MULTILEVEL STRUCTURE OF THE LITERARY TEXT

M.M.Jalishova

Abstract:this thesis explores the multilevel structure of literary texts, which encompasses narrative, symbolic, thematic, and philosophical layers. Drawing on the theoretical framework of Gérard Genette's narrative theory and incorporating other relevant literary theories, the research delves into how these layers interact to produce complex meanings in classical, modernist, and postmodern works. By employing qualitative analysis, particularly close reading, the study identifies how different levels contribute to both the complexity of literary texts and the richness of interpretation. Findings suggest that these multilevel structures engage readers actively, fostering a deeper reading experience. Furthermore, the study acknowledges the limitations of this approach in certain genres where narrative depth is not a priority.

I.INTRODUCTION

Literary texts frequently operate on multiple levels, blending surface narratives with deeper layers of symbolism, thematic resonance, and philosophical inquiry. This multilevel structure enables readers to interact with texts in various ways, with meaning often constructed through active interpretation. For example, novels may present a clear plot while addressing broader existential, social, or psychological concerns.

The aim of this thesis is to examine how multilevel structures function within literary texts and to explore the role of these structures in enhancing both the complexity of a work and the reader's engagement with it. In doing so, it draws on Gérard Genette's theory of narrative levels—particularly his concepts of diegesis, metalepsis, and focalization—and other relevant theories. By examining classical, modernist, and postmodern works, this thesis investigates how texts are constructed across multiple narrative planes, with particular attention to how these layers interact and affect the reader's understanding.

II.METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative approach, applying close reading as a method to analyze the chosen texts. The works selected—Ulysses by James Joyce (1922), Beloved by Toni Morrison (1987), Moby-Dick by Herman Melville (1851), If on a Winter's Night a Traveler by Italo Calvino (1979), and City of Glass by Paul Auster (1985)—represent a diverse array of literary forms, styles, and periods. These texts were chosen for their explicit use of multilevel narrative structures and their capacity to reveal complex interactions between surface narratives, symbolic meaning, and philosophical exploration.

To analyze these works, the following criteria were applied:

1. Narrative structure: Identifying and distinguishing between surface-level plots and deeper, implicit themes, using Genette's concepts of diegesis and metalepsis.
2. Symbolism: Interpreting how symbols operate within and across narrative levels.
3. Thematic analysis: Investigating how overarching themes (such as identity, memory, existentialism, or sociopolitical issues) function within different narrative layers.

The analysis also considers the limitations of this multilevel structure in genres or texts where the focus on plot or entertainment may outweigh symbolic and thematic depth.

III.RESULTS

The qualitative analysis of the selected works highlights several key aspects of multilevel narrative structures:

1. Multilevel narrative frameworks: Texts like Ulysses and Beloved demonstrate intricate narrative frameworks, where the surface plot—Joyce's day-in-the-life structure or Morrison's story of Sethe's struggle with memory—operates alongside profound

commentaries on identity, history, and memory. Genette's concept of metalepsis helps clarify the ways in which these narratives transcend traditional boundaries between narrative levels, creating layered experiences for the reader.

2. Complex symbolism: In Moby-Dick, Melville constructs an elaborate symbolic system where the whale serves not only as a literal target for Captain Ahab but also as a symbol for larger existential struggles. This layering of symbolism challenges readers to interpret both concrete and abstract elements simultaneously, blending diegetic reality with metaphorical depth.

3. Reader engagement and interpretation: Texts like If on a Winter's Night a Traveler and City of Glass foreground the reader's role in actively constructing meaning. These works often play with narrative conventions, leading readers to negotiate between the story's surface and deeper, metafictional themes. This interplay engages readers in an interpretive act that enhances both the reading experience and the impact of the literary text.

4. Genre and narrative complexity: It is important to note that not all literary texts employ such multilevel structures to the same extent. Genre fiction, such as romance or mystery, may prioritize plot development over deeper thematic exploration. In such cases, the multilevel structure may be less apparent or less critical to the overall literary experience.

IV.DISCUSSION

The analysis reveals that multilevel structures are crucial to how literary texts produce meaning and invite interpretation. By employing multiple narrative planes, authors enable readers to engage with works on various levels, from surface narrative to symbolic, thematic, and philosophical inquiry. For example, The Divine Comedy uses allegory to layer moral and spiritual themes beneath its surface narrative, while works like To the Lighthouse by Virginia Woolf and City of Glass by Paul Auster blur the boundaries between psychological depth, philosophical inquiry, and narrative experimentation.

These multilevel structures are particularly effective in postmodern texts, where the lines between reality, fiction, and metafiction become porous, creating opportunities for readers to explore questions of identity, existence, and interpretation. Reader engagement is key to the success of these texts. Unlike straightforward narratives, multilevel texts often require active interpretation, encouraging readers to construct meaning themselves. However, this complexity may alienate some readers, particularly those more accustomed to linear narratives or genres that prioritize plot.

Despite the richness that multilevel structures offer, it is essential to acknowledge that not all literary works use such complexity to the same degree. Some texts, especially those in genre fiction, rely more heavily on plot and may not provide the same interpretive challenge. Therefore, the effectiveness of multilevel structures varies depending on the text's goals and audience.

V.CONCLUSION

The multilevel structure of literary texts plays a vital role in enriching both their complexity and interpretive potential. By operating on multiple narrative, symbolic, and thematic planes, literary works invite readers to engage with texts in more meaningful ways. This interaction between surface narrative and deeper layers of meaning contributes to the depth and richness of literature, encouraging readers to participate in the creation of meaning.

However, it is important to recognize that not all literary texts employ multilevel structures equally. While classical, modernist, and postmodern works often leverage this complexity, genre fiction may prioritize plot over symbolic or thematic exploration. The multilevel structure remains a powerful literary device for exploring the human experience, but its use and effectiveness depend on the specific goals and design of each work.

REFERENCES:

1. Genette, G. (1980). Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method. Cornell University Press.
2. Joyce, J. (1922). Ulysses. Shakespeare and Company.
3. Melville, H. (1851). Moby-Dick. Harper & Brothers.
4. Morrison, T. (1987). Beloved. Alfred A. Knopf.
5. Calvino, I. (1979). If on a Winter's Night a Traveler. Einaudi.
6. Auster, P. (1985). City of Glass. Sun & Moon Press.
7. Woolf, V. (1927). To the Lighthouse. Hogarth Press.
8. Dante Alighieri. (1320). The Divine Comedy. Transl. H.F. Cary.

WORDLY
KNOWLEDGE