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# Interpreting The Novelistic Text Narration And Signification Production

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## Abstract

Interpreting novels goes beyond the surface narrative, delving into the depths of the literary work to uncover hidden meanings. The process involves deciphering symbols and symbolism, creating an interactive dynamic between the author and the reader. Readers engage in unraveling the novel's concealed content, understanding its profound message.

Interpretation requires considering historical and cultural contexts that influence the novel's content. Readers challenge themselves to comprehend character motivations and the connections between events, thereby constructing a richer and more profound understanding of the text.

Through interpretation of novels, readers gain the ability to open windows to new worlds and to comprehend broader concepts about life and humanity. The interpretive journey represents a creative interaction that adds dimensions and value to the reading experience, which enhances the novel's significance.

**keywords:** Interpretation , the text, the novel, the narrative, the signification.

## Introduction

Interpreting a novel is an intriguing intellectual journey that opens up new horizons for the reader to explore infinite worlds. The novel, as a literary genre, carries cultural, linguistic, and intellectual diversity that serve as an expressive art form open to multiple readings. This is because it reflects an artistic, aesthetic, and imaginative world.

Novels represent creativity inasmuch as narrative is concerned in terms of the beauty of expression, language, style, symbols, ideas, and content. Fictional writing becomes an exceptional event that enables the reader to read, understand, interpret, and analyze this form of writing.

Characters and plot details in the narrative serve as a surface that can undergo deeper analysis and broader understanding. Interpreting a novel allows the interpreter to explore the psychological and social dimensions, understanding the symbols that fall under the lines of the novel. This transforms the process of reading into an interaction between the text and the reader, exchanging thoughts and feelings through the language of words.

This unique journey allows the interpreter to cast a discerning eye on storytelling and human experiences by unraveling the complex layers of the novel. Interpreting it enables an

understanding of the relationship between surface events and deep meanings, revealing hidden dimensions rich in meanings and signals.

Interpreting a novel is not limited to examining the novel's structure but goes beyond to include historical and cultural contexts that play a vital role in shaping the narrative vision. It involves the internal pattern of the text and its various formats. Ultimately, interpreting a novel allows the interpreter to be an active participant in constructing the narrative, giving the novel a second life through individual experiences that oscillate between understanding the narrative and producing significance.

Based on this, how do we interpret a novel, and what are the criteria for that?

## **II. Limits and Constraints of Interpreting the Novels:**

**Definition of Interpretation:** Interpretation, in its early origins, was associated with sacred religious texts and later became linked to all human phenomena due to cognitive needs that go beyond the spoken and written words to understanding and explaining. This need is imposed by the interaction between the text and the recipient, making interpretation connected to various fields. Thus, it became a human activity and an exploration of thinking with both apparent and latent linguistic characteristics.

Interpretation is not a methodology; rather, it surpasses restrictions, strictness, and exclusion to represent thought and priorities aimed at understanding the meaning and bringing it to light from the residues of discourse. Interpretation examines possibilities and multiple levels because it opens up to infinite semantic mazes, requiring the interpreter to navigate them to avoid falling into the trap of impossibility.

This act is built on the currencies of understanding and interpretation, where their convergence leads to shaping a realistic view towards the text and the world. This occurs in tandem with transitioning from the abstract level to the goal, whether explicit or hidden. It is essential to scrutinize meaning and clarify it as an incomplete work of art. To be complete requires the succession of selves and the authority of language to liberate the truth from the illusion that results from the absence of a thorough reading at the imaginative level.

Interpretation is the process of understanding or analyzing the meanings of something, whether it is a literary, scientific, or symbolic text within the context of language and literature. It involves explaining or describing the meanings of texts and words, encompassing the interpretation of linguistic and religious symbols in various forms.

This term refers to the process in which researchers or interpreters use understanding and analysis to comprehend complex phenomena or contexts. Interpretation can be self-generated, relying on personal understanding based on contextual and purposeful biases, or it can be objective, following a scientific and logical methodology that progresses from premises to results through reasoning and evidence.

Interpretation is characterized by an existential dimension, as it is an exploration into the essence of the interpreted subject using reading strategies that oscillate between personal inclination and the illuminating methodology. It incorporates scientific and cognitive approaches focused on searching for meaning and revealing significance. The significance of interpretation varies from interpreter to interpreter, depending on abstract laws and human nature. Undoubtedly, it plays a crucial role in understanding the meanings, purposes, and

implications of texts, opening up diverse dimensions of their social, cultural, and varied contexts.

