



Bożena Sieradzka-Baziur

<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4214-7268>

Ignatianum University in Cracow, Poland

bozena.sieradzka@ignatianum.edu.pl

Macrostructure and Microstructure of Janusz Korczak's Monographic Pedagogical Work "How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family"

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Abstract

Research Objectives: This study seeks to deepen the understanding of the monographic pedagogical work *How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family* published about 100 years ago by the outstanding Polish educator Janusz Korczak. The article also seeks to propose a method for analyzing other historical scientific texts of this type.

Research Methods: The methodology used in this study is a linguistic and textological analysis of an early pedagogical text.

Structure of the Article: The article describes the research objectives, subject matter, and applied methodology. The main section provides an analysis of the macrostructure, microstructure, metatext, delimitation, coherence (both cohesion and coherence), and the functions of *How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family*.

Research Findings and Their Impact on Educational Sciences: The analysis demonstrates the richness of meaning and the nuanced semantics within the pedagogical text. The textological examination has uncovered thematic areas that had not previously been explored by scholars studying this work.

Conclusions: Analyzing pedagogical texts from a textological perspective allows for a better understanding of both historical and contemporary works on upbringing, care, and education.

Keywords: text linguistics, family studies, family, text structure, Janusz Korczak

Introduction

This article examines the unique macrostructure and microstructure of Janusz Korczak's monographic pedagogical work, *Jak kochać dziecko. Dziecko w rodzinie* [How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family]. Published three times during the author's lifetime, this text is among the most renowned Polish pedagogical studies. It is a prose piece by the famed educator, presented in a 168-page book (14 x 20.4 cm).

The monograph *How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family* is part of a tetralogy—a series of four literary works connected by a common theme and title. The tetralogy includes the following parts: *Dziecko w rodzinie* [A Child in the Family] (1919, 1920a; cf. 2nd edition 1929a), *Internat, Kolonie letnie* [Boarding School, Summer Camps] (1920b), and *Dom Sierot* [Orphanage] (1920c; cf. 2nd edition *Jak kochać dziecko: Internat, Kolonie letnie, Dom Sierot* [How to Love a Child: Boarding School, Summer Camps, Orphanage] 1929b). The first part of the tetralogy, *How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family*, is the most well-known. Its second edition, the final one published during the author's lifetime in 1929, which included revisions by Korczak, acts as the research material for this article.

The issues discussed in the analyzed monograph concern the development of the child from the prenatal period through adolescence. The book places significant emphasis on the idea that family members, especially the mother, should give their child accepting and understanding love. The text represents the early stage of the development of pedagogy as a scientific discipline in Poland. The intended audience for this work comprises non-specialist parents—primarily mothers or guardians—while the author fulfills the role of both an educator and physician communicating his expertise.

The Polish language used in this monograph exemplifies the popular variety of the scientific style. It blends features typical of scientific, journalistic, artistic, colloquial, religious (references to God), and philosophical (reflections and meditations) styles. Researchers of Korczak's work have characterized *How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family* as a guide, treatise, essay, manifesto, and pedagogical deliberation (cf. Sieradzka-Baziur, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c). The multiplicity of these terms calls attention to the text's richness and complexity, as well as the necessity of analyzing it from multiple perspectives to fully grasp its depth and nuanced meanings.

Purpose and Subject of the Research and Methodology Used in the Study

This article expands on the form and semantics of *How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family*, an issue previously discussed in earlier works (cf. Sieradzka-Baziur, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c, 2022). The structural composition of Korczak's most outstanding work has not yet been the subject of broader analysis. The objective of this research is to deepen the understanding of this monographic pedagogical text, published approximately 100 years ago, and to propose a methodology for analyzing other historical scientific texts. The methodology applied in this study is linguistic textological analysis.

The study of texts can be traced back to antiquity, within the disciplines of poetics and rhetoric (Aristotle, Quintilian). Text theory, or text linguistics, began to develop as a distinct linguistic field in the 1930s and flourished in the 1960s and 1970s. Key contributions to the field in the 20th century and beyond include works by prominent international scholars such as Yuri Lotman, Boris Uspensky, Mikhail Bakhtin, Karl Bühler, Roman Jakobson, Teun A. van Dijk, Robert de Beaugrande, and Wolfgang Ulrich Dressler. In Poland, the studies of researchers such as Teresa Dobrzyńska, Anna Wierzbicka, Stanisław Gajda, and others have also advanced this field (cf. Zdunkiewicz-Jedynak, 2008).

