

Levels of Textual Investigation and Its Semantic Purposes¹

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Received: 06.01.2025; Accepted: 16.03.2025; Publication: 02.04.2025

Abstract

Literature is a form of human expression, in which all emotions, thoughts, concerns and ideas are gathered, expressed in the most refined ways of "speech" or "writing", since from this standpoint it is the sum of "oral" or "written" effects: in other words, it is a language that carries within it an aesthetic and artistic value, and we can go further and say: it is the art that carries within it an expressive model of beauty..., and this model can only be ideal. This beauty and this idealism are exactly what prompts us to respond to literature through the manifestation of feeling and intentions, since the latter are considered intentions and implicit messages conveyed by the sender (the author or sender of the message) to the recipient (or receiver of the message), through this "coded message", or "written text", which can be folded (folded meaning), generated and assembled, and then reconstructed anew, and "in a different style" as the French thinker and deconstructor Jacques Derrida acknowledges.

Keywords: Literature; speech; The Implicit; the Explicit.

Subject classification codes: PR1-56, PR111-116

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Citation: Dehamnia M. (2025). Levels of Textual Investigation and Its Semantic Purposes. *Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems*, 8(2), 168-179. <https://imcra-az.org/archive/358-science-education-and-innovations-in-the-context-of-modern-problems-issue-2-volvi-2025.html>

Intoduction:

The features of our study's complaint are manifested in posing the following main question: In what does literature manifest itself? And written literature - in particular - as it is entrusted with the process of interpretation? We mean interpreting the text and clarifying its meanings, the apparent and the hidden, the simple and the complex, the announced and the unspoken.

Because the text, although its dimensions are multiple and its channels are branched, does not go beyond the framework of these two readings:

- **The firstreading:** a literal reading, "which sees that the word indicates by its appearance the intended meaning, and that the latter reveals itself directly, as it is present on the surface of the discourse, and does not need explanation or clarification".¹

The second reading: an implicit reading, deep in dimension and significance, "sees that the meaning, on the contrary, is hidden and hidden in the depths of the text, requiring examination and investigation to uncover and reveal it".²

Accordingly, we see it casting a dense halo of suggestions and shadows, through which the different experiences of readers mix, so that visions multiply, orientations mix, and the text is generously enriched.

Therefore, what are the intentions of the literary text? What are its intentions, announced and unannounced? What is their nature and what is their meaning? And to what extent can these meanings crystallize and become apparent?

On the other hand, we ask about the dimensions of this manifestation and what are they? And about its intentions as well? Is it an absolute manifestation, or is it limited by boundaries and disputes are raised over it?

Subject:

In contextual approaches, the idea of "author's authority" and the dominance of "the meaning intended by the author" has become entrenched, as the "absolute", "immune" and "sole" meaning of the text, on the basis that the most that the interpreter can achieve is to state the original author's intention of the text, then change the path from the pole of "author's intention" to the pole of "reader's intention", which is another completely different direction in the language of contemporary reception theories.

We should not forget that between the two poles, there is another intention no less important than the two previous intentions, which is "the intention of the text", and what it contains of darkness, density and momentum in meaning, making it a key to a thousand possible readings.

From here, the text opens a space for a group of questions and inquiries, which are at the heart of this work, the most important of which are the following:

- On what basis is the process of understanding the text based?

Do we draw a clear linear beginning for it by stating the initial meaning (of the text)? And by that we mean stating the author's authority and nothing else?

- Or do we study the text as a beginning that has never been determined? And it is still an illusion and imagination in the mind of its recipient or receiver, and thus the text becomes the "given that is not predetermined par excellence"? And thus it demands a lot from those who will enter it and from which door?

- Or is this text "self-sufficient", "saturated with its existence", and "full of its meaning"? And here it will be framed - necessarily - from within it and from within it only?

These questions - and others - are raised in the circumstances of this new orientation of the text, according to new innovative approaches, which have begun to live the obsession of change at the level of writing³; at the level of a "signifier" that is constantly absent, and according to the process, vitality and vibrant life of the text, flowing within a historical legacy that combines the past, present and future, and in the context of a social and civilized life that regains its luster and historical and civilized role⁴.

