

TEACHING LITERATURE THROUGH LITERARY APPROACHES

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ÖZET

Edebiyat öğretiminde çok çeşitli yaklaşımlar vardır: tarihsel, dilbilimsel, yapısal, yapıçözücülük, hermenitik, psikoanalitik, yeni tarihselcilik ve okura dayalı yaklaşımlar gibi...Her bir yaklaşım eseri inceleyen kişinin zihinsel ve duygusal ve edebi ne aradığına bakılarak uygulanabilir ve analmayı kolaylaştırır. Bu çalışma üstte adı geçen yaklaşımların belli başlı kuralları ve esere nasıl yansıtılacağı ile ilgili ölçütleri hedef almaktadır.

SUMMARY

There are many different approaches to criticism and teaching literature: historical, linguistic, structuralist, deconstructionalist, hermeneutic, psychoanalytic, new historicism and reader-response theories. Each method is valid for the person who finds that it answers an intellectual and emotional need; each is meaningful if it deepens the understanding of the works under scrutiny and broadens the horizons of critics, readers, teachers and students. This study focuses on the main tenets of some literary approaches and what criteria should be employed in studying a literary work.

Key Words : Structuralism, deconstructionalism, new historicism, reader-response, psychoanalysis.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yapısalcılık, yapı çözücülük, yeni tarihselcilik, okuyucu-yanlısı, psikoanalisis

There are many different approaches to criticism and teaching literature: historical, linguistic, structuralist, deconstructionalist, hermeneutic, new historical, psychoanalytic and reader-response theories. Each method is valid for the person who finds that it answers an intellectual and emotional need; each is meaningful if it deepens the understanding of the works under scrutiny and broadens the horizons of critics, readers, teachers and students. Whatever the approach is, it should act as a catalyst, stimulating and exciting those involved in the pursuit of knowledge and encouraging them to develop their own potential. They turn what might be an intellectual exercise or tour de force remaining within the confines of the mind into praxis, thereby acting

as a broadening agent in the life experience.

Such an exposure is enlightening: it enables the individual and group to feel involved in the writings discussed. Personalities ferment, ideas are provoked. Thus energized, the readers and students are encouraged to further their analyses and through association, to relate their discoveries to aspects of their own lives. The purpose of relating the literary approaches to literature is to equip young people for life, to encourage them to think, to question values, to probe, to enlarge their vision, to find their ground bed and to develop their capabilities so that they become wholesome, well rounded, independent individuals competent in their sphere and yet capable of relating to the world around them.

The ways to scrutinize a literary work, which nowadays amounts to a piece of text can be categorized broadly into two : traditional and postmodern. (http://
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Traditional (Aristotelian) theories suggest :

1. Plot is well made, there is a linear structure and logical and orderly progressive development, and everything is chronologically sequenced.
2. It implicates that the reader can do identification easily.
3. It wears down viewers' capacity for action by involving audience strongly and the emotional reaction is the goal.
4. Experience is heightened vividly, specificity is stressed.
5. Instinctive feelings are preserved and maintained.

6. The spectator shares the experience, identifies himself with the work of art and is lost in escapism.

7. The human being portrayed is not so complicated, motivation and behavior are clear.

8. Humanity is presented as potentially transformable, but determinism is an underlying structure.

9. The key element in reading is in the ending-reactions and feelings of readers. There is the centrality of catharsis, of purging of emotions. There is vicarious experience and enjoyment.

Whereas Postmodernist Theories maintain :

1. Narrative is fragmented, it is temporally and spatially complex, the plot is nonlinear

2. It turns the reader into an observer.

3. It arouses capacity for action by not lulling spectators. Intellectual and analytical faculties are emphasized. Distantiation feature is important.

4. It forces readers to make decisions, to choose, to think critically.

5. It brings the shock of recognition and a realization of a new perspective.

6. the spectator stands outside of the situation and studies and reflects upon it.

7. The human being depicted is an object of an inquiry, a basis in the enigmatic nature of human complexity, of chaos theory.

