


THE ROLE OF THE LITERARY CRITIC: STUDY OF THE OBJECT AND AESTHETICS IN THE PROCESS OF SEMIOTICS THROUGH A CRITICAL READING

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ABSTRACT

The respective essay aims to guide students of Literary Criticism and Comparative Aesthetics through the study of the *Work and criticism* (2019, p 9-31) and *Aesthetics and Semiotics* (2019, p 1-8) of Literature and Intersemiotic Systems, by Flávio Khote. From this perspective, the analysis of the role of the critic will be a relevant theme in this essay, in addition to enunciations in relation to the role of semiotics within literature and the study of the object among the aesthetics in comparison. Therefore, comparative studies will be used with the semiotic theory of Algirdas Julien Greimas, For Greimas, the sign is called "textual aspect", Semiotics is the theory of signification and its object is not the sign, but the Semiotic Systems. According to Greimas, "each science has its particular semiotics". This comparative study seeks to substantiate the role of the critic and assist him in his training, guiding him not to fall into traps preformed by methodological procedures of the criticism of comradeship, in this way, it seeks to form critics who excel in the ethical and isonomic precepts of literary criticism.

Keywords: Semiotics. Aesthetic. Object. Criticism.

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INTRODUCTION

The work and criticism of Flávio Khote make us think in order to deepen our knowledge in relation to the role of the literary critic. This observation has the purpose of assisting in the critical and personal formation of each professional, in a way the study under analysis is contained in a process of examining the critical concept, we must analyze as well as the analysis of other works on the same subject. We cannot excel here in saying relevant, because for the critic we should not discard even those devoid of critical sense. From the moment the critic discards any hypothesis regarding the understanding of the critical process, he makes his first mistake, because all study and thought must be analyzed with caution, because the processes are in constant transformation.

Following Aldo Tagliaferri,

"Theory is made in the absence of the very possibility of building adequate knowledge about literature. For this reason, the effort to produce an aesthetic would be at odds with its own impossibility, based on our premises, and would become, in the manner of Sisyphus, the reiteration of the very impossibility of aesthetics" (TAGLIAFERRI, 1978, p.68).

This statement shows us how the critic must have the sensitivity of knowledge of aesthetics, because when we analyze the word theory, we concomitantly have the word possibility, thus reinforcing the idea that nothing, nor any study on the subject should be discarded.

For Jakobson, as is well known, Literary Theory was the investigation of literariness, characterized as the organized deformation of everyday language (EIKHENBAUM, 1976, *passim*). This statement by Jakobson, in relation to the organized deformation of everyday language, is in line with Khote's writing, who in *The Work and Criticism*, p 9, tells us "this should have already led "left-wing" readers and literati to distrust literature to a greater degree than the Dadaists. It seems that the "protest" of the "People" is even more radical and effective: he simply does not read Literature". (KHOTE, 1981, p. 9-31.) If literature is based on the organization of everyday language, in a way these transformations require in-depth studies based on linguistic concepts. According to Brito, "if we consider that this epistemological problem resulted from an insufficiency of the thing and not of language, if the contradiction is immanent to the literary work, then perhaps the impasse of the universal through the particular phenomenon – of theorizing something as literature – proves to be a particularism itself. It is not to make a theory of something like literature that is impossible, it is the theoretical vice of linguistics that makes literary experience impossible.

In relation to aesthetics and semiotics, Khote alerts us to the role that aesthetics needs to assume in relation to the criticism that is made of it, both by semiotics and by the



conspiracy of silence. According to Khote, "aesthetics is constituted within the relatively limited horizon of the Western metaphysical tradition, a horizon that philosophy, perhaps pushed by social forces and ferment for more than a century, has desperately sought to transcend" (KHOTE, 1981, P.2). According to Matheus Brito,

"Aesthetics would properly qualify the dialectic between the opaque interest, but immanent to the object, and the judgment that does it justice by conferring primacy on it. The insolubility of the question – theory or literature, semiotics or aesthetics – is useful if it allows us to radicalize another stance. So far we have said that the conceptual knot between referent, value, subject, and experience has been reduced to the problem of the meaning of the text. Is there any notion of language that, without becoming entangled in semiotics, we can recover for literary studies?" (DE BRITO, 2015, p.1419)

Brito ends his thought with a questioning in relation to the notion of language, in this aspect we can observe that semiotics and aesthetics are something inseparable for understanding, in this way we can observe an eminent concern and questions that help to guide the theoretical basis of criticism.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

GENERAL GUIDELINES OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Literary criticism is the study, discussion, evaluation and interpretation of literature. It can take the form of a theoretical discourse based on the theory of literature or a discourse that details or revises a literary work. The method of literary criticism is directly influenced by history, in this aspect the analysis of terms of the time, help in the translation and explanation of themes relevant to society.

