ТЕОРІЯ ЛІТЕРАТУРИ

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RECEPTION OF TEXTUAL GAPS IN A LITERARY WORK

The article analyzes the phenomenon of textual gaps in a literary work within the context of the theory of non-finito as a specific artistic system. It has been established that the characteristic features of unfinished texts include ellipsis, indeterminacy, fragmentation, openness, and polyreceptivity, which activate the reader's creative imagination in the process of perception. The interrelation between the intentionality of a literary work and its gappiness is substantiated, which necessitates interpretative supplementation by the recipient. The main approaches to the understanding of "empty spaces" in a literary text are examined, particularly from the perspective of phenomenological aesthetics of the Polish literary theorist R. Ingarden, who considers the literary work as an intentional, polysemantic, derivative, heterogeneous, and non-factual structure. Attention is focused on how meaning is concretized during the reading – a process in which the recipient fills in the gaps, activating their own intersubjective semantic codes, imagination, and cultural memory. It is explained that due to the temporal perspective, no part of the text can be fully and definitively comprehended during the reading, since each phase of the work is interpreted only partially and is subject to change depending on the reception context. The specific nature of the reader's perception of yet unread parts of the text is outlined – these are projected in the mind as schematic outlines or possible options for the development of events. It is noted that literary gappiness not only prompts interpretative activity in the reader but also serves as a means of artistic influence, creating aesthetic effects such as anticipation, tension, surprise, and others. It is emphasized that each new concretization of the text is partial, subjective, and open to new interpretations, since it is based on the dynamic correlation of the reader's past, present, and future experiences. Gaps in the text of a literary work are regarded as a condition of co-creativity, whereby the act of reading turns into a dialogue between the author and the recipient, through which the text acquires new meanings and significance.

Key words: reception, non-finito, gap, text, literary work, interpretation.

Statement of the problem. The issue of finito/non-finito in literary works has increasingly drawn the attention of contemporary literary scholars, as recent decades have seen the establishment of non-classical approaches to the content, form, and structure of artistic texts. These approaches are characterized by a certain ambiguity, incompleteness, presence of gaps, fragmentation, and polyreceptivity. Therefore, the reception of a literary work as an open, unfinished text – where meaning is co-constructed by both the author and the reader – has become an especially relevant problem. This approach necessitates the analysis of "empty spaces" (gaps) within the structure of the literary text and encourages an understanding of

how the reader interprets and fills these gaps through their personal reading experience, imagination, and worldview, transforming the act of reading into a co-creative process.

Analysis of recent research and publications. In contemporary studies, the phenomenon of non-finito is examined as an artistic technique grounded in "active figurative interaction between visible imagery and abstract emptiness (free zones of the canvas or sheet, unprocessed sculptural material)" [1, p. 28], thus, the presence of gaps, i.e. "empty spaces", in a literary text is a distinctive feature of its non-finito structure. Scientific findings demonstrate that "gapness as a "category of absence" is marked by various meta-

signs, including: culturemes, ellipsis, rhetorical questions, phrase truncation, silence, gender voids, implicitness, xenonyms, memory gaps, lexical gaps, ethnographic gaps, nonverbal elements, intentional omissions, and graphic incongruities" [7, p. 122]. The absence of something at the level of form or content "reflects the intentional nature of the literary work, whose existence is determined by the creative acts of the author's consciousness. For proponents of reception aesthetics, these are the primary means of communication between the text and the reader. Gaps serve as the basis for the emergence of potential semantic constructs within the reader's imagination. The reader constructs a certain textual gestalt based on their personal life experience, worldview, and consciousness" [4, p. 2].

The specific nature of non-finito and the realization of interpretive gaps in literary texts are addressed in the works of Oleksandra Visych ("The Aesthetics of Non-Finito in Lesia Ukrainka's Work"), Stefania d'Agata d'Ottavi ("The Structure of Non-Finito in the Poetry of William Blake"), Vasyl Kostiuk ("The Poetics of the Fragment and Artistic Wholeness"), Roman Ingarden ("On the Cognition of the Literary Work"), Umberto Eco ("The Poetics of the Open Work", "The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts"), among others.

