

The Role of Semiotics, Hermeneutics, Intertextuality, and Deconstruction in Understanding the Reproduction of Poetic Meaning

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of four major modern critical approaches—semiotics, hermeneutics, intertextuality, and deconstruction—in understanding how poetic meanings are reproduced. The study is based on the assumption that poetic meaning is not fixed but rather emerges from a complex interaction between the text, the reader, and the cultural context. The research adopts a descriptive-analytical method through a review of modern critical literature. The findings indicate that these approaches contribute to revealing the dynamic nature of poetic meaning: semiotics analyzes signs, hermeneutics reconstructs meaning through the reader, intertextuality connects texts to one another, and deconstruction exposes the multiplicity and instability of meanings. In addition, the study demonstrates that these approaches do not function in isolation but rather complement one another in providing a more comprehensive understanding of poetic discourse. Semiotic analysis uncovers the structural and symbolic dimensions of the text, while hermeneutic inquiry situates interpretation within a continuum of historical and cultural horizons. Intertextuality expands the analytical scope by tracing the presence of other texts within the poetic fabric, and deconstruction critically interrogates the limits of coherence by revealing internal tensions and ambiguities.

The study also highlights the shifting role of the reader in modern criticism, emphasizing that interpretation is an active, productive process. The reader engages with the text not only to decode meaning but also to participate in its continual reconstruction. This participatory role reinforces the idea that meaning is contingent, context-dependent, and subject to change across different interpretive communities. Furthermore, the research underscores the importance of cultural context as a dynamic framework that shapes both the production and reception of poetic texts. Cultural codes, historical references, and ideological frameworks all contribute to the plurality of meanings that a poem can generate. As such, poetic meaning becomes an open-ended process that evolves over time, adapting to new readings and perspectives. Ultimately, the study concludes that the integration of these modern critical approaches provides a richer and more nuanced model for understanding poetry. It affirms that poetic texts are not closed systems but living structures of meaning, continually renewed through interpretation, dialogue, and cultural engagement.

Keywords: Semiotics, Hermeneutics, Intertextuality, Deconstruction, Poetry, Meaning.

INTRODUCTION

Poetic texts are among the most open forms of discourse to multiple interpretations due to their symbolic and suggestive nature. Modern criticism no longer views meaning as a fixed entity within the text but rather as a continuous process of production shaped by reading and cultural interaction. In this context, several modern

critical approaches have emerged to explain this phenomenon, most notably semiotics, hermeneutics, intertextuality, and deconstruction.

These approaches collectively emphasize that language in poetry functions not merely as a tool for direct communication, but as a complex system of signs that generate layers of meaning beyond the literal level. Semiotics, for instance, explores how poetic signs operate within broader systems of signification, revealing how meaning is constructed through relationships between symbols, codes, and cultural conventions. Hermeneutics, on the other hand, highlights the interpretive act itself, viewing understanding as a dialogic process between the reader and the text, shaped by historical and contextual horizons.

Intertextuality further expands this perspective by situating the poem within a network of prior texts and discourses, suggesting that no text exists in isolation. Every poetic work echoes, transforms, or contests other texts, thereby enriching its semantic possibilities. Deconstruction deepens this insight by exposing the instability of language, demonstrating how meanings are constantly deferred and how apparent coherence often conceals internal contradictions.

Furthermore, these critical perspectives underscore the fluid boundaries between author, text, and reader, challenging traditional notions of authorial authority. The reader becomes an active participant in meaning-making, engaging with the text through interpretation, reconstruction, and even creative reimagining. As a result, poetic meaning remains perpetually open, resisting closure and inviting diverse readings across different contexts and time periods.

This openness not only enhances the aesthetic and intellectual richness of poetry but also affirms its enduring relevance, as each reading generates new insights and reconfigures the relationship between language, thought, and experience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Role of Semiotics, Hermeneutics, Intertextuality, and Deconstruction in Understanding the Reproduction of Poetic Meaning (2024–2026 scholarship overview)

Recent scholarship (2024–2026) in literary theory continues to emphasize that poetic meaning is not a stable or pre-given entity, but rather a continuously reproduced process shaped by interpretive activity, cultural context, and textual relations. Contemporary studies increasingly integrate semiotics, hermeneutics, intertextuality, and deconstruction as complementary frameworks for explaining how meaning is generated and re-generated in poetic discourse.

