later. Unfortunately, historical circumstances did not allow Gustav Shpet to be a direct participant in the European discussion about the fate of knowledge and culture. Nevertheless, the demonstrated similarity of philosophers' thoughts shows that one of Shpet's epistemological concepts, "the sphere of conversation", can be applied to analyze the spirit of the times. The paragraph shows that common foundations of thinking of Ernst Cassirer and Gustav Shpet, who were equally critical of the increasing fragmentation, privativeness of knowledge and the narrowing of the legitimate sphere of "human" and cultural, independently led to the same result: the need for philosophical restitution of historically and linguistically determined culture as a basis of philosophical thinking about cognition.

The common mindset of the two thinkers was attention to human and his life world, the definition of which they saw in the analysis of culture, i.e., as noted above, in the unfolding of the analytical meaning used for (self-)descriptions of concepts by subjects and analysts. The paragraph proves that for both philosophers, culture, despite its external status in relation to man, cannot be conceived in isolation from the cognizing subject. This circumstance lays the foundations for cultural-historical epistemology, in the paradigm of which culture and man should be understood as a dialogical philosophical unity.

**The third Chapter, “Gustav Shpet’s Ideas in the Context of Cultural-historical Epistemology”** presents a synthesis of epistemological principles of Gustav Shpet's philosophy in the context of cultural-historical epistemology: 1) a generalizing characteristic of Gustav Shpet's theoretical and epistemological developments is given, 2) it is shown what an important role the question of the theory of knowledge played for the Russian philosopher, 3) it is demonstrated that the legacy of Gustav Shpet forms the central philosophical core of cultural-historical epistemology as a philosophy of human cognition and meaning, 4) the critical method of Gustav Shpet, which has become an integral part of cultural-historical epistemology, is reconstructed. In this Chapter from the methodological positions of the method of analysis developed by G. Shpet, is given an outline of the main features and trends in modern epistemology. The latter includes the increasing fragmentation (privativeness) of disciplines and practices and the desire for a logical definition through the denial of the uniqueness of a person, his replacement with an artificially constructed scheme, even when it comes to an analysis of really existing cultural, social and existential practices, and finally, the installation of extreme sociologization. Based on this analytical work, it is shown how and why Shpet's philosophical project becomes the basis for cultural-historical epistemology. The analysis emphasizes the connection of the works of cultural-historical epistemologists with the method of G. Shpet, as well as the need to turn to the thought of the Russian philosopher to analyze the current state of the theory of knowledge.



**In the first Paragraph of the third Chapter, “Theory of Knowledge in the XXth and XXIst Centuries: in a Search for Meaning”** is given a thematic analysis of the development of the theory of knowledge during the XXth and XXIst centuries. The focus of the review is to find how the idea of "meaning" and the very role of philosophy have changed in matters of cognition. It is shown that the general external logic of the development of the theory of knowledge was the increasing fragmentation of topics, methods and approaches. With the help of an appeal to the conceptual methodological apparatus of the philosophy of G. Shpet it is proved that the fragmentation of the theory of knowledge during this period was not a way of enriching the theory of knowledge from the standpoint of philosophy but led to the exclusion of a significant part of the heritage of theoretical thought from the focus of attention of modern epistemologists. A significant part of the current trends in epistemology is defined as a manifestation of negative (*otritsatel'naya*) philosophy, the installation of which is to give a logically limiting, but not synthesizing definition of the meaning of the phenomenon. The necessity of understanding the expansion of studies-shaped approaches as an implementation of the logic of negative (*otritsatel'naya*) philosophy in modern theory of cognition is substantiated. An appeal to the most actual trends in the field of epistemology (STS, empiricism, new idealism and materialism, perennialism, essentialism, gender criticism of science, analysis of "Mega Science", etc.) demonstrates an internal interest to the social in the context of return of the question for meaning and significance of human activity. Nevertheless, most of modern approaches, even realizing their limitations, do not have an opportunity to reformulate themselves within their own theoretical and methodological boundaries. Only philosophical reflection can assume such a unifying role of the last critical instance, which justifies the relevance of Shpet's philosophical constructions for the methodology of modern theories of cognition.

