

# Who Controls The Meaning

## 1. Assignment 10-1

### The difference between reader response and authorial intent:

- Author's intent is the concept that refers to the author's intended interpretation of their work as defined in the piece itself.
- Reader's response is the interpretation of their work as defined by the readers experience of the work without the influence of the author's intention.

More often than enough the reader's response becomes completely personal because it would have filtered through the perception and experiences of the reader themselves.

(source: Writing wranglers and warriors)

- Misinterpretation: Can happen because of
- Ambiguity of language: Multiple plausible reading polysemy and idioms
- Incomplete Context: Reader brings different background knowledge & cultural frames.
- Cognitive bias: Motivated bias reasoning halo effects
- Tone and register mismatch: Sarcasm, Irony understatement
- Structural Cues and Emphasis: Sentence order punctuation and emphasis including bold/italics change perceived priority and intent.
- Medium Constraint: Short Formats (tweets, headlines) and translation strip nuance, increasing the chance that intent collapses into a simpler different message.
- Emotional state of the reader: Mood, stress or identity threats narrow interpretative options and amplify hostile readings.

## Common Patterns of misinterpretation

- Literalizing figurative speech: Metaphors & Hyperboles read as factual claims.
- Missing authorial stance: Failure to distinguish reporting from endorsement when an author's presents other views.
- Overgeneralization: From narrow example to a broad rule the author never claimed.
- Attribution error: Assuming malicious or simplistic motives when other explanations, rhetorical strategies and audience tailoring for better.
- Cherry-picking: Isolating a sentence from its paragraph or section and treating it as a whole argument.

## Key Differences

- Focus of Analysis: Reader's response centres on the experience of the reader (how they interpret the text). While Authorial intent centres on the author's goal (what they intended to say).
- Source of meaning: In reader's response meaning is "co-constructed" by the reader's interaction with the text. In authorial meaning is considered fixed by the author at the time of writing.
- Flexibility: Reader's response allows for multi-varied interpretations based on different readers. Authorial intent seeks to identify one primary "correct" intended meaning even if it's hard to find.
- Role of context: Reader's response values the reader's current context, background and emotions. Authorial intent values the historical, social and personal context of the author.
- Core Concept:
  - Reader's response theory: Suggest that a text is not finished until it is read and that meaning is created by the audience.
  - Authorial intent: Often involves investigating the author's biography, philosophy and choices of genre or language to understand their true original or intended message.

Ultimately, the debate centres on whether the meaning of a text is defined by what the author wanted to say or by what the reader receives (source: Google Chrome Search).

In Conclusion:

- Author writes the text.
- The text is published (Author steps back)
- Reader encounters the text.
- Reader brings experiences, beliefs, cultural background, moral values and historical awareness.
- Meaning is constructed – Not fixed, Not singular but multiple interpretations.

## 2. Assignment 10-2

### The Importance of communication to the discussion of Authorial Intent:

- Communication is critical to authorized intent because it determines whether an author's intended message is successfully transmitted to the audience, transforming the text from static words into understood meaning. It bridges the gap between the authors original context and the reader, minimizing the subjective misinterpretations.

In the hermeneutical view the authors intent should constrain the ways in which a text is properly interpreted.

(source: Wikipedia.org)

- Accuracy and interpretation: Communication ensures that the readers understood the message as intended, rather than creating a new subjective meaning.
- Contextual Understanding requires bridging gaps, exploring the historical, personal and cultural context of the author ensuring that the interpretation aligns with the original setting.

Key Aspects of why communication is critical include:

- Encoding and decoding: Authors encode their message into language, while readers decode it, often creating a gap where meaning can be lost or altered.

- Contextual Understanding: It helps readers understand the specific situation in which the author wrote. Which is crucial for interpreting the text correctly.
- Purposeful Choices: Communication explains why an author included specific elements such as tone, dialogue or structure to convey their message.
- Limiting Subjectivity: A focus on communication the authors intended. Meaning may be misinterpreted making the study of communication paramount to grasping the true purpose of a text.

### 3. Assignment 10-3

#### Several situations whereby a reader may intentionally change an author's intended meaning.

Readers often intentionally reshape a text meaning to serve personal, political or creative agendas, transforming the original intent to fit new context or biases.

#### Key Situations include:

- Re-interpreting classics through modern ethical lenses, adapting narratives for new mediums using text for political propaganda and finding personal therapeutic or subversive meaning.
- Several specific situations where this occurs include, applying contemporary perspectives (revisionism). Reader may reinterpret older literature through modern or "woke" moral or political lenses, disregarding the historical context in which the author wrote to make the text fit today's values.
- Political or Ideological Agendas: A reader might intentionally argue that a text supportive of one position actually supports the opposite, twisting the intended meaning to serve a specific premeditated political argument.
- Creative Adaptation and Reimagining: Film makers, writers, or artists often intentionally change the meaning of a story to make it relatable or engaging for a new audience such as changing a villain into an anti-hero.
- Personal Connection and Emotional Resonance: To cope with personal and emotional resonance. To cope with personal experiences like loss or grief,

readers may deliberately warp a character's journey to mirror their own life's, prioritizing their own lives and emotional experience over the author's intent.

- Fandom and "Ship" interpretations: In Fan culture readers often ignore explicit text to focus on or create romantic subplots between characters (eg. In Supernatural or Harry Potter) while the author never intended.
- Humour Satire and Memes: Online culture(readers) frequently take a serious or dramatic content and deliberately reinterprets it through irony turning profound lines into jokes or memes which completely strip them of their original intended context.
- Classroom/ Pedagogical Redirection: Educators might focus on a minor tangential theme in a text to highlight a specific moral lesson intentionally disregarding the primary intended theme to support or perhaps different student learning outcome.