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## INTERPRETATION OF FICTION. PHENOMENOLOGY, HERMENEUTICS AND RECEPTIVE ESTHETICS

### Abstract

Literature is often regarded as a mirror of society. However, the artistic work does not simply reflect the society, but also bears traces of the political, social, historical and cultural environment in which the writer grew up. Individual characteristics also play a role in the formation of the work. However, the work must find its reader, the viewer of art cinema, so that its meaning is created. From this point of view, the writer of the literary work, the text itself and the reader are united as a trinity in the process of interpretation. The most essential point here is the process of interpretation itself. The article analyzes this concept, which we often find in the scientific literature dealing with the interpretation of a work of art, and a number of approaches that are important for its explanation.

**Keywords:** *literature, interpretation, phenomenology, hermeneutics, receptive esthetics*

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### Bədii əsərin təhlili. Fenomenologiya, hermenevtika və reseptiv estetika

#### Xülasə

Bədii ədəbiyyatı tez-tez cəmiyyətin güzgüsü olaraq qəbul edirlər. Halbuki bədii əsər sadəcə cəmiyyəti əks etdirmir, həm də özündə yazıçının yetişdiyi siyasi, sosial, tarixi, mədəni mühitin izlərini daşıyır. Fərdi xüsusiyyətlər də eynilə əsərin formalaşmasında rol oynayır. Lakin, əsər oxucusunu, bədii kino tamaşaçısını tapmalıdır ki, mənası da yaransın. Bu baxımdan bədii əsərin yazıçısı, mətnin özü və oxucusu bir üçlük olaraq təfsir prosesinin içərisində birləşir. Əsas məqam təfsir prosesinin özüdür. Məqalə bədii əsərin şərhindən bəhs edən elmi ədəbiyyatda tez-tez rast gəldiyimizi bu anlayışı və onun izahı üçün əhəmiyyətli olan bir sıra yanaşmaları təhlil edir.

**Açar sözlər:** *bədii ədəbiyyat, təhlil, fenomenologiya, hermenevtika, reseptiv estetika*

#### Introduction

Interpretation of a literary work requires specific approach which is mainly demonstrated by literary critics. Q.Quliyev describes it as, “On the one hand, a literary critic should get acquainted with a literary and artistic example, experience it and admire it (otherwise, would it be worth getting to know it?), on the other hand, should overcome his admiration and study it thoroughly (otherwise, would it be worth talking about the work?) (Quliyev, 2014: 8).

If we consider a work of art as a unit formed by the sum of various cultural, historical, socio-political influences, the importance of the reader for the process of meaning formation becomes clear, as Q.Quliyev puts it, “Implicit reader must demonstrate his position to the views of all narrators and on this basis must unite the inner world of the work in a conceptual unity” (Quliyev,

2012: 196). Noting the role the readers play in the author-text-reader relationship, we can explain the approach applying certain conceptions. We can concentrate on phenomenology, hermeneutics and receptive esthetics. Although these concepts take their basis from Germany and philosophy, they are not an approach to be limited to one country, one field of science, they are concepts of literary studies that have influenced cultural analysis in general and giving it a certain direction.

### **The Process of Interpretation**

The "Cartesian Revolution" was associated with Deckard's name and was an approach that influenced Enlightenment for a long time. Descartes thinks by doubting reality, that he really exists, and as a result, he claims "I think, therefore I am". So, because I think, I exist, and because I think, everything I think about exists. It created a distance between consciousness and the objects it thinks about. In 1796, Kant created skepticism and claimed that "We cannot know the things in themselves". The next change was introduced in 1807 by Hegel's phenomenological approach, which noted that our consciousness is constantly dissatisfied and alienates us from reality. Of course, it didn't end there, later Marx's ideas about "commodity fetishism" and ideology, Nietzsche's language, Freud's hidden consciousness, and Darwin's ideas about natural selection deepened skepticism and drew attention not only to the lost connection between consciousness and reality, but also to the confusing connection of consciousness with its own foundation.