8. Humans, while sharing commonalities and universality, are alterable. Change is the goal.

9. The key element is development, course and process. Montage, radical juxtapositions are meaningful. It is unrealistic, not mimetic.

Now, it is time to scrutinize the main literary approaches briefly and how they can be integrated into studying the texts.

FORMALISM

Formalism or the Prague School or the New Criticism, the American version, is the most applied of all literary approaches. It arose in opposition to biographical approaches. It tries to establish literary studies as an objective discipline by attempting at revealing organic unity in complex texts as a reaction of fragmented society they have witnessed.

1. Texts possess meaning in and of themselves.
2. The best readers are those who have ample knowledge of language.
3. All the parts of the texts are interrelated to each other.
4. Close reading of texts is required.
5. All ambiguities are resolved and semantic tensions that complicate the meaning are disambiguated.
6. Literary devices such as imagery, motifs, ironies, metaphors, symbols, paradox, prosody, oppositions are analysed.

The questions to be posed in applying formalism :

First, summarize the literary work.

How are the parts related to each other?

Read the text closely to find out the semantic tensions

Which literary devices are used? Why?

Analyse the protagonist and antagonist.

Find out the conflict.

STRUCTURALISM

Structuralism is different from the Romantic humanist model that holds that the author is the origin of the text, its creator. It asserts that the structure of language itself produces reality--- we can think only through language and therefore our perceptions of reality are all framed by and determined by the structure of language. It holds that the source of meaning does not lie in the individual's experience but in the sets of oppositions as Saussure (1993) suggests. Some basic principles can be listed below.

1. Meaning occurs through difference. Meaning is not identification of the sign with object in the real world. Rather it is generated by difference among signs in a signifying system.
2. Relations among signs are of two sorts: contiguity and substitutability.
3. Structuralism notes that much of our imaginative world is structured of and structured by binary oppositions. (hot-cold, being-nothing, male-female, light-dark,...)
4. It forms the basis of semiotics which will be covered briefly later on...
5. Genette (1977) says structuralism is a study of the cultural construction or identification of meaning according to the relations of signs that constitute the meaning spectrum of the culture.
6. Structuralism dethrones the individual, the idea that the self is an indivisible essence. The self is like other things signified and culturally constructed.
7. Language is a system (la langue) that is prior to any linguistic utterance (parole)
8. To know something you need to understand the underlying system that makes meaning possible.
9. Literature contains a structure from which individual texts emerge. But a larger system should be found out in analysis. Vladimir Propp (1970) , for example, categorized 31 functions of the fairy tales. Todorov (1973) also studied the function of symbolism in literature.
10. Authorial intention is not of interest and nor is it concerned with historical context.

While analyzing a text, possible clues to apply structuralism

How is the general structure of the text?

Identify codes that operate in texts.

Identify binary oppositions

SEMIOTICS

Semiotics is often encountered in the form of textual analysis and it also involves philosophical theorizing on the role of the signs in the construction of reality. Semiotics involves studying representations and the processes involved in representational practices. Most of the words refer to things, but most of these are abstract concepts rather than physical objects in the world. The great majority of lexical words in a language exist on a high level of abstraction and refer to classes of things or concepts; clearly language cannot be reduced to the naming of things. Within a language, many words may refer to the same thing but reflect different evaluations. Hence concepts are mental constructs and they are in flux. Those who could learn from semiotics should search for structural leaks, seams and scaffolding as signs of making of any representation, and also for what has been denied, hidden or excluded so that the text may seem to tell the whole truth.

There are two main ways : Syntagmatic and paradigmatic. One way is to make use of syntagmatic relations such as above/below

In front/ behind

Close/ distant

Left/right

North/south

“up” is associated with goodness, virtue, happiness, consciousness, health, life, the future, high status, power whereas “down” is related to evil, sickness, depravity, death, low status.....

Another spatial dimension is that of center and margin.... In one particular visual form, relationships can be investigated between key elements of content such as products, props, setting and actors.