Interpretative processes are particularly important for understanding history and interpreting events, contributing to building comprehensive views of the past and present. It expands personal understanding, enhancing effective interaction with different ideas and cultures and understanding diversities and complexities. It is a vital tool for comprehending the world from a comprehensive and profound perspective, directing human thought from the familiar to the unfamiliar, transitioning from literal meaning to implied meaning, and producing significance.

The lingering question is: What is meant by interpreting the narrative text/novels? How is this process carried out? To what extent does interpretation contribute to revealing narrative aspects in the novel and producing signification?

Interpreting a narrative text alludes to the process that readers or critics follow to understand and explain the content and meanings of the novel. This includes examining its historical and cultural context, its communicative status, analyzing characters, events, themes, and the symbols used. The goal of this process is to understand the text and the message it carries, as well as its impact on the reader.

Interpreting novels gives readers an opportunity to interact with the author's ideas, understand their worldview, and explore the realms of realistic and imaginative narratives. It helps clarifying the author's intention and meaning. Interpretation of the novel relies on analyzing narrative language, narrative structure, events, characters, settings, and narrative functions. It can be an individual experience based on the reader's experiences and opinions, while also serving as a subject for literary studies and literary criticism, contributing to the understanding of the novelistic text and its cultural and social impact.

Interpretation of the novels leads to constructing a parallel text to the interpreted one in terms of ideas and content, albeit in a somewhat different language. This compels the interpretive practice to expand its scope to become open to possibilities that have not been realized, building a new world through a process of deconstruction that involves invoking absent, deleted, and unspoken aspects of the text. Thus, this mechanism focuses on exploring both the declared and the undeclared, producing signification related to narrative and artistic components.

The interpretation of the novel does not rely solely on the narrative elements as abstract or material components within the text. Rather, interpretation, from the perspective we aim for, questions the narrative language and its aesthetics, techniques, and deviations. It goes beyond the stereotypical level known by structural narratology, which focused on the how at the expense of meaning and content. Based on this, interpretation becomes a cognitive, artistic, and productive activity. It becomes open to the general context, the context of the text, and its possible and diverse worlds, which are different simultaneously due to the multiplicity of textual functions and discursive connotations.

Narrative interpretation helps describe and construct the text by deciphering its linguistic and literary symbols. This is because the novel encompasses artistic, cultural, political, religious, and ethical dimensions, acquiring a cosmopolitan and open-world image. This grants it a character of diversity and intermingling of genres, languages, and existential aspects. As a

result, interpretation becomes open to the infinite, turning it into an enjoyable and boundless endeavor.

### **Boundaries and Constraints of Interpreting the Novels:**

Is the interpreter of the narrative texts free in his interpretive practice? Or are there constraints and boundaries to consider in his interpretive activity? What is the specificity of this interpretation?

Interpretation begins with the act of reading and culminates in the acts of interpretation and understanding. These represent the two facets of the second reading of the interpreted text, as the interpreter becomes a new reader decoding the novel's symbols, narrative techniques, and functions to reach its meaning.

The interpretation of a novel differs from other forms of text because it is based on the structure of the narrative, which encompass diverse worlds and draws from various knowledge and sciences. Therefore, the interpreter must be equipped with the fundamental elements of this genre and possess an intellectual background that ought to be framed by artistic and linguistic aspects of this creative text. This interaction should be dynamic and enjoyable since the novel relies on both realistic and imaginative dimensions. These are fundamental pillars the interpreter should consider along with understanding the diverse composition of characters that serve as gateways to cultural and narrative dialogues.

The interpretation of the novel falls within contemporary hermeneutics, where the relationship between reality and narrative is put under doubt. The interpreter aims to penetrate the literary world to understand and elucidate its apparent and latent levels, diagnosing infinite and intentional meanings. Thus, the methodology of interpreting the novel involves analyzing its references and producing interpretations.

Abdelrahman Tamara outlines the guidelines for analyzing a narrative text by identifying its constitutive components, then observing the narrative elements guiding interpretation to produce a new text. Therefore, interpreting the narrative reference is constructed upon the analysis of its reference, creating textual references.

According to this perspective, interpretation becomes a dialogue with the text, its units, structures, and patterns. It evolves into an interactive relationship between the self and the other, between the interpreter and the text. The interpreter transforms from an ordinary reader into an explorer in the landscape of narration, navigating its paths and turns to search for narrative identity. Importantly, the interpreter should enter the text with an alternative mindset, avoiding self-biases and historical alienation, allowing the text to move beyond its literal meaning.

