

Interpretation as Creative Objective Act

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Make sure that, reading your story, the melancholic move towards laughter; those who laugh begin doing it louder, the simple are not bothered, the discreet become amazed with the invention, the serious do not disregard it, nor the wise stop praising it.

Cervantes: 2004, p. 14

Introduction

In *Don Quixote's* prologue, Cervantes announces the purpose of a literary work: being open to different interpretations that allow every reader a personal encounter. We believe that Semiotics offer a theoretical basis to have a creative and open encounter with texts, without drifting away from other disciplines and the objectiveness that the text itself encompasses.

In the first place, we explain the classical and modern conceptions of the sign, namely representation and significance, in order to observe the function of Literature as a sign that withholds both conceptions. In the second place, we analyse the particularities of the literary sign as a creative energy of meaning. In the third place, we study meaning as significance, which is the individual and innovative enjoyment of the reader, who then builds new meaning. Furthermore, we inquire into the potentiality of the literary sign, open and creative, but framed by the “place of the text”, with a “box of tools for analysis” and specific examples. Finally, we will reach some conclusions that allow us to face reading as a singular and objective act.

Literature as a sign: representation and significance

The modern conception of the sign in terms of semiotic element and the classical conception that takes the sign as a representation are different. This neither means that both theories of the sign are rivals nor that the modern theory must replace the classical conception. Rather, the two theories carry out different domains of scope: the semiotic and the semantic ones (Benveniste, 1997, Volume II, Chapter II).

The modern theory of the sign corresponds to the semiotic one, whereas the classical theory, to the semantic. The semiotic sign and the semantic sign are two independent objects of study.

The notion of the semantic sign, that is to say, the sign in the classical sense, is very important and poses considerable problems. Its importance comes from the applications of which it is susceptible to. The history of philosophy certifies that the notion of the sign has served during many centuries to organise the ensemble of reflections about thought and knowledge.

According to classical theory, all thought is a sign. Upon thinking of an object, I hold, in spirit, the idea of said object; that idea that I hold in spirit represents the object. Therefore, the idea itself is a sign: a thing that represents another thing. We get to know the exterior world through the mediation of these signs that are the ideas; the word idea possesses a greater meaning because it includes, to certain philosophers, sensations. Signs are inferred from the concurrence of sensations. That inference is automatic and unconscious; for example, when I read I have no consciousness of the characters, I only have consciousness of the ideas, whose signs are the characters made out of words and, nevertheless I cannot access those ideas but with the mediation of signs.

Therefore, when reading a book one does not pay attention to the characters, but to what they represent. On the contrary, if we pay attention to the characters themselves, then we lose sight of what they represent. This presents something of a paradox: on one hand, to access the represented thing, we must resort to the sign, to the representing thing, since we do not know the represented thing other than by its intermediate. But, on the other hand, we must abstract the sign, the representing thing, to have access to what it represents. We must therefore act as if the sign did not exist and treat it as if it was nothing. The sign must be simultaneously present and absent in order to represent the signified thing.

This paradox is present within all classical literature: it is the presence-absence paradox of the sign. It is imperative that the sign is present in order to represent the signified thing; but, if it is too present, it ends up hiding the thing that it should be revealing. To access the signified thing, we must pass by the sign, but not stop in it. This ever-possible concealment of the represented thing by the marked presence of the represented thing is in a way illustrated by the irresistible tendency towards the idealism that has manifested the philosophy of the sign or of the idea as a sign.

At first, the theory of ideas was a way to explain our knowledge of the outside world. It was later used as a way to deny the existence of said world, whose only knowledge is mediated by these signs that are ideas. The focus has been placed on signs after they have served us to have access to things. In consequence, we know that the sign possesses a dyadic character: it is opaque and transparent, it uncovers and hides the signified thing at the same time. In general terms, for the classics, the sign is a representation, while for the modern thinkers it is a signifier.

