

*Semiological Analysis of the Narrative Character in the Novel*

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**Abstract:** The novel is among the most renowned forms of literature, being the most prevalent and receptive to various literary discussions. It is also the most extensive narrative genre in terms of scale. Its significance is defined by the reality that it represents a primary creative work that engages with the medium of the novel, mirrors actual life, and draws the reader into its layers, allowing them to experience the events as if they were participating in them. Lately, contemporary methods have surfaced that focus on analyzing texts. One of these methods is the semiological approach, which has notably established itself in the critical field by placing significant emphasis on the novel. One of the most crucial aspects that scholars and reviewers have focused on is the character element, which serves as the central point in the narrative and as an artistic device employed by the novelist to convey the events.

**Keywords:** semiological approach, character, novel, existence.

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## التحليل السيميائي للشخصية السردية في الرواية

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**ملخص:** الرواية من أشهر أشكال الأدب، كونها الأكثر انتشاراً وانفتاحاً على مختلف النقاشات الأدبية، كما أنها أكثر الأنواع السردية اتساعاً من حيث الحجم. إن أهمية الرواية تتحدد من خلال كونها عملاً إبداعياً أساسياً يتفاعل مع وسيط الرواية، ويعكس الحياة الحقيقية، ويجذب القارئ إلى طبقاتها، فيعيش الأحداث وكأنه مشارك فيها. وقد ظهرت في الآونة الأخيرة أساليب معاصرة تركز على تحليل النصوص، ومن هذه الأساليب المنهج السيميائي الذي أثبت نفسه بشكل ملحوظ في المجال النقدي من خلال التركيز بشكل كبير على الرواية. ومن أهم الجوانب التي ركز عليها الباحثون والمراجعون عنصر الشخصية، الذي يعمل كنقطة مركزية في السرد وكأداة فنية يستخدمها الروائي لنقل الأحداث.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** المقاربة السيميائية، الشخصية، الرواية، الوجود.

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## Introduction

The novel is a literary form that portrays the essence of reality using various narrative methods, creating an articulate space where the author shares his views on the universe, life, and existence through diverse values and messages to impact the reader's mind and inspire their imagination. One of the most crucial aspects that researchers and critics have highlighted is character, which serves as the primary axis in the narrative and as an artistic tool employed by the novelist to convey the story. Therefore, the focus of our study is named: "Semiological Analysis of the Narrative Character in the Novel". The semiological approach, which has emerged as a crucial method because of its analytical efficiency across different fields, initiated a phase of semiology, interpretation, and the quest for meaning in a previously unfamiliar manner. A significant investigation commenced to explore and interpret the implications of De Saussure's term "semiology" for a science yet to emerge, as well as the American Peirce's emphasis on the importance of analyzing signs and their dimensions within a discipline termed "semiotics." In other words, structuralism imposed strict limitations on semiology, prompting a revolutionary effort by certain critics to free semiology from these constraints, among whom the key figures include: Philippe Soler, Julia Kristeva, Paul Ricoeur, Jacques Derrida, leading to an ongoing evolution in semiology and interpretation. The semantic function that animates, if you will, is represented in the character via his thoughts and actions, or the traits he displays in his interactions with other characters within the context of time and setting. The narrator allocates to him a series of roles associated with a group.

### ***The research problem:***

How can the novel character be formulated through the mechanisms of the semiological approach?

*Research question:*

What is the importance of the novelistic character as one of the narrative techniques?

What are the most important values embodied by the novelist through the different characters?

To answer the previous questions, we adopted the semiological approach. In all literary works, so we entered the world of the novel with its mechanisms.

***The importance of the research:***

The importance of the research lies in its attempt to study the mechanisms of the semiotic approach to the novel's characters and understand the concept of character, and track its movement and position in the narrative, in order to reveal the semiotics of the characters.

***Research objectives:***

The Semiology analysis deals with the element of character as a sign with the aim of reaching the true invisible meaning. The novel is considered a journey from the past to the present.

*Research Methodology:* The research adopted the descriptive method, using analysis in order to reveal the semiotic features and dimensions that make the meanings open to a variety of readings.

We faced difficulties during this experience, the most important of which were:

Difficulty in collecting scientific material. The abundance of references and the intertwining of concepts that made us confused when choosing the best of them. Now this field is very diverse.

**The concept of semiology**

"Semiology" is derived from the Greek word "Sémeion," meaning sign, and "Logos," referring to discourse, as seen in terms like "Sociology," "Theology," "Zoology," etc. The term "Logos" signifies science, thus defining semiology as: "the science of signs."