Main ideas of phenomenology can be generalized as:

- Intentionality is the construction of an object by consciousness.
- Epoche (suspension) - bracketing natural attitude - phenomenological reduction - removing previous knowledge and prejudices about the phenomenon we study.

We come across these ideas in the works by Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre.

Phenomenology is derived from the word phenomena, that is, phenomenon, event, picture. The main idea is related to the name of the German philosopher Edmund Husserl, and it is based on the fact that the human consciousness does not passively record the external environment, but designs and builds it. Phenomenology is the study of how things come into being in our understanding and, consequently, in our subjective experience of the world. In this case, it is intended to perceive the phenomenon consciously, from the subjective point of view of the first person, direct perception in any concept, without hypothesis. That is, phenomenological understanding depends on how the subject perceives the phenomenon. It includes the study of the structure of perception, thought, memory, imagination, feeling, desire, action, social, linguistic activity. Our consciousness presents things through certain concepts, thoughts, ideas, images. The same process happens when we read a literary text, "As we read, we oscillate to a greater or lesser degree between the building and the breaking of illusions" (3). The basic structure of consciousness opens the way to other forms of experience - phenomenology considers not only the nature of the object, but also the study of the subject trying to understand it, the consciousness. Husserl tried to analyze the structure of consciousness. Therefore, the world is empiric and transcendental, that is, it is perceived and material in experience, not by theory.

Analysing phenomenological method we come to conclusion that the method is based on certain elements. For example,

- Epoche-Judgment about the investigated object is suspended. It was called natural attitude. According to this approach, we see the world beyond our subjective perception. Husserl argued against this and claimed that the world was created in the human mind. The main thing here is to somehow block the prejudice based on our previous experiences and opinions about the object.

- Phenomenological eidetic reduction-going to the essence of experience. What makes this love? What makes him that person? Would he still be that person if it were not for these characteristics? That is, to analyze the object.

- Phenomenological Transcendental Reduction - turning the object into the activity of consciousness.

In connection with fiction, this approach means that the social and political context in which the text was created is not taken into account, only the text itself is analyzed. A work of fiction is a reflection of the writer's consciousness, no biographical information about him is necessary, the literary text is enough to understand the relationship between the writer himself and the world. This approach also assesses the role of the reader in the formation of meaning. It gives the reader a glimpse into the mind of the writer.

Husserl did not attach importance to language, he did not allocate space for its role in the formation of meaning. Husserl's student Martin Heidegger noted that we ourselves are a part of the world and somehow do not perceive it from the outside. This differs from Husserl's idea of the transcendental ego. According to Heidegger, our thinking is situational and historical. This allows us to call him an existentialist. He called his philosophy hermeneutics, that is, the science of interpretation. So Husserl is a transcendental phenomenology, and Heidegger is a hermeneutic phenomenology. Hans-Georg Gadamer developed Heidegger's idea and showed that the meaning of a work of art does not emerge out of nowhere, its meaning also depends on the historical situation of the interpreter. Thus, Phenomenology introduced a new approach to the analysis of the work emphasizing the role of the subject in the object-subject relationship, that is, the role of the reader in the relationship between the work and the reader.

### **Hermeneutics**

During the interpretation of the text, hermeneutics should take into account the difference between the date of writing of the work and the period in which the interpreter lived, including cultural and linguistic factors, "The reader has one language system and the author another; the object is also meaningful with reference to the language system with a specified community past and present" (Bleich, 1978: 160). According to hermeneutics, we do not first see the object and then interpret it into meaning, the process of seeing itself is to shape the world in some way. How we see the world is influenced by everything, our culture, our personal history, even our profession. Knowledge comes from curiosity, creative thinking, enthusiasm and commitment. Understanding means that when we understand something, we combine someone else's point of view with our own, which expands the mind. The role of tradition in interpretation was undeniable, one cannot get stuck in tradition, but it also does not work to ignore it as a primary source. Language is not just a tool, it is a tool through which our thoughts are shaped. The hermeneutic circle means that understanding depends on context. Hermeneutics does not mean relativism, it does not mean there is no objective truth. The fact that we see the world differently does not mean that we create the world ourselves. Hermeneutics is critical realism, so our personal participation is central to our understanding of things. That is, we do not build the world, the world reveals itself to us from our point of view and having strong belief in our knowledge should not stop us from learning more, that is, "Absolute to knowledge is not a reason for abandoning the pursuit of truth" (Schleiermacher, 1998: 26).