It is literature which manifests the reappearance of the living being in language. First the existence of language is based in the representation, in making signs, naming and designating with other names that mark a different presence; the second sign, the rhetorical. Then, literature will emphasise the being of language, but without a starting point nor a fixed route, literary work writes its own route every day. That is why literature appears as what needs to be thought, equally if analysed for its signified aspect (what it wants to say, its ideas) as for its signifier (its linguistic form).

Literature consisting of a signifier and a signified is substituted by literature as a sign that adds Pierce's notion of user (active sign that stays in a potential state). According to Foucault, *Don Quixote* represents that fundamental change:

Don Quixote shows what is negative in the world of the Renaissance; writing has stopped being the prose of the world, the similarities and the signs have broken their former compromise; the similarities are tricky, they lead to visions and delirium, things remain obstinately in their ironic identity: they are not more than what they are; words go towards adventure, without content, without similarities that fill them; they no longer mark things; they sleep between the books' pages surrounded by dust (1999, p. 54)

The poet is who tries to hear another language, not that of the simple similarity between things and signs, but of a language that does not stop proliferating from allegorical signs that present identities and differences.

While the interpretation used to be based on only the relation of similarity between the signs and the represented things, now, the world needs signs as instruments of analysis and identity marks and differences in the close likeness of things. The sign will start signifying within the interior of knowledge and linked to the sense. The linguistic signs represent thought, but not a representation in terms of translation, rather in terms of listening; language represents thought, just as it represents itself. The difference between the classical period and modern times is that in the classical period an essential act of significance is not seen, but rather one of representation.

Literature is a sign that represents and signifies the thoughts of mankind, a mental sign that manages to exteriorise. It is something evident (the anecdote) that allows us to see something not evident (the meaning). It is the sign that represents and signifies the author's "state of their soul" as the first step in the infinite semiosis that begins the act of creation. It is a sign that represents and signifies a group of objects that form a unique and complex object. This object is the creative thought made out of facts and ideals, of realities and dreams. Literary representation makes use of linguistic signs, which are the words, but in itself is also a sign. A sign made out of a signifier that is its form of representing and a signified that is what it wants to represent. It has an object, as evidenced, and its signified is closer to Pierce's interpretant than Saussure's concept, because it is as potential sign, open to different interpretations.

Literature puts us in the presence of a speech where many things are being signified at the same time, without it being necessary for the reader to decide one at the expense of the others. The author reads the world and represents it with imagination, in its own way, based on the election of a particular ground (attribute). The reader reads the work as a sign of the world and interprets it.

Interpreting consists of referring words to things, giving everything a voice and giving place to the second message. What is typical of knowledge is not seeing nor showing, but interpreting.

The literary text is a crucial sign that, for proper interpretation, requires recognition as such in its three levels of functioning:

- a. The semantic level: it is the signified of the literary sign, the text presents itself in an implicit way, because of the selection and combination of signs that represent a system of belief of reality and that can or cannot agree with the author's ideas. It is the one that

- allows transcendence and organises the real world and dreams, creating beauty and giving coherence to the totality. The reality analysed is between the sign and the object.
- b. The syntactic level: it analyses the internal relations of the literary sign. This macro sign is formed of signs, that are abstract entities that relate themselves to each other and those relations can be addressed from a double perspective: the combination of conceptual entities that corresponds to the semantic dimension and the combination of expression elements, both directions represent the paradigmatic or associative axis and the syntagmatic axis as presented by Saussure.
 - c. The pragmatic level: it studies the relations between the literary sign and the users. The link between author–work–reader that entails a mandatory personal and valuation reference.

The three levels are inseparable and they interrelate: they build a complete and articulate whole that is the literary sign. The syntactic level refers to the structural problems of the sign, the semantic level to the connotative uses and the pragmatic level connects the text from its production to its recognition. In this last level the circulation is analysed, which is the constant movement of a text that, as a sign-interpretant, is dynamic and actualises in every reader and in every concept depending on the field of pertinence of the recipients.