Semiotics (2024–2026 Developments)

Recent semiotic studies build on classical foundations established by Ferdinand de Saussure and expanded by Roland Barthes, but shift toward multimodal and digital-text interpretations. Current research highlights that poetic meaning is constructed through complex sign systems that include lexical, rhythmic, visual, and symbolic layers. In this view, poetry is analyzed as a dynamic structure of signs in which meaning is produced through internal relationships rather than external reference. Recent studies also stress that semiotic networks in poetry are culturally coded, meaning that interpretation varies depending on the reader's social and ideological background.

Hermeneutics (2024–2026 Developments)

Modern hermeneutic studies, continuing the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, focus on interpretation as a historically situated and dialogic process. Recent research emphasizes that poetic meaning emerges through the interaction between the reader's cognitive framework and the historical "world" of the text. The concept of interpretive plurality has become central in contemporary hermeneutics, where each reading is seen as a re-actualization of meaning rather than a recovery of an original message. Studies from 2024–2026

particularly highlight the role of digital readership and global cultural exchange in expanding interpretive horizons.

Intertextuality (2024–2026 Developments)

Building on the theories of Julia Kristeva and Mikhail Bakhtin, recent intertextual research focuses on expanded textual networks, including digital archives, hypertext environments, and cross-media literary production. Contemporary studies argue that poetic texts are increasingly “open systems” that draw on multiple sources across genres, cultures, and historical periods. Meaning is therefore understood as a relational construct produced through the interaction between texts rather than within isolated works. This perspective is especially important in modern poetry, where intertextual references often operate implicitly through stylistic, thematic, and symbolic echoes.

Deconstruction (2024–2026 Developments)

Recent deconstructive approaches, grounded in the philosophy of Jacques Derrida, continue to explore the instability of language and the impossibility of final meaning. Current studies emphasize that poetic texts contain internal contradictions that prevent fixed interpretation. In contemporary criticism, deconstruction is increasingly applied to highlight ideological assumptions embedded within poetic language and to reveal how meaning is continuously deferred through linguistic play. Recent research also connects deconstruction with post-digital literature, where textual instability is intensified through fragmentation and remix culture.

Synthesis of the Approaches (Recent Scholarship Consensus)

Recent academic literature (2024–2026) increasingly supports an integrated theoretical model in which these four approaches function as interconnected tools. Semiotics explains how meaning is structurally encoded in signs, hermeneutics describes how readers interpret these signs within historical contexts, intertextuality situates texts within broader networks of meaning, and deconstruction reveals the instability underlying all interpretive processes.

Together, these approaches confirm that poetic meaning is not reproduced in a linear or fixed manner but emerges through continuous interaction between text, reader, and cultural systems. Recent studies conclude that poetry should be understood as an evolving semiotic and interpretive space in which meaning is constantly reconstructed rather than discovered in a final form.

First: Semiotics and its Role in Producing Poetic Meaning

Semiotics is defined as the study of signs, where language is viewed as a system of symbols that generate meaning through their relationships. Studies indicate that every linguistic message consists of interconnected signs and that meaning does not arise directly from reality but from the network of relations within the sign system.

In this sense, meaning is produced through the interaction between the **signifier** (the form of the word, sound, or image) and the **signified** (the concept it represents), rather than through any inherent connection to external reality. This relational nature of signs highlights that meaning is differential—it emerges from distinctions between signs within the system, not from isolated elements.

Moreover, semiotic analysis distinguishes between different levels of meaning, particularly denotation (the literal meaning) and connotation (the associative or cultural meanings). In poetic texts, connotation often dominates, allowing words and images to carry rich layers of symbolic significance that extend beyond their surface meanings. This multiplicity of signification contributes to the openness of poetic discourse and its capacity to generate diverse interpretations.

Additionally, semiotics emphasizes the role of cultural codes and conventions in shaping how signs are understood. Symbols, metaphors, and imagery in poetry are not interpreted in a vacuum; rather, they rely on

shared cultural knowledge and interpretive frameworks that guide the reader’s understanding. As a result, the same poetic sign may produce different meanings across varying cultural and historical contexts.

Furthermore, poetic language frequently disrupts conventional sign systems through ambiguity, metaphor, and figurative expression, thereby expanding the possibilities of meaning. By deviating from ordinary linguistic usage, poetry invites readers to engage more actively in the process of interpretation, uncovering hidden relationships between signs.

Thus, semiotics provides a powerful framework for analyzing how poetic meaning is constructed, revealing that the richness of poetry lies not in fixed references but in the dynamic interplay of signs within an ever-evolving system of meaning.

Table 1: Semiotics and its Role in Producing Poetic Meaning role in poetry

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyzing symbols, metaphors, and poetic imagery.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Revealing the deep structure of the text.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Understanding the relationship between signifier and signified.

