

A Semiotic Approach to Narratology

Mohammad B. Aghaei

Department of English language

Islamic Azad University

Tabriz Branch

Tabriz, Iran

Abstract

Semiotics principally investigates and explores the production and function of signs and sign systems as well as the methods of their signification. It is mainly concerned with how a sign signifies and what precedes it at deeper level to result in the manifestation of its meaning. For this purpose, it offers a set of unified principles that underlie the construction, signification and communication of any sign system. The literary semiotics seeks to explain how the textual components get their significative value within a given literary discourse. In order to do so, the conventions, discursive forces and cultural aspects of the text should be taken into consideration in explaining the processes of signification. So, this article tries to give a semiotic view to the study of narratives by describing the semiotic aspects of the previous and recently devised literary theories and gives a methodological clarity to them.

Key Words: narratology, proposition, motif, motifeme, mythemeextradiegetic, diegetic andmetadiegetic.

1. Introduction

During the past five decades, many literary semioticians have attempted to present a semiotic perspective on the nature of literary narrative. Although their studies initially focused on the structural aspects of the narrative, they provided a relevant methodological foundation for the development of contemporary semiotic theories of literary narrative. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Saussure's semiological views formed the basis for the early structuralist postulates. It was later developed by the Russian formalists and used for the description and scientific analysis of the literary text. Although the Russian formalists did not completely succeed in giving a comprehensive account of the nature of literature, their notion of 'literariness' was a significant contribution to the development of literary semiotics in the first half of twentieth century. Some of the earlier literary semioticians such as Vladimir Propp and Boris Tomashevski were mainly inspired by the formalist methodology that offered various structural approaches to the study of narrative. These approaches also provided the impetus for the further development of literary semiotics in the post-structuralist era. Indeed, the literary semiotics has now entered a new stage in which pragmatic and the hermeneutic aspects of the literary discourse have gained more prominence. During the past few decades, due to the influence of pragmatic philosophy, the literary semiotics has progressed into another new level in which one finds several conceptual tools and methodological apparatus to study the principles and structures of literary signification in a more rigorous manner.

This article explains the different principles of literary semiotics proposed by the Russian formalists, structuralists and post-structuralists, particularly their contributions in the characterization of the semiotic aspects of literary narrative.

2. Semiotic Approaches to Narratology

Due to the influence of formalists' approaches on the French structuralism that caused the French structuralism to shift its orientation from the study of social or cultural structure to the narrative structure, another line of literary structuralism called 'narratology' was developed. It focused on not only the underlying structure of story but also the structure of narration. Its ultimate goal was

to provide a general model of narration and the production of meaning. Narratology was initially influenced by Levi-Strauss's structural analysis of myth. It had initially given a special attention to the minimal units of narrative and the principles of their combination into a 'grammar of the plot'. The pragmatics of narrative and the study of different types of narratives are further topics of narratology. The scope of narratology is too extensive; it actually covers all types of narratives. In the following statement, Barthes clearly defines the scope of narratives:

“The narratives of the world are numberless. Narrative is first and foremost a prodigious variety of genres, themselves distributed amongst different substances — as though any material were fit to receive man's stories. Able to be carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or moving images, gestures, and the ordered mixture of all these substances; narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting...stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news item, conversation. Moreover, under this almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there have not been a people without narrative. All classes, all human groups, have their narratives...Caring nothing for the division between good and bad literature, narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself” (Barthes 1966a: 79).

But narratologists have limited this scope only on the study of 'narrativity' as a specific feature of narrative discourse. Many narratologists have characterized the essence of narrative according to different modes of discourse, especially in terms of its content. The narrativity of fiction is mainly characterized according to its three basic aspects; the events, the verbal representation and the act of narrating. These aspects are labeled as story, text and narration respectively. Story is a succession of events arranged in a chronological order. Text forms a discourse within which the events are narrated. The act of narrating is narration. Indeed, story and narration may be seen as “two metonymies of the text, first evoking it through its narrative content, the second through its production” (Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 212).