Task statement. The aim of this literary study is to generalize existing knowledge about textual gaps within the artistic system of non-finito and to highlight the specific ways in which recipients perceive and interpret these "indeterminate places" in literary texts.

Outline of the main material of the study. The concept of incompleteness and the recognition of the reader's significant role in constructing final meanings – particularly through the "filling in" of certain textual gaps – are dominant characteristics of the non-finito artistic system. Contemporary scholars interpret non-finito not merely as an artistic technique or intentional incompleteness of a work, but as a distinct mode of creative thinking that gained particular prominence at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and reached its full development in the Postmodern era. However, it is important to note that researchers of modern and postmodern culture emphasize the continuity of the non-finito aesthetic, tracing its origins to the artistic practices of ancient civilizations, the Renaissance, the Early Modern period, as well as to Eastern art traditions. As the German aesthetician H. Lutzeler observed, in these traditions the artist deliberately limits the work to a suggestive gesture, avoiding completed forms and thus creating space for the recipient's imagination [1, p. 30].

Within the framework of the non-finito theory of literary works, the phenomenological concept developed by the Polish literary scholar R. Ingarden remains particularly relevant. According to this concept, works of verbal art are intentional and polysemantic, are characterized by their derivativeness, heterogeneity, and non-factual nature [6, p. 137]. Thus, a literary work is not a finished object, but rather an intentional structure that the reader actively completes in the act of reception. Through this engagement, the process of concretization takes place – wherein the reader fills in the semantic gaps of the text, thereby rendering it accessible to aesthetic experience. This concretization is enabled by the activation of intersubjective semantic codes, which function to limit excessively subjective interpretations. As a result, each act of reading renders the literary work slightly different, yet it always remains grounded in a stable semantic framework. Therefore, the work itself must be distinguished from its interpretations and concretizations – the latter being less schematic, yet never final.

The impossibility of fully completing a literary work, according to R. Ingarden, stems from the fact that the recipient, while reading the text "sentence by sentence", has "immediately and vividly present only the portion of the work that is being read at that moment" [3, p. 144], or one of its phases. Each phase of the work, in turn, passes through several stages in the reader's consciousness. Initially, it appears only in broad outlines, then becomes "alive" and distinctly present, and eventually transitions into a state of familiarity in which it is no longer perceived directly or actively. However, the phase does not vanish completely – it remains in the reader's consciousness as part of their past experience. It is neither destroyed nor definitively completed, but continues to exist, seemingly receding from the recipient, even though its traces persist, whether or not the reader consciously recalls them.

As a result, each concretization of a literary work contains its own gaps, since the reader, in the process of comprehension, focuses on what is most essential and thereby "condenses" already-read sentences or entire sentence groups; "this "condensation" – a kind of compression of meaning – typically occurs automatically, without special attention to these sentences and without any specific operation of shortening" [3, p. 145].

Most often, the concretization of a literary work is narrowed – or limited – to the level of the depicted objects and characters. The gaps within this representational plane arise from the fact that once

we learn something about the characters or objects presented in the work, they cease to be vividly present to us. What remains is a blurred recollection, typically confined to what has already happened to them in previously read sections, the events they were involved in, and how they changed over time. Simultaneously, a kind of compression and simplification of these stages occurs in the reader's consciousness. The reader usually retains a clear memory only of the most striking elements: climactic events, central characters, or facts that made an emotional impact. Depending on the course of the narrative, different details remain vividly present in memory during the reading. This phenomenon is due not only to the accumulation of narrative information but also to the shifting significance of characters, events, or facts – what initially appeared important may lose its relevance, while other aspects gain new meaning as the reading progresses.