➤ **Outcome:** Semiotics demonstrates that poetic meaning is not direct but constructed through a complex system of signs.

Second: Hermeneutics and the Reproduction of Meaning

Hermeneutics focuses on the process of interpreting the text by the reader. Meaning is not fixed but is formed through the interaction between the text and the reader. According to this approach, meaning results from an interpretive process shaped by the reader’s cultural and intellectual background.

This perspective emphasizes what is often called the hermeneutic circle, where understanding moves back and forth between the parts of the text and the whole, allowing interpretation to deepen progressively. The reader does not approach the text as a blank slate but brings prior knowledge, assumptions, and expectations that influence how meaning is constructed. These preconceptions are not obstacles but necessary starting points for interpretation.

Moreover, hermeneutics highlights the concept of the fusion of horizons, where the historical context of the text and the present context of the reader intersect. Through this interaction, new meanings emerge that are neither entirely bound to the original context nor completely determined by the reader’s perspective, but rather arise from their dynamic engagement.

In poetic texts, this process becomes particularly significant due to the density of language, symbolism, and ambiguity. The reader is required to actively negotiate meanings, fill in gaps, and respond to implicit suggestions within the text. As a result, interpretation becomes an open-ended activity that evolves with each reading.

Furthermore, hermeneutics acknowledges that multiple interpretations can coexist without necessarily canceling one another. Each reading offers a different perspective shaped by time, place, and intellectual framework, which reinforces the idea that meaning is historically and culturally situated.

Thus, hermeneutics provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how poetic meaning is continually reconstructed, affirming that interpretation is not merely the discovery of meaning but an active and ongoing process of its creation.

Key characteristics of hermeneutics:

- Multiple possible readings of a single text.
 - The reader's role in producing meaning.
 - The connection between meaning and historical-cultural context.
- **Outcome:** Hermeneutics transforms the poetic text into an open space for the reproduction of meaning in every reading.

Third: Intertextuality and its Effect on Meaning Formation

Intertextuality refers to the interaction and overlap between texts, suggesting that no text exists independently. Every text is shaped through its relationship with other texts, whether directly or indirectly. Studies confirm that texts "refer to other texts" and that meaning is formed through these relationships.

From this perspective, a poetic text can be seen as a mosaic of references, echoes, and transformations of prior discourses. These connections may appear in the form of direct quotation, allusion, adaptation, or even subtle stylistic imitation. Through such mechanisms, the text becomes part of a larger textual network in which meanings are continuously generated and reconfigured.

Moreover, intertextuality expands the interpretive process by encouraging readers to recognize and trace these textual links. The reader's familiarity with other texts plays a crucial role in uncovering deeper layers of meaning, as each reference can activate additional associations and cultural resonances. In this sense, meaning is not confined within the boundaries of a single text but emerges through its dialogue with other texts across time and space.

Intertextual relations may also function critically, allowing a text to challenge, reinterpret, or subvert earlier works and established discourses. A poem, for instance, may revisit traditional themes or canonical texts, reshaping them to reflect new perspectives or ideological positions. This dynamic interaction enriches the text's semantic potential and highlights its participation in an ongoing cultural conversation.

Furthermore, intertextuality underscores the role of cultural memory in shaping literary meaning. Texts carry traces of historical, religious, and literary traditions, which influence how they are produced and received. As a result, interpretation becomes an act of connecting the present text with a broader archive of cultural knowledge.

Thus, intertextuality reinforces the idea that poetic meaning is not isolated or self-contained but is continuously constructed through a web of textual relationships, making each reading an exploration of both the text itself and the larger literary and cultural systems to which it belongs.

Table 2: Intertextuality and Its Effect on Meaning Formation role in poetry

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invoking religious, literary, or historical texts.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating multiple layers of meaning.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expanding interpretive possibilities.

- **Outcome:** Intertextuality makes poetic meaning the product of a network of texts rather than a single text.

Fourth: Deconstruction and the Destabilization of Meaning

Deconstruction is a critical approach that rejects the idea of a fixed or final meaning in a text. It focuses on uncovering internal contradictions and demonstrating that meaning is unstable. Studies indicate that deconstruction is used to reread poetic texts and reconstruct their meanings in new ways, particularly in literary and educational contexts.

At its core, deconstruction examines how texts rely on binary oppositions—such as presence/absence, speech/writing, or center/margin—and reveals how these hierarchies are neither stable nor absolute. Instead, each term depends on the other for its meaning, leading to a continual slippage that prevents any final interpretation from being secured. In this sense, meaning is always deferred, never fully present, and constantly open to reinterpretation.

