



CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF ANALYZING A LITERARY TEXT ACCORDING TO ITS GENRE CHARACTERISTICS

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the distinctive methodology, principles, and main approaches to analyzing literary texts. It emphasizes the necessity of studying literary texts based on their connection with national mentality, structure and narrative system, expressive means, language, and poetic features. The article systematically explores the styles of signification and expression, as well as the processes of meaning formation and interpretation. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of jointly considering form and content, identifying the characteristics of open texts, and the reader's aesthetic reception in the analysis of literary texts. The article demonstrates the potential for generating new meanings through interpreting literary texts in various contexts and provides an in-depth discussion of the analytical process.

Any literary text should be subjected to a reader's analysis based on the national mentality of its creator, the structure of the work, its theme, language, and stylistic features. An essential aspect of a literary text is the unique skill of its author. The following can be noted as its important characteristics:

1. A literary text belongs to the cultural and spiritual sphere. Therefore, it can only be analyzed and evaluated based on the conditions of this sphere.
2. A literary text is a means of communication that embodies distinctive features.
3. A literary text has a composite structure.
4. A literary text is an artistic phenomenon realized through language.
5. The poetic function of language is predominant in a literary text.
6. A literary text has one signifier but multiple signifieds; that is, it is reconstructed and recreated each time it is read.
7. The addressee of a literary text exists within the text itself.
8. A literary text does not represent any entity or concept beyond itself.
9. A literary text interprets reality and transforms it, thereby creating its own truth.

Every literary text is formed based on traditions and relies on previous examples. From this perspective, applying existing knowledge lays the foundation for creating subsequent works and provides the necessary materials. A text with such characteristics is not merely



historical, social, psychological, or anthropological material. However, various disciplines use texts according to their principles, analyze, and evaluate them.

It is important to emphasize that distinguishing literary texts by content and form should not be done by analyzing form first and then content; separating content from form is impossible.

National Mentality. The term "national mentality" refers to a concept, emotional perception, and aesthetic taste created collectively by social, political, administrative, legal, military, religious forces, civil society organizations, commercial and economic life, and educational activities during a certain period. The theme, form, and style of expression reflected in a literary text are connected to the mentality specific to that era. It is considered appropriate to begin the analysis of a literary text by paying attention to characteristics inherent to the national mentality. In doing so, the text itself should always be the primary basis. Discussing the social, political, and economic structure of the era using sources external to the text does not constitute analysis of the work from this perspective. The structure, style of expression, and thematic elements that embody the national mentality must be selected from the text and must express the characteristics reflected therein.

Each literary work contains numerous expressive elements and a unique structure that embody the national mentality of its era. These should be chosen as the subject of text analysis and assessed collectively. The differences among these elements are evident in texts written on the same themes across different periods. For example, in works about love for nature, care for others, or love, literary texts from various eras demonstrate distinct structural and stylistic approaches. Similarly, poetic works depicting the lifestyle of small-town residents show differences in structure and style from texts describing the interests in life of impoverished villagers living during the same period. Applying these differences helps clarify the culture of the period when the text was written, the spirituality of the society, and the worldview and customs of the people. As a result, it becomes possible to explain, based on the text, how the literary work represents its own era and relates to the realities of that time.

Analyzing the structure of a literary work serves the purpose of identifying the characteristics of relationships between the elements that create it. These elements within a system imply the existence of unity. Structural analysis begins with identifying the units that compose the system. For example, the human body is a system. Externally, the units composing this system are the head, torso, arms, and legs. Inside this system, there are internal systems such as the digestive, circulatory, and nervous systems. Similarly, each literary text forms an integral system. When analyzing a literary text structurally, it is necessary to identify its composing units, which mainly include the characters, setting, and time needed to describe and organize events.