Dorota Zdunkiewicz-Jedynak (2008, p. 59) defines a text as “a spoken or written, non-sentential sign structure constituting an informational whole.” A text is composed of sentences, defined as “a sequence of words arranged in a specific order, containing a certain content, in writing starting with a capital letter and ending with a full stop, an exclamation mark, or a question mark” (*Wielki słownik języka polskiego*, n.d.). The shortest text consists of two sentences, while the longest is theoretically unlimited. Linguists dealing with text analysis have developed a rich terminological apparatus, which includes the following key concepts:

1. Text structure
2. Metatext and text delimitation
3. Text coherence (including both coherence and cohesion);
4. Text functions (cf., e.g., Duszak, 1998; Dobrzyńska, 2001; Zdunkiewicz-Jedynak, 2008).

The terminological tools developed over the long history of linguistic textology must be adapted to the type and volume of the text being examined, and in some cases, the existing terminology may prove insufficient. Korczak’s pedagogical monograph *How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family* is a complex, multi-layered text; therefore, it was necessary to introduce two additional terms: macrostructure and microstructure of the text.

Macrostructure and Microstructure of *How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family*

How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family is characterized by a complex and nuanced macrostructure and microstructure, as summarized in Table 1. The macrostructure of the monograph encompasses its basic constitutive elements, while its microstructure includes the components within each element of the macrostructure.¹

¹ These terms were used by Piotr Żmigrodzki in reference to dictionaries. The macrostructure of a lexicographic work refers to the overall arrangement of its entry articles, which may be organized alphabetically, hierarchically, or conceptually.

Table 1. Macrostructure and Microstructure of *How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family* by Korczak

Elements of the macrostructure of <i>How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family</i>	Number of pages	Elements of the microstructure of <i>How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family</i>
Cover	1	Name and surname of the author, title of the text, information about the edition (2 nd), place of publication, year of publication, name of the publishing house, logo of the publishing house
Title page	1	Name and surname of the author, title of the text, information about the edition (2 nd), place of publication, year of publication, name of the publishing house, logo of the publishing house
Additional title page	1	Title of the work
Introduction to the 2 nd edition	1	I Title of the introduction II Metatext
Motto	upper part of the page	One sentence and the title of the work from which the motto is taken
115 sections of the text	160 (p. 7–167)	I The actual content of the text. 1) Initial parts of the sections; 2) The sender addressing the recipient; 3) Narrative parts (including scientific essays, descriptions, short stories); 4) Examples of fairy tale fragments; 5) Sentences, considerations; 6) Author's dialogues; 7) Descriptions of non-verbal language; 8) Dialogues taken from living speech; 9) Quotations taken from living speech; 10) Linguistic data and their analyses; 11) Lists of linguistic data in the onomasiological system, see sections: 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95; 12) Supplements to the 2 nd edition added in small print, see sections: 6, 9, 18, 23, 27, 37, 38, 40, 58, 64, 69, 75, 98, 99; II Metatext, including quotation marks elements such as quotations, among others, from literary works
Conclusion (section 116)	2 incomplete pages	I Metatext II Addressing the recipient

A contemporary monographic pedagogical work in the form of a guide typically includes a cover, a title page, an introduction, chapters and sub-chapters with a hierarchical structure, references to relevant literature,

The microstructure of a dictionary pertains to the internal structure of an entry article, including the delineation of its mandatory components, their sequencing, and the method of implementation (cf. Żmigrodzki, 2009, p. 52).

conclusions, and a table of contents. Optional components may include a motto, charts, tables, photographs, figures, lists of charts, tables, and figures, a bibliography, and an annex.

Korczak's guidebook comprises such constitutive elements as the cover, title page, introduction, main content, conclusion, and one optional element: the motto. The key feature that distinguishes this guide by the renowned educator from contemporary texts of its kind is the absence of a hierarchical structure of chapters. Instead, the text is composed of 116 complementary sections of comparable length, each ranging from approximately one to two pages. Table 2 provides an overview of the sentence count within the sections of the text.