Of course, the gap-filled nature of the currently experienced phase of the work is less pronounced compared to the indeterminacy of those parts yet to be encountered. Unknown objects or events toward which the reader is moving are initially sketched only in general outlines, sometimes even in several possible variants. Even when their appearance is vague or indefinite, it contributes a particular tone and atmosphere to the events being observed during the reading. However, only the subsequent progression of the reader's engagement with the text can reveal the degree to which such anticipations were accurate. Moreover, "not without significance – especially important for aesthetic perception are the deliberately crafted "surprises": something may emerge on the representational level (or on other levels of the work) that could not have been foreseen, or, conversely, something anticipated and expected may not appear at all" [3, p. 147]. The preparation for such narrative twists is achieved through the use of specific artistic techniques, by means of which the text presents something as likely or expected that ultimately does not occur, and is instead replaced by something entirely unexpected. This technique creates distinct aesthetic effects, and the reader's ability to recognize and appreciate these elements of surprise plays a crucial role in the artistic perception of the narrative's development.

R. Ingarden substantiated the existence of interpretive gaps in the unread portions of a text through the lens of the phenomenon he termed "temporal perspective". He argued that "the approaching phases of the future appear either as unfilled temporal schemas, more imagined than directly present to us,

or, to the extent that we anticipate certain forthcoming events, they present themselves to us only in the form of vaguely outlined figures of temporal phases. This event-related vagueness means that such a temporal phase does not possess a clear or definitive place in phenomenal time. Typically, when such an indistinctly outlined phase becomes part of the living present, its qualitative contours turn out to be significantly different from how they initially appeared in their preliminary sketch – this occurs even when the anticipated events indeed take place" [3, p. 149].

In the process of engaging with a literary work, there inevitably comes a moment when the recipient, either consciously or unconsciously, reactivates previously read sections – those that have entered the horizon of their past experience. However, even in this case, it is impossible to avoid gaps and perspectival reductions. As R. Ingarden explains, the phases of the past, which we have already lived through, and the future, which is yet to come, acquire clear delineation only within a limited span surrounding the present moment. These phases are almost always connected to events and processes that have occurred or are occurring in the present; we either observe them directly or imagine them with varying degrees of clarity. Interestingly, when recalling certain events or objects, the reader tends to impose a somewhat formal temporal scheme upon them, attempting to imaginatively position them within a coherent structure. Yet this scheme cannot be fully completed, as "it contains many intervals (empty spaces), and in two senses: first, because many phases lack specific events (at least for us, when they are entirely unknown); and second, because we do not fully construct this scheme in our imagination through all of its phases. At most, if necessary, we imaginatively leap over these intervals, mentally connecting phases of the schematic time through associations and arrangements among the referenced instances. Often, we rely on standardized models of such associations, which alter the purely schematic nature of the reconstructed time. In such cases, the temporal scheme becomes, in principle, unlimited and, on the one hand, an extension of our enriched past experience that, through an analogous schematic process, stretches into the future" [3, p. 149], thus, it remains in a state of non-finito.

Ultimately, this becomes evident in the fact that the actualization of certain moments from previously read sections occurs "from a particular temporal "point of view" that lies at a greater or lesser temporal and event-based distance from what is being recalled and, moreover, is constantly being displaced. As a result of this shifting "viewpoint", the recalled process or

event appears each time from a different angle. One moment it is one stage of the process that gains visible contours in recollection; at another time, a different stage comes into focus, while the rest seem to recede into obscurity. They become less distinct, blurred, or visible only in certain features, thus reducing their temporal extension in the act of remembrance. Every moment in time – each zero point of the act of remembering that encompasses a specific temporal segment and the events contained therein – produces a particular temporal "appearance" of the remembered process or a set of such "appearances", which can also be termed its "temporal-perspectival condensations" [3, p. 154-155]. Thus, the recipient cannot fully actualize the previously read sections from the horizon of their past in such a way that they are entirely separated from the temporal perspective through which they are perceived. This remains impossible even when the recollection occurs instantaneously, as a unified act, and the point of view is maintained in the reader's "present". Even when events are recalled from a significant temporal distance, the process invariably assumes a highly condensed and synthetic nature within the temporal dimension.