Literature is a sign that represents and signifies the world, it is the sign that reaches the synthesis between the classical and modern periods in the notion of sign. Literature says and does not say; its form is very particular, because the literary language is metaphorical:

(...) there is no difference between this visible marks that God has deposited over Earth's surface, in order to make us get to know its deep secrets and the legible words that Scripture or Classical erudites, illuminated by the divine light, have deposited in the Sacred Scriptures. The relation with the texts has the same nature in relation to things; here like there, what matters is the signs. But God, in order to exercise our wisdom, has planted only the nature of figures that need to be deciphered (Foucault, 1999, p. 41)

The Defamiliarization of the Literary Sign

Language does not deal with the conceptual only; literary language is what opens up with the most richness towards the non conceptual zone of language, as a transformational force, as a creative energy. It is in poetry where the true nature of words is revealed as a radiator of forces. Here, words are not only a sign of something being represented, but a creative energy of

meaning. The great richness of literary language is its reservoir of meaning. Poetic language is born in the moment of defamiliarization, of admiration of the spirit becoming conscious of its own transcendence. It is the moment in which judgement is suspended and the spirit opens up to the intuitive encounter with reality.

Literary signifiers seem to always be insufficient because it is not about concepts, but potential significance. The mechanics of literary language allows a meaning to be represented by different signifiers, and the represented signified to be endless and evoke various meanings. The creative reader must be active, as the critic, and be able to perform different takes: formal/structural, cultural/anthropological, poetic/symbolic and hermeneutic/interpretive (Maturó, 1995, p.63). Because of this, it is necessary to value the interrelation between a semiotic method and an hermeneutic one if you want to reach a creative but objective interpretation. We consider hermeneutics as *an attitude of the spirit that can be called of search* (Maturó, 1995, p.86). The search of meaning, the comprehension of literary works, needs a semiologist–detective and of an hermeneutic–philosopher. Technique is not enough to reach meaning, it is necessary to unravel it from an attitude of the spirit of search for the absolute.

To understand means to comprehend meaning, the significant field that overtakes individuality. For hermeneutics the world is transformed and we must take distance to comprehend it with reflection. Interpreting is finding the meaning of the text brought by its symbols and internal texture, discovering other levels of significance crossed by other codes. There is a process of symbolization of the creator and a similar process of the reader that requires a distance and reflection to take in the connotative meaning that the text has for every subject that is able to seize it.

Because of that it is useless to try to find strict limits between semiotics, semantics and hermeneutics since semantics takes care of the significance, of the content as a mediator of meaning, hermeneutics of the interpretation of the meaning, and semiotics studies the formality of the sign to get to that meaning. In literary reality, form, content and meaning explain each other and are not understood separately. Literary works transform a complex human experience and create its own world. Just like the metaphor displaces the name in order to arrive by a road to a new aspect of its object and it composes a complex sign that manifests a new meaning of reality, every literary work, as a macrostructure, creates a universe of meaning into which we are invited to come. Literary works are a system of significant forms, that is where we go from semiotics to semantics and we do not stop because, when we recognise the significant forms,

literature creates a meaning that makes it legitimate and necessary. This relation between form and content is the one that happens with metaphor and its cognoscitive function beyond the embellishment of the form. The metaphor pretends to reveal an aspect of the object that otherwise would stay hidden or inaccessible. It is in metaphor where you can clearly see the inseparable relation between form and content:

Metaphor stops being a form of beautifying rhetorics, or of linguistic curiosity, to begin most brilliantly exemplifying the power that language has to create meaning with unexpected links thanks to which a sudden semantic pertinence emerges from the ruins of a previous pertinence carried by its semantic and logical inconsistency (Ricoeur, 1995, Autobiografía Intelectual, p.p. 47,48)

Literary language is a particular case of the sign, for the deliberate use of the forms, the attention paid to the medium, and the richness of contents. Everyday language is generally simpler or less dense of content, it does not pay special attention to the medium and it uses conventional forms without a particular valoration. Literary language, on one hand, maximises the content; on the other hand, hurries the forms. All the language is interpretation, hermeneutic act, but literary language is on a greater scale, given that its effort for the form widens the observation field to the deepest and sublime of human life.