Gerard Genette is one of the influential narratologists who spent much time on examining the narrative discourse. His book *Narrative Discourse* (1983) is one of the most important contributions to narratology. He focuses on the network of means by which the plot is interwoven in the narrative. In fact, he tries to define the borders of narrative. For this purpose, he emphasizes on three diegetic levels of narratives; extradiegetic, diegetic and metadiegetic or hypodiegetic level. The *extradiegetic level* is the level of the narrative's telling; what we commonly understand to be the narrator's level, the level at which exists a narrator who is not part of the story he tells. The *diegetic level* is understood as the level of the characters, their thoughts and actions. The *metadiegetic level* or *hypodiegetic level* is that part of a diegesis that is embedded in another one and is often understood as a story within a story, as when a diegetic narrator himself/herself tells a story (Genette 1983: 283).

According to Genette's narratology, the narrative is analyzed in terms of *order*, *duration*, *frequency*, *voice* and *mood*. The *order* is a chronological order of events and actions of a story that they are presented in the narrative discourse. The narration may temporarily lag behind the chronological order of events (it is a kind of a *flashback*—although Genette does not use the term). Sometimes it may be synchronic with events, or it may run ahead of the narrator. Genette offers a detailed analysis of all the possible relations between the order of events and order of narration and does so in technical vocabularies such as 'analepsis, prolepsis, anachrony, analeptic prolepsis and proleptic analepsis.'¹ The *duration* is concerned with the relationship between the time that an event has taken in the reality and the time that it actually takes to be narrated in the narrative. The *frequency* is concerned with the relation between the number of times that an event occurs in the world and the number of times that it is actually narrated. The narrative may repeatedly recount an event that happened only once or may recount once what happened frequently. The *voice* is

¹. Analepsis is a flashing back to an earlier point in the story.

Prolepsis is a flashing forward to a moment later in the chronological sequence of events.

Anachrony is a non-chronological order that reaches the story into the past or the future, either more or less far from the present moment. In fact, it is a kind of discrepancy between the chronological order of events and the order in which they are related in a plot. The analepsis and prolepsis result in an anachrony in the story.

Analeptic prolepsis is a kind of a flashback to an earlier moment of foreshadowing; in simple words, the future within the past.

Proleptic analepsis causes a narrative to be anchored in the two levels, a retrospective vision and announcement concerning the story; in simple words, the past within the future.

concerned with who narrates and from where. Genette offers homodiegetic and heterodiegetic levels² for narration. The *mood* deals with the distance between the narrator and the story. The distance of the narrator varies according to narrated speech, transposed direct speech and reported or free indirect speech in the story.

Genette's narratology, thus, directly focuses on the way of the presentation of the narrative. It actually maps the story world with real world and indicates how focalization shifts during the course of a story, and so on and so forth. It presents a better model for the interpretation of complex texts.

Therefore, the narratologists have emphasized on the necessity of distinguishing between 'narrated events' and 'narrative discourse'. This distinction was first discussed in the form of dichotomies such as Aristotle's *mythos*³ vs. *mimesis*⁴, Formalists' *fibula* vs. *syuzhet*, Bremond's *recite raconte* (narrated story) vs. *recite racontant* (story elements), Greimas's *immanence* (deep structure) vs. *manifestation* (surface structure) and Kristeva's *phenotext* vs. *genotext*. The phenotext is the textual surface structure. It can be empirically described by the methods of structural linguistics such as phonology, syntax and semantics. The genotext, on the other hand, is the deep structure, where the signification process takes place. These two modalities, phenotext (symbolic) & genotext (semiotics), are "inseparable within the signifying process that constitutes language, and the dialectic between them determines the narrative discourse" (Kristeva 1984: 24). The basic dichotomy of narratology is defined by Chatman as follows: A story (*histoire*) is the content or chain of events (actions, happenings), plus what may be called the existents (characters, items of setting); and a discourse (*discours*)...is the expression, the means by which the content is communicated. In simple terms, the story is *what* a narrative depicts, and a discourse is the *how*

². Homodiegetic level refers to a narrator who has an active role as a character in the narrative; he may or may not be the protagonist. In heterodiegetic level, the narrator does not take part in the story.

³. Mythos is the term used by Aristotle in his *Poetics* (c. 335 BCE) for the plot of an Athenian tragedy. It is the first of the six elements of tragedy that he gives. According to Aristotle's *Poetics, tragedy* contains six parts: plot, character, diction, reasoning, spectacular, and lyric poetry. "Plot (mythos) is the source and soul of tragedy followed in decreasing order of importance by the character (ethe), thought (dianonia), language (lexis), and music and stagecraft. The mythos, thus, makes up the principle aspect of the tragedy, the exterior element, more easily discernible as it is not subordinated to any other element. It corresponds closely to the idea of tragedy itself in the sense of a dramatic narration" (Rizzoli 1999: 6).

