Hermeneutic Method in Literature

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ABSTRACT: Literary hermeneutics is the method of analyzing literary texts, teaching about the principles of their interpretation. This article gives full information about hermeneutic method, its analysis and approaches of analyzing literary text by this method.

KEYWORDS: hermeneutic circle, divination, logical circle, meaning, understanding, pre-understanding, receptive aesthetics.

Literary hermeneutics - the science of interpreting texts, teaching about the principles of their interpretation. With regard to the "literature" system, this process takes place within the framework of the subsystem – "Work - reader – tradition". The origin of the word "hermeneutics" is associated with the name of Hermes, the ancient Greek god of cattle breeding and trade, patron saint of travellers, messenger of the gods, who explained to people their speech.

Originally, the role of hermeneutics was to interpret oracle divinations. In the future, the scope of its application expanded and included the interpretation of sacred texts, laws and classical poetry. When the philological discipline appeared, the twentieth century was called literary hermeneutics. It`s development was facilitated by schools of rhetoricians and sophists who developed the rules for the interpretation of texts. These rules were used by Alexandrian philology, which, collecting and studying written monuments, has accumulated extensive experience in the interpretation of works of fiction. In the Middle Ages, literary hermeneutics existed as part of classical philology, interest in which increased dramatically during the Renaissance. It did not fade away even in the period of the Reformation, when controversy erupted between Protestant and Catholic theologians, who differed in interpretation of Holy Scripture. At the turn of the Middle Ages and modern times, there was an understanding that the developing in parallel, philological hermeneutics and biblical hermeneutics share common modes of interpretation and that both are one in essence.

Modern reference literature defines hermeneutics as the art of interpretation, sometimes as understanding. In the general theory of hermeneutics, understanding is not just perception of information, it`s purpose is to penetrate the system. Symbolic symbols that make up speech (and the written word) in order to comprehend as adequately as possible the meaning hidden in them". The fact that the authors of the definitions of hermeneutics see in it only art is not only a tribute going back to a deep antiquity of tradition, but also a consequence of the modern state of hermeneutics, which has not yet realized that in the second half of the twentieth century, it became a science.

The first universal theory of understanding was proposed F.D.E. Schleiermacher. As a professor of theology and philosophy, he gave lectures in Halle and Berlin. After his death, on the basis of lecture books, the treatises "Dialectics", "Hermeneutics" and "Criticism" were published, which played a large role in the

development of hermeneutics. In his theoretical constructions, he proceeded from what naturally arises misunderstanding. Seeing art in hermeneutics avoid misunderstanding, he considered it necessary to investigate the essence of the process of understanding. In the text of any work, according to Schleiermacher, two beginnings can be combined-adherence to existing rules and deviations from them, due to genius he creates images and sets the rules. Therefore, knowledge of the rules necessary but not enough to understand the work. A genius which is free from rules should be comprehended directly, as if transforming into another. The possibility of such a transformation into an author due to the presence in each the minimum of each other. At this comparison with myself become an impulse for "divination", a prophetic gift, ability to predict, guesswork, interpreter congenial author. The theory of understanding created by the works of Schleiermacher is not transformed hermeneutics from art to science. The method of understanding, according to G.G. Gadamer, must keep in sight both general (by comparison) and peculiar (by guesswork); this means that it must be both comparative and divination. From both points of view, it remains "art" for it cannot be reduced to the mechanical application of rules. Divination is irreplaceable.

G.G. Gadamer cannot agree with this conclusion, considering the concept of Schleiermacher in relation to the system of "literature", where the concept of "rule" corresponds to the element "tradition" (of texts). The interpreter action field, by Schleiermacher, in this case the subsystem "Author - work – tradition", since the "reader" - the interpreter, in the process of understanding, must repeatedly to "transform'' into an "author" in order to carry out the act of divination.

 Considering that in the subsystem "author - work -tradition" the relationship with "author – work" characterizes genesis of the work in connection with tradition, it will become clear that Schleiermacher deduced the possibility of understanding from genesis understandable text, about which he repeatedly wrote. However, the act understanding, according to Schleiermacher, is carried out in the subsystem "Author - work – reader", which is in the feedback going from the "reader" to the "author", with the subsystem "Author - work – tradition", and this link between the author and the "reader" -interpreter is mediated by the "work". Therefore, direct comprehension of individuality of author, the underlying divination, within the framework of the literature system turns out to be impossible.

2. The second half of the 19th century was significant for hermeneutics with the emergence of a fundamental theory of understanding, developed by Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911). Professor of philosophy in Basel, Kiel, Breslau, Berlin, member of the Berlin Academy of Sciences, Dilthey carefully studied the legacy of Schleiermacher and wrote the book "The Life of Schleiermacher" (1870). Dilthey contrasted the method of "explanation", applied in the "sciences of nature", where rational penetration into the essence of things is possible, the method of "understanding" inherent in humanitarian "sciences of the spirit." He proceeded from the fact that understanding one's own world is achieved through introspection (introspection), understanding another's world - through intuitive "Getting used to", "empathy", "feeling", and understanding phenomena of the culture of the past - by interpreting them as manifestations of the integral spiritual life of the historical era. He built a reconstruction of the life of this era according to the principle of connecting many biographies.

He penned the classic essay "The origin of hermeneutics". Therefore, we should not be surprised by the continuity of his theory in relation to Schleiermacher`s theory in terms of interest in the genesis of the work, although the attitude "the author -work" he considered in connection not with tradition, as it was done by Schleiermacher, but with "reality", which corresponded the postulates of the version of the philosophy of life created by him. Fulfil the condition of direct "living" into the inner world the "author" the "reader" - interpreter could not, because the connection, going from the reader to the author is mediated by the element "reality", which, moreover, did not represent reality itself, and its reconstruction.