With this new orientation of the text, and with the necessity of these major changes and transformations to the structure of writing and text together, we have the right to ask about the extent of the conditions for achieving them, and how to question the text through them, as well as to interrogate its meanings and explore its depths.

These are some of the textual issues and problems - of utmost importance for constructing the text - that we are trying to clarify and investigate, and to reveal their intentions through this research.

As for the starting point for all of this, it will be through talking about three major historical moments⁵, which are as follows:

1- The subjective moment (the writer's text), or what the proponents of phenomenological reading call "the author's intentions".

2- The objective moment (the text itself), or what is called "the text's intentions".

3- The communicative moment (the reader's text), or what is called "the reader's intentions"⁶.

But it is necessary to emphasize that these major historical moments in the life of the text (these intentions), even if we try to separate them on the theoretical level, they return and meet and intertwine constantly on the applied level, as will become clear.

1- The subjective moment (the writer's text), or what is called "the author's intentions":

With traditional approaches, the issue of "ownership of the text" was settled in favor of the writer or author without any considerations of other possible intentions outside this framework, and even if these other intentions sought to search for the meaning of the text⁷, this would only be within the framework of the author's intentions and what the latter wanted to say in general and in detail, and nothing else, and the matter remained thus, such that no one disputed this ownership and this position, for a long period of time.

The roots of this issue⁸, they go back to the era of Plato, and after him Descartes, where the period of "glorifying the element of the self" prevailed, and elevating it over all other elements, as Descartes believes that "intellectual activity cannot be imagined without the existence of the self that bears its effects"⁹, and this appears especially in his famous saying: "I think, therefore I exist".

The same "ego" complex that Plato glorified was also glorified by other philosophers, such as Hume, William James, and Fichte, who saw in the "ego" "the only and final truth that cannot be doubted¹⁰," which is a clear indication that confirms Descartes' statement, thus, "self-centeredness" was also maintained for a long period of time, and Western metaphysics or Western logocentrism and its issues were also centered around this "self".¹¹

How do we explain this?

The idea of the "center" or "centrality", which dominated Western thought for a long time, was embodied, and this influence was reflected in various human sciences, the history of thought and literature, where attention was directed entirely to what was generally considered - the center of the text - which is the author, and this was the traditional view of literature, known to generations of nations, and entire critical movements centered around it.

If we return to the literary text and its declared and undeclared intentions, which is the goal and objective in this regard, we say that the dominance of the author, as the center, over the text had a profound effect on the issue of meaning in the literary text.

What does it mean for the author (human) to be connected to the text? And to be the axis and center of it?

Giving priority to the author's intentions means:

- 1- The dominance of ideology, due to its close connection to the creative self (the author's self);
- 2- The pursuit of possessing the truth, while there is no absolute truth in the text;
- 3- Consecrating the author's intentions, considering them timeless truths, is a kind of illusion and fantasy, because every literary work is necessarily "disappointing", and the meaning of

"disappointing" is the **possibility of saying and re-saying it again, in different styles and images**, and the inevitable result is the instability of the text.

2- The objective moment: (the text in itself) or what is called the text's intentions:

So, it is true that the text is one, but the readings are multiple and diverse, and it cannot be otherwise, as the new literary and critical movements in the nineteenth century sought to achieve this goal or aim, by redrawing the features of the text map anew.

Stéphane Mallarmé¹² talks about displacing the author's authority in favor of writing or more precisely in favor of the text, when he says that we must leave the initiative to "words", that is, language, away from logic and similarity, because the ambiguity that surrounds the text is itself the essence of this text - if there is an actual essence to the text - as authentic poetry is based on the principle of "dream" and dream only¹³.

As for the dream, it means the extent of the "impact" that poetic writing leaves on our souls, considering that writing is based on the principle of astonishment, the impossible, and the free play of words, and granting language the highest status in approaching literature is a surrealist vision that "relentlessly destroyed the established values of traditional literary concepts"¹⁴.

