

THE HERMENEUTICAL HISTORISM: PSYCHOLOGICAL, PHENOMENOLOGICAL, NARRATOLOGICAL

Summary

The article aims at presenting the continuously growing importance of the hermeneutical historicism for the studies of literary history and discussing its three typological forms.

Dilthey put forward the hermeneutical historicism as an opposition to the positivistic studies of the history of national literatures, thriving in the literary scholarship of the 19th century. He emphasized the methodological divergence between human and natural sciences. Because the former investigate objects created by humans and of necessity filled by human spiritual contents, they demand specific interpretative methods, based on the factors of empathy, manifestation and understanding. Dilthey substantiated the impossibility of creating objective historical science on the grounds of historicity of the historical consciousness, as well as questioning Ranke's demand of cognizing any historical epoch through itself. Although acknowledging the impossibility to avoid the objective difficulty in understanding for a historian attempting to cover the historical distance, he nevertheless still believed in the applicability of the "psychological empathy" jump, thus stimulating the monographic studies of separate historical epochs and individual writers' world views. Dilthey set the scene for phenomenological hermeneutics by way of asserting the inseparability between the subjective and the objective in literary sources as well as in life.

The phenomenological hermeneutics appeared in the middle of the 20th century, inspired by Heidegger and Gadamer as a response towards psychological interpretative historicism. Such prominent literary scholars like E. Staiger, R. Ingarden, M. Bachtin, E. D. Hirsh, H. R. Jauss, W. Iser, Stanley E. Fish, M. Riffaterre and others all had their say in this sphere. While continuing the critique of scientism in humanities, the phenomenological hermeneutics established its own methodological principles in the literary studies: 1) along with criticizing the "naïve realism" of the positivist historians, it replaced the emphasis on the texts instead of the author and raised the demand for immanent study of the aesthetical object; 2) while disputing the antihistorism of the structuralists, it revealed functioning of literature not only as an aesthetical object, but also as a historical message; 3) the reader was pointed out as the source of meaning in literature, and importance of interpretation as well as history of the textual reception got established; 4) the necessity for the dialogue between the interpreters and for the inter-subjectivity in the interpretative histories was pointed out.

The narratological historicism established itself as sequence and branch of the phenomenological historicism, questioning not only pretensions for objectivity of histories, but also their overly scientific style, loaded with professional terms. H. White, P. Ricoeur and others encouraged literary scholars to return to telling fictional historical narratives, revealing the diatactic nature of their discourse, inherent in simultaneously performing two closely related functions: both supplying information on various facts and their interpretation. Therefore rendering the literary history in figurative metaphorical style allows the researcher to present more abundant and original information than rendering it in strictly logical conceptual way.

Lithuanian literary studies have made good use of the psychological hermeneutical historicism, whereas methodological options presented by the phenomenological and narratological historicism still remain largely unused.