The first aspect the interpreter considers is the level of constructing the narrative text by exploring its worlds. Since the novel is not a realistic work that narrates or depicts reality, the novelist constructs his textual worlds based on the referential imagination. The novel, as a set of signs and symbols, refers to a subject and a world that truly belongs to the imaginative narrative, even though it often intersects with the real world. The interpreter should start from the assumption of not narrating reality.

Humans, in their diverse extensions, represent a fundamental subject and element in the narrative and artistic evaluation. There is a strong connection between life and art, with the primary and ultimate support being humans. Therefore, humans are the most important

element that the interpreter should focus on because they shape the narrative world and qualitative distinctiveness.

The third boundary and constraint relates to the structure of this literary genre. The novel is a linguistic, artistic, and aesthetic work, making it a diverse and open artistic world. It is essential to comprehend this diversity, revealing its images, styles, language, and design. The narrative language is not always direct; it includes implication and allusion, leaning towards avoidance of explicit statements. Here, the interpreter begins his work by filling the gaps in the text, uncovering the elements of presence and absence, and the unspoken, focusing on searching for meanings to reinterpret them, as much of contemporary literary production relies on using symbols as an expression of the unspecified, open to constant interactions and new interpretations. This open or multiplicative interpretive approach contributes to creating an endless textual interaction.

### **III. Interpreting Novels: Case Studies.**

In this section, we aim to present interpretations of some novelistic texts, taking the title as the first interpretive threshold, and then exploring narrative elements for selected models.

#### **Textual Thresholds:**

The title represents a crucial entry point, acting as the head for the body of the text. It is a suggestive strategy directed towards the reader, contributing to the crystallization of their vision of the content. The title serves as a sign of definition and specification, a marker of existence and identity. It allows us to access the worlds of the text, serving as the focal point and center of reading, forming the basis for literary enjoyment in the journey of interpretation as well.

Interpreting a narrative text requires understanding its textual threshold represented by the title. It serves as a communicative and indicative interface, helping to unravel the mystery of the text and sometimes aiding in understanding it. The title is a parallel text that serves the primary text since the novelist carefully selects the title of the novel, making it attention-getting, prompting questions, thoughts, and interpretation.

The title is a linguistic, textual, artistic, and aesthetic structure that incorporates suggestive and referential functions. It is a unique building manifested in a word or phrase, presenting hypotheses and speculations. The title leads us to envisage the text, closing gaps and intentional omissions, often left by the novelist for various purposes. Below is an interpretation of some novel titles.

"Black Suits You" is a textual threshold employed by the Algerian writer Ahlam Mosteghanemi. It is a captivating title composed of a complete phrase consisting of Subject + Verb + Object. The subject is a semiotic sign referring to a color supposed to be part of the collaborative reader's encyclopedia. The verb is a present simple, while the object is expressed in the second person singular, addressing the reader.

Black, according to common color connotations, signifies sadness, respect, and elegance. Since it comes as a subject to a present simple "suits you," the title explicitly suggests admiration, praise, and wonder, associating with elegance, confidence, power, simplicity, classical beauty, and inner beauty. The title indicates appreciation and approval.

Interpretation places us in front of the possible rather than the realized, initiating an internal dialogue between the self (the reader's identity) and the other (the text) as a subject for interpretation. If we connect the title ("Black Suits You") with the narrative in the novel (events, characters, and place), a new unexpressed meaning emerges, originating from the deep level of the text. The title leads us towards a different discursive path, an implicit invitation to not succumb to flattering phrases hiding harm and hurt.

In a novel by the Algerian writer Saïd Boutadjine titled "I Seek Refuge in Allah," the title is concise, condensed, and full of religious connotations, meaning at its informative level "seeking refuge from the cursed Satan." However, the novelist did not add this aspect and settled for saying "I Seek Refuge in Allah," creating questions for the reader and the interpreter.

The title "I Seek Refuge in Allah" is an Arabic expression meaning "I seek refuge in Allah" or "I ask Allah for protection." This phrase is commonly used in the Arabic language as an expression of reliance on Allah and seeking His help in challenging moments or when facing difficulties. The expression signifies surrender and trust in Allah, reflecting the desire for His protection.