This is at least how Ferdinand de Saussure characterized it, as it can

then conceive of a science that examines the existence of signs within the boundaries of social life. The root of semiology comes from Greek, and its primary meaning is "the study of signs".

It is recognized that semiology is the discipline that examines sign systems, including linguistic, iconic, or kinetic forms. Thus, if linguistics examines linguistic systems, then semiology investigates non-linguistic signs that emerge within society. Therefore, linguistics is considered a branch of semiology, as stated by the Swiss scholar Ferdinand de Saussure, since semiology examines all systems, regardless of their rules and expressive forms: linguistic or not. Thus, semiology extends beyond just linguistic signs or non-linguistic signs, as it examines various sign systems, particularly those developed within social contexts, which sets it apart from semiotics.

De Saussure limited this discipline to the analysis of signs that possess a social aspect, indicating that semiology investigates the role of signs in social contexts; this implies they serve a social purpose and are intricately linked to social psychology. In this context, de Saussure states that Language is a system of signs used to convey ideas, allowing it to be likened to writing, the alphabet used by deaf-mutes, manners, military signals, ritual symbols, and so on; however, language stands out as the most significant among these systems. There exists a connection between semiology and social psychology, as both pertain to a single reality: social life, regardless of its aspects. This field is named "semiology," and it aims to explain the composition of signs and the governing laws that regulate them. Since it is still in development, we cannot foresee its exact nature. This discipline is entitled to exist within its established boundaries, even though linguistics is merely a subset of it. The principles semiology uncovers will be relevant to linguistics, which will consequently align itself with a more specialized area within the entirety of human phenomena. Linguistics is thus merely a

segment of semiology, which then derives application rules from it within a social context, specifically connected to linguistic systems.

Based on our astute observation, we deduce from the refusal to label it abstraction that it leads to necessary and relative judgments concerning the attributes of the signs employed by scientific intelligence. According to Peirce, semiotics emerged concurrently with semiology as described by de Saussure, and Peirce rejected the term abstraction because it ultimately yields necessary and relative judgments about the signs utilized, particularly within the scientific realm. In this context, Roland Barthes argues that it is essential to now embrace the idea of inverting the Saussure proposition, considering that linguistics is not merely a distinct part of semiology, but instead semiology is a component of linguistics, specifically that segment tasked with managing the significant units of discourse. Thus, the coherence of contemporary studies in anthropology, sociology, psychoanalysis, and stylistics, focused on the idea of meaning becomes apparent. This semiotic knowledge today can only reflect linguistic knowledge since it must be applied at least as a proposal to non-linguistic entities.

However, Barthes argues that linguistics is not included in semiology; rather, semiology falls under the umbrella of linguistics, particularly when it comes to significant discourse units. This relationship has led to the development of various sciences, with sociology being the most significant as it encompasses non-linguistic elements that this method must be employed to understand their implications. Peirce and Saussure are often regarded as the founders of what is widely referred to as semiotics. They established two significant traditions. The word 'semiology' is occasionally employed to denote the Saussurean approach, whereas 'semiotics' pertains to the Peircean approach. Nonetheless, it is typical nowadays to refer to 'semiotics' as a broad term encompassing the whole area of study. In other words, the concept of 'semiology' is

intrinsically associated with 'Ferdinand de Saussure', while 'semiotics' pertains to 'Peirce', and is broader and more inclusive than the former.

Therefore, the theory of general signs has developed since the start of the 22nd century. The Anglo-Saxons practiced semiotics, whereas the Europeans opted for semiology. One can also distinguish between semiology as a broad theory and an extensive philosophy of signs, with the former being the theoretical aspect, while semiotics serves as an analytical methodology focusing on texts, discourses, and human actions, involving deconstruction, organization, analysis, and interpretation, thus representing the applied segment of semiology.

Semiotics constitutes only a segment of the science of signs, thus we can assert that its focus lies in the implementation of semiology, which also belongs to the science of signs but applies within society rather than in isolation. Saussure states that semiology is associated with social roles that relate directly to the existence of signs within social life. He suggests "Séméiologie", denoting the study of signs, based on Saussure's depiction of language as a system of signs where the essence lies in the link between meanings and sound images, and both aspects of the sign are psychological, indicating it is a social creation of language faculty. Saussure's semiology is built on a set of principles, which include: - The dual nature of structure, whereby a word comprises two elements, the signifier "Signifiant", representing the auditory image of what is represented, and the second element, the signified "Signifie", referring to the mental concept. The connection between the two elements is an arbitrary relationship, and it is the link between the signifier and the signified according to Saussure. Semiotics progresses as a bold initiative with a fresh core for science.