Turning from spatial to sequential syntagms brings us to narrative. Semantic narratology is concerned with narrative in any mode: literary or

nonliterary, fictional or nonfictional, verbal or visual. Syntagmatic analysis can be applied to all kinds of texts. A syntagmatic analysis would involve an analysis of how each frame, scene or sequence is related to each other. Umberto Eco's syntagmatic analysis of the James Bond novels (1992:161) is quite known in this area.

M moves and gives a task to Bond
 The villain moves and appears to Bond
 Bond moves and a lady shows herself to Bond
 Bond consumes her: possesses her.
 The villain captures Bond
 The villain tortures Bond
 Bond conquers the villain
 Bond convalescing enjoys woman, whom he then loses.....

Whereas syntagmatic analysis studies the surface structure of a text, paradigmatic analysis seeks to identify the various paradigms (set of signifiers) which underlie the content of texts. This involves positive or negative connotations of each signifier and binary oppositions. Paradigmatic relations are the oppositions and contrasts between the signifiers.

Levi Strauss (1966:16) reports three stages in this analytical method.

---define the phenomenon under study as a relation between two or more terms

---construct a table of possible permutations between these.

---take this table as the general object of analysis which, at this level only, can yield necessary connections.

However, Roland Barthes (1977:15) stresses three levels of representation or levels of meaning rather than what should be done in finding out the relationship in the text as Levi Strauss suggests. Barthes has actually adopted from Louis Hjelmslev the notion that there are different orders of signification. Differences between the three orders are not clear cut but they can be distinguished in the following

way.. The first order of signification, denotative, is seen as primarily representational and it is self-contained. The second order of signification, connotative, reflects expressive values which are attached to a sign. The third order of signification, mythological or ideological, reflects major culturally variable concepts underpinning a particular worldview such as masculinity, femininity, freedom, individualism, objectivism, Englishness... Susan Hayward (1996: 310) gives the example of the three orders of signification in relation to a photograph of Marilyn Monroe.... "At the denotative level this is a photograph of the movie star Marilyn Monroe. At a connotative level we associate the photograph with Marilyn Monroe's star qualities of glamour, sexuality, beauty.... if this is an early photograph. At a mythic level we understand the sign as activating the myth of Hollywood."

Although Saussure stresses the importance of the relationship of signs to each other, one of the weaknesses of structuralist semiotics is the tendency to treat individual texts as discrete, closed-off entities and to focus exclusively on internal structures. The semiotic notion of intertextuality is introduced by Julia Kristeva (1987) who refers to texts in terms of two axes:

A horizontal axis connecting the author and reader of the text

A vertical axis connecting the text to other texts.

Uniting these two axes are short codes: every text and every reading depends on prior codes. Theorists of intertextuality problematize the status of authorship, treating the writer of a text as the orchestrator of what Barthes refers to as the already written rather than as its originator.... Barthes (1977:146) contends that a text is a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The writer can only imitate a ges-

ture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others. He declares the death of an author and the birth of the reader, saying that a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. All works are rewritten. No one today, even for the first time, can read a famous novel or poem, look at a famous painting without being conscious of the contexts in which the text had not been reproduced, drawn upon, alluded to, parodied and so on. Michel Foucault (1972:23) contends that the frontiers of a book are never clear cut: beyond the title, the first lines and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences... On the other hand, Gerard Genette (1977) proposes "transtextuality" instead of intertextuality and lists five types.

Intertextuality includes quotations, allusions, plagiarism.

Paratextuality is the relation between a text and its title/ headings/ prefaces/ epigraphs/ dedications/ footnotes/ illustrations.

Architextuality is the designation of a text as part of a genre.

Metatextuality is explicit or implicit commentary of one text on another text.

Hypotextuality is the relation between a text and a text or a genre on which it is based.

Semiotics helps to make us aware of signs and of ideologies. Whenever a sign is present, ideology is present too..There are no ideologically neutral sign systems.

Rules of thumb in semiotic analysis

Identify the text and its genre

Find out signifiers in the text

Search the modality (what reality claims are made, does it allude to being a fact or fiction, what references are made to an everyday experiential world, what modality markers are present.)

Paradigmatic analysis (binary oppositions)

Syntagmatic analysis

Analyse the rhetorical tropes

Stress the intertextuality.