The use of "I Seek Refuge in Allah" is associated with preserving oneself from evils, and it may occur when a person feels in danger or encounters challenging situations. It reflects submission to Allah's will and reliance on His strength entirely.

The interpretation of titles puts us in the realm of language and symbolism, connecting the explicit and the implicit, and revealing the hidden layers of meaning in the text. It is a journey into the nuances and subtleties that titles carry, creating a dialogue between the reader and the text and enriching the interpretive experience.

The title "I Will Throw Myself in Front of You" by the Algerian novelist Dihia Louiz takes us into the narrative imaginary space, serving as an expressive and laden title with strong psychological and social connotations. Among these connotations are despair and psychological pressures, reflecting a difficult psychological state experienced by the speaker, who has reached the point of threatening desperate actions such as suicide. It could be an expression of the extent of despair and tension left by difficult circumstances or personal problems.

The text could be an appeal for help from one person to another. Although the combination of the present tense verb with the letter "seen" (س) often indicates the future, we can sense a tone of challenge in the structure of the title. It implies that the speaker has no other option to resort to. Apart from the author's intention, the interpreter focuses on the intentionality of the text. The novel's message may differ from its author, and the interpreter must pay attention to what the text says and aims to convey. Consequently, the title takes on a character of reportage and accomplishment. The reportage aspect is evident in its surface structure as a news style, but it is also accomplished in terms of being an actual act of commitment. The speaker threatens the addressee with throwing themselves in front of them, taking responsibility for the consequences and outcomes. This expression reveals behavioral significance and reaction, and its success depends on the acceptance or rejection of the other person. Thus, it refers us to an emotional world where one person requires assistance from another. This inclination in the novel toward the human dimension forms the backbone of all texts.

According to what has been stated above, it is noted that attempts to interpret some novel titles do not follow a specific rule or strategy. It is an endeavor that oscillates between artistic taste and the intellectual and cultural references invoked by the interpreter during the process. It does not claim to achieve a final understanding or production of meaning but represents efforts in the infinite openness to multiple readings and possibilities. This, in fact, embodies the principle of contemporary interpretation.

### **The Narrative of Self-Disclosure in the Novel: "I Will Throw Myself Before You" by Dihia louiz .**

The novel raises existential questions about human identity that constitute the essence of the universe. The text appears as a cathartic expression of inner turmoil, with writing serving as an outlet to articulate hidden emotions. The language used is clear and simple, leaning towards boldness and madness by unveiling societal taboos. The narrative embodies the internal struggles of the narrator, reflecting fragmentation, isolation, screaming, and pain. The act of writing becomes a means to cover and escape the harsh realities of life. The novel takes on an autobiographical tone, portraying the life of the narrator through carefully chosen characters and their interwoven narratives.

The author meticulously selects characters, creating a narrative space that aligns with their details. Themes and events confirm this interaction, addressing issues such as the narrator's father's alcoholism and attempted assault, her mother's involvement in prostitution, and the revelation that the narrator is an illegitimate child. The narrative events vividly illustrate the narrator's psychological crisis, employing the first-person singular pronoun to blend self-expression with narrative references. The language is clear and simple, suitable for the novel's purpose of depicting the harsh reality of women and the bleak homeland within, with writing serving as a human endeavor and a muscular effort.

The novel presents a direct confrontation between narrative and reality, departing from the social novel pattern with dual protagonists and a struggle between good and evil. It aligns with human existence, shifting from self to others, inviting readers of various backgrounds into a dialogue. This ongoing interpretation allows for the production of new meanings, emphasizing the humanistic dimension that transcends the text.

### **2. The Narrative of Marginality in the Novel: "The Lower District" by Abdulwahab Mansour:**

Analyzing the linguistic and stylistic formulation of the title reveals its dual nature, with the first part referring to a specific geographical area often associated with poverty. The second part, "lower," serves as an adjective describing the neighborhood as inferior or lower, suggesting a narrative focused on the marginalized spatial and social elements. The title signifies a life documented about a challenging and miserable reality, shedding light on the dark side of societal neglect.

The novel emphasizes the marginalized spatial and social dimensions, portraying the lives of the poor, miserable, and oppressed. The narrative reveals the challenges faced by the inhabitants of these neighborhoods, shedding light on their harsh conditions and aiming to redefine and reconsider their lives. The storytelling revolves around Ahmed El Qat, depicting

his challenging life journey, from childhood struggles to mental illness, suicide attempts, homelessness, imprisonment, hospitals, and the search for identity amid a bleak reality.