The writer gives shape and the reader that is unaware of the forms is exposed to deforming the meaning of the work, of falsifying its interpretation if it does not respect the limits of the text. Literary language loves plurality and complexity, it includes the personal factor of the author and reader, actualises connotations, awakens illusions, searches for novelties and surprise, that is the explanation behind the plurality of critics interpretations and the elaboration of different interpretation techniques. Reading literary works is always delight and risk. The “*man is language*” and this is the base of Paul Ricoeur’s anthropological philosophy; men interpret (themselves) continually based on the act of saying, which is why every interpretation is open o a future interpretation.

The reader’s task consists in overcoming the distance that separates them from the textual world in order to take over it, comprehend it and explain it in its multiple senses, given the polysemic quality in words, symbols and the relation with different contexts. It is not necessary to oppose semiotics and hermeneutics nor to juxtapose both methods, but to relate objectiveness with the existential. It is Ricoeur who tries the most to link semiotics and hermeneutics so that the system of signs does not lose its subjective element. It searches for a dialectic relation between the

moment of explanation and of comprehension, “explain to comprehend”. (Ricoeur, 1995, *Autobiografía Intelectual*, p.53).

Textual semiotics presents the analytical and explanatory focus of the text, of its structure, and hermeneutics the interpretation for comprehension. A focus has the purpose of objectifying, creating a distance between the investigator and the meaning, the other tries to find the appropriation of meaning, but the objective distance serves him as a base. With the help of linguistics we work with the relations between meanings, the mutual interpretation of the signs where each has value in terms of difference and opposition to other signs. With hermeneutics we find ourselves in the open field of manifestation of meaning where there are extralinguistic realities, the problematic of reference.

Interpretation hinges upon the linguistic and the non linguistic, language and lived experiences. Philosophy acts as arbitrage between two different methods of apprehension of meaning and being through language. It starts at the base of language (*la langue*) as a linguistic structure or system to get to the opening of speech, the process of language (*le langage*). The sign reaches its transcendence when it breaks its own closure and opens up to the other, from the ideality of meaning to the reality of things. The analysis must open up to semantics creating a new opening for an integral comprehension of language on the basis of hermeneutics.

Comprehending a text is following its movement of meaning towards the reference, beyond the author one moves to the possible ways of being-in-the-world that the text opens and discovers. Since meaning is universal, it is always actualised. The first meaning is in potency deposited in writing and actualises itself with the unlimited semiosis of interpretations. The literary sign is a special sign that transcends the limits of words with its transposed, metaphorical meaning. In order to get to it, it is necessary to take into consideration its form and background. A comprehensive vision of the sign that puts together the classical-semantic conception (the sign as representation) and the modern-semiotic conception (the sign as significance) and that also integrates classic hermeneutics that will help to “interpret to comprehend” that symbolic language, that transcendence of the sign, with a spiritual attitude of the quest of meaning.

Significance as a Construction of Meaning

Literary words invite the pleasure of enjoying words devoid of utility. The pleasure begins in the limits of the border, what seduces is what is there but can not be seen, the excitement is produced

by the hope of seeing what is concealed, of knowing the games of language, of developing a creative reading. The intellectual activity is associated with the pleasure obtained in the construction of a second level of knowledge. Barthes invites us to be reunited with the pleasure of shredding the texts and being “aristocratic readers”

*You expect something to happen, but nothing happens, because what occurs to language does not occur to speech: what “takes place”, that thing that “leaves”, the crack within borders, the interstice of delight, is produced in the volume of languages, in the enunciation and not in the continuation of speech: not devouring, not swallowing but chewing, carefully ripping; to read today’s authors it is necessary to find again the leisure in old readings: being aristocratic readers (Barthes, 1998, *El placer del texto*, p. 23)*

The meaning is said between the lines, because a text always needs its shadow. There is delight when there is discovery, when you know the flavour of reading, when the mind follows its own ideas without having the satisfaction of the subject. Significance is that individual delight, novel and unexpected.