The theory of understanding, elaborated in detail by Dilthey, is not removed hermeneutics from the category of arts, but it led to you division of literary hermeneutics from philological into a special literary discipline.

Dilthey, not only philosopher and cultural historian, but also the founder of the spiritual-historical school in literary criticism, who applied the provisions of his theory of understanding in literary hermeneutics. His works about I.V. Goethe, F. Petrarch, G.E. Lessinge, F. Holderlin, novalis and C. Dickens contributed to the awareness of the features of literary texts that set them apart from others monuments of spiritual culture and suggesting a special approach to their study. Dilthey`s role in development is great the concept of "reception", which is key for modern comparative studies.

The hermeneutics of modern times transferred from ancient rhetoric to the theory of understanding the rule according to which the whole should be to understand on the basis of the part, and the part on the basis of the whole. This rule is similar to the logical circle in the definition through the defined - called the hermeneutic circle, the circle of the whole and the part, or the circle of understanding. The hermeneutic circle itself is defined as "the paradox of the irreducibility of understanding and interpreting a text to a logically consistent algorithm."

The quoted passage obeys the rule that the whole is to be understood on the basis of the part, and the part on the basis of the whole. And here the principle of the system works. The hermeneutic circle was present in the writings of Schleiermacher and Dilthey, and both researchers were well aware of this approach. Moreover, Dilthey described with utmost correctness application of the rule by which he was guided in his hermeneutic studies: "For every (interpretation) is characterized by such a forward movement that passes from perception of definite-indefinite parts to try to capture the meaning of their whole, or more precisely to define the parts themselves. The failure of this method is revealed in the case when individual parts do not become clearer.

For a long time, the attitude towards the circle in understanding was unequivocally negative, and hermeneutists either tried to avoid it, or was recognized as an unavoidable evil, with which one has to put up with. The situation changed dramatically after the publication of the book Hans Georg Gadamer Truth and Method. Fundamentals of Philosophical hermeneutics ", in which there are many attention was paid to the problem of understanding and related her question of hermeneutic circle.

Developing M. Heidegger`s idea that the anticipating movement of pre-understanding constantly determines the comprehension of the text, Gadamer established the link between the process of understanding and the hermeneutic circle: "The circle <...> is not formal in nature, it is not subjective or objective - it describes understanding as the interaction of two movements: tradition and interpretation. Anticipation of meaning guiding our understanding text, is not a subjective act, but defines itself from the community that binds us with tradition.

The conclusion made by Gadamer in relation to the system of "literature" means that the process of understanding takes place within the framework of subsystems "work - reader – tradition". The correctness of this interpretation of Gadamer`s words is confirmed by the fact that "in the first place, he consistently refrains from all judgments about a text that refers to any reality other than the text itself (be it socio-political or cultural-historical reality), and "that secondly, he imposes a ban on reducing the meaning of the text to its intention, those exactly what it was ultimately aimed at traditional hermeneutic strategy".

Limiting the field of action of the "reader" -interpreter subsystem "work - reader – tradition", Gadamer established the limits in which the methods developed by hermeneutics are applicable. The element "reader" is also present in the subsystem "reader - work – reality" but in it, the object of understanding is the relationship between dissimilar objects - a "work" (not really existing, corrected or damaged text!) and reality. About applying the whole and part rule here out of the question.

Gadamer`s philosophical hermeneutics played a big role in the transformation of hermeneutics, in particular - literary hermeneutics, from art to science. literary hermeneutics uses the same procedures and in the same order as hermeneutics as a method of understanding in philosophy: "a) putting forward some hypothesis,

which contains a premonition or pre-understanding of the meaning of the text as a whole; b) interpretation based on this sense of its individual fragments, i.e. movement from the whole to its parts; c) correction of the holistic meaning based on the analysis of individual fragments of the text, i.e. reverse movement from parts to whole.

Conservative Approaches. The main proponents of the conservative approaches in hermeneutics are Betaly, E.D. Hirsh and Scheleiermacher. According to them, the following principles and presumptions are the characteristic features of the approach:

i.   Truth of the text reflects the author's intentions.

ii. Truth is understood to mean the correspondence between the interpreter's idea and the textual meaning.

iii. Understanding the historical, cultural and autobiographical background of the author helps us to identify the meaning of the text.

iv. Truth also is related to the genre and language of the text and what it meant to the original readers.

v.   The interpreters should leave aside their biases to understand the text's relevance at the period of its creation.

vi. The interpreter should be able to distinguish between the text's objectivity and his subjective perspectives.

Dialogical Approach. The guiding principles of this approach is that the 'truth' underlying a text is not generated automatically from the interaction between the intention of the author and the interpreter's feelings. Heideggar reports: i. "'Truth' is a self–realization from insightful contemplation." ii. Interpretation is not entirely subjective; the text can impose restrictions in the process. iii. The historical context of a text may help us to understand it, but such understandings need not be complete. iv. A text can produce incorrect interpretations; further, it may produce more than one 'good' interpretation.' v. Historical and linguistic investigations may not eliminate the interpreter's prejudices and pre-suppositions. vi. The reason for a literary work having different interpretations in different periods is due to its uniqueness and importance; the basic semantic substance of a work may remain the same but successive interpretations may change its connotations.

Critical Approach. A distinguishing feature of this approach is the importance given to language in text-interpretation. Hebermas's concept of language in interpretative communication subsumes three basic notions:

i.   The reliability of linguistic competence.

ii. Language use contains biases and pre-suppositions; and

iii. Language use is based on psychology (Habermas,1990)

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