**The second Paragraph of the third Chapter, “Gustav Shpet’s Ideas in the Context of Modern Theory of Knowledge”** analyzes the relevance of the reception of Gustav Shpet's ideas in the modern theory of cognition, on which

representatives of cultural-historical epistemology are working. It is shown that within the framework of the tradition of cultural-historical epistemology was realized the need to return to redefining the basic concepts of the study of human cognitive activity in a philosophical way, reorganizing the process of philosophical cognition in a mode that could synthesize related fields and methods. It is shown that metaphysical nature of the subject's interest in cognition can and should become a starting point in understanding the meaning of cognitive practices, which is ignored in modern STS, case studies, new materialistic optics of cognition and other common research settings.

Based on the analysis of the logic's of knowledge theory development perception in cultural-historical epistemology, the relevance of Gustav Shpet's ideas about the dialectical relationship of positive (*polozhitel'naya*) and (*otritsatel'naya*) philosophy, which forms an external philosophical framework of the current situation, is shown. The epistemological perspectives of the concept of the philosophical history of philosophy – "historical philosophy" in other output by Gustav Shpet – in the context of modern theory of cognition are considered. Based on the analysis, it is concluded that cultural-historical epistemology is a reflexive continuation of the developments of Russian philosopher, which can be understood as the implementation of the logic of positive (*polozhitel'naya*) philosophy described by Gustav Shpet.

**The third Paragraph of the third Chapter, "Cultural-historical Epistemology as a Direction in Contemporary Theory of Knowledge"** presents an analysis of cultural-historical epistemology as a direction in actual research of cognitive activity. It is shown that cultural-historical epistemology is based on dissatisfaction with the limitations and specialization of many modern approaches to this phenomenon (social epistemology), as well as awareness of the defilosofization of culture. The latter is understood as a problem, since the phenomenon of European rationality is based on philosophical thinking, which can always be redefined within the framework of a specific cultural and historical situation but cannot be abolished without destructive consequences for culture.

One of the main themes of cultural-historical epistemology is a category of "dignity of knowledge", which should be understood as a return to philosophical "logic of cognition". The philosophical origins of the appeal to the concept of knowledge are considered. It is proved that the ideas of cultural-historical epistemologists about the cultural significance and meaningfulness of knowledge are the realization of cultural logic embedded in philosophy since its inception.

Knowledge itself is necessarily a cultural phenomenon and, therefore, for its adequate understanding, it requires taking culture into account when analyzing. The paragraph highlights subjects related to the polemical potential of cultural and historical epistemology. It is shown that the change in the internal logic of understanding knowledge leads to the processes of knowledge production transformation. Scientists, who are normatively deprived by modern theoretical optics of value dimension of their activities, lose a fundamental dimension in science, literally being unable to understand what contribution they make to common cause. It is demonstrated that understanding the process of expanding the spheres of applied science in cultural-historical epistemology can be a productive optics with practical consequences for philosophy.

We highlighted the main specific features of cultural-historical epistemology in the context of the modern theory of cognition crisis: 1) a possibility of a philosophical expert assessment of both the state of knowledge itself and its research, 2) a dialogue with alternative historical approaches in the theory of cognition that formed the actual principles of cognitive activity, 3) the return of "value" and "human dimension of Self" to the question of cognition, 4) sensitive attention to the historical logic of self-description of the process of cognition on the behalf of its participants as a significant source of reflection. It is demonstrated that cultural-historical epistemology can complement and organize private research of scientific practices, offering an integrating philosophical attitude for understanding the meaning of cognition.

**The fourth Paragraph of the third Chapter, "The Groundings of Cultural-historical Epistemology in the Works of Gustav Shpet"** provides a

historical and philosophical reconstruction of the logic of the appeal to the heritage of the Russian philosopher in the works of cultural-historical epistemologists is carried out. The main ideas of cultural-historical epistemology as a formalized concept began to take shape at the end of the 20th century as a response to a request for a restoration of philosophical significance in the cognitional context. As a methodological source of the approach, the key authors for the direction – not all of them only cultural-historical epistemologists, but all of them somehow share the key intuitions of the approach – such as B.I. Pruzhinin, T.G. Shchedrina, V.A. Lektorsky, L.A. Mikeshina, N.S. Autonomova, P.P. Gaidenko, V.N. Porus, M. Denn, K.G. Frolov, N.I. Kuznetsova, V.G. Kuznetsov, V.S. Stepin, I.N. Griftsova, V.G. Kuznetsov and many others in search of methodological inspiration for the construction of positive philosophy turned to Gustav Shpet's heritage. The basis of such an appeal to the works of G. Shpet was the organic inclusion of his thought in Russian culture, which in practice has not lost its continuity. One of the methodological guidelines of G. Shpet was a requirement to carefully understand the historical continuity of thought. In case of elaborating Russian theory of cognition in the conceptual framework of Russian culture, it was Gustav Shpet's phenomenological approach that proved to be the most relevant and, no less importantly, relevant specifically for the current crisis of the dominance of "negative" (*otritsatel'nye*) tendencies in the philosophy of cognition. Accordingly, the historical and philosophical study of G. Shpet's legacy, understanding its diversity and analysis of the subsequent reception is one of the most urgent tasks of mapping and development of modern philosophy in Russian. This experience can also be applied to work with other figures of thought, which was shown by G. Shpet himself in his theory and is also implemented in practice in projects of cultural-historical epistemologists.

