

УДК 821.111.09

© T. Pinchukova

THE SUBJECTIVE PARADIGM IN DAVID BLEICH'S INVESTIGATION

The concept of the subjective paradigm by David Bleich, a famous American literary critic, is under discussion in the article. The author considers the modes of scientific activity, the notion of paradigm as a shared mental structure. D. Bleich speaks about the subjective paradigm that views knowledge as created by the scientific community in the name of all mankind. In Bleich's opinion, the instrument of subjectivity and intersubjectivity is language as a means of announcing intention and conferring meaning. The novels by the great authors of the 20th century – Joyce, Woolf, Faulkner and others – offer a widespread expression of subjectivity as a fundamental and pervasive fact of modern experience and literature.

Рассматривается концепт «субъективная парадигма», предложенный известным американским литературным критиком Д. Блейчем, который анализирует формы научной деятельности, понятие парадигмы как ментальной структуры. С точки зрения Д. Блейча, субъективная парадигма позволяет интерпретировать знание как результат деятельности научного сообщества во имя всего человечества. Инструментом субъективности и интересубъективности является язык как средство выражения интенции и передачи значения. Романы великих писателей XX века – Дж. Джойса, В. Вулф, У. Фолкнера и др. – проникнуты субъективностью, которая является фундаментальным и характерным свойством современной художественной литературы.

Introduction

Bleich's work emerges from the combination of theory and classroom teaching. It is based on the psychoanalytical model, or conception, of the reading process. The concept of the subjective paradigm by David Bleich is based on a concept of a thought introduced by T. S. Kuhn in his treatise *"The Structure of Scientific Revolutions"* (1962). According to Kuhn, a paradigm is a model that describes the cognitive state of mind of individuals systematically observing something in human experience. A paradigm is recognized in two basic ways. First, it is *"sufficiently unprecedented to attract an enduring group of adherents away from competing modes of scientific activity"*; second, it is *"sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of problems for the redefined group of practitioners to resolve"* [6, p. 10]. A paradigm's existence is therefore defined by the behaviour of the group of its adherents. Thus, Kuhn writes, *"a paradigm is what the members of a scientific community share, and, conversely, a scientific community consists of men who share a paradigm"* [Ibid., p. 176].

1 Paradigm as a mental structure

D. Bleich concludes that a paradigm is a shared mental structure, a set of beliefs about the nature of reality subscribed to by a group of thinkers large enough to exercise leadership for those similarly wishing to observe and understand human experience.

In Kuhn's term, a paradigm is even more than this, it is a "world-view". Kuhn's work shows that all perception takes place through a paradigm. The paradigmatic perception of reality at any moment in history is the reality at that time. Kuhn claims that the philosophical paradigm initiated by Descartes and developed at the same time as Newtonian dynamics is no longer adequate to modern experience. "Today, – he argues, – research is parts of philosophy, psychology, linguistics, and even art history, all converge to suggest that the traditional paradigm is somehow askew" [Ibid., p. 121]. Kuhn's idea that paradigms govern science leads to the conclusion that the notion of objectivity is itself a paradigm, and that validated perception is a more useful way of understanding what is real at this time.

Kuhn does not announce an alternative to the objective paradigm. He says that "*none of these crisis-producing subjects has yet produced a viable alternative to the traditional epistemological paradigm*" [Ibid., p. 125].

The increasing involvement of the scientist in the process of observation, made if possible to suggest the full dimensionality of subjectivity in the emerging conceptions of knowledge. D. Bleich speaks about the subjective paradigm that views knowledge as created by the scientific community in the name of all mankind. Discoveries in modern physics have led to an unexpected conclusion: the limits of the capacity for objectification have been reached, and any new knowledge is a function of the means of observation and perception.