After Mallarmé, Paul Valéry came to confirm that the text is only an "inside" and has no outside, meaning that the text governs itself by itself through its internal system that gives it life, strength and activity, as it is self-sufficient and does not need external contexts to express itself, which is considered a glorification of the element of "writing". In the twentieth century, and with the advent of Russian formalism in particular, the author was completely ignored and the focus was on the "intentions of the text" or the "language of the text" in the expression of the linguists themselves, as the text is above all a formal game. "The universal meaning of writing, if we assume its existence, can only be the uncertainty of meaning itself".¹⁵

Thus, formalism has neglected the principles of aesthetics and closed the issues of psychology and sociology, and the text has become a formal, technical application only, without the presence of the producing self (the author) or the receiving self (the reader), with the exclusion of the reality that unites them. The literary work has become separate from its author and its recipient, as the language of the text is the language of "displacement"¹⁶, by displacing the text above intentions and purposes, so "the literary work is not based on this meaning or that, but rather remains marked by the desire for meaning, by the longing for meaning, and the act of writing is not determined by a precise goal, but rather allows itself to engage in a play of signifiers that does not stop"¹⁷.

The text, and therefore writing, remains – as Derrida acknowledges – "false testimony", "falsehood" and "deception" because both are negotiable, exchangeable and constantly circulated, thus breaking all agreements, so that anxiety replaces reassurance, the question replaces the answer, and the variable replaces the constant", however, he acknowledges it and believes that the

moment of writing is the moment of the birth of the text, even though it constantly “fails” and “postpones” the meaning, and so on until the text becomes a labyrinth and writing becomes madness, as Mallarmé declared – long before Derrida¹⁸.

3- The communicative moment (the reader's text), or what is called the reader's intentions:

Reading requires writing constantly, and if there were no readers, the author would not have written his work, even if this work did not see the light of day, meaning even if it was not published and received by readers, because “the moment of writing is a moment of orientation towards the reader, and the writer himself receives what he has created as his first reader”¹⁹.

How is the text activated by readers or recipients? And to what extent do they perceive it? And is it still an illusion and imagination in the fabric of their minds? And also because it is considered the “given” that is not predetermined - par excellence - and since it is so, it will demand a lot from those who will undertake reading, analysis and interpretation!

Instead of reviewing opinions and their differences in defining this axis, the axis of reading and readers or reception and receivers, we take the initiative to say that “the concept of reading, as a concept free from the restrictions and intentions of the creator of the text and his purposes, and as a concept that begins with confirming what the reader does in choosing a specific meaning within the coherent sequence of the course of words in the text being read, and ends with the reader performing this choice, in a way that reveals the specificity of this reader’s understanding”.²⁰

All this, makes reading distant from everything related to the creator and his stated and unstated intentions on the one hand, and brings closer everything related to the reader or the recipient and what he also carries of hidden and declared intentions and purposes on the other hand, to open the door to interpretation and openness to the text, which is considered a basic requirement for the life of the text, its freshness and the continuity of its pulse, “there is something that lies outside the self of the author (or artist)”²¹, and this reality or this predicted reality is at the core of the work of the reader or interpreter, and it is what also strengthens his existence when he calls for the liberation of the language, and thus the text, and makes it an endless sequence of signifiers.

David Herbert Lawrence says²², “Never trust the artist, but trust the story, because the proper function of the critic (reader or interpreter) is to save the story from the artist who created it”,²³ which means taking the literary work out of the narrow circle of the author and into a wider and broader space, which is the space of the recipients and receivers and the power they possess to change the course of this impact.

True reading requires special qualifications from readers, the most important of which are “boldness,” “fierceness,” “logic,” “mental energy,” “caution,” “suspicion,” and finally “confrontation”²⁴, by this we mean confronting the text, as few are those who can enjoy the beauty

and freshness of the text without danger, as Julia Kristeva acknowledges²⁵. Although a person is naturally inclined to love exploration and confronting danger²⁶, by this we mean the danger of reading, the danger of interpretation and the constant slipping into the space of meaning.

The contemporary German critical schools - and this is a reference to the pioneers of the Constance School, represented by Jauss and Iser - were among those who paid great attention to this issue, as they focused on the element of the "reader" or "recipient", and granted him the greatest freedom in the movement of working on the text and the possibility of interpreting and explaining it, based on the sum of his previous knowledge and experiences that he acquired through a series of historical readings and accumulated experiences, which are like possible expectations that enable the reader to embark on the adventure of reading.