DECONSTRUCTION

One of the catchphrases of the 1980s And 1990s is deconstruction, of which the leading figure is Jacques Derrida (1985) who claims that there is always a center , a point from which everything comes and to which everything refers. Sometimes it is God, it is the human self, the mind, or the philosophical system.

Derrida associates logocentrism, the domination of the concept with the idea that this domination is made possible by subordination of the written to the spoken word. Plato is among the first to degrade the written word, which he compares to a drug : pharmakon (which means both cure and a poison in Greek) – designed to assist our memory in its struggle against oblivion. Plato condemns the written word accusing it of being hostile to life and living thought. Moreover, it is unstable and unreliable, because it can be read and interpreted in many different contexts.

Deconstruction is a systematic attempt to reveal the negativity of a text: its ambiguities, aporias, and polysemies can indeed be considered as the antipodes of Hegel and the Hegelian Marxists. Their main sources of inspiration are Nietzsche and Heidegger. Although deconstructionalism is thought to draw on the notion that the meaning of meaning is infinite application and indefinite referral of signifier to signifier, there are two types of deconstruction: Hartman foregrounds certain semantic and phonetic associations or anagrams whereas Miller and De Man's way of approaching the texts through aporias.

De Man is a leading figure of the so-called Yale School of deconstruction

in America in the 1970s. His first point is that literature cannot be understood as a signified relayed by a signifier because there are always already many different interpretations of what literature is. Secondly, de Man argues that it follows from this that the meanings or significations of any literary text cannot be exhausted by any act of reading or interpretation. The literary text never has a single reading that has the final word. No one has exhausted all the possible readings of *Hamlet*.

Deconstructionist view is rhizomatic (Deleuze and Guattari: 1987). A rhizome is any plant (like ivy or grass) whose root system is coextensive with the plant itself, as the plant grows ever outwards and across. It is possible to identify the different parts of tree but not so with a rhizome; in principle, a single grass seed could grow rhizomatically to cover the whole land, but a tree is always rooted to the spot. Hence for Deleuze and Guattari (1987:8) the rhizome becomes the figure of acented systems and in this it may appear as yet another example of postmodern notion of structureless structure. Trees are structured and hierarchical whereas the rhizome is nonhierarchical, structureless, open, perambulatory, consisting only of multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight. Deleuze and Guattari (1987:22) hold that to attain the multiple, one must have a method that effectively constructs it, no typographical cleverness, no lexical agility, no blending of creation of words, no syntactical boldness, can substitute for it. In fact, these are more often than not merely mimetic procedures used to disseminate or disperse a unity that is retained in a different dimension. Typographical, lexical, or syntactic creations are necessary only when they no longer belong to the form of expression of a hidden unity.

In deconstruction, the binary oppositions are explored and the marked

item (the positive) and the unmarked item (the negative) are found out and how the first term is valued over the second one is discussed and questioned. It questions for example why speech is favored over writing, masculine over feminine. What deconstruction does is to look at how a binary opposition functions within a system by maintaining that two terms cannot exist without reference to the other. Deconstruction wants to erase the boundaries between oppositions. Some of the ways to reverse an opposition are:

Y is better than X (if X is better than Y)

Antagonist is cooler than protagonist

Women are smarter than men

The suppressed ones are more heroic than the dominant ones.

Deconstruction does not destroy the boundaries, it demonstrates the inherent stability. The strategy of deconstruction seeks to challenge the binary oppositions and instability of this opposition. It also questions the privileging of the signified over the signifier.

Literature is open to deconstructive reading as it relies heavily on the multiple meanings of words, on exclusions, on substitutions, on intertextuality, on the play of meaning, on repetition....

Tips to deconstruct a text:

See the asymmetrical opposition or value-laden hierarchy in which one term is promoted at the expense of another.

Distinguish the points of condensation, where a single term brings together different lines of arguments.

Examine the text for ways in which it suggests a difference from itself.

Find out figures of self-reference, when a text applies to something else, not the one it seems to suggest.

Point out conflicting readings of the text.