The narrative structure does not follow chronological order but relies on anticipation, retrieval, and suspension. It employs narrative techniques that break the temporal sequence, serving the novel's purpose and narrative structure. The novel captures a pivotal period in Algeria's history, reflecting various dimensions that can be described as multi-faceted.

### **Implicit Patterns in "The Lower Districts":**

The novel encompasses various implicit patterns, including:

#### **Social Pattern:**

Careful observation of the linguistic and stylistic formulation of the title finds that it consists of two definite articles. The first one represents "the district," referring to a place belonging to a specific geographic area, often characterized by impoverished neighborhoods. As for "the lower," it serves as an attribute and description of the district, positioned as the opposite of "the upper," implying a lower position. From a thematic perspective, the thoughtful interpreter discerns that it signifies a "life," suggesting that the narrative revolves around a socially disadvantaged class. This implies that the novel will present a narrated life depicting a reality that appears difficult and bleak, aiming to portray the worlds within this space and the nature of life within it, while highlighting the social stratification in society. In other words, it seeks to illuminate the dark side of this marginalized existence, likely taking an ideological and political orientation, representing a social outcry against a reality that marginalizes the poor. Consequently, the text is expected to advocate for the working class living in the lower strata.

Therefore, the text will focus on the lives of the impoverished class and reveal the challenges faced by the inhabitants of these neighborhoods. It will shed light on the harsh conditions they endure, as if aiming to restore their dignity and provoke a re-evaluation of their circumstances.

#### **Political Pattern:**

The political marginalization of the neighborhood and its residents is evident. They are treated as slaves by the police, isolated from other neighborhoods and civilized life. The narrative showcases oppression, torture, and a lack of consideration for citizens' lives. The absence of freedom of expression and human rights reflects the flawed policies imposed by higher authorities.

#### **Religious Pattern:**

The religious pattern is manifested in the protagonist's life. He reads the Quran, cites its verses, and undergoes treatment through religious recitation, reflecting an Islamic identity that believes in Allah and monotheism.

#### **Psychological Pattern:**

The psychological pattern is embodied in the protagonist's character, marked by sorrow, loneliness, and rebellion against reality and politics. The protagonist's love for cats symbolizes freedom, liberation, and the ability to move without constraints. His choice of Independence



Day for a suicide attempt leads to political repercussions, imprisonment, and torture, demonstrating his struggle for liberation.

### **Spatial Pattern:**

The spatial pattern involves the various locations chosen by the author, each symbolizing a facet of marginalization. The "yard" of the house serves as a place of solace for the protagonist, offering an escape from the harsh reality. The cemetery also provides refuge and is a sanctuary from police pursuits. The "shrine" represents a healing place for the impoverished.

### **Cultural Pattern:**

The cultural pattern is interwoven into the text, which require interpretation and understanding. The novel is open to infinite meanings, producing various interpretations through narration and storytelling techniques. It invites a dialogue that involves intellectual, linguistic, and cultural dimensions, making the understanding and interpretation of the text dynamic.

In conclusion, "The Lower Districts" intricately weaves together social, political, religious, psychological, spatial, and cultural patterns. The novel serves as a multi-layered narrative, demanding engagement with its various dimensions for a comprehensive interpretation.

## **IV. Conclusion**

In concluding the discussion on the interpretation of the novel, it becomes clear that this artistic work represents an inexhaustible transcendence of human experiences. Understanding the novel goes beyond a superficial examination of events and characters; it requires a deep exploration of the hidden layers it carries. The beauty of interpretation lies in the reader's ability to see beyond the words and comprehend the cultural and social contexts that form the backdrop of the narrative.

Novel texts serve as places for exploration and contemplation, where the author creates worlds adjacent to the minds of readers. Interpretation forms an intimate connection between the author and the reader, allowing the exchange of ideas and experiences across the pages of the book. The reader acts as a translator of emotions and thoughts buried in the text, making each reading a unique and personal experience.

Although interpretation can be a subject of wide debate, its strength lies in an individual's ability to surpass the apparent limits of words and discover hidden dimensions. It is an intellectual journey that enlightens the reader to new areas of understanding and perception.

In the end, interpretation remains a continuous and enriching journey, providing the reader with the opportunity to better understand oneself and the world. The novel embodies the complexity and diversity of life, and its interpretation represents a mental illumination that enlightens the paths of understanding and human interaction.

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