In the 4th century BC, Aristotle wrote the *Poetics*, a literary typology and description of form with many specific criticisms of contemporary works of art. In this aspect, the literary criticism of the Renaissance developed classical ideas of unity of form and content in literary neoclassicism, neoclassicism was the literary school that sought to disseminate and resume the classical models of art and poesis, with decasyllabic verses and art based on aesthetics. Thus, making criticism incomprehensible to the less prestigious population of knowledge. In the Enlightenment, criticism becomes more popular, in this period the literacy rate starts to rise, reading no longer becomes exclusive to people of possession.

In contemporary times, Northrop Frye is the influential *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), Frye notes in his work that some critics intend to adopt an "ideology" to judge literary works, this thought has been a great influence for modern and postmodern thinkers. Thus, we have Hermeneutics: knowledge via interpretation to understand the meanings of human texts and symbolic expressions, including the interpretation of texts that interpret other



texts. In the 1960s, the "New Criticism" developed around two primordial figures Gérard Genette and Roland Barthes, for whom criticism has become literature itself.

Semiotics emerged in linguistic studies with the research of the Lithuanian **Algirdas Julius Greimas** (1917-1992). However, the word "semiotics" was first used by the American philosopher and linguist **Charles Sanders Peirce** (1839-1914). Semiotics serves to understand signs and based on this improve communication, being useful in the analysis of human behavior.

All these historical aspects are guidelines for the study of literary criticism, in this way they serve as an analytical basis for the teaching of semiotics and comparative aesthetics, because when we analyze the historical aspects we observe the evolution in the study of literary criticism, semiotics improves this advance and tries to help in the explanation of concepts not yet identified

By researching semiotics and aesthetics, it is possible to perceive the relevance of these themes for a good literary analysis, for Khote, "Semiotics seems today to be the overcoming of linguistics (considered a mere subdivision) and aesthetics. It claims to be the science of what aesthetics would have been mere philosophy, or worse still, mere metaphysics." (KHOTE, 1981, p. 1-8.) And aesthetics was unable in its function to explain art and for such an object received much criticism.

Since the discovery of photography and with the techniques of sign reproduction, such as film and television, there has been an increase in memory in relation to the record, in this way, the systems of arts have become too narrow and secondary. In this perspective, Khote reveals the desire to give semiotics the scientificity it needs, because in this way, when analyzing the philosophical positions of Nietzsche and Heidegger, it is observed that for his conclusions the poet also started from theoretical bases, thus explaining that only the theory that is capable of questioning its presuppositions can aspire to become science.

In the article "Umberto Eco and Semiotic Aesthetics", Edgar Roberto Kirchof refers to the poet as one of the great writers of the 2000s and recognized for his literary works, but even before that, in the 1960s, Umberto Eco begins to develop the theory and construction of a semiotic system in "La Struttura Assente" (1968) and "Trattato de Semiótica Generale" (1975), in which it defines the aesthetic message based on semiotic criteria. In one of the author's best-known works, *The Name of the Rose* (1980), there is also a predominance and clearly manifestation of his theoretical postulates on poetics, narrative and semiotic interpretation.

Eco does not develop an aesthetic theory in a broad sense, but deals with aesthetic issues throughout his work, from his productions in the 50s to the current productions. In his



book, Eco makes his own analysis of the aesthetic evolution of his productions, distributing it in four phases, in the last of which the phase of aesthetics and semiotics, aesthetics is placed under the prism of the semiotics of the text. In the third phase, in which there is the highlight of "Aesthetics and mass communication", Eco begins to work on the issues and to occupy a new aesthetic territory, marked by the relationship between intellectual and contemporary culture in general, in this phase we observe a social commitment typical of Humberto Eco.

For Eco, the aesthetic experience brings into play a kind of contradiction, since, on the one hand, it cannot be reduced to a quantitative measure or to a structural systematization, on the other hand, however, it is only possible because "it must have a structure, because otherwise there would be no communication, but pure occasional stimulation of random responses (ECO, 1976, p.60). Therefore, Eco develops the concept of aesthetic idiolect to solve this paradox.