Literary works in general either respond to our expectations or horizons of expectation (through the possibility of fulfilling the expectation), or they disappoint us, and a clash occurs whenever the language deviates and becomes contrary to the ordinary, the familiar, and the conventional in the world of writing, as happened with the masterpiece (Madame Bovary)²⁷ by Gustave Flaubert; "And finally (any of these expectations) makes our ideas and horizons change radically, that reality becomes completely new, so readers' experiences are enriched, and aspects of the text and the interpretation of the text are opened that were not known before, which means that nothing is "given" in the reading process, nothing is predetermined, but rather everything is a construction, the construction of meaning through the continuous and endless communication of the text, the latter which "Ingarden"²⁸ described as "the undefined place," and that it is "a compositional system in which a place has been allocated to the person charged with achieving those compositional works"²⁹, this refers to the reader who gives meaning to the text through his practice of reading, and plants life in it by filling in the "blankness" and "points of indeterminacy" mentioned by Ingarden, and reorganizing them in a paradoxical way, and a text that calls for the element of imagination when its blanks and gaps are filled is bound to influence other texts, and in all of this the reader plays the main role, for he is – without a doubt – the focus of the interpretation process, and nothing is designed or implemented without consulting him as he is the one entrusted with this task.

Accordingly, the horizon of expectation goes through three possible stages, which are:

First: either compatibility or response.

Second: or either partial displacement of language.

Third: or either radical change in the reality of the text, and this refers to what Hans-Georg Gadamer calls the total transformation of the text, which means that what existed before no longer exists.

Conclusion:

After the radical changes that included literature, this change was reflected at the level of the concept of the text, after the major break that occurred with the classical systems in literature, which were based on the principle of unilateralism in interpretation, and the promotion of the idea of absolute meaning, as well as the principle of absolute objectivity in the text, especially after the ideas of "Nietzsche", "Mallarmé" and "Valéry" became popular, where the concept of "the sanctity of the text" shifted and descended from its height, to become a text that can be interpreted, read, and its meanings re-crystallized, and formulated anew, in light of various details, purposes and intentions.

The latter distinguished three purposes, which are like extreme moments in his history, through which what is hidden in him is highlighted and what is in his secret is revealed.

The first moment: The author's intention, which is the main reference that was dominant and prevailing for long periods of time, as classical approaches in literature exaggerated in glorifying the author, and made him the focus of the interpretive process, and any research beyond this meaning is a kind of illusion and fantasy, and any questioning of this intention is questioning the integrity of the "author" and the "work" alike.

The second moment: The disappearance of the author's authority and the emergence of the authority of the text, as the latter was liberated and became a productive energy after it was merely a regurgitation of what the owner of the work says, and nothing more. By practicing the killing of the author, the orbit of reading became confusing, and the certain principles wavered with it, and the text became a metaphor that allows for the free and permanent generation of meaning³⁰.

The third moment: In it, the birth of the reader was announced as the most important party in the equation of interpretation, since the work was ultimately written only for him and for his sake, because he is the one who builds a series of possible worlds, based on the phenomenological vision of reading, and what it requires of presence and absence, concealment and clarity, and between "what can be read" in the text, and "what is actually read", or in the language of the theory of communication between "what was said" and "what was not said", or what is unspoken in the text.

While the nature of reading that the reader follows in this case is that based on the principle of colors and forms of transformations and developments related to the reality that produced them in the beginning, to transcend reality through an endless process, and in search of an impossible perfection for a text that is constantly "fragmenting," since reading -as Julia Kristeva³¹ predicted- is: "snatching, picking, stalking, and exploration with a strong and rapid possession of the other," and we mean the text, which can only be achieved by a skilled reader, who has the ability and capacity to scatter the text and resurrect its fragments again.

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5. AminaGhosn, Jacques Derrida, In Mind and Writing, Al-Mada for Culture and Publishing House, First Edition, 2002.
6. FernandHallin and Michel Autan, Research in Reading and Reception, translated by Mohamed Khair Al-Baqaei, Center for Civilizational Development, First Edition, Aleppo, 1998.
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Footnotes :

