

PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION OF A LITERARY TEXT (HOMER "THE ILIAD" BARICCO "THE ILIAD")

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Abstract:

This article examines the principles of interpretation of a literary text on the example of Baricco's work "Homer. Iliad". The definition of interpretation is given, new forms of narration, compositional features, intertextual connections in his work are considered. It is noted his ability to interpret the epic poem "Iliad", making changes in the plot, genre, structure and style of the work. Baricco offers a modern interpretation of Homer's ancient work "Iliad": he rewrites the text in a new style, simplifies it and adapts it for modern audience, translates Homer's war epic into prose, uses modern Italian language, adds 'inserts' to the narrative of the original epic.

Keywords: Literature, literary text, interpretation, intertext, epic, subjective narrative, style.

Introduction

The characteristic features of a work of fiction are the manifestation in each case of the writer's individual artistic manner, conditioned by his worldview, aesthetic influence, as well as a great variety of lexical and grammatical means of language in their various relations with each other. Therefore, the issue of interpretation of a literary text in modern linguistics continues to be very relevant and at the same time extremely complex.

V. A. Kukharensko defines text interpretation as the development of ideological and aesthetic, semantic and emotional information of an artistic work, which is carried out by means of creating the author's vision and cognition of reality (Kukharensko 1988: 6).

According to F. M. Adylova, text interpretation is both the process of comprehension of the work and the result of this process, which is expressed in the ability to state one's observations using the appropriate meta-language, i.e. professionally and literately stating the understanding of what has been read (Adylova 2018: 311).

In the context of this article the principles of Alessandro Baricco's interpretation of Homer's work 'The Iliad' are examined. Baricco's work "Homer. Iliad" shows the subtle flair of a literary scholar, filigree mastery of analysing the ancient text and the desire to preserve the flavour of the ancient epic and at the same time make it relevant to modern society.

Discussion and Results

The book was born out of the author's idea to give a public reading of Homer's Iliad: "Some time ago I had the idea of giving a public reading of the Iliad... I quickly realised that it would



be impossible to read Homer's poem in its original form: it would require at least forty hours of time and a very patient audience. And so I decided to modify the text, adapting it to the purpose I had set out to fulfil" (Baricco 2007:5).

This initiative immediately aroused interest in the Italian press, as A. Baricco performed a trial production as an advance in September 2003, a year before the book was published. The thirst for experimentation and the lofty goal (cultural and educational) explain the emergence of A. Baricco's public reading of Homer's Iliad: "A flowing and collective reading. Reading it to today's audience can only mean, in a way, rewriting it. I thought it was an adventure worth trying: to translate the Iliad once more, adapting it to the needs of public reading. Shorten it by all means. Modernize the Italian language. Perhaps limit the supernatural part to the necessary minimum, bringing everything back to the emotion of a pure war story. I have always admired the work of those who in the 19th century began to translate the entire Iliad into poetic verse. This was a Time, a culture that claimed its own Iliad: against all logic and simply out of respect for its taste and linguistic conventions. I thought we, too, should have our own Iliad. An "Iliad" for us" (Scarsella 2003: 32).

In his work, A. Baricco offers a modern and personal interpretation of Homer's Iliad, rewriting the text in a modern style and adding his creative vision to the narrative of the original epic and insertion. The basic principles of interpretation by A. Baricco are given below:

- Narrative style

Homer's creative thinking is archaic, he writes a military epic that was understandable in that era. The idea of the Italian writer was to revive the original way of presenting Homer's poem, for which it was created: reading in public. At the same time, the poem paradoxically loses its declamatory character: in Baricco's version, the recognizable epic rhythm of the Homeric text is lost. A. Baricco reformatted the classic work of Homer, translated the military epic into prose, adding elements of his artistic and narrative vision. A. Baricco comments on his revision: "I tried never to stoop to a simple retelling, but to create more concise episodes from the original sections of the poem. Therefore, I managed to build a denser wall out of Homeric bricks" (Baricco 2007:5).

Baricco is known for his unique poetic style of narration. His intervention is characterized by modern writing and the use of modern Italian: "as for vocabulary, I tried to exclude from the text all archaisms that obscure the meaning of what was said" (Baricco 2007:7).

- Text abbreviation

Baricco refuses the appearances of the gods. In the introduction, the author justifies this opposite choice: in the "Iliad", the gods quite often interfere in what is happening, controlling it and prejudging the outcome of the war. But for modern perception, they turn out to be perhaps the most alien element. As soon as we take the gods out of the brackets, the Iliad reveals a solid secular foundation. This means that if we remove the gods from the text, there will remain not so much an orphaned and inexplicable world as human history, where people live their fate as if they were solving an encrypted message using a secret code that is almost completely known to them.