The chapter substantiates the thematic unity of G. Shpet's philosophical project and the attempts made by cultural-historical epistemologists to return "dignity" to knowledge and, consequently, to the philosophy of cognition as a constitutive part of culture. It is proved that the phenomenologically developed

idea of the temporality of consciousness in the philosophy of G. Shpet, from which the objectivity of the social dimension of reality follows, can be considered an epistemological basis for philosophical reflection on the phenomenon of cognition. It is shown that the unity of culture, history and language, resulting from the implemented Shpet's philosophical analysis was both the basis of G. Shpet's philosophical project itself and became the basis of methodological constructions of cultural-historical epistemology.

In the **Conclusion** we summarize the overall results of the investigation, formulate key points and outline the perspectives of further research as well as some possible ways of their realization.

## CONCLUSION

Our research was mainly concerned with the question of how Gustav Shpet's philosophical and methodological project became the basis for cultural-historical epistemology. It is not difficult to imagine the question: what was the dissertation about in the first place? Was it about history of philosophy or about the foundations of epistemology? In our opinion – and we have made every effort to demonstrate this clearly – in the case of cultural-historical epistemology in the works of Gustav Gustavovich Shpet, this opposition is imaginary. The philosophy of cognition refers to philosophy (and, therefore, to the history of philosophy!) not because of formal similarity, whether it is historical, thematic, or just convenient for the administrative organization of science, but because in their positive (*polozhitel'naya*) form they represent a single historical and cultural phenomenon that was formed in history and, at the same time, formed Western rationality.

It is within its borders that most of the theoretical approaches and concepts in philosophy known to us today were born. In other words, our culture, which is centered on the desire for knowledge, is inevitably historical and necessarily philosophical. The latter characteristics are also ways of truly understanding cognition itself. What has been said in no way contradicts the existence of particular approaches in theory of knowledge or functioning of specific disciplines and sciences, but sets the prospect of their philosophical understanding, which may be interesting not only to professional philosophers, but to everyone who wants to comprehend their place in the world and understand the nature of their passion for knowledge.

Gustav Shpet's understanding of theory of knowledge problems is important for us today for several reasons. In addition to the obvious intrinsic value of his outstanding philosophical project for the intellectual history of Russian culture, Gustav Shpet's work acts as a link not only between modern philosophy in Russian, but also as a bridge through time and culture. It returns theoretical thought to its productive origins. This unique position and the role of Gustav

Shpet's philosophy were obtained due to several factors. Despite the fact that development and "progress" in philosophy are debatable concepts, it would be absurd to deny the existence of changes and the increase in knowledge. Proceeding from the classical ("exemplary" by definition) understanding of philosophy, the task of a thinking person turns into the task of actualizing the potencies originally inherent in rational philosophical thinking. Each epoch must creatively redefine itself and its foundations, such are the conditions of its existence and philosophical survival. Gustav Shpet's thought, his phenomenology, hermeneutics, philosophy of the history of philosophy, organizational activities for the establishment of philosophical work and education, and, finally, translations served to return philosophy to its original task: to center the role of man in the world, to endow the life of his mind with meaning.

Rational philosophical thinking is arranged in such a way that, depending on the historical and cultural context of the epoch and the accepted rules of discussion, the forms of philosophical thinking can change significantly. The very history of philosophy and its prototype in Antiquity imply dialogicity, or, if it sounds more suitable, dialecticism (in the Hegelian sense and understanding shared by Gustav Shpet). Philosophical reflection must be heard by the interlocutor, perceived by culture to have any meaning and concrete meaning for a life of a person or a scientist. This deep reflection accompanied Gustav Shpet's work, setting its formal and meaningful framework. As a result, we are dealing with a creative understanding of the foundations of the phenomenological tradition that seemed to Shpet to be most relevant at that time. Already at the very beginning of his journey, Gustav Shpet showed himself as an independent and original thinker, who nevertheless was no stranger to pedantry and rationality, logical and systematic thinking. The task of a logically constructed philosophy – reliance on universal logic – was to play the role of an irrefutable argument for opponents, critics and competitors with whom the Russian philosopher was in discussion.