Pay attention to the marginal ones.

Discover the gaps, margins, digressions, contradictions, and ambiguities.

PSYCHOANALYTICAL APPROACH

As psychoanalysis deals with language and with interpretation, it introduces a significant approach: there are motives and meanings which are disguised by and work through other meanings. Psychoanalysis deals with motives, especially hidden or disguised motives. The unconscious is important: it is created through repression and it is a product of culture as what is repressed is what is taboo, what is taboo is culturally formulated. To Lyle (

) Freud and Lacan (1978) locate the center of cultural organization and the formation of the subject in the family and sexual differentiation; the signifying activities of both the unconscious and the preconscious are centered in the Oedipal experience and the Western symbolic order derives its coherence from the phallus or paternal signifier.

To analyse the text, it is important to know Freudian and Lacanian terms since these concepts are searched in the texts.

Freudian terms:

Repression: Every human has a repression of the pleasure principle. Something is repressed and when repression becomes excessive, it makes us ill.

Self: The early years of a child's life are important in forming his identity. The self which emerges from the Oedipus complex is more stable, a split subject torn between conscious and unconscious as it is forbidden to consummate the union it desires and so must repress those desires and substitute more acceptable objects of desire.

The Oedipus Complex: It marks the structure of the relations by which we are produced. The child's desire of his mother is intervened and barred by the presence of his father, the son sees his difference from his mother (her lack of phallus) and tries to be like his father

whose power he thinks threatens to castrate him.

Dream interpretation: The aspects of dream are condensation (various meanings are attributed in one referent), displacement (something like the use of tropes, allusions), regressive transformation (replacing ideas and feelings with images) and wish fulfillment. Psychoanalytic critics see the text as if it were a kind of dream: the text hides, represses its real content behind manifest content. They see the text as an expression of the secret, repressed life of its author, explaining the psychological struggles in the writer. Not only the author but also the characters lend themselves to be analyzed in this approach.

Unconscious: It is produced through repression, the unconscious peaks in the world through dreams and parapraxes (slips of the tongue)

Disorders: Main ones are neurosis (obsessional, historic and phobic) and psychosis (paranoia, schizophrenia- a harder case to treat as the self has been virtually subsumed).

Id, ego, superego: Id is irrational, instinctual, vital, unconscious. Id has secret desires, darkest wishes, intense fears. It tries to have the pleasure principle. Ego is the rational and logical part of mind. It regulates id and is driven by reality principle. Superego is the censor derived from societal control. Morality principle is at work in super-ego.

As to Lacan, he deals with language more. The unconscious is structured like language and language is determined by difference. Lacan believes it is impossible to step outside of language, the subject does not speak but is spoken to. Words mean more than what the speaker means.

His main terms:

Language and Absence: The subject is constituted in language.

Unary and Binary Signifiers: When there is a lack of referent, this unary signifier opens up a world of play.

The Mirror Stage: The mirror event is the opening of the ego. The child must go through some initial form of recognizing itself as a separate object in the world. In order to see itself, it must see itself as a self among selves. The mirror shows the self to the child which it perceives as the other first.

Lacanian theory supports poststructuralist idea of the fragmentation of the self. And it ties the writer and culture, text and reader. His tripartite of human psyche consists of the imaginary, symbolic and real phases. The imaginary stage is the first to undergo. From birth to six months we live in a world of wishes, images, united with the mother. Self image is in flux because we do not differentiate. Between age of 6 to 18 months we enter a transitional stage: the mirror stage. We literally and metaphorically begin to see ourselves in the mirror. We recognize the separation of objects from ourselves, leading to a feeling of lack. The symbolic order is the next phase in our development. We are conscious of separation, of difference. We learn language and it shapes us as individuals. The father figure dominates in this phase. He represents the norms, rules, the laws. We are cut off the primordial originary state. The real stage includes the physical world and we are conscious of what we lack.

Tips for psychoanalytic analysis:

Treat the text like a dream and find out images showing repressed desires, fears either on the part of the author or character.