According to the standard definition, a text is a supra-sentential structure. In the case of *How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family*, the study covered approximately 2,500 sentences comprising the work.

Table 2. Sentence Content of *How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family*

Number of sentences	Number of sections
Up to 20 sentences	53
Up to 30 sentences	48
Over 30 sentences	15
TOTAL	116

The shortest section in the analyzed guide consists of seven long sentences (section 33), while the longest section (section 94) contains 65 short sentences. Sections ranging from 7 to 20 sentences are the most common, with some sentences being extremely long. For example, one sentence in section 73 contains 69 words, as does a sentence in section 75, while a sentence in section 78 includes an extraordinary 102 words.

How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family lacks a table of contents, as the sections are not individually titled, a point that will be discussed later in this article. The microstructure of the text consists of two heterogeneous elements: the actual content of the text and the metatext, defined as "statements about statements" (cf. Wierzbicka, 1971, p. 106). The actual content of the text is composed of 12 components, as listed in Table 1.

Metatext and Text Delimitation

Korczak's guide contains many metatextual elements, which are statements about the text itself. Metatext is a secondary text that provides information about the internal organization of the main text and performs a delimiting function. In the analyzed text, metatextual elements include the title, introduction, motto (a quote from Juliusz Słowacki's *Anhelli*), and conclusion.

The title of Korczak's text, *How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family*, consists of two components that inform the reader about its content, which suggests that it will focus on the functioning of a child in a family and the responsibilities of their guardians. As previously noted (Sieradzka-Baziur, 2019b, p. 205), the first part of the title appears to take the form of a question, but it lacks a question mark. This creates an elliptical construction, which could be expanded to read: *A Book on How to Love a Child*. Such a title carries a pragmatic dimension and frames the text as an action-oriented guide.

The introduction to the second edition, composed of four sentences, includes a metatextual statement that invites the reader to engage in an intellectual journey on the topic of raising a child within the family:

Fifteen years have passed, many questions, conjectures, and doubts have been raised, distrust toward the stated truths has grown. An instructor's truths are a subjective assessment of experiences, merely one, the last, movement of considerations and feelings. Its wealth is in the quantity and weight of its unsettling concerns. Instead of correcting and supplementing, better to note (in the fine print) what has changed around me and within. (Korczak, 2018, preface to the second edition)²

The text concludes with section 116, which consists of 14 sentences and includes an extended metatextual statement as well as an address to the primary recipient: the mother:

² All quotations from the analyzed text are cited from Korczak 2018, translated by Benjamin Paloff.

Fortunate is the author who, in finishing his work, is aware that he has said what he knows, what he has read, assessed according to stated models. Committing it to print, he has a serene sense of satisfaction that he has called forth a mature child capable of an independent life. It can be otherwise: he does not see the reader who demands mediocre science with a readymade recipe and an indication for its use. Here the creative process means becoming engrossed in one's own unestablished, unlearned, suddenly arising thoughts. Here is the work's conclusion—a cool balance sheet, the painful jolt from sleep. Every chapter looks with reproach at having been abandoned before it came to be. The book's final thought is not the conclusion of the whole, and isn't it strange that that's all there is, that there's nothing more. So should I add something? That would mean starting over again, casting aside what I know, encountering new problems that I will hardly think through, writing a new book, equally unfinished.

(...)

A child brings a wondrous song of silence into her mother's life. The song's content, its program, strength, creativity, consists of the number of hours the mother spends near her when the child requires nothing, but lives, of the thoughts she diligently enfolds the child in. Through the child the mother matures, in quiet contemplation, into the inspirations that the work of caregiving demands. Not from a book, but from herself. Then any book will have meagre value; and mine has fulfilled its task if it is convincing in that. In wise solitude, keep watch...
(section 116).

The introduction, serving as the opening statement, and section 116, functioning as the conclusion, create clearly defined boundaries within the text. Researchers refer to this type of compositional strategy as a meta-textual frame (cf. Dobrzyńska, 2001, p. 298).