We started our research with the analysis of Gustav Shpet's phenomenology. As a rule, it is with it that the conversation about Shpet begins when anyone wants

to say something general about the philosopher and his role in the intellectual culture of Russia. This is fair and justified, but the realization of the understanding of Shpet's phenomenological plan may not just shift the emphasis, but also present his theory in a completely different light. We have undertaken a textual analysis of Gustav Shpet's central "phenomenological" work "Appearance and Sense" (1914) in a certain thematic way, namely: we tried to trace the genesis of his interest in epistemological problems. The basis for such a step was the interpretation of G. Shpet's philosophy in the tradition of cultural-historical epistemology. Accordingly, in order to make a verdict on whether Gustav Shpet was a theorist of knowledge, or for him it was a side and passing interest – if at all – it is necessary to pay attention to how he built his theory.

Turning directly to the text of "Appearance and Sense", we have shown that the fabric of the text is woven from comments on Shpet's teacher thoughts, Edmund Husserl, independent ideas of the Russian philosopher and a separately not articulated polemical context (without exaggeration, Shpet polemizes with the whole epoch). The understanding of "Appearance and Sense" as a work that is only a translation of Edmund Husserl's concept of phenomenology is fundamentally wrong. For Shpet, his work is a living thought in which he considers it possible to say his own word. Before briefly defining it, we note nevertheless that the achievements of the phenomenological tradition were useful to Shpet. He willingly accepts the most interesting developments, including the very creative, anti-dogmatic attitude of Husserl and his students. These common places include the intentionality of consciousness, the temporality of experience, the understanding of the world as a set of phenomena interpreted by a subject, the meaning of the concepts of "noema" and "noesis".

Listed above is a starting point for the philosopher's own thought. G. Shpet always has in mind a general context, seeks to express his position through an appeal to common problems and meanings that concern his contemporaries. Phenomenology is becoming one of such common points, and it is fundamentally important that Shpet gives not just a brief interpretation of it, but offers a reader its



interpretation, in fact, building an independent philosophical concept. It is within its borders that the theory of cognition, or, more precisely, cognitive interest, become key concepts. Analyzing "Appearance and Sense", one could assume that all this was only a private manifestation of interest that was generated by the work with Husserl, but the archival work performed by T.G. Shchedrina convincingly shows that at a level of textual studies, preparation of manuscripts, Shpet's next big work "History as a Problem of Logic. Part I" is not a work that starts or develops new topics. They should be interpreted as the implementation of a single logic, which is based on epistemology. In general, the theoretical foundations of Shpet's philosophy, laid in the 10's, will remain the foundation of his philosophy throughout his life.

We have attempted to describe the new and original that Gustav Shpet brings to phenomenological method. It should also serve as a link between his works of different years. Such a concept, which Husserl would encounter only 20 years later, in the 1930's, becomes an emphasis on social existence. Not only phenomena, but mainly their subjectively understood meaning, constitute the essence of perceptions. For the philosophy of cognition, the question of how this meaning is produced and functions becomes a priority. The disclosure of this mechanism becomes the task of Gustav Shpet, which he solves at several levels, each of them we addressed in our research. Firstly, the tools of analytical phenomenology allow us to reveal how the intentional consciousness of a person functions and experiences activities and perceptions. Secondly, the task of hermeneutical understanding of meaning arises from the phenomenological formulation of the question. Then it becomes logically necessary to map the subjective meaning in a culture in which it can only exist as a separate kind of being. Finally, certain aspects of understanding meaning are also important: language, history, culture, philosophical rationality. All of them together form a universal "logic of cognition", an empirical embodiment of which may vary. It was in this form that Gustav Shpet's inspiration served as a basis for cultural-historical epistemology. The prospects of this line of thought of Russian philosopher and the

tradition of cultural-historical epistemology can be judged based on the problems facing the current theory of knowledge.