⁴. Mimesis shows, rather than *tells*, by means of directly represented action.

(Chatman 1978: 19). The word ‘what’ refers to the content of story world such as its events, characters and settings. The word ‘how’ refers to the discourse within which the content of story is represented in a logical way. The interaction of the story and discourse produces the ‘narrative meaning’ since, while the discourse is being continuously formed through narrating the story, it creates a (Saussurian) syntagmatic order for the arrangement of subsequent units of the story. As it suggests, the narrative meaning is made possible by “the particular relation between the two components (story and discourse) of the closed system, meaning that is produced both on parallel levels (as story and as discourse) and between levels (story and discourse in relation to each other). As in Saussurian theory, discourse is not the passive vehicle for the expression of rich content: rather the dynamic relation between story and discourse is itself the form of narrative, while the laws that determine this interaction are the laws of narrative” (Dorothy 2006: 193).

Therefore, in order to understand narratology’s contribution to semiotics of narrative, it is important to grasp the distinction between its three fundamental entities such as ‘story’, ‘narrative’ and ‘narration’ because these entities form the basis of narrative construction. In general, story corresponds to a series of events and actions that are told by someone (the narrator), and represented in a final form, producing a narrative. As a field of study, narratology thus looks at the internal mechanisms of narrative and the form taken by a narrated story.

So far, what has been explained on narratology basically concentrated on the *form*, rather on the reader or the cultural aspects of narrative. Actually, any text is more than its structural organization; it possesses the cultural aspects of a given society. Lotman *et al.* say that “the text has integral meaning and integral function [...]. In this sense it may be regarded as the primary element (basic unit) of culture. The relationship of the text with whole of culture and with its system of codes is shown by the fact that on different levels the same message may appear as a text, part of a text, or an entire set of texts” (Lotman *et al.* 1975: 8). Then, the literary text is a representation of culture with all its components and the reader thus has a paramount role in producing meaning by breaking the text into cultural fragments, or *lexias*, as Barthes calls them. Barthes in his *S/Z* (1974) identifies the five codes such as proairetic, hermeneutic, semic, symbolic and referential or cultural codes that constitute a framework for the analysis of the literary text. The *proairetic* code is a set of small actions of the narrative. The reader assimilates these pieces of information (actions) in a prescribed order. The *hermeneutic* code refers “all the unites whose

function it is to articulate in various ways a question, its response, and the variety events which can either formulate the question or delay its answer; or even, constitutes an enigma and lead to its solution” (Barthes 1974: 17). The *semic* code provides cultural stereotypes (models of personality, dressing or naming for example) that enable the readers to gather pieces of information about characters. This code concerns “the unit of the signifier which creates connotation” (ibid.: 17). The *symbolic* code refers to the detail exploration of text for the symbolic interpretations. The *referential* code that Barthes later divided into a series of *cultural* codes, most easily provides the cultural information on which the text relies. This code involves numerous codes of knowledge or wisdom to which the text continually refer.

3. Syntactical Structure of Narrative

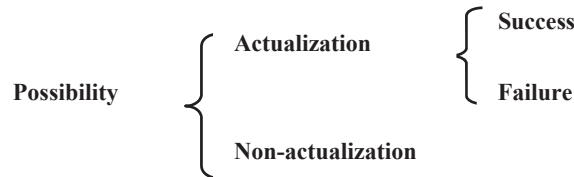
The study of the syntactical structure of narrative deals with three major aspects: (i) the study of formal aspects of signs, (ii) the study of the relation of signs to other signs and (iii) the study of the way in which signs of various classes are combined to form complex signs (Posner 1992: 40). The literary semioticians such as Propp, Bremond, Greimas, Levi-Strauss, Todorov, Barthes and Kristeva, who have exclusively dominated the field of literary studies, have attempted to critically examine, with different methodological assumptions, the structure of narrative. They have succeeded to identify several degrees of narrativity with different perspectives. The highest degree of narrativity is defined by the human agents’ deliberate and intentional actions that are articulated in a well-defined temporal and causal connection in the narrative. The traditional patterns of folk narrative (for instance, the hero’s quest as described by Propp) would serve equally well to illustrate the ideal narrativity. In this case, the semantic contents of the characters’ functions serve as a criterion for the characterization of narrative structure. They actually form the framework for the whole narrative. Therefore, underlying the surface structure of narrative lies the semantic content of functions. These functions in fact constitute the deep structure of narrative. In a similar way, the literary semioticians consider an ideal narrative as a connected sequence of actions and they also emphasize on the construction of a unifying pattern or unified system which establishes a maximum of connection between the individual actions. They mostly explain the narrative structure on the base of its syntactical and semantic aspects as in Propp’s narrative sequence. For instance, Todorov considers the syntax of a story as a combination of propositions and Barthes