The formulations of Einstein, Bohr, and Heisenberg make sense as a manifestation of the subjective paradigm, states the critic, because in each case the role of the observer is paramount. An observer is a subject, and his means of perception define the essence of the object. An object is circumscribed and delimited by a subject's motives, his curiosities, and his language. Under the subjective paradigm, new truth is created by a new use of language and a new structure of thought. The establishment of new knowledge is the activity of the mind adapting itself to new developmental demands.

Edmund Husserl, an accomplished and creative mathematician, had to reconsider the nature of science, which led him to formulate the concept of "transcendental subjectivity". In his work "*The Crisis of European Sciences*" (1938) he raised the problem of "*the enigma of subjectivity*" and the "*enigma of psychological subject matter and method*." [5, p. 5].

The problem arises from two angles. First, "*if we cease being immersed in our scientific thinking, we become aware that we, scientists are, after all, human beings and as such are among the components of the life-world which always exists for us, ever pregiven; and thus all of science is pulled, along with us, into the – merely "subjective-relative" – life-world*". [Ibid, p. 131]. The other side of the question, Husserl says, is "*But can the world and human existence in it, truthfully have a meaning in the sciences recognize as true only what is objectively established*" [Ibid., p. 67].

Thus, the fact that one can be both objective and subjective is the heart of the problem. The paradoxical interrelationships of the 'objectively true world' and the "life-world" make enigmatic the manner of being of both". [Ibid., p. 131].

Husserl does not claim to solve the problem finally, but his way of understanding science anew insists on its communal basis. Knowledge is created by the human community. The world exists not only for the isolated men but for the community of men, even straight forward perception is communalized.

In Roger Poole's study *"Towards Deep Subjectivity"* (1972) ethical considerations are shown to represent an important aspect of the subjective paradigm. Poole argues that interpersonal exchange of knowledge and interpersonal allocations of responsibility function in exactly the same way. Knowledge and responsibility are both governed by the subjective paradigm on levels ranging from two people to the community of nations.

Poole adds a new idea of his own to this synthesis of ideas. It is the idea of ethical space, the primary unit of which is the human body: *"The body is the locus of all ethical experience, and all experience is, because spatial, ethical. There can be no act which does not take place in ethical space. There can be no "flaccid" act, no act devoid of all significance, no unconditioned act"* [9, p. 27].

Ethical space is meant to be in part metaphoric, but in part real. It is metaphoric in the sense that every human act, even private ones, has some consequence for some other human beings. Such acts must touch on other people's personal "space". It is real in the sense that every human body – and every notion – needs a certain measure of real space in order to live, as well as a certain stake in the inventory of environmental resources. In this context, metaphorical space and actual space are identical.

2 Subjectivity in language

Pool argues: *"Subjectivity itself turns out to be, not only an intentionality, a meaning-conferring ability, but a relationship. It is impossible to have an objective relationship with anything at all: at the very least it would be intentional and thus subjective, even if it were relatively passionless, like my relation to the pillar-box. It does not move me to strong feelings about it, but I have decided all the same that it is red."* [Ibid., pp. 95-96]. In Bleich's opinion, the unspoken proposition in this statement is that the instrument of subjectivity and of intersubjectivity is language, since that is what we use to announce intention and to confer meaning. To decide that something is or is not red, true or free is simultaneously a subjective act and a linguistic act. Every linguistic act has cognitive, expressive, interpersonal and ethical dimensions that render such acts subjective. "Language is part of human means of adaptation in nature. When this part is cancelled by violence or other destructive behaviour, we lose our only natural means of survival. Unlike animals, we depend on language and thought – on self-awareness – to protect, preserve, and prolong our lives", says D. Bleich [1, p. 29].