For Gustav Shpet as a philosopher, the goal of understanding the meanings of the world is achieved through two starting points: the structure of subject and culture. The experience of a phenomenon, which is a philosophically understood psychological state, is never directly accessible not only to the person himself, but also to an external observer. Accordingly, there is a great temptation to declare consciousness a black box that defies logical analysis, which in its ultimate interpretation leads to solipsism, or "scandal" in philosophy. Gustav Shpet shows that it is necessary to analyze the logic of the work of the cognizing consciousness, which, with all the possible diversity of its states and fillings, will always be universal. Having chosen this path, he comes to the first constant of his philosophy of cognition – the temporal reflexivity of experience, which can be refined in cultural and psychological frameworks. Experiences may be inaccessible to a person and his interlocutors directly, but they always appear as secondary experiences of memories of their states. Memory, temporality, and, therefore, the necessary historicity are the basis of all knowledge, forming its structure.

Gustav Gustavovich, guided by the philosophical value of cognition of the meaning of phenomena, is looking for a way to link his analysis of consciousness with individual searches for meaning in the processes of everyday cognition. Just as a person needs to know what a particular word is needed to be used for successful communication, so science needs to know what this or that mechanism serves and how it determines the cognition. To access the world of meanings, intersubjectivity is necessary, or, as Shpet creatively interprets it, "social being", is necessary. The difference in word usage is not accidental. If intersubjectivity at the level of language refers to artificial search/invention/construction of a concept, then sociality is a productive metaphor that can make a transition from phenomenological studies of consciousness to hermeneutics and history. Later, Edmund Husserl also came to realize the central role of the problem of intersubjectivity and developed this idea in his works.

"Social being" is, put simply, history, culture and language. Its objective existence is based on the fact that cognition is carried out through a reflexive, time-unfolding correlation of experiences of *experience* with meaning and sense. The intentionality of the subject is not only a blind focus on everything external, similar to the primitive principle of stimulus–reaction, but grasping in the world meanings that are vital for the psychological subject, who, as he realizes himself in the world of language and history, becomes a person. Gustav Shpet saw danger in the schematization of human subject, in its separation from the world of meanings, therefore his phenomenology was designed not to strengthen the separation of a philosophically reliable subject and a concrete person, but through indisputable philosophical logic to return the world of meanings to a legitimate position in philosophy and theory of knowledge.

Having made sure that the philosophical analysis of consciousness does not abolish the "owner" of consciousness, but, on the contrary, encourages to explore the world of meanings in which a person lives, Gustav Shpet moved on to the implementation of the polemical part of his philosophical project, which simultaneously became both theory and practice of his philosophical methodology, since the main thing that philosophy does is working with cultural meanings. With its incessant reflection, it creates them and breathes new life into them. Hermeneutics as the science of understanding meanings became the next central topic for Shpet, as well as the history of the history of philosophy. Being aware of the forms of culture diversity, the philosopher did not seek to deal with all possible subjects independently. This encyclopedism would rather be repugnant to his task. Gustav Shpet saw positive (*polozhitel'naya*) philosophy as meaning and aim of cognition, its center. Its building in its specific cultural-historical situation presupposed academic work with the history of thought.

Our analysis of his criticism of neo-Kantianism, the dispute with Auguste Comte showed that Shpet does not take something arbitrary in the history of thought but starts from what can be attributed to central and relevant topics. In other words, Gustav Shpet, using the example of a discussion relevant for his time,

shows that general “logic of cognition” can be found in the criticism of the history of thought itself. This approach turns out to be productive precisely because all ideas have their own history, but only within the framework of a philosophical reflexive attitude they can be realized, reflected, and therefore, fairly evaluated within the framework of philosophical reflection.

Neo-Kantianism and Positivism, popular and influential in those years, were important targets for criticism by Gustav Shpet. Each of these directions in the coordinate system of Russian thinker was a negative (*otritsatel'naya*) philosophy. Firstly, it refused to claim to understand the meaning of scientific activity, and, secondly, it undermined the very cause of philosophy, mainly searching for the reasons of functioning previously performed by philosophical reflection that later became parts of specific, particular sciences. For Shpet, the fragmentation of the ways of cognition is internally contradictory, since cognition is valuable and is a part of historical culture, which was based on philosophy. Without detracting from the merits of individual sciences, Gustav Shpet determined that empirical research should always be supplemented by philosophical reflection on language, history and culture, outside of which consciousness is doomed to wander in the void of abstract schemes created in order to deprive language, history and culture of any independent meaning.