What is important is to turn the text into an object of pleasure, and in that quest of pleasure in the act of reading semiotics can be, as Barthes points out: “the jack of all trades of present knowledge, just as the sign itself is in every speech”. Meaning is never arbitrary because it is found in the text, in its global macrostructure; what happens is that even if it is not found in one place in particular, it is everywhere. Finding meaning is not inventing, but bringing to light what is concealed and, because of that, seduces and incites to be discovered, and to take delight in that discovery.

Peirce, the father of semiotics, recognised as a fundamental method in this discipline the “abduction”. That is the essential instrument to any interpretation, inferring in order to remove the veil in messages to see what is behind them. Interpreting is thinking, recognizing and producing creatively based on the coming close to the literary work as a sign. Significance is the text by itself not as a finished enclosed product, but as a production in elaboration, present in other texts, other codes and other circumstances, as an interpretant in the height of semiosis, a sign in potency indefinitely. The “interpretive competence” helps to find the plurality in the text, its openness and its limits. A text can have various meanings, but not any meaning, because in the same text you can find the parameters of the acceptable interpretations.

Interpreting a text is explaining its form and comprehending its background, understanding why these signs act in a particular way while being interpreted from the intention of the text is way

more significant than the intention of the author or of the interpretant. A text, as defined by Todorov, is just “a picnic in which the author takes the words, and the readers, the meaning”.

So that the text can reach its full openness, the reader must find “what is not said”, that void in which the text keeps as an open universe the unlimited connotations of the interpretant, which are beyond and under the literal meaning. The reader’s mission is to conjecture about the intention of the text, to be its “model reader” and imagine a model author that finds the intention of the text. Any interpretation that can be confirmed in a fragment of that same text is accepted as valid. Otherwise you would not be interpreting a text, but rather using it while not respecting its cultural and linguistic context (fundamental distinction made by Eco in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*).

A text is presented as a machine created to produce interpretations from different readings, so that degrees of acceptability of the interpretations will be recognised, according to their possibility of confrontation with the intention of the text present in the textual signifier. The significance of a text is always open waiting for a new reader, but it is not simply presented, it is a second knowledge that seduces because it is hidden and that is the essence of the pleasure that it produces, but also its biggest difficulty. That is why whoever wants to reach it will need to hold up a comprehensive vision to address the text as an all in its structure, its signifieds, its meanings, its symbols and its potentiality.

Literary reading, a Creative Objective Act

We recognize some literary analysis “tools” that cooperate in the attainment of the objective proposed: an interpretation model both personal and objective. We begin by examining the title before reading the text, without forgetting that this is the icon-sign that represents it. By deeply analysing the words that compose it, we can deduce the level of denotation and that of connotation. We approach the text with a paused reading, just as Barthes points out in his textual analysis, “we walk through it in slow motion” and we stop in what it shows and what it hides. We read and take delight in that double pleasure.

In the text we can find units of signification that allow us to build levels of interpretation. Within these units we can recognise the nuclear and the complementary ones. It is important to distinguish the different levels of interpretation: denotation and connotation. In the denotation level there’s the facts. In the connotated level, the meanings. In this last level there are three parts to take into consideration: the perceptive one, the cognitive one, and the valorative one, as the

three stages of development in mankind thinking in the search of abstraction (the world of senses, that of reason, and that of the spirit).

Denotation and connotation are in the center of every interpretation. While denotation allows meanings to be discovered through a syntagmatic reading, connotation allows significance to be reached by a paradigmatic reading. A text is etymologically a weaving, and in reality this is what texts present, an intertwinement of diverse codes that form a tabular model. Space and time frame the story and have a double functionality: denoted (physical) and connoted (symbolic). The analysis of disjunctions, as cuts between these levels, helps to deepen this vision. Characters are analysed as active forces, as of the functions that they conduct and the double dimension character / role. The textual isotopes are arrows of meaning, are literary signs that symbolise the meaning in the narrative. They are divided into internal and external. The internal ones allow us to reach the internal meaning of the text and the external ones the global meaning.