The efforts of Piaget to understand the nature of intelligence, which he identifies with language and thought, have produced the belief that it is best conceived as an organ of the body: "*Cognitive functions are an extension of organic regulations and constitute a differentiated organ for regulating exchanges with the external world*" [7, p. 369]. Like an organ, it is, on the one hand, an independent system, and on the other hand, it is a contributing element to the individual's biological and social homeostasis. In "*The Origins of Intelligence in Children*" (1952), Piaget argues that intelligence is grounded in two universal circumstances – the development of sensorimotor intelligence, which most animals also have, and a dialectic relationship between mother and child, which no animals have. These two conditions foster natural growth to where human activity is controlled by consciousness and its agent, language, in a way that permits indefinite periods of time to elapse between the first impulse and the sensorimotor fulfillment of its demand. This capacity for conscious control is what Piaget calls representational intelligence. He characterizes it as an internalization, or mentalization, of the sensorimotor behaviors that were established in the earlier stages of bodily growth. Piaget seems willing to extend this understanding of intelligence to its social function. He suggests, in particular, that there is a "continuity" between the function of intelligence in the individual and the function of the individual in the social group: "*The social group... plays the same role that the "population" does in genetics and consequently in instinct. In this sense, society is the supreme unit, and the individual can only achieve his inventions and intellectual constructions insofar as he is the seat of collective interactions that are naturally dependent, in level and value, on society as a whole. The great man who at anytime seems to be launching some new line of thought is simply the point of intersection of synthesis of ideas which have been elaborated by a continuous process of cooperation, and, even if he is opposed to current opinions, he represents a response to underlying needs which arise outside himself. This is why social environment is able to do so effectively for the intelligence what genetic recombinations of the population did for evolutionary variation of the transindividual cycle of the instincts*" [Ibid., p. 368].

Freud first assumed that his hermeneutic method uncovered original causes of dreams and neurosis. Gradually, however, he realized that most of the clinical interpretations he adduced could not be conceived in objective terms. Freud formulated the epistemological principles which he thought applied simultaneously to psychoanalysis as well as to any organized pursuit of knowledge. These principles constitute one of the earliest attempts to change the conception of knowledge in the direction of subjectively.

When Freud made these statements, the sciences were changing in the direction he outlined.

It might seem that subjective thinking would be least applicable in matters of visual perception, as compared with perception through the other senses or with the perception of linguistic meaning. Over the past few decades, however, psychologists and art critics have shown that the subjectivity of visual perception is equal to that of semantic perception, especially in cases where the act of seeing is considered of central importance. For example, if a married couple passes a rose on a walk and both observe "rose red" and then forget about it, there is agreement: they saw the same "objective" colour. But if the same couple is looking at various styles of rose red carpeting for their prospective home, their perceptions of the colour will be heavily influenced by what each had in mind in general for their home. The carpeting will be "seen" in the preimagined context: there would be no point in explaining to each party what the "actual" colour is. The "operational" use of the colour red in this case defines it.

Bleich's survey of intellectual developments in various fields is intended to suggest that for the past few decades, knowledge in the physical sciences and in the social and psychological sciences has been hermeneutically derived. The subjective paradigm suggests that knowledge in general comes through synthesized interpretations.

Literary criticism is perhaps the major constituent of the humanistic disciplines traditionally understood as hermeneutic.

"Yet at the very time when Mannheim, Freud, and the physical scientists were looking to subjective forms of thought to better authorize knowledge, criticism turned in the opposite direction, emphasizing the "scientific" attitude, featuring the objective autonomy of a work of art," points out D. Bleich [1, p. 33]. Having no language to rationalize and organize older forms of topical impressionistic criticism, "new" critics tried to hypostasize a literary text as a document with an internally coherent objective meaning. At the same time the traditional practices of literary judgment and evaluation were retained, so that criticism began to resemble the biblical hermeneutics of centuries back. For example, T. S. Eliot felt justified in claiming that *"Hamlet"* is an "artistic failure" because there is no "objective correlative" for the emotion the play aroused in him [3, p. 98]. He did present a value judgment in the form and syntax of fact. Partially as a result of Eliot's leadership, such statements became common critical practice. In this practice, two aspects of the objective paradigm are combined – the assumption that leaders have special access to the absolute truth and the scientific assumption that an object of art is independent of human perception [1, p. 31].