defines it as a set of symbolic and cultural codes. In fact, they have given a semantic perspective on the syntactical structure of narrative and considered narrative as a syntactical combination of semantic units. In his actantial narrative schema, Greimas also proposes a syntax of narrative which describes the plot organization of narrative precisely. He claims that three basic binary oppositions underlie all the literary narrative: *subject/object* (Propp's hero and sought-for-person), *sender/receiver* (Propp's dispatcher and hero) and *helper/opponent* (conflations of Propp's helper and donor, plus the villain and the false hero). Here, the hero is both subject and receiver. The subject is the one who seeks; the object is that which is sought. The sender sends the object and the receiver is its destination. The helper assists the action and the opponent blocks it (cited in Chandler 2007: 119). Therefore, the narrative is composed of deep (semantic) structure and surface structure; the surface structure is constructed by taking into account the deep structure. It means that it is the deep structure that determines the surface structure.

Greimas has also presented a basic model known as the 'elementary structure of meaning' and has situated it at the deep level of literary text. This model is based on the structure of binary opposition; for instance, there can be no *up* without *down*, no *good* without *evil*. In other words, the meaning is generated by oppositions we perceive between two semes—the smallest unit of meaning. Greimas then develops this basic structure to include negating or contradictory terms. This model was further developed to produce a visual representation known as the *Semiotic Square* (Greimas 1987: 49). The 'semiotic square' is based on the logical opposition of surface structures with their logical semantic structures. It is indeed an elementary structure of signification that is at the heart of both narrative progression and semantic, thematic or symbolic content. So the transition from deep structure to surface structure is in fact a kind of transition from semantic schema to narrative organization.

In his article *The Logic of Possible Narrative* (1966), Claude Bremond has also proposed a model that explains the narrative in a somewhat abstract way. He states that "If we are to narrate anything at all, it is both a necessary and sufficient condition that some action be guided through three phases: a situation opening some possibility, the actualization of that possibility, the ending of this action" (cited in Ricoeur 2002: 39). However, Bremond suggests that these three phases constitute a general and logical model that is applicable for characterizing the structure of any narrative. In fact, it considers the structure of narratives in terms of three phases such as virtuality, actualization

and realization that can also be characterized as possibility of action, transition to action and result of action, respectively. The following figure represents Bremond's model of narrative structure clearly:



This scheme allows for multiple paths for the manifestation of narrative structure. For instance, suppose that a character is pondering whether to revenge or not the murder of his father. It is the first phase, the possibility of action. In this phase, he may decide to take action (actualization), or he may decide not to take any action (non-actualization). If he proceeds to take action, he may succeed in his action as taking revenge (success) or he may fail (failure). Indeed, Bremond's model indicates a temporal development of the story in a logical and possible way that eventually leads to the final stage of the story. It shows how complex and meandering stories can be comprehended. Besides presenting a logic of narratives, Bremond also offers a simple and elegant classification of narrative roles such as agent, patient, influencer and enemy or frustrator.

All literary theories, since the early part of twentieth century, have offered several conceptual tools for developing various semiotic models for the study of narrative. Their methodology of research has been fundamentally influenced by the structural linguistics and anthropology. Although structuralism has been gradually losing its importance in contemporary social sciences due to the influence of more recently developed fields, narratology still applies the structuralist methodology because of "the remarkable success of the structuralist tradition in literary studies, which may have dissuaded researchers in the field from taking unnecessary risks with new developments. Also due to the historical development of literary studies, a reaction to structuralism is likely to bring forth anti-formal stands, rather than more sophisticated formalism. One should mention, however a few models inspired by generative-transformational linguistics" (van Dijk 1985: 95). Van Dijk has devised a framework that has been basically inspired by the generative transformational model. He has indeed applied the generative-transformational model in his study of narrative that put together purely narrative units with higher order units of the story, such as Moral or Evaluation.