Korczak establishes other boundary points for the macrostructure of his text. The framework of his narrative spans the development of a child

from the prenatal period through adolescence. Dobrzyńska (2001, p. 299) describes similar delimitation strategies employed by other authors, noting examples such as narratives framed by the lifespan of a protagonist, from birth to death, or temporal boundaries like sunrise to sunset or the progression of the seasons until their full cycle is complete.

As these findings suggest, delimiters—linguistic signals marking the beginning and end of the text—are prominent in the macrostructure of Korczak's work. However, when it comes to its microstructure, such signals are rare in individual sections of the guide. The beginning of each section is signaled by a numerical label, which often appears as part of a sentence rather than as a distinct graphic element. This opening sentence can be regarded as a title, as it identifies the section and introduces its content (Danek, 1972, p. 166), cf:

6. "Ungrateful."
7. "Is the baby healthy?"
8. "Beautiful?"

The vast majority of sections begin with sentences that do not meet the traditional definitional criteria for a title. While some initial parts of sections include phrases that could function as titles, the concluding parts rarely exhibit repetitive structures. Occasionally, the final sections contain direct addresses to the reader, as seen in section 16: "Call the doctor for ten minutes, but keep watch yourself for twenty hours."

Text consistency

Text consistency refers to the logical and clear connections between a text's components that are understandable and logical to the recipient. Researchers distinguish two types of text coherence: semantic consistency (coherence) and formal coherence (cohesion). A coherent text is composed of elements that form a logical and structured whole, both in meaning and formal structure.

Text consistency—coherence

Zdunkiewicz-Jedynak (2008, p. 65) describes text coherence as being based on three fundamental unities:

1. The text is created by one (though not necessarily individual) speaking entity;
2. The text is addressed to one recipient (not necessarily a single individual but rather a recipient who possesses the necessary type of knowledge about the world);
3. The text concerns one arbitrarily broad topic (it is “about something”) developed in a manner planned by the sender.

In the analyzed text, the speaking subject is identical to its author, Janusz Korczak, as evidenced by autobiographical references, such as mentions of his experiences at the front. For instance, he writes: “I wrote this book in a field hospital, under artillery fire, during the war; the very program of understanding was insufficient” (section 98). Additional references to his work at the Orphanage further support this identification (section 60).

The text’s topic and recipient can be inferred through the concepts presented in the work. As demonstrated in my previous research (Sieradzka-Baziur, 2019a), the concepts found within the text form a hierarchical whole, which determines the semantic coherence of the text. The central subject is the child and its physical, mental, social, and spiritual development. These themes are illustrated by the concepts outlined in the table below.

Table 3. Concepts in *How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family* in Relation to the Child

Types of Concepts in Relation to the Child	Subordinate Concepts
CHILD'S PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	CHILD; DEVELOPMENT STAGES; CHILD'S HEALTH; CHILD'S APPEARANCE; DREAM; CHILD'S SEXUALITY; A GIRL AND A BOY.
CHILD'S MENTAL DEVELOPMENT	CHILD; DEVELOPMENT PERIODS; CHILD'S INTELLIGENCE; SELF-AWARENESS; SENSE OF SUCCESS; DREAMS; TEENAGE LOVE.
CHILD'S SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	CHILD; DEVELOPMENT PERIODS; LANGUAGE; CHILDREN'S RIGHTS; FREEDOM; AUTHORITY; TRUTH; FUN; BOREDOM; PROPERTY; POVERTY; SEXUAL HARASSMENT.
CHILD'S SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT	CHILD; SPIRITUALITY; RELIGIOSITY.

The intended audience of *How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family* is adults, particularly mothers. The hierarchical structure of subordinate concepts organized around the primary themes of PROCREATION, UPBRINGING, EDUCATION, and CARE, as identified through semantic analysis, proves the coherence of the analyzed text.