In texts based on denotation, such as folk tales, novels, and modern novels, each contains an event or a system of events. The difference lies in the components that make up the system of events, their sequencing, narration, and presentation. Therefore, when analyzing literary texts, it is appropriate to begin with the system of events. The system of events never simply happens but is always organized. This is where the primary difference between denotative literary texts and didactic texts lies. The system of events emerges as an aesthetic arrangement of imagined, designed, and fictional event segments. However, the starting point or model of



these imagined, designed event parts is reality itself. Here, it is not about reflecting reality but transforming and interpreting it.

To understand the system of events, it is important to ask: "What is an event?" An event occurs as a result of the clash or conflict of at least two or three persons gathered in one place, or two elements substituting their roles, based on their individual differences. Every event requires characters, setting, and time. It becomes clear that around an event, elements such as characters, setting, and time unite to form wholeness. In expressing and presenting this unity, some elements may be emphasized while others may be omitted. The system of events consists of event parts united around the main conflict or encounter. By analyzing the relationships between these parts, the attitude toward the main conflict is revealed. A concise and clear expression of this main conflict is considered the theme of the text.

Theme identification requires structural analysis. When the system of events is represented schematically, the functions of the categories of character, setting, and time in the text become clear. In literary texts based on the expression of emotions, especially in poetic works, the structural units consist of combinations of sound and meaning. First, these units should be identified, then the network of relations between them studied. Each unit must have its own meaning and value. However, the meaning and value of the text are not merely the sum of the meanings and values of these units. Analyzing the relationships between these units leads to the theme of the text. Thus, the theme is essentially the unique structure and stylistic expression of the text itself.

The units that form the theme usually remain in the background. Even in these texts, the theme is achieved through examining and understanding the nature and purpose of the relationships between the units forming the theme. In both types of texts, achieving the theme requires careful and problem-focused study of the structure. The following points are crucial:

1. The system of events should not be shortened or summarized but analyzed. Neglecting the system of events can lead to mistakes in discussing the functions of character, setting, and time.

2. The system of events is imagined and organized.

3. It is incorrect to determine the theme of a literary text without structural analysis.

4. Every literary work has a unique theme.

5. Theme is an abstract concept beyond the literary text. In literary texts, the system of events is concretized through categories of character, setting, and time.

6. Studying a literary text only in terms of form or content leads to errors. Each form exists with its own content, and each content determines its form. It is incorrect to study them separately.

7. After determining the theme of a literary text through structural analysis, its historical and social significance, importance to humanity, and development in the history of culture and thought should be briefly addressed, along with how it is reflected in the work.

It is purposeful to conduct analyses of national mentality, text structure, and theme under the section of "language and expression." Literary language is a new form of language nourished by natural language. Natural language is the language used by everyone in everyday communication. The artist, however, assigns new meanings and values to elements at every linguistic level to express a particular structure, narrative, or psychological state more



effectively. Their goal is not to teach but to depict a transformed and recreated reality, evoking an aesthetic experience in the reader. Consequently, personal values are embedded into the language. This occurs through unique expressions and distinctive descriptions. Emotional value is infused into the expression, leading the reader to perceive new meanings from the text. As a result, the secondary meaning of artistic expression is understood more profoundly.

Language, as a carrier of culture, helps in understanding characteristics specific to historical and social themes. Influenced by natural language, individual language is expressed with personal sensitivity. Therefore, literary language emerges based on imagination. In literary texts, the poetic function of language is utilized. Linguistic signs, especially words, have unlimited potential to be used metaphorically to evoke imagery. At the level of expression, linguistic elements are often employed with appeal and emotionality. This characteristic facilitates the emergence of secondary meaning. Secondary meaning allows the literary text to be reconstructed and its meaning to be expressed differently upon rereading, thus enriching interpretation over time.¹

One of the essential aspects of analyzing a literary text lies in distinguishing literary language from natural (everyday) language. This includes examining the influence and importance of imagination through selected examples from the text. These examples should be categorized internally to identify specific linguistic features of the studied work. Additionally, attention must be paid to elements such as sound and pronunciation where appropriate, as well as to the reasons why certain words and phrases are used outside of their primary, literal meanings. These are inseparable components when interpreting the linguistic characteristics of a literary text.