4. Semantic Constituents of Narrative

The various narrative models or theories presented in the previous sections hardly describe in detail the semantic dimensions of narratives. Though narratologists such as Todorov, Greimas and Kristeva have mostly offered semantic based models for the study of narrative, they did not provide a clear and applicable model for characterizing the semantic aspects of the narrative. Other narratologists such as Dolezel, Pavel and Ryan have dealt with this subject in more detail. They have used various terms for referring to the semantic content of narrative. The term *narreme* and others such as *proposition*, *motif*, *motifeme*, *mytheme*, *narrateme*, *minimal narrative*, *minimal story*, *atomic story* and *kernal story* have been proposed by different literary theorists researching on the semantic constituents of narrative. All these terms mainly refer to the minimal semantic units of narrative. According to Helmut Bonheim, the relation of narreme to narratology is like what the morpheme is to morphology, and the phoneme to phonology (Bonheim 2000: 11).

Here the narreme of narrative should be explained clearly. There exist two views, clarifying the narreme of narrative. The first is “a *prior* determination of the narreme on the basis of an elementary logic of action: the ‘monadic’ view; and the second is a *posteriori* approach: ‘dyadic and triadic’ views, which derives the narreme by deduction from a corpus of narrative” (Noth 1990: 370).

The monadic view is based on an elementary unit that corresponds referentially to an event and linguistically to a proposition. In his book *Grammar of Narrative*, Todorov has taken a monadic view to narratology and defines the basic element of narrative structure⁵ as a ‘proposition’ corresponding to an ‘irreducible’ action (Todorov 1969: 19). Such narrative propositions are formed by a proper name (corresponding to an agent) plus a predicate, consisting of either a verb (of action) or an attributive adjective (ibid.: 27). All information about the characters or agents is contained in the adjectives, which also define attributes related to states, properties and status. Narrative propositions are furthermore characterized by secondary categories such as *modes*. They

⁵. Todorov’s conventional narrative structure with five stages:

Stage 1: A state of equilibrium is defined.

Stage 2: Disruption to the equilibrium by some action or crisis.

Stage 3: The Character(s) recognition that there has been a disruption, setting goals to resolve problem. Stage 4: The Character(s) attempt to repair the disruption, obstacles need to be overcome to restore order.

Stage 5: Reinstatement to the equilibrium. Situation is resolved, a conclusion is announced.

may express facts (indicative modes), volition (obligatory and optative modes), or hypotheses (conditional and predicative modes).

The dyadic and triadic views indeed expand the monadic view by the dimension of process that is expressed in categories of 'time' and 'causality'. Therefore, there are two main principles of combination of events; temporal succession and causality, that arrange the narrative events in time-sequence. If the narrative is to be defined in terms of action and not in terms of events, the dimension of process is logically presupposed because an action is defined as "a change of state brought about intentionally by a (conscious) human being in order to bring about a preferred state or state change" (van Dijk 1976: 550). An example of a dyadic view is also Labov's definition of "minimal narrative as a sequence of two clauses which are temporally ordered" (Labov 1972: 360). In fact, in dyadic view, two or three functions or actions are interrelated within a manifest contour over a stretch of time and space and form an event that is considered as a 'minimal narrative'.

Similar to the narratologists who have offered models or theories for characterizing the semantic constituents of narrative, Lubomir Dolezel developed his theory of 'narrative motif'. He uses 'motif' or 'motifemes' for the interpretation of the basic semantic units of narrative (Dolezel 1972: 60). In practice, the motifemes correspond to motifs that can be defined as 'propositions' predicting an action of a character. For instance, the motifeme 'the hero defeated the villain' could correspond to the motif 'Ivan killed the dragon'. Then, for Dolezel, a motif is the semantic representation of the narrated state or event, taking place in a chronological point of the story. Since the events are defined in terms of changes from one state to another, the motifs are classified into two types; 'dynamic motifs' representing the events and 'static motifs' representing the states. The motifs are also further sub-divided into other motifs such as physical motifs, mental motifs, private motifs and social motifs. These motifs serve as 'atomic stories' that are also defined by four traits including 'alethic', 'deontic', 'axiological' and 'epistemic'. The *alethic* expresses the possibility, necessity and impossibility; the *deontic* expresses the permission, prohibition and obligation; the *axiologic* expresses goodness, badness and indifference; and the *epistemic* expresses knowledge, ignorance and belief.