Furthermore, deconstructive reading pays close attention to what is marginalized, suppressed, or left unsaid within the text. By foregrounding these overlooked elements, it exposes tensions and inconsistencies that challenge the apparent unity or coherence of the text. This process does not aim to destroy meaning but rather to multiply it, showing that every text contains the seeds of alternative readings within itself.

In poetic discourse, this approach is particularly effective due to the inherent ambiguity and density of language. Metaphors, paradoxes, and figurative expressions often generate conflicting interpretations, which deconstruction brings to light. As a result, the poem is revealed as a site of continuous negotiation between competing meanings rather than a closed system with a single message.

Additionally, deconstruction questions the authority of the author and shifts attention toward the play of language itself. Meaning is not determined by authorial intention but emerges from the interaction of linguistic structures, textual gaps, and the reader’s interpretive engagement. This perspective aligns with broader poststructuralist views that emphasize the indeterminacy of language.

Thus, deconstruction contributes to a deeper understanding of poetic texts by demonstrating that meaning is inherently unstable, fragmented, and open-ended, encouraging readers to engage critically and creatively with the text in order to uncover its multiple possibilities.

Table 3: Deconstruction and the Destabilization of Meaning role in poetry

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deconstructing binary oppositions (presence/absence, center/margin).
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revealing internal contradictions.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Producing multiple and open-ended interpretations.

➤ **Outcome:** Deconstruction reproduces meaning by destabilizing its original structure.

Fifth: The Integration of the Four Approaches

These approaches do not function independently but complement each other in interpreting poetic texts:

Together, they form an integrated analytical framework that captures the complexity and richness of poetic meaning. Semiotics provides the tools to decode the system of signs and symbols within the text, while hermeneutics situates this analysis within the lived experience of the reader, emphasizing interpretation as a dynamic and context-sensitive process. Intertextuality broadens the scope by linking the text to a wider network of literary and cultural references, and deconstruction critically interrogates these relationships by exposing tensions, ambiguities, and instabilities within the text.

In this way, each approach addresses a different dimension of meaning production—structural, interpretive, relational, and critical—allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of how poetry operates. Their integration prevents reductive readings by acknowledging both the internal mechanisms of the text and the external factors that influence its interpretation.

Moreover, the interplay among these approaches highlights that meaning is not located in a single source but emerges from multiple layers of interaction. A semiotic reading may reveal symbolic patterns, which are then reinterpreted through a hermeneutic lens, expanded through intertextual connections, and finally questioned or destabilized through deconstructive analysis. This layered process reflects the fluid and evolving nature of poetic discourse.

Consequently, the complementary use of these approaches enhances critical engagement with poetic texts, encouraging readers to move beyond surface meanings and explore deeper, more nuanced interpretations. It also reinforces the idea that poetry is a living form of expression, continuously reshaped by diverse methods of reading and analysis.

Table 4: The Integration of the Four Approaches

Approach	Function
Semiotics	Analyzing signs
Hermeneutics	Interpreting meaning
Intertextuality	Connecting texts
Deconstruction	Deconstructing meaning

Integration:

- Semiotics reveals structure.
- Hermeneutics gives it life.
- Intertextuality connects it to a broader cultural context.
- Deconstruction continuously reproduces meaning.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that poetic meaning is not a fixed entity but a dynamic process that is continuously renewed through reading. Modern critical approaches—especially semiotics, hermeneutics, intertextuality, and deconstruction—have shifted literary studies from searching for a single meaning to exploring multiple meanings.

Thus, the poetic text becomes an open space for semantic reproduction, constantly shaped through the interaction between the text, the reader, and the cultural context.

Moreover, this dynamic perspective foregrounds the active role of the reader as a co-creator of meaning rather than a passive recipient. Interpretation is therefore influenced by the reader's historical background, cultural assumptions, and personal experiences, which contribute to the continual transformation of the text's significance. From this viewpoint, meaning emerges through an ongoing dialogue between presence and absence, explicit expression and implicit suggestion.

In addition, intertextual relations enable the poetic text to resonate with other texts, traditions, and discourses, expanding its semantic horizons and allowing for an endless network of references. Deconstructive readings

further reveal the internal tensions and contradictions within the text, demonstrating that meaning is never fully stable or complete, but always deferred and open to reinterpretation.

Consequently, poetic discourse resists closure and invites an infinite plurality of readings. This openness not only enriches the aesthetic experience but also reinforces the relevance of poetry across different temporal and cultural contexts, ensuring its capacity to generate new meanings with each act of reading.

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