**Table 4. Concepts In How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family
in Relation to an Adult**

Types of Concepts in Relation to the Adult (mother)	Subordinate Concepts
PROCREATION	ADULT; FERTILITY; INHERITANCE; MOTHERHOOD; INFANTICIDE.
UPBRINGING	ADULT; FAMILY; PARENTAL ATTITUDES; EDUCATION STYLE; ADULT SEXUALITY.
EDUCATION	ADULT; HOME EDUCATION; PARENTAL ATTITUDES; SCHOOL.
CARE	ADULT; PARENTAL ATTITUDES; BREASTFEEDING; CHILDREN'S NUTRITION; CHILDCARE; ENSURING ENOUGH SLEEP; ENSURING SUFFICIENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY; PROVIDING ENTERTAINMENT; ENSURING SAFETY.

The term *semantic coherence* applies not only to the macrostructure of the text but also to its microstructure. Particularly noteworthy is the high level of coherence in sections containing scientific essays (e.g., an essay on breastfeeding, section 18), descriptive passages (e.g., a description of a little country boy's behavior, section 42), and narrative stories (e.g., a story about a boy's determination, section 44).

Some sections are organized around children's questions (e.g., section 85), while others contain a list of word structures assigned to specific concepts, following an onomasiological system. The concepts Korczak uses to group semantically complex statements can be categorized into topics such as animals (section 87), nations (section 88), humanity (section 89), authority (section 90), religion (sections 91, 94), poverty (section 92), social relations (section 93), and language (sections 94, 95).

Text consistency—cohesion

Formal consistency (*cohesion*) is achieved through the use of grammatical and lexical indicators of unity. In the case of the analyzed work, this is a significant topic, as it encompasses approximately 2,500 sentences and would warrant a separate, detailed study. In *How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family*, one notable feature is the frequent use of phrases following colons, which appear in various parts of the text. These elements contribute to its formal coherence. Examples include phrases such as "And thus"; "Or"; "Finally"; and "A caveat," as seen in section 24.

Text functions

Karl Bühler (1934) proposed the first model of language (speech) functions, in which he identified the **representational**, **expressive**, and **impressive** functions. Later, Roman Jakobson (1960) expanded this framework by distinguishing three additional language functions: **phatic**, **poetic**, and **metalinguistic**. In Poland, Renata Grzegorzczkova (2007) built upon these findings and created an alternative categorization of the functions of utterances, taking into account the direct purpose of the sender. In terms of the information transfer, Grzegorzczkova distinguished two main categories of functions:

1. Informational Functions

- Descriptive information function
- Evaluative-postulative information function

2. Non-Informational Functions

- Causative function (constitutive, performative)
- Expressive function
- Persuasive function (impressive)
- Mystery function
- Creative function
- Phatic function

This categorization corresponds to the functions performed by Korczak's text, which, in accordance with Zdunkiewicz-Jedynak's definition (2008, p. 59), represents "a spoken or written, supra-sentential sign structure, constituting an informational whole."

An analysis of *How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family* shows that its primary functions are the **informative descriptive function** and the **informative evaluative-postulative function**. Table 4 outlines the overarching pedagogical concepts, such as **UPBRINGING**, **EDUCATION**, and **CARE**, as well as their corresponding subordinate concepts, extracted through semantic analysis of Korczak's text.

Korczak's guide has a dual purpose: it "informs" by describing the existing models of upbringing, education, and care in Polish society at the time, while simultaneously "evaluating" these models and "formulating pedagogical postulates." Regarding educational issues, Korczak expressed his belief that the educational activities of parents should address not only the physical, social, and cognitive development of children but also their spiritual growth.

The text also advocates for the rights of children. Korczak writes:

I call for a Magna Carta of children's rights. I have found three basic ones, though there may be more: 1. A child's right to die. 2. A child's right to the present day. 3. A child's right to be what he is (section 37).

In the following section, Korczak elaborates on the first of these rights:

A mother's intense, understanding, even-tempered love for her child must give him the right to an early death, to conclude the cycle of life not in sixty revolutions of the Earth around the sun, but in only one spring or three. A cruel demand on those who do not want to bear the difficulties and costs of the postpartum period more than once, twice. (Section 38)

In section 10, Korczak warns against the harmful effects of raising a "convenient child," writing: "The good child. One must be careful not to confuse good with-convenient."

Such a child fulfills the wishes of its parents and adapts to their expectations, but in the future, will be "internally passive and practically ineffectual."