Thomas G. Pavel has further developed some of Dolezel's ideas and offered his notion of 'narrative domains'. Syntactically, these domains are a set of actions undertaken by an agent and his/her allies. Semantically, they are governed by at least four types of regularities: "The *ontological* rules,

which establish what there is and what is possible/necessary in each domain, the *epistemic* rules, which regulate knowledge, the *axiological* rules, which set the values, and priorities of each group, and the *rules for action*, which function as normative instructions. These domains combine Dolezel's atomic stories with his relativized modalities" (Pavel 1985: 98).

Finally, the most comprehensive model in narratology has been offered by Marie-Laure Ryan in her *Model Structure of Narrative Universes* (1985). For developing her model, she has drawn inspiration from other narratologists such as Bremond, Dolezel and Pavel. She actually offers a systematic and reasonable procedure for organizing the narrative information by locating conflicts, explaining the characters' behaviours, and reducing the text into its most important components (Ryan 1985: 745). The following scheme gives a clear perspective on Ryan's narrative model:

**Three Models of
World that may
be represented in
a narrative
(Offered by Ryan)**

1) Representation of the Real Worlds:

- 1.1. Epistemic or Knowledge World (K-Worlds): containing all propositions representing the beliefs and knowledge of characters.
- 1.2. Hypothetical Extension of K-Worlds: representing characters' view on possible (future) courses of events.
- 1.3. Intention Worlds: these worlds are created when a character commits himself to reach a certain target by following a certain action.

2. Ideal Model Worlds:

- 2.1. Wish-World: various states of affairs and actions are ranked according to their degree of desirability.
- 2.2. World of Moral Values: specifying what characters consider good or bad for the members of a specific group.
- 2.3. Obligation-Worlds: individual receives values from the group.

3. Alternate Universes:

These universes are comprised of dreams, hallucination, fantasies created by the characters.

The model is in fact based on typology of the narrative world and real world. It means that the narrative world represents the real world within itself. Therefore, the real world is an idealized or alternative model that can be used for studying the semantic content of the narrative. She offers three categories of relative worlds and each one is also divided into subcategories.

5. Plot-Structure and Its Constituents

The story is primarily composed of a main event, climax point, and numerous minimal events basically supporting the main event. These minimal events continuously put the story in a new state of condition as being continuously added to the story in a logical and chronological order in the progression of story. On the other hand, any change or replacement in their syntagmatic

arrangement causes a change in the syntactical structure and then in the thematic configuration of narrative. However, in general, the plot-narratology is a kind of identifying the principles that organize such action-successions of the story.

Therefore, the narrative represents a story through the syntagmatic order of signifiers which transpose the story into a new and meaningful perception at any point of narrating. The logical and linear configuration of the signifiers creates a discourse within which the story continuously develops and progresses through their dialectical interplay. In the literary text, the signifiers can only be comprehended in the entirety of their meaning; i.e., by their interrelation with each other in the text.

Therefore, for the signification of any literary text, it is imperative to decompose its discourse into the minimal events. In the process of decomposition, many of these events play paramount role in the story; in fact, they form the main framework of the story. But, some of them may be completely eliminated without causing any change in the identity of the story. Yet, it is the reader's inner feeling that makes judgment about what may be omitted without destroying the coherence of the story and what may not be omitted without distributing the connections among events. So, those small events or functions which may be omitted without disturbing the chronological course of events are catalyzers, according to Barthes (1966). On the other hand, the reader discovers that some of events constitute the core of work and are required by the story. They act as cardinal events that are developed and correlated by the catalyzers. In this case, Barthes gives an illustrative and non-literary example: "If the telephone rings, one can either answer it or let it ring. A catalyst accompanies and complements the kernels [cardinal], but the action to which it refers does not open (or continue, or close) an alternative that is of direct consequence for the subsequent development of the story. 'Before I answer the phone, I perhaps turn on the light, unlock the door, or wonder who is ringing'" (cited in Lothe 2000: 76). It thus implies that the configuration of cardinal events makes the main skeleton of the plot structure of story. The decomposition of narrative into its signifying units, cardinal and catalyzing events, is necessary but not sufficient for reaching to its complete significance. In fact, the decomposition only brings out its semantic content. Here, it should be noted that the semiotic analysis of a literary text is not merely limited to the analysis of its syntactical organization or the representation of its semantic content. The literary text is more than its syntactical structure and semantic content; every literary text is an

aesthetic representation of the human culture; in fact, it acts as a mirror reflecting a given society. So the reader should give due importance to the cultural aspects of the text in order to get its proper significance.