- 1- Ali Harb, Critique of Truth, Arab Cultural Center, first edition, 1993, p. 17.
- 2- Ibid., p. 17.
- 3- Writing: The least that distinguishes it is the difference and the constant slipping of meaning, according to postmodern approaches, where stereotypes have disappeared and awareness, revelation and fullness have become present.
- 4- Abbas Al-Charif, Gadamer: Hermeneutics of the Artistic Work and the Crisis of Aesthetics, Book: Interpretation and Translation, Al-Rawi Hussein and Ibrahim Ahmed, first edition, 2009, Ikhtilaf Publications, p. 139.
- 5- These major historical moments: are a phenomenological formula known since the time of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) that consciousness is always "awareness of something", and

understanding is "understanding of something". The self conjures up the subject, and this process presupposes that there is a discourse or legacy that is translated or interpreted in different forms, through the techniques of explanation, interpretation, and reading, a role assigned to the interpreter or reader, through the dialectic of dialogue and textual questioning.

- 6- The term "reader" became widespread especially with the advent of contemporary German critical schools, most notably the "Constance School".
- 7- By other intentions, we mean the intention of the reader on the one hand and the intention of the text itself on the other hand.
- 8- What is meant by it is the dominance of the author's intention over everything else.
- 9- Ahmed Youssef, *Systemic Reading, the Authority of Structure and the Illusion of Immanence*, Part One, Ikhtilaf Publications, Algeria, 2003, p. 167.
- 10- Ibid., p. 167.
- 11- Western logocentrism: This refers to Western metaphysical thought, which Derrida describes as an architecture that must be undermined, demolished and rebuilt. This metaphysical thought is based on the logic of dualities, which favors one side over the other; for example: the duality of inside and outside, signifier and signified, center and margin, voice and writing, and then adding the characteristic of privilege and presence, while "emptiness" fills everything, and "presence" is constantly enveloped by "absence", and so is "the case of meaning in the text".
- 12- Stéphane Mallarmé: (1842-1898) One of the poles of the symbolic school with a romantic orientation in interpretation, he created a new language in poetic writing, which was a source of inspiration for many French poets after him, and Arabs alike.
- 13- Poetry, according to Mallarmé, is the expression of the dark and mysterious side of existence.
- 14- Ahmed Youssef, op. cit, p. 174.
- 15- Vincent Jouve, *Roland Barthes and Literature*. Translated by Mohamed Souriti, Africa East, first edition, 1994, p. 75.

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- 16- The concept of displacement: It means using structures and vocabulary of the language, as well as images, in a way that goes beyond the usual and common, it is in some way a deviation of the language.
- 17- Vincent Jouve, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
- 18- Amina Ghosn, Jacques Derrida. In *Mind and Writing*, Al-Mada for Culture and Publishing House, first edition, 2002, p. 22.
- 19 - *Ibid.*, p. 39.
- 20- *Journal of Signs in Criticism*, p. 93.
- 21- Ahmed Youssef, *Systematic Reading*, p. 195.
- 22- David Herbert Lorens 1885/1930: Romantic writer, poet, and theater man, British by origin.
- 23- *Ibid.*, p. 195.
- 24- Michel Charles, *Rhetoric of Reading*, Editions du seuil, 1977, p. 15.
- 25- *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- 26- The person here is meant to be the reader or interpreter in the specific sense of the word without generalization.
- 27- Vincent Jouve, *op. cit.*, p. 81, talking about *Madame Bovary*.
- He means the writer - in this novel - does not address anyone in particular, he delivers a message without a sender or a recipient, as the dominant element here is the element of language, and that is in all aspects and corners of the text. Language is the real hero in this novel, as Barthes says, Flaubert in his opinion is the first modernist writer because he reached the madness of writing (the madness of language by using those new methods, which were not known before in the world of style).
- 28- Roman Ingarden: 1893-1970, a phenomenologist and ontologist of Polish origin, who was very interested in issues of aesthetics and its impact on works of art, and he is one of the great students of the philosopher Edmund Husserl, one of his most important works is the book: *Acts of Reading between Reception and Creation*.

²⁹-FernandHallin and Michel Autan, Research in Reading and Reception, translated by Mohamed

Khair Al-Baqaei, Center for Civilizational Development, first edition, Aleppo, 1998, p. 42.

³⁰- Ahmad Youssef, Systematic Reading, p. 176.

³¹- "The art of reading: principles and methods": knowledge of the problem/ Seminar by Philippe

Pigallet. Paris Editions.E.S.F. Modern publishing company.Technical bookstore, 1985.p.9.

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