The process by which the recipient fills in gaps and further delineates certain aspects from previously read sections at each successive stage of concretization is described by R. Ingarden as the "expansion" of recollection. He understands this as the gradual restoration in memory of facts associated with what has already been recalled – facts that supplement and clarify the original recollection in various respects. At a given moment, we may remember only a single detail – for instance, the appearance or condition of a particular object. Only later, by recalling additional circumstances and details related to this object, do we gradually construct a clearer image of what has been preserved in memory. This may lend the memory a new character both on a general level and in its essence, which may have previously remained unnoticed or insufficiently defined. Such a process allows not only for the altered accessibility of remembered details but also for the redirection of our attention toward different aspects and elements of the situation. As a result, new details may emerge from the recollection, becoming distinct and vivid. Simultaneously, the spatial context of the memory may also change: the same objects recalled from memory may appear different depending on the perspective and conditions of their recollection.

It is important to note that the concretization and actualization of an artistic work occurs not only during the act of reading but also after it. Reading does not equate to complete understanding: the text continues to reveal itself over time, as the recipient possesses only a limited set of materials for further reflection and for filling semantic gaps, which encourages deeper reinterpretation and return to the word [3, p. 160]. Without revisiting and rereading the text, it is impossible to fully grasp its distinctive structure and unique properties. Reading always directs us back to the original source – to the text itself.

Thus, the initial engagement with a literary work, during which its constituent parts are identified, serves merely as a starting point – a preparatory phase for more profound cognitive interaction with the text. Nevertheless, this preparatory phase, in which the reader forms their first impression and initial experience of the work, is not only necessary but also indispensable. It plays a crucial role in all subsequent stages of understanding that follow the initial reading, particularly in the process of refining and clarifying essential elements, ultimately contributing to the achievement of finito.

The aesthetic reception of a literary work as the "filling of empty spaces in the text" [2, p. 261] was interpreted by W. Iser, who expanded on the phenomenological ideas of R. Ingarden. Iser, a literary theorist, also emphasized an important manifestation of non-finito: the presence of gaps, which prompt the recipient to actively fill them during the process of engaging with the work. Readers often feel themselves drawn into the events of the text, perceiving them as real – even when they bear little resemblance to their own lived experience. The fact that different recipients perceive the "reality" of the same text in distinct ways vividly illustrates how a literary work transforms reading into a creative process that goes beyond the mere perception of the written word. A literary text activates our cognitive faculties, allowing us to reconstruct the world depicted within it. In a non-finito work, the reader can imagine only that which is absent from the text, as "the written part of the text provides us with information, while the unwritten part offers us the opportunity to imagine; yet, of course, without elements of indeterminacy and the presence of gaps in the text, we would be unable to employ our imagination" [2, p. 267].

In this regard, the Polish phenomenologist, in a letter to the Ukrainian literary scholar I. Fizer, observes that a literary work presents objects – such as things, people, processes, and events – that collectively shape the reader's image of the world, constructed through a limited set of judgments. Everything not mentioned in the text simply does not exist in this world: "precisely for this reason, the represented objects exhibit zones

of indeterminacy, that is, gaps, as a result of which the text appears schematic. Therefore, in a literary work, what is not depicted is just as important as what is depicted. The existence of these gaps depends not only on our language, but also on its limited set of judgments and its lexical constraints in representing these objects within the work. The categorical form of represented objects in the literary text would, ideally, involve an unlimited number of determinants (attributes, qualities, etc.), of which, typically, only a limited number can be explicitly realized. The remainder (author's note: of the plot) is represented by an infinite set of gaps. It is impossible to eliminate them from the work" [5, p. 371].