The major modern critics have tried to bring new language and thought into literary hermeneutics, though ultimately, objective thinking prevailed in their work. In 1925, I. A. Richards tried to remove the mysticism from aesthetic thought. He argued that aesthetic emotion is no different from any other emotion

and that, therefore, it is ordinary human feeling occurring under the influence of aesthetic perception. He further argued that it is the job of critics to present value judgments and that such judgments derive from the subjective economy of appetites and drives. He maintained that psychology is indispensable if we are to understand the human interest in literature, and he tried to outline what such a psychology might look like. Finally, he dismissed the mind-body problem altogether because it arises from our failure to make a distinction "*as to when we are making a statement and when merely inciting an attitude*" [8, p. 84]. That is, if we understand the motive of our own pronouncements, the question of what is objective and what subjective would not arise. This much of Richard's argument is in accord with the subjective paradigm.

As a rule, however, this thinking is not applied in his own critical practice. Although he says he feels awkward about it, he also proffers his belief that he as a critic is an "*expert in matters of taste*" and that a critic "*ought than to be ready with reasons of a clear and convincing kind as to why his preferences are worth attention*" [Ibid, pp. 36-37]. In "*Principles of Literary Criticism*" Richards presents highly subjective judgments of good and bad poetry, supported by equally subjective reasons. Yet, rather than using his psychological considerations to explain his personal judgments, he uses only his expertise in taste to authorize the judgments. Richards did not develop his proposed psychology much further, and he did not publicly change his opinion about the critic's expertise. In fact, in "*Practical Criticism*", which is a pioneering attempt to examine in detail how actual readers read, Richards again relies on his authority simply to judge correct and incorrect readings. The subjective factors that Richards acknowledged in his theory as being part of the reading process were omitted from systematic, conscious consideration in his practice of criticism.

The work of Northrop Frye has played a comparably prominent role in critical thinking of recent decades. His emphasis on the search for and definition of archetypal themes has widened the critical tradition he received. Yet for him the ideal of knowledge is still the quantitative sciences. He believes that criticism should imitate physics. Even though he shows how the frontier sciences in this century are social and behavioral, he still hopes that the "science" of words will one day be as reliable as mathematics. The classification system he devised for literature is neither more nor less certain than a persuasive interpretation. In the future, in different cultural circumstances, other criteria for classification may be adduced, or the act of literary classification may not be considered knowledge at all.

Frye believes that a certain area of literary response is inaccessible in an ultimate sense; this is the *nous*, the knowledge of literature, as opposed to the *dianoia*, knowledge about literature. Frye pursues the latter, objective knowledge. The *nous* is experiential and yields only subjective value judgments. This knowledge cannot be sought by a subject of study. This could be a defensible

position for Frye if his own sense of his relationship to knowledge were less personal. Frye explains why one seeks knowledge in the first place: "*The knowledge of most worth, for a genuine student, is that body of knowledge to which he has already made an unconscious commitment. I speak of an unconscious commitment because for a genuine student, knowledge like marriage, is too important a matter to be left entirely to conscious choice.*" [4, p. 3]. The question "What knowledge is most worth having," he suggests, should be rephrased as "With what body of knowledge do you wish to identify yourself?" Thus, he subjectifies the "worth" and keeps the knowledge objective.