German philosopher V. Dilthey (Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911)). By developing the concept of hermeneutic circle, Schleiermacher (Friedrich Schleiermacher) showed that the reader cannot understand the parts of the text without understanding the whole, and the whole without understanding the parts. E.D. Hirsch said that a correct interpretation reveals the meaning intended by the author. Martin Heidegger and Hans Georg Gadamer drew attention to the historicity and temporality of interpretation. According to them, the meaning is always codified and combines the horizons of the writer and the author's expectations (fusion of horizons). The interpretation of the text depends on the knowledge, assumptions, cultural background, experience and openness of the reader.

### **Receptive Ethics**

A work that does not find its reader is somehow incomplete, "The text has a direction; it begins, progresses and ends. But a skilled reader also gives a text meaning by making connections between all the parts of the text, regardless of direction or position" (Holland, 1968: 28). The main idea is that the text comes into being only when it meets the reader, that is, it gives meaning. Receptive

aesthetics continued the principles of hermeneutic interpretation. It gave a sociological aspect to the commentary. It interpreted the literary artistic example by placing it in the historical context that produced it. As early as 1920, A. Richardson wrote about it, but it could not cause enough resonance at that time, when psychoanalysis and structuralism were on the scene. Later, in Germany in the 1960s, V. Iser played an important role in the development of the theory. In America, similar ideas were reflected in the works of S. Fish. In general, the views vary and one of the key concepts are: Transactional reader-response theory (meaning appears at the result of transaction between the text and reader based on his emotions and knowledge)- Louise Rosenblatt, V. Iser, Affective stylistics (text comes into being if it is read)- S. Fish, Subjective reader-response theory (meaning depends entirely on the reader)- David Bleich, Psychological reader-response theory (readers' motives)- Norman Holland, Social reader-response theory (interpretive community of minds)- Stanley Fish's; fusion of horizons - G. Godamer, horizon of expectation – Jauss.

Jauss explains "Horizon of expectation" which means reactions the piece of work is approached with. The work may and may not fulfill the expectations. He also defines the notion of "Aesthetic distance", "Jauss takes over the notion of horizon which he names "horizon of expectation" and means by it the sum total of reactions, prejudgments verbal and other behavior that greet a work upon its appearance. A work may fulfill such a horizon by confirming the expectations vested in it or it may disappoint the expectations by creating a distance between itself and them. This Jauss labels "aesthetic distance." Aesthetic distance becomes an important factor in the constitution of literary history for it may result in one of two major processes: either the public alters its horizon so that the work is now accepted – and a stage in the aesthetics of reception is set – or it rejects a work which may then lie dormant until it is accepted, i.e., until a horizon for it is forged" (Jauss, 1982: 12).

Jauss' concept of horizon occupies an essential place in the theory of interpretation. Horizon leaves the work open for reader analysis and explains his interpretation from different angles. Because, "The act of looking at (regarding) something necessarily involves looking away from (disregarding) something else-this is an element in the horizon structure of all experience of the world" (Jauss, 1982: 200).

Godamer notes that, "To acquire a horizon means that one learns to look beyond what is close at hand—not in order to look away from it but to see it better, within a larger whole and in truer proportion" (Godamer, 2004: 304). Horizon is not a fixed position, it evolves and is in a constant process of formation.

### Conclusion

Along with the period and environment described, the work of art creates a certain idea about the historical conditions in which it was written, and about the leading trends of the time. In this sense, it would be correct to treat the works as a whole formed in the sum of historical, socio-political and cultural processes.

The analysis of the work requires a certain knowledge and outlook of the reader. The point of view of the reader, the horizon of understanding determines the meaning of the work. This horizon expands and enriches with each work, so it is constantly in the process of formation. Thus, reading a work of art is not only an aesthetic pleasure, but also a way of enlightenment.

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