According to R. Ingarden, a gap in the text functions as a particular obstacle for the reader, one that arises unintentionally and is often perceived as a deficiency. At the same time, it reflects a commitment to the classical concept of art. If one considers the text as a continuous flow of sentences, each sentence evokes certain expectations that are typically confirmed by the next. However, when these expectations are not fulfilled, a sense of disappointment emerges. Even in the simplest narrative, it is impossible to avoid omissions, as no plot can be told in its entirety. It is precisely these inevitable gaps that impart dynamism to the narrative. When the reader encounters indeterminacies in the text, it opens up a space for their own imagination and effort, directed at establishing connections and filling in those gaps left by the author.

Conclusions. Thus, the process of comprehending a literary work is inherently selective, as the potential meaning of the text far exceeds any single interpretation. This is evidenced by the fact that rereading often evokes impressions markedly different from those experienced during the initial reading. Such a phenomenon can be explained by changes in the reader's circumstances and personal experience. The text remains open to multiple interpretations, enabling new perceptions with each subsequent reading. As a result, earlier events and details within the text acquire new meanings and appear in a different light, while any textual gap or unexpected element prompts a temporary suspension of the interpretive process and shifts the direction of comprehension. Eventually, such "indeterminate places" are interpreted in connection with prior experience, yielding a distinct aesthetic pleasure. Ultimately, it becomes evident that some degree of novelty or surprise – a characteristic incompleteness, or non-finito – is essential for the value of the text. Only under such conditions can a literary work capture and sustain the recipient's attention and invite them into a process of co-creation.

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Слободян Н. В., Нестерчук К. М. РЕЦЕПЦІЯ ТЕКСТОВИХ ЛАКУН У ЛІТЕРАТУРНОМУ ТВОРІ

У статті аналізується феномен текстових лакун у літературному творі в контексті теорії non-finito як специфічної художньої системи. З'ясовано, що характерними ознаками незавершених текстів є недомовленість, невизначеність, фрагментарність, відкритість, полірецептивність, що активізують творчу уяву читача в процесі сприймання. Обґрунтовано взаємозв'язок між інтенційністю літературного твору та його лакунарністю, що зумовлює потребу в інтерпретаційному доповненні реципієнта. Проаналізовано основні підходи до осмислення «порожніх місць» у художньому тексті, зокрема з позицій феноменологічної естетики польського літературознавця Р. Інґардена, який трактує

літературний твір як інтенційну, полісемантичну, деривативну, гетерогенну і нефактичну структуру. Увагу зосереджено на тому, як під час читання відбувається конкретизація смислів – процес, у межах якого реципієнт заповнює лакуни, активуючи власні інтерсуб'єктивні смислові коди, уяву та культурну пам'ять. Пояснено, що з причини часової перспективи в процесі читання жодна частина тексту не може бути усвідомлена повністю та остаточно, адже кожна фаза твору осмислюється лише частково й змінюється залежно від контексту рецепції. Окреслено специфіку читацького сприйняття ще не прочитаних частин тексту, які проектуються у свідомості як схематичні контури або можливі варіанти розвитку подій. Зазначається, що літературна лакунарність не лише зумовлює інтерпретаційну активність читача, але й є засобом художнього впливу, створюючи естетичні ефекти очікування, напруження, несподіванки тощо. Підкреслюється, що кожна нова конкретизація тексту є частковою, суб'єктивною і відкритою до нових інтерпретацій, оскільки базується на динамічному співвідношенні минулого, теперішнього та майбутнього досвіду читача. Лакуни в тексті літературного твору розглядаються як умова співтворчості, за якої акт читання перетворюється на діалог між автором і реципієнтом, у процесі якого текст набуває нових сенсів і значень.

Ключові слова: *рецепція, non-finito, лакуна, текст, літературний твір, інтерпретація.*