All of these elements of analysis support us in getting closer to the creative space where significance is found. Each of them starts at the explanation of the textual signifier and is open to the comprehension of meaning in order to reach an interpretation that takes the literary sign as a whole. These concepts permit a creative-interpretive competence to be developed, emphasise the knowledge of elocution, and grow the potentiality and mobility of the literary sign. In this way, we can interpret the texts' meaning and reach its significance. We achieve individual pleasure, novel and unexpected, of finishing the literary work in recognition of its potentiality and the possibilities that we, readers, have as part of the creative process.

These concepts can be summarised in ten instruments of analysis that conform “a tool box”:

- 1- The title-index of the literary work.
- 2- Reading as the discovery of signs.
- 3- The significance units within the text.
- 4- The reading of different codes.
- 5- The levels of interpretation: denotation and connotation.
- 6- The narrative speech: tense, mode, and voice.
- 7- Narrative space and time.
- 8- Characters as active forces.
- 9- The pointing out of meaning.
- 10- Significance.

All of them start at the textual signifier and from that place open up to personal interpretation. They are independent because they analyse different aspects of the narrative, but united cooperate in the construction of significance. We allude to Cervantes' text once again so as to exemplify the construction of significance in a literary work. If we observe the different analytical presentations of *Don Quixote* in the IV Centenary of the *Real Academia Española* and consider the perspectives of Martín de Riquer, Francisco Ayala, and Mario Vargas Llosa, the plurality of meanings that arise off the text is significant.

On the one hand, Riquer presents an hidalgo who is a chivalric romance enthusiast that becomes crazy, thinks that he is a knight in shining armor and emerges in the quest of adventures until he is obligated to return to his home, where he falls sick, comes back to his senses, and dies christianly. He interprets the story of a crazy man and justifies it with the fact that when the main character comes back to his senses, the story ends. A madness that comes from reading chivalry novels, which is why the purpose of the text is to banish these kinds of readings that are mocked, without satirising heroism. He analyses it not as a chivalric romance but as an entertaining parody that intended to (and accomplished) give an end to the reading of these novels that prejudiced men by presenting them with an impossible world.

On the other hand, Ayala, even if he understands the literary work as a satire of chivalric romance that shows us a hero against the world, emphasises the fact that Don Quixote and Sancho as absolutely singular and original personas. Literary characters that live independently from the text where they exist, and are constructed as a myth rich in a transcendental and authentic signification that illuminates and gives life to the ancient story. At least to a non naive reader, as Ayala suggests, both characters assume a poetical dimension that exceeds poetry itself and become mythical figures.

Finally, Vargas Llosa tells us that Don Quixote is fundamentally an image that represents fiction, life, and freedom:

But, even though Quixote does not change, incarcerated as he is in his chivalric vision of the world, what do change is his surroundings, the people around him, and reality itself, which, as if altered by his insanity, slowly falls into derealization —by the way of a Borges' story— until it becomes a fiction. This is one of the most subtle and modern aspects of the great Cervantine novel (...) Don Quixote's big topic is fiction, its cause, and the way in which it infiltrates life as it models and transforms it (...) Fiction is the central subject of the novel since the hidalgo that is its main character has been "deranged" —also in his

madness we should see an allegory or a symbol instead of a clinical diagnosis— by the fantasies of chivalric romance (...) Don Quixote is a novel about fiction in which imaginary life is everywhere, in the adventures, in the mouths, and even in the air breathed by the characters (...) At the same time that it is a novel about fiction, Don Quixote is a chant to freedom. It is convenient to stop one moment to reflect upon the famous phrase that Don Quixote says to Sancho Panza: “freedom, Sancho, is one of the most precious gifts that the skies have given to mankind; all of the treasures confined by the earth and hidden by the sea cannot be compared to it; for freedom, as for honor, one can and must face life, and on the contrary, captivity is the greatest evil to come upon men” II, 58, p.p. 984-985. Behind the phrase and the fictional character that pronounces it is Miguel Cervantes’ own figure, who knew very well what he was talking about (Vargas Llosa, “Una novela de hombres libres” p.p. XY y XVIII)

Each of them interprets parting from a particular textual signifier, in a different time and context. Semiosis is infinite and if we were to execute a new critical presentation today, among numerous possibilities we could observe the character of Marcela as an early representation of feminism.