Heidegger, philosophically, tries to simplify Peirce's theory, his contribution is not in the writing of literary essays or in the imitation of his terminology. His texts are unveilers of the object studied. Heidegger explores the simpleton, sender, receiver, channel, message and code concept of information theory, in this perspective suggests that the icon is more faithful, so the symbolic would only be superior if it were iconic. "The iconic may be less identical to the real, and therefore perhaps the 'symbolic' may become ideological," according to Khote.

When we talk about the object of study, we cannot fail to talk about Greimas, in his work on poetics and linguistics, Greimas seeks to discover how linguistics can contribute to the definition of the object. For this, he uses the principle of equivalence used by the poets Baudelaire, Hugo and Apollinaire, who in turn show the limits of application of this limit.

When talking about the poetic object, he begins by talking about the analyses that proliferate in the poetic field, it is evident in this initial part of his text the criticism made by the author when using the term "profession of faith", a term used in the Catholic religion that begins with "I believe in God the Father Almighty" so if we analyze this perspective, The author demonstrates that many writers have difficulties in writing texts in terms of language, but the poet mentions that abstention from writing can be worse in poetics than in linguistics.

Therefore, even though the author reestablishes his criticism of poets who treat this definition of the object as a profession of faith, he shows appreciation for the importance of writing such texts, so that it enables the reader to seek knowledge and obtain a basis for these theoretical principles. There is a great concern with the construction of an



increasingly coherent and conservative discourse, in this aspect it would be very difficult in today's world to unify so intensely in words a single discourse of literary critic, anthropologist, philosopher and grammarian.

The author asks us, through a rhetorical question, how it would be possible to identify in a given text if it is poetry. This question is very important for the observation of the process of creation of poetic texts. From the week of modern art, when we enter contemporary writings, poetry has given freedom in the sense of aesthetic and structural construction, we can easily define the structure of prose and poetry, but the definition of searching for a text and its poeticity is something more complex.

Thus, the denomination of the poetic object becomes mythical, as there is questioning in relation to schools of thought and it is shown that for this analysis to become effective, it would be necessary for each school to define with propriety what this poetic object would be. When we do this analysis, we realize that each school aims to innovate, but this innovation does not have the function of replacing the object of the previous school, but becomes an object of futuristic function, which is ahead of its readers.

This object remains to be discovered, and this is where the fundamental role of the literary critic comes in, who has the function of discovering through his methods and theories the rules and specificities that each object has in mind. I understand that in this phase the critic must observe the vertical and horizontal aspect of the text, in addition to paying attention to the historical moment and the social problems that can interfere in the identification of this object.

The complexity of such terms can be explained by P Valéry. According to Valéry, art can be applicable in the sense of "equivalence" between the background and the form. This equivalence can be observed through the vertical and horizontal planes, in which the linguistic levels are stacked on top of each other, in addition to adding the idea of phonics, grammar and semantics.

Khote, like Valéry, affirms that poetry is not only an oscillation between sound and meaning, but that sound and meaning are configured in it as a function of the silence that permeates them and against which they assert themselves. For Khote, sound cannot exist in the poem as something opposite to meaning, as if sonority came to the detriment of meaning and was poeticity itself.

Finally, Khote ends his text with the statement that "science is not the ultimate and only horizon of knowledge, the objectivity of knowledge is not, however, "scientific jargon" in the name of objectivity and it is necessary to reevaluate the claim of the scientificity of science".



CONCEPTUAL ASPECTS

Thus, we consider that:

- 1) The critic is responsible for pointing out the successes and failures of certain productions in aesthetic, linguistic and rhetorical terms;
- 2) Semiotics seeks to understand how human beings can interpret things, especially the environment that surrounds them;
- 3) The object does not have the function of replacing the previous school, but rather innovating and making it current

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

By concluding these studies of comparative aesthetics, it is possible to observe that arts, music and literature are intimately linked, when analyzing a work of art or poetic text we cannot detach ourselves from the historical facts that permeate them, observe the author's intentionality and still maintain the social role to which the text was exposed.

Therefore, the critic must be concerned with having a theoretical foundation and depth in semiotics so that he can make the creative process of his criticism, not fail to observe the details of the themes studied in addition to comparing it with the themes and authors of current events.

One of the recommendations is the tireless reading of theoretical and guiding texts, having a grounded basis makes the critic have more credibility in his analyses, finally being an attentive reader and especially of books, makes him not fall into traps and untruths of the technological world.



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