For Baricco, human history comes first. The author himself notes that when creating his works, the story comes first.: “I generally start from stories or situations” (Audino 1995:107). Moreover, Baricco's story is a human story, the story of women who were mentioned in passing by Homer (Chryseis, Andromache, the nurse).

-Subjective 1st-person narrative

A.Baricco endows the work with new content, adding “inserts” in the chapters “Chryseid”, “Tersit”, “Pandar”, “Aeneas”, “Nestor” and others. N.A.Fateeva notes such a manifestation of open metatextuality as the addition of someone else's text: transfer of characters, compositional scheme and manner of presentation of a well-known work in the context of a new time (Fateeva 2007: 145).

Homer's objective epic is replaced by the subjective view of each particular narrator, who offers his own, unique vision of the war and the events taking place. By changing the objective author's narration to a subjective 1st-person narrative, Baricco creates an intertext at the level of a different function of the heroes. They are no longer just heroes, but heroes-narrators.

Baricco deliberately changes the historical perspective: preserving the plot of the ancient Greek epic, the author offers his vision of events through the eyes of eyewitnesses, through the prism of their perception, feelings and experiences. The events are narrated in the first person by various characters, both major (e.g. Agamemnon, Odysseus, Aeneas, Helen) and minor (e.g. Chryseid, Tersitus or Andromache), an unnamed nurse and a river.

-Character Study

In Baricco's work, the images of a beautiful captive and a worthless jester, a young ambitious warrior and an old wise warrior are of equal importance. The author portrays both the multifaceted nature of such a phenomenon as war and the disclosure of the characters through it. Baricco, thanks to the chosen form of the 1st person, has powerful opportunities to create the image of the character through his inner conflict and conflicts with other characters. Inserts also serve as a tool through which the author can make his own comments and emphasise the important in his opinion character traits of the characters (“Agamemnon”, “Nestor”, etc.).

In Baricco's work, female characters are enlarged. Baricco singles out and enlarges minor figures, creating stories for them. Along with men, women (“Chryseida”, “Nurse”, “Anromacha”) are witnesses and indirect participants of the events taking place.

The first chapter in Baricco's novel is “Chryseida”. She is the daughter of a priest who was taken captive and became a slave. Note that in Homer this character is silent, appearing on stage only once. Baricco makes Chryseida an eyewitness to one of the most important conflicts of both works, the beginning of the whole plot - the conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles. Chryseida begins her story in the first person: ‘It all began on that bloody day’. Baricco emphasises ‘that day’ because it is of great importance in the character's biography: for Chryseida it is a female tragedy, her capture, the day when her fate was decided.

Another female character who witnesses the events taking place is the Nurse. She appears in Homer in one scene, when Hector says goodbye to Andromache, she stands next to him and sees everything that is happening. A.Baricco also endows her with the words: “Of course, I



remember that day. I remember every minute of that day. And that's the only thing I want to remember, I saw it with my own eyes - I was there myself", which allow the reader to get closer to the story.

In the 21st song of the Iliad, entitled "The Battle of the River", Homer gives an important role to the river god Xanthus, who opposes Achilles. If in Homer the river stream is one of the many gods fighting alongside people, then in A. Baricco it is a hero - a narrator, a participant in the events taking place, a witness to what is happening: "Years of war flashed before my eyes - not blind flows the river stream among the people ... But that day too much blood was spilled, too strong was the rage and too cruel hatred. On the day of Achilles' glory, I rose up, full of disgust". (Baricco 2007: 133).

In the chapter "The Flow" A.Baricco connects all the military events, leads discourse on war. His Flow is an allegory of war. One of the most important functions of the Stream is to show the psychological state of Achilles, his rage, cruelty, ferocity provoked by the death of his friend Patroclus.

Conclusion

Thus, Baricco offers a modern interpretation of Homer's ancient work The Iliad, rewriting the text in a new style, adapting it for a modern audience, adding 'inserts' to the narrative of the original epic, which allows us to speak of his unique creative mind. The novel is interesting to read, as it is easy to read, more accessible and shorter than the original, awakens interest in Homer's text and helps to appreciate the beauty of the original.

So, the interpretation of the literary text in this example allows the reader to understand more deeply not only the text itself, but also the context of its creation, the author's intentions, and the possible reactions and emotions it may evoke.

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