Conclusion

The literary work is an interpretant sign that is in potency and waiting to be put into action by a reader. This sign is one of the most complex because its language is poetic. A metaphorical language tends to insinuate more than show. This is the essence of literature that produces aesthetic pleasure. The literary sign keeps a meaning, not a fixed one but more like a mobile one, a meaning that actualises itself in the link between an author, an open work and a creative reader. This live meaning is the significance of the piece of work. The tool to find this significance comes from literary semiotics, because this discipline’s object of study is the sign in transit to explain the text, but the contribution of hermeneutics enriches, without doubt, the comprehension.

Explanation as a particularity of natural sciences and comprehension as the attitude that characterises social sciences. The first one is based on empirical observation, causal relations and justifies itself with inductive logic. The second one, however, implies an inference in the field of foreign psyches coming from the investigator, and for that it uses the interpretation of texts.

With semiotics the reader stays in the “space of the text”, in the interior of its closure, in its immanence, they only attend to the game of its internal oppositions. This procedure is legitimate because it gives place to the explanation of the text, an explanation not borrowed from the

natural sciences but from the scope of language. This epistemic-methodological model from Structuralism is then what allows us to adopt an explanatory posture applied to the text; however, we recognise that it is not enough to wear out all its implications. The purpose of structural analysis is to transcend semantics from the surface to get to the profound semantics, to the semantics alive in the tale. Then, a necessary instance between an ingenuous and superficial interpretation and a critical, deep, creative interpretation, is created.

Thereafter, we overcome the antithesis and search for the complementarity of structural analysis and hermeneutic interpretation. This last one as the auto comprehension of a subject by the comprehension of the signs of their own culture based on the semantic possibilities of the text. We do not see the interpretation as a subjective operation “about the text” but as an objective operation, “an act of the text”.

To show the relation between semiotics and hermeneutics Ricoeur resorts to Peirce’s notion of interpretant in terms of the sign of an object that comes from the established relation between another sign and that same object:

the object is the text itself; the sign is the profound semiotics pointed out by structural analysis and the series of interpretants is the chain of interpretations produced by the community of interpreters and incorporated to the dynamic of the text, as the work about meaning on itself (Ricoeur, 2006, *El conflicto de las Interpretaciones. Ensayos de hermenéutica*, p.146)

The literary text will always have a present, be self-referential and refer to the world, but also, it will be able to transcend its occurrence and “open up” to other possible worlds, where it will find a “model reader” to whom it will be addressed and will represent its potential universal reading. The text is seen as a “potential work” tied to an indefinite number of possible readings.

This is the dialectic that exists between explaining and interpreting, validating and conjecturing. “The structural model could be the paradigm of explanation” (Ricoeur, 2006, p. 193) and “hermeneutics that of interpretation with the ways of validating conjectures because (...) the text is a limited field of possible interpretations” (Ricoeur, 2006, p. 188).

We would like to establish that it is not possible to comprehend the significant guideline that can grasp an in depth interpretation without some sort of personal commitment similar to that of the reader that faces himself with the profound semantics of the text and makes it his. The solution is not denying the role of personal commitment in the comprehension of literary phenomena, but restricting it. The comprehension is totally mediated by the ensemble of explanatory procedures

that proceed and accompany it. We believe that it is possible to integrate the explanation and the comprehension in order to obtain a new concept of interpretation. We explain the text to comprehend it creatively and so discover new signs that will be able to reach a new significance. Reading with a spiritual attitude of quest, reading searching for the second message allows us to develop a subtle capacity of observation that draws a universe behind words.

A work of literature is always feeding off the plurality of voices: that of the author, the narrator's one, that of the text, the narratee and, principally, that of its multiple and active readers to whom Cervantes has referred, many centuries ago, in the introduction to the most representative work of the Spanish language.

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