In the first two chapters of the study, we conducted a historical and philosophical reconstruction of the philosophy of knowledge in the Gustav Shpet's project. Interest in knowledge was not a particular subject of his thought, but was its constitutive feature, which formed Shpet's circle of interests and methods. The thematic unity of the methods and his own research work, which he adhered to throughout life, speaks in favor of the integrity of Gustav Shpet's project. For the historical and philosophical analysis of Shpet's thought, we also used the works of cultural-historical epistemologists who actively addressed and are addressing Russian philosopher's legacy. This methodological move allows us to capture the thought of Gustav Shpet in its dynamics, to show as best as possible how Shpet saw functioning of the reflective philosophy of the history of philosophy.

In order to highlight from all sides the functioning of Shpet's philosophy as one of the sources of inspiration for the current cultural-historical epistemology, in the third chapter we carried out a thematic study of the problems of the modern crisis of ideas and values in the theory of knowledge. The basis for this was Gustav Shpet's understanding of the trends of fragmentation of methods and loss of meaning in philosophy at the beginning of the 20th century, which were fully realized in methodology by the 70's and continue to be present in modern discussions. It is quite possible that the wording "limit the possible ways of understanding the meaning" would be even more appropriate. From our point of view, a philosophical effort – and this is precisely an effort of negative (*otritsatel'naya*) philosophy – to eliminate the subjective meaning rooted in culture from the practice and theory of scientific reflection was the fruit of desire to purify culture from philosophy, by transferring its functions to specific sciences and approaches. As a result, their declared equality – which is confirmed mainly by the fact that they are invulnerable to criticism, because common grounds have remained in the past along with the tradition of the history of philosophy – turns out to be a chaotic set of methods and practices of varying degrees of elegance and sophistication. This oppressive diversity is designed to create opportunities for infinite potential of reducing a person to consciousness, the logical form of which will be the possibility of entering into economic, socially determined, etc. relations. Beyond the brackets of these processes remains understanding that this is a constructed reality that ignores its historical genesis and excludes meaning from scientific activity. As a result, science becomes dangerous for itself, not thinking, meaningless for its participants, and fundamental knowledge is less and less interesting for scientists themselves, to whom strict critics make apparently impossible demands.

We have shown that cultural-historical epistemology seeks, through the methodology developed by Gustav Shpet, to become part of a positive philosophy that, on logically consistent grounds, could return philosophical dimension to science and methodology. One of the criteria for the relevance of this enterprise is

a request from scientists to return value to their activities, which would not be primitively reducible to the usefulness and profits of their work. The latter in capitalist societies is easily measured in calculating the profits of beneficiaries, which at the level of individual meaning is very far from the real self-consciousness of science, which in its work refuses to recognize an exclusively formal role.

Cultural-historical epistemology finds inspiration in the works of Gustav Gustavovich Shpet and inherits Shpet's methods of working with the history of thought, which act as an alternative to deconstructivist practices. The search for contradictions, gaps, inconsistencies and influences in the works and practices of philosophers, scientists and thinkers is aimed not at discrediting their thoughts, exposing the impurity of their intentions, but at real understanding of the meaning of their work, in which self-reflection, culture, individual and general history, language, as carrier of meanings, become key categories that allow us to talk about cognition in a positive way. Based on logical structure of subject's cognition phenomenological understanding, Gustav Shpet made this practice of analysis and reflection a reality. It becomes a continuation of the philosophical history of thought in the tradition of cultural-historical epistemology, which returns to man and culture their meaning and value in the world.

## APPROBATION OF THE WORK

### Publications:

**Articles which are published in journals indexed in international indexing and citations databases and included in the lists of high-level journals by HSE:**

1. Afanasov, N.B. 2019. Ernst Cassirer and Gustav Shpet about Culture: Perspectives for Modern Methodology of Social and Humanitarian Knowledge, *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 1, pp. 47-51. (in Russian).
2. Afanasov, N.B. 2019. From Auguste Comte's Positivism to Gustav Shpet's "Positive (*polozhitel'naya*)" Philosophy: The Problem of Empirical History, *Humanities Research in the Russian Far East*, no. 2(48), pp. 78-87. (in Russian).
3. Afanasov, N.B. 2018. To the Understanding of Social World's Status (Reflections on the Book), *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 4, pp. 100-110. (in Russian).