Look for evidence in the Oedipal complex

Find out yonic or phallic images

Look at the ways in which specific characters reveal their own obsession and neuroses

Find out whether the Imaginary order when the Mother dominates or the phal-

locentric Symbolic order is more prominent in the text.

Look for parts in the text which represent elements of the Imaginary, Symbolic and Real Stages (which leads to the same place: an awareness of the splintered nature of self)

READER RESPONSE THEORY

Both Plato and Aristotle are aware of the effects of works of literature. Plato worries that poets stir up the emotions of the audience. He also believes that art as a copy of a copy and furthest removed from truth. He even excludes poets from his ideal society in his Republic. Aristotle, on the other hand, is conscious of the significance of specific rhetorical effects of works of art. In his discussion of tragedy, he says that tragic plays elicit from spectators the feelings of pity and fear. Both have the common point: they see the reader as passive. Reader-response criticism is categorized into two: phenomenology, and reader-response categories. Stanley Fish points out the two types in his own way. Phenomenologist way and epistemological way. Fish asserts that there is no correct interpretation that will always hold true and since the reader is cut off the world of the author a complete disjuncture exists. The interpreter belongs to a different world from the author which is conditioned by different social layers.

Phenomenology is founded by the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1964), who claims that the task of phenomenology is to study essences such as the essence of emotions. As formulated by Husserl after 1910, phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness that enable consciousness to refer to objects outside itself. The other German philosopher, Martin Heidegger (1993), claims phenomenology is not just one philosophical science among others, nor is it the sci-

ence preparatory to the rest of them. It is the name for the method of scientific philosophy in general. Hans Robert Jauss (1982), another pioneer in phenomenology, studies how horizons of expectation change with time, thereby changing the way audiences interpret texts. Wolfgang Iser (1974), analyses the text's effect on both the implied reader and the actual reader. Iser's implied reader is the reader implied by the text, the hypothetical reader predisposed to appreciate the effects of the text. For Iser, readers create the text, filling in gaps, anticipating what is to come, all along using their own understanding (their world of beliefs/values) to process the work. Sometimes the text subverts that pre-understanding, creating disturbing effects.

One approach is symbolic story representation, a method created by Patricia Enciso (1992) that invites students to position themselves symbolically in relation to the story world through the use of paper cuts created by the students themselves. She suggests that English teachers need to acknowledge their expertise about interpretive practice, rather than operating as though there are no interpretive expectations and competencies, and to be willing to provide their students with ways to gain knowledge about how interpretation is practiced among experienced readers and experts.

If students cannot connect personally to the text, how can they understand the text? Authorial reading is the answer.

Generally, when readers say they dislike a person or a text, they do not mean they are offended or disgusted by them but they lack an interest in them. They do not care much one way or another about their existence, they are apathetic.

Clues for reader-response theory :
Justify the responses to the text (the affective and associative responses of the

reader must be insightful, not self-indulgent)

Provide a meaningful way of discussing a text. Support the emotional responses to a text with evidence from the text itself.

Provide sufficient room to include a substantial variety of responses.

In terms of phenomenology, what is the existence of the characters related to? How do characters get reality? How is self-understanding related to a cultural act? How does the text reflect the personality of the author and the conscious and unconscious understanding toward the world?

So far we have briefly discussed major literary theories and the clues to be observed in the texts we are using. Literary interpretations always reflect a particular institutional, cultural and historical background. They are just like windows of the house enabling us to get the whole view of the garden. Among all these many diverse methods of interpretation the categorization can be made among text-, author-, reader-, and context-oriented approaches. Mario Klarer (1999:78) shows this rubric in the following way.

Text
Rhetoric
Formalism
Structuralism
Semiotics
Deconstruction

Author
Reader
Biographical
Reception
Psychoanalytic
Reader Response
Phenomenology

Context
Literary history
Marxist literary theory

Feminist literary theory
New historicism and Cultural studies

All these help students and learners how to see , where to look , how to get the full benefit of the text. The simplified categorization and short intro-

duction of the theories should not mislead the readers into thinking that each is alone important and can be used in analysing the text. One perspective is never enough to get the exact taste of any text.

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