Korczak's text also introduces concepts related to education. In section 52, he contrasts the concerns of two mothers about the future of their children. One mother, who lacks financial resources, regrets that her child must be sent to an apprenticeship to learn a trade. The wealthier mother, meanwhile, laments that her child must work hard at school. Korczak does not idealize the educational process, recognizing the shortcomings and inefficiencies of the Polish school system of his time. Using his characteristic metaphorical style, he writes:

For free birds from country manors, how painful is their penance in school dormitories, after a couple years of relative freedom in the field, the stable, the servants' quarters. (Section 98)

The concept of child care in the family is articulated by Korczak in relation to nutrition, sleep, rest, play, exercise, safety, and overall well-being. He points out mistakes that parents make in child care. For example:

63. Forcing children to sleep when they don't feel like it is a crime. The chart that declares how many hours of sleep a child needs is absurd.

As can be seen from the above examples, the global function of *How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family* is mainly informational. The sections of the text (1 to 116) are rich in statements that perform a variety of linguistic functions identified by Grzegorzczkowska (2007), depending on their intended purpose.

For instance, the text also performs an inciting (impressive) function: Korczak urges mothers to love their children more wisely and deeply, to nurture and care for them attentively. He employs rhetorical questions to achieve this, such as:

6. Ungrateful. Is the Earth grateful to the sun for shining? Is a tree grateful to the seed it grew from? Does the nightingale sing to the mother

who warmed it with her breast? Do you return to the child what you had taken from your parents, or do you only lend in order to take back, meticulously recording and calculating the interest? Is love a service for which you demand payment?

The persuasive function is closely connected to the phatic function, as the author maintains a bond with the recipient through the use of vocative forms, such as *"oh mother!"* For example:

Commanding someone to give out readymade thoughts is to order another woman to give birth to your own child. There are thoughts that, painfully, must give birth to themselves, and these are the most valuable. They decide, mother, whether you will feed from the breast or the udder, whether you'll raise him as a person does or as a female does. (Section 1).

They serve to establish linguistic contact and expose the communicative relationship between the sender and the recipient. The phatic function dominates in these utterances. In the initial parts of some sections, the author occasionally uses direct address to the recipient, as seen in:

"You'll say, 'My child'" (Section 2);

"You say, 'It should ... I want it to ...'" (Section 5).

These direct forms of address serve to establish linguistic contact and expose the communicative relationship between the sender and the recipient. The phatic function dominates in such utterances.

Korczak's text also demonstrates a strong metalinguistic function (Jakobson, 1960), which is manifested in his statements about language. He includes descriptions of non-verbal language, dialogues, quotes from live speech, linguistic data and their analyses, as well as comparisons of linguistic data in an onomasiological arrangement. These linguistic examples, as cited and characterized by Korczak, illustrate the three key pedagogical processes he discusses in the family context: care, upbringing, and education.

Summary

How to Love a Child: A Child in the Family is a remarkable subject for textological and semantic research due to its complex macro- and microstructure, coherence, cohesion, metatext, text delimiters, and the various functions it performs. The word *text* originates from the Latin term *textus*, which means “weaving” or “fabric.” Korczak has woven his text from many components, presenting the central theme of the work—dedicated to the development and upbringing of the child within the family. These constitutive elements include the cover, title page, introduction, main content, conclusion, and an optional element, the motto.

The uniqueness of Korczak's structural design lies in the 116 sections of comparable length, each rich with diverse components. This textual fabric is varied, syncretic, complex and semantically dense, constituting a serious challenge for the attentive reader. Each of the 12 distinguished components can constitute (cf. Table 1) an independent basis for analysis. The syncretism of Korczak's text is characteristic of the era in which it was created, as “the language of the older generation of humanists was very closely related to the language of literature, journalism, rhetoric, and narrative prose” (Wilkoń, 2000, p. 65).

Considering Korczak's text as a fabric, it could be likened to a patchwork—a composition of diverse elements that create a unique whole. The analyzed text is rich in meaning and complex in its semantics. Textological analysis deepened its understanding, revealing thematic areas previously unexplored by scholars. This article also proposes a methodological framework for analyzing other historical scientific texts.

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