### Other publications:

1. Afanasov, N.B. 2022. The Idea of Autonomy in the Context of Late Capitalism, *Research Result. Social Studies and Humanities*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 42-54. (in Russian).
2. Afanasov, N.B. 2020. Reading Andrei Platonov: The Dialectics of Philosophical Meanings in *The Foundation Pit*, *Russian Journal of Philosophical Sciences*, vol. 63, no. 5, pp. 67-86. (in Russian).
3. Afanasov, N.B. 2020. The Loss of Human Value: Basic Income and Deprofessionalization, *Herald of Tver State University. Series: Philosophy*, no. 1(51), pp. 259-269. (in Russian).

4. Afanasov, N.B. 2018. Sociological Method and Historical Science: É. Durkheim and G. Shpet. In: *Istoriya kak fundament gumanitarnogo poznaniya. K 100-letiyu gumanitarnogo obrazovaniya na Dal'nem Vostoke: materialy mezhdunarodnogo seminara, 15-18 oktyabrya 2018 g.*, ed. by Azhimov F.E., Pruzhinin B.I., Shchedrina T.G., Dobmaeva P.G. Vladivostok: Far East Federal University Publishing House, pp. 343-348. (in Russian).

5. Afanasov, N.B. 2017. Abolishing Consciousness and Constitution of Collective Unconsciousness in Gustav Shpet's Philosophy, *Herald of the Institute of World Civilizations*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 8-14. (in Russian).

6. Afanasov, N.B. 2016. Transition to History as an Object of Philosophical Investigation through the Analytics of Consciousness in the Philosophy of G.G. Shpet. In: *Chelovek v istorii. Metodologicheskie tetradi po kul'turno-istoricheskoy epistemologii*, ed. by Pruzhinin B.I., Shchedrina T.G. Moscow: Tsentr gumanitarnykh initsiativ, pp. 114-123. (in Russian).

### **Conferences:**

The key points and results of the dissertation were presented and discussed in the following reports at scientific conferences:

1) "Modern Russia and the World: Historical Contexts of Development and Scenarios of the Future", Dubna, Dubna State University, 13 May 2022. Presentation title: "Fragmentation and Dialogicity: Gustav Shpet's Thought in the Context of Modern Culture Development".

2) "Social-cultural Determinants of Social Development: Models and Forecasts", Dubna, Dubna State University, 19 April 2019. Presentation title: "Gustav Shpet on Culture and History: a Project of Positive (*polozhitel'naya*) Philosophy".

3) "Modes of Thinking, Ways of Speaking", Moscow, National Research University Higher School of Economics, 26 April 2018. Presentation title: "Ernst Cassirer's Theory of Cultural Forms and Gustav Shpet's Views on Culture and



History: Reflection on Science and Methodology as a Way of Understanding Society”.

4) A meeting of “Internationale Ernst Cassirer-Gesellschaft”, Berlin, Berlin Technical University, 15 March 2017. Presentation title: “Gustav Shpet: Language and History as Phenomena of Cognition”.

5) “Modes of Thinking, Ways of Speaking”, Moscow, National Research University Higher School of Economics, 26 April 2017. Presentation title: “Reflection and the Contents of Philosophical Subject in Gustav Shpet’s Phenomenological Philosophy”.

6) “Facets of Culture: The Actual Problems of History and Contemporaneity”, Moscow, Institute of World Civilizations, 15 December 2016. Presentation title: “Abolishing Consciousness and Constitution of Collective Unconsciousness in Gustav Shpet’s Philosophy”.

7) Annual Conference in the history of Russian philosophy held by Maison des Sciences de L’Homme d’Aquitane, Bordeaux, 9 December 2016. Presentation title: “History as a Way of Understanding Social Reality – on the Materials of Gustav Shpet”.

8) “Subjective World in the Context of Contemporary Cognitive Sciences’ Challenges”, Moscow, Institute of Philosophy, 6 October 2016. Presentation title: “Self-reflection in Gustav Shpet’s Philosophy: between Apperception and the World of History”.

9) “Modes of Thinking, Ways of Speaking”, Moscow, National Research University Higher School of Economics, 30 April 2016. Presentation title: “History as a Way of Conceiving Social Reality in Gustav Shpet’s Philosophy”.

10) “International Scientific Conference for Undergraduate and Graduate Students and Young Scientists ‘Lomonosov’”, Moscow, Moscow State University, 14 April 2016. Presentation title: “Epistemological Problematics in G.G. Shpet’s Philosophy”.