The subjective grounding of both feelings and knowledge was seriously explored in modern literature long before the scientists and philosophers started taking it into account. In "*The Modern Psychological Novel*", Leon Edel shows how a whole series of authors, in many Western countries at about the same time (the turn of this century), began, as he puts it, to "turn inward". He says that while these authors, each like those of previous times, portrayed subjective experience, each presented it in forms and languages that were different from anything that came before. Hamlet's "*To be or not to be speech*", for example, "gives us no feeling of his surroundings or the sensory experiences... at the time of utterance" [2, p. 56]. Modern subjectivity, he suggests, is the scene not just of different thoughts, but of different kinds of thoughts, all occurring in peremptory succession to one another. In portraying the near simultaneity of the sensory, the trivial, the past, and the logic of the present, the subjective novelists were aiming at more than verisimilitude; they expressed the recognition that *every element of subjective experience is potentially meaningful*. Before Freud started consciously using this principle in his technique of free association, experimental writers like Dujardin presented in fiction trivial subjective experiences which had meaning to the reporting character and which invited the reader to share this meaning. As this literary style came into the hands of the great novelists of the twentieth century – Joyce, Woolf, Faulkner, for example – it became a widespread expression of the discovery of subjectivity as a fundamental and pervasive fact of modern experience.

The subjective novel also helped bring to the fore the fact of subjectivity in the reading experience. In discussing James's "*The Turn of the Screw*," Edel says that "*the reader's mind is forced to hold to two levels of awareness: the story as told, and the story to be deduced. This is the calculated risk Henry James took in writing for audiences not prepared to read him so actively*" [Ibid, p. 50]. Active reading of this tale involves a situation of subjective choice for the reader. The governess is then thought of as having given an "objective" account of the events at Bly. If you do not always believe the narrator, then you consider part of the story "real" and part "imaginary", especially the ghosts. When the reader is aware of this choice of viewpoints, the language of the story becomes

multivalued, not simply in its metaphorical function, as in most other literature, but in its *referential* function.

Active reading involves other kinds of subjective initiatives as well. Reading "*The Sound and the Fury*" can require a great degree of ratiocination; "*Ulysses*" requires background information; and the poetry of Eliot and Pound demands a high level of erudition. Most modern subjective literature seems to require some sort of supplementary effort on the part of the reader in order for the reading experience to become meaningful.

Conclusion

Subjective literature calls attention to the complex subjective actions of language. If we are not conscious of language use, we are not aware of how decisively it defines the reality. Joyce's later work portrays different realities by using different languages and different styles of the same language. In fact, says D. Bleich, reality is identified with linguistic reality. The stability of consciousness depends on the stability of our language. The subjective novelists made deliberate use of the psychological fundamentality of language, its absolute governance of our daily sanity, and its uniqueness as a means toward both intellectual enlightenment and the management of our emotional lives.

The subjective paradigm is a development of modern culture on the largest scale. Its presence may be noted in every phase of cultural activity. In creating new awareness of the determining role played by language in these activities, it also suggests new ways to understand the human ontogenesis of language and symbolic thought, as well as the capabilities and limits of our natural tendency to objectify experience.

Bibliography

1. *Bleich, D.* Subjective Criticism / D. Bleich. – Baltimore & London : The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985. – 309 pp.
2. *Edel, L.* The Modern Psychological Novel / L. Edel. – New York : Random House, 1975. – 356 pp.
3. *Eliot, S.* The Sacred Wood / S. Eliot. – New York : Random House, 1978. – 240 pp.
4. *Frye, N.* The Stubbom Structure / N. Frye. – London & New York : MacMillan Publishing Company, 1970. – 372 pp.
5. *Husserl, E.* The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology / E. Husserl. – New York : W. Norton & Company, 1975. – 450 pp.
6. *Kuhn, T. S.* The Structure of Scientific Revolutions / T. S. Kuhn. – Chicago : Chicago University Press, 1962. – 320 pp.
7. *Piaget, J.* Biology and Knowledge / J. Piaget. – Chicago : Heath and Company, 1971. – 369 pp.
8. *Richards, I. A.* Principles of Literary Criticism / I. A. Richards. – New York : The Guilford Press, 1972. – 284 pp.
9. *Poole, R.* Towards Deep Subjectivity / R. Poole. – New York : McGraw-Hill, 1972. – 270 pp.