Whatever has been so far discussed about the semiotic nature of literary text makes it clear that literary text, as a sign system, is a composite, integrated and self-referential system representing the world through its discourse. It basically comes into existence from a harmonious and logical correlation of its minimal units within its system. This correlation is absolutely essential to make the literary discourse unique because the different units become intelligible only in the context of whole discourse that in turn becomes intelligible only through its principles. Therefore, creating a literary discourse is in fact creating a new structure of significance, a structure which is not a simple imitation of human reality, but a structure which presents a specific perception, and what is more important, a specific interpretation.

Therefore, the semiotic analysis of a literary text deals with the way in which meaning is produced by the syntactical structure of interdependent textual signs that are organized under the syntagmatic and paradigmatic forces of the discourse or discursive conventions. It implies that the process of literary signification constitutes three factors: Syntactical structure, semantic constituents and pragmatic aspects of the text.

Bibliography

- Barthes, Roland (1964). *Elements of Semiology*. Trans. Annette Lavers & Colin Smith. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Barthes, Roland (1966a). "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative." In: Barthes, R. (1977). *Image-Music-Text*. New York: Hill & Wang. pp.79-124.
- Barthes, Roland (1966a). "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative." In: Barthes, R. (1977). *Image-Music-Text*. New York: Hill & Wang. pp.79-124.

- Barthes, Roland (1974). *S/Z*. Trans. R. Miller. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Bertens, Hans (2001). *Literary Theory*. London: Routledge.
- Bonheim, Helmut (2000). "Shakespeare's Narremes." In: Holland, Peter (Ed.). *Shakespeare Survey 53: Shakespeare and Narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 1-11.
- Bremond, Claude (1966). "The Logic of Possible Narrative." *Communications*, volume 8, Paris, Editions du Senil. pp. 60-76.
- Bremond, Claude (1966). "The Logic of Possible Narrative." *Communications*, volume 8, Paris, Editions du Senil. pp. 60-76.
- Chandler, Daniel (2007). *Semiotics: The Basics*. Second Edition. London: Routledge.
- Chatman, Seymour (1978). *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. London: Cornell University Press.
- Dolezel, Lubomir (1972). "From Motifemes to Motifs." *Poetics*, volume 4, pp. 55-90.
- Dorothy, Hale J. (2006). *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1900-2000*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Eco, Umberto (1976). *A Theory of Semiotics*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press/London: Macmillan.
- Fisette, Jean (2007). "Literary Practice on the Immediate Horizon of the Elaboration of Semiotic: Peirce's Meeting with a Few Great Authors." *Semiotica*, volume 165-1/4, pp. 67-89.
- Genette, Gerard ([1972] 1983). *Narrative Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gerrig, Richard J. and David W. Allbritton (1990). "The Construction of Literary Character: A View from Cognitive Psychology." *Style*, volume 24, pp. 380-91.
- Gonzalez-Marquez, Monica (2006). *Methods in Cognitive Linguistics*. Philadelphia: J. Benjamins Publication.
- Goodwin, David (1991). "Employing the Reader: Motivation and Technical Documentation." *Technical Writing and Communication*, volume 21, pp. 99-115.
- Greimas, Algirdas J. (1987). *On Meaning: Selected Writings in Semiotic Theory*. Trans. Paul J. Perron & Frank H. Collins. London: Frances Pinter.