Expressions that enrich the secondary meaning of the text and evoke emotional responses are crucial in revealing the nature of literary language. At this point, it becomes particularly important to address the concept of secondary meaning. Investigating such distinctive features facilitates a deeper understanding of the inner world of the text and highlights what differentiates the studied text from others.

The issue of signification is a separate matter. One must seek answers within the text to understand who is speaking, what they are saying, why, and how. For this, it is necessary first to focus on the speaker and their point of view. In our view, the primary focus should not be on the sentences and chapters of the text, but rather on the types of expressions used.

In textual analysis, the characteristic features of these expression types demonstrate how they complement and integrate with one another. It is essential to examine the various forms of expression within the text. Particularly in poetry, analyzing rhythm-producing elements is also a significant part of this process.

Meaning and interpretation. The interpretation of literary texts begins with the core of meaning. To interpret a text, it is essential to delve into its meaning, which is often embedded within linguistic features, sound, pronunciation, and structure. Meaning is any impact that arises in the receiver of the message during communication. To create meaning, all elements within the composition must be present, as it is the unity of these elements that determines the

¹¹ Aktaş, Şerif va b. Türk Edebiyatı 9. – Ankara, Bilge Ders Kitapları, 2005. – 38-s.



conveyed meaning. Every meaning is realized within a specific context and can vary across different contexts. In essence, meaning is a dialogue between two contexts.

The meaning of scientific texts is defined according to the conditions of the constructed context, and the receiver comprehends the text based on these same conditions. Such texts typically have a single, fixed meaning. In contrast, literary texts often possess meanings that shift depending on the reading context and the individual interpreting them. As the reader or their situation changes, the text acquires new meanings. These texts are constructed in a way that allows for new interpretations upon each reading. All components of the text play a crucial role in generating various and novel meanings.

While the text itself remains unchanged, it is the reader who transforms, reconstructing the text through their imagination, cultural background, taste, and knowledge. This process is called "reception." Reception does not require altering the essence of the text; however, due to the reader's evolving worldview, mindset, culture, and knowledge, the text is subject to constant re-evaluation. This re-evaluation and renaming process is referred to as "interpretation."

Interpretative texts are characterized by their potential to encompass multiple meanings. One of the features of literary texts is their ability to enrich themselves with new semantic values; they are reconstructed and acquire new meanings with each reading. In the process of creating meaning and receiving it in new ways, the work itself plays an active role. Literary texts are inherently suited to the discovery of new meanings. Such texts are referred to as "open texts."

In open texts, meaning varies depending on the reader's perspective. In such texts, the conveyed ideas, events, emotions, and images are not fully detailed; instead, they are expressed by leaving deliberate gaps. The reader fills these gaps according to their desires, thoughts, and imagination.

In literary texts especially in poetry the effects of sound, pronunciation, language, and imagery are more profound. There is also a dialogic relationship between the context in which a text was created and the context in which it is read. Without the reader, poetry and art lose their significance. Therefore, continuous dialogue between the text and the reader is natural. This ensures that the literary work particularly poetry continues to exist beyond its original time. Thus, the text is interpreted in ways specific to the reader, expanding its field of meaning. After analyzing the work, its original context is clarified, and interpretation begins. This process requires identifying connections between components of the text and understanding the function of each part.

The purpose and objectives of the person interpreting the text should also be considered. Interpretation involves establishing a new dialogue with the text and allows the reader to determine their position in relation to it. It enables the creation of new meanings, concretization, and the enrichment and renewal of the text's presence across different contexts. The points mentioned above serve to analyze and evaluate literary texts, understand their distinctiveness, and interpret them effectively.

In conclusion, literary text analysis helps shape the reader's point of view and develops their ability to uncover new meanings within historical and cultural contexts. Working with texts enhances the reader's ability to generate new interpretations on the topic being studied.



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