- Greimas, Algirdas J. ([1966] 1983): *Structural Semantics*. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press.
- Guiraud, Pierre (1975). *Semiology*. Trans. George Gross. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Hawkes, Terence (1977). *Structuralism and Semiotics*. London: Routledge.
- Hjelmslev, Louis (1953 [1943]). *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*. Baltimore: Waverly Press.
- Johansen, Jorgen D. (2007b). "Preface." *Semiotica*, volume 165-1/4, pp. 1-10.
- Johansen, Jorgen D. (1986). "The Place of Semiotics in the Study of Literature." In: Evans, Jonathan D., and Andre Helbo (Ed.). *Semiotics and International Scholarship*. Dordrecht: Nijhoff. pp. 101-126.
- Johansen, Jorgen D. (2007a). "A Semiotic Definition of Literary Discourse." *Semiotica*, volume 165-1/4, pp. 107-132.
- Kristeva, Julia (1984). *Revolution in Poetic Language*. Trans. M. Waller. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Labov, William (1972). *Language in the Inner City*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Langendonck, William (2007). "Iconicity." In: Geerraerts, Dirck and Hubert Cuyckens (Ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 394-418.
- Lothe, Jakob (2000). *Narrative in Fiction and Film: An Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Lotman, Jurij *et al.* (1975). *Theses on the Semiotic Study of Culture*. Lisse: de Ridder Press.
- Ludovic, De Cuyper (2008). *Limiting the Iconic: From the Metatheoretical Foundations to the Creative Possibilities of Iconicity in Language*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Martin, B. and F. Ringham (2006). *Key Terms in Semiotics*. London: Bookens Ltd.
- Morris, Charles W. (1938/1970). *Foundations of the Theory of Signs*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

- Nebel, Bernhard (1999). "Frame-based Systems." In: Robert, Wilson A. and Frank C. Keil (Ed.). *MIT Encyclopedia of the Cognitive Science*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. pp. 324-326.
- Noth, Winfried (1990). *Handbook of Semiotics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Palmer, Alan (2007). "Universal Mind." *Semiotica*, volume 165-1/4, pp. 205-225.
- Pavel, Thomas G. (1985). "Literary Narrative." In: Van Dijk, Teun A. (Ed.). *Discourse and Literature*. Amsterdam: Benjamins Publishing Co. pp. 85-103.
- Peirce, Charles S. (1907). *The Essential Peirce. Selected Philosophical Writings*. vol. 1 (1867-1893), edited by Nathan Houser & Christian Kloesel, 1992, vol. 2 (1893-1913), edited by the Peirce Edition Project, 1998. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Peirce, Charles S. (1931). *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, 8 volumes, vols. 1-6, eds. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, vols. 7-8. Ed. Arthur W. Burks. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Pollio, Howard R., Smith Michael K. and Marilyn R. (1990). "Figurative Language and Cognitive Psychology." *Language and Cognitive Processes*, volume 5, no. 2, pp. 141-167.
- Posner, Roland (1992). "Origin and Development of Contemporary Syntactics." *Languages of Design: Formations for Word, Image and Sound*. Vol. 1, no. 1, September, pp.33-50.
- Propp, Vladimir (1928). *Morphology of the Folktale*. Second Edition. Trans. Laurence Scott. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Ricoeur, Paul (2002). *Time and Narrative*. Chicago [u.a.]: University of Chicago Press.
- Rimmon-Kenan, S. (2002). *Narrative fiction: Contemporary Poetics*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd.
- Rizzoli, Renato (1999). *Representation and Ideology in Jacobean Drama: The Politics of the Coup De Theatre*. New York: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- Ryan, Marie-Laure (1985). "Model Structure of Narrative Universe." *Poetics Today*, volume 6, pp. 717-755.

- Santaella, Lucia (2007). “The contribution of Peirce’s Philosophical Disciplines to Literary Studies.” *Semiotica*, volume 165-1/4, pp. 57-66.
- Tejera, Victorino (1995). *Literature, Criticism, and the Theory of Signs*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co.
- Todorov, Tzvetan (1965). *Theories of Literature: Text and Russian Formalism*. Paris: Seuil.
- Todorov, Tzvetan (1969). *Grammar in Decameron*. Mouton: The Hague.
- Todorov, Tzvetan (1969). *Grammar in Decameron*. Mouton: The Hague.
- Trotsky, Leon (1957). *Literature and Revolution*. New York: Russell.
- Van Dijk, Teun A. (1976). “Narrative Macro-structures: Logical and Cognitive Foundations.” *PTL: Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature*, volume 1, pp. 547-68.
- Van Dijk, Teun A. (1985). *Discourse and Literature*. Amsterdam: Benjamins Publishing Co.
- Waugh, Patricia (2006). *Literary Theory and Criticism*. Oxford [u.a.]: Oxford University Press.