Semiotics essentially refers to the study of signs, or the discipline of semantics, grounded in the epistemological foundations of the

signifier, as articulated by Greimas. Everything in our surroundings is perpetually transmitting signs. Meanings and interpretations arise from the combination of signs associated with all things, influencing both rational and irrational beings. Recipients must express their desire to receive, enabling the mind to initiate a complex process of unraveling the sign networks of meanings that encompass them. Thus, semiotics is linked to all entities since they function as signs, with the mind serving as the foundation of the semiotic process by deconstructing and creating meanings. Saussure argues that the creation of meaning relies on language, which is defined by a system of signs that enables it to fulfill its function in forming or conveying a complete message. To ensure coherence, specific laws need to be applied to this process, which Saussure referred to as "Syntagmes." Consequently, a sign cannot be interpreted alone or in isolation; instead, the process of interpretation should connect the sign as a component of a broader system that governs how the sign is utilized.

This system is identified through the exploration and understanding of the laws and regulations that connect the signifier and the signified, along with the rules and principles that associate the signs in a unified manner; these rules or principles are referred to as "Codes." Furthermore, semiotics introduces an additional aspect concerning how the sign imparts meaning. Thus, "Semiology" is a discipline that examines the existence of signs utilized in society like language, traditions, ceremonies, and similar aspects, revealing their elements and the principles of their arrangement. Nevertheless, it constitutes a field of social psychology, and consequently of general psychology. De Saussure claims that linguistics is merely a subset of semiotics, and the principles uncovered by semiotics can be utilized in linguistics. Therefore, the latter closely follows a particular area within the framework of anthropological guidelines. Therefore, the elements of signs and their regulations arise from their application, particularly within social contexts; as they belong



to social psychology and general psychology, which oversee the progression of linguistic phenomena.

### **Semiotics, its domains and instruments**

Semiology is a theoretical examination of how the meanings of signs and symbols are considered in the evolution of language. What significant function do signs and symbols serve in understanding meaning as a sign's meaning and a symbol representing the connection of meaning in language? Semiology starts by examining the connection between signs and symbols in the evolution of language, considering the role of the system of meanings embedded in these signs and symbols, and it adds to the meanings found in linguistics. Semiology considers how the signs and symbols present in a social community influence the distinctiveness of meanings within that particular social group.

Semiology considers the historical evolution of languages in terms of nature versus nurture, where certain words possess natural, absolute, universal, and permanent meanings, while others have arbitrary meanings resulting from a cultural framework that specifically determines the significance of signs and symbols within that culture, thereby influencing its linguistic interpretations. Furthermore, semiology demands that words be utilized naturally or based on the arbitrary social construct of what the word refers to. De Saussure opposed the idea that word meanings are merely arbitrarily constructed by society as one might expect. De Saussure acknowledged that various cultures assign different meanings to language owing to disparities in the structure of signs and symbols. Words alone serve as functional symbols for the conceptual, intellectual, and cognitive ideas that the human mind contemplates, while the inherent and natural absolute metaphysical concepts present in the human mind shape the functioning of meanings in language. De Saussure thought that words inherently possess

meanings and serve as symbols for the innate concepts within the human mind, an essential necessity for the reality of the world.

These absolute inherent conceptual meanings could be identified and manifested in the earthly realm due to the process of language acquisition. And the mental capacity to understand and recognize the inherent conceptual meanings in terms. The culture, the social and political systems, and the self-serving human ego that determine the meanings of words are simply deceptive and arbitrary interpretations of the universal, eternal, absolute, metaphysical concepts, inherently ingrained in the human mind, waiting for intellectual, cognitive acknowledgment and awareness of language in the real world. Views varied regarding semiology as a scientific discipline and its applications across various domains, yet there is a consensus that it focuses on the study of diverse signs, with semiology being applied in numerous areas including logic, literature, art, media, and more. This field of study has been recognized since ancient eras, just like the study of language. Semiology is associated with media, as almost all media content contains various semiological components, whether they are linguistic or non-linguistic in nature. Semiotic analysis is utilized in the media domain, either by examining the image with all its details or by scrutinizing the sound in its various forms and encompassing its meanings.

### **The concept of character**

Character is a subject that has garnered significant focus from researchers since it plays a crucial role in the realm of novel creation. It is a complex and enigmatic issue, leading us to discover a notion that varies from individual to individual, as it forms one of the elements of the novel. To better understand it, we need to explore its origin. In tracing the word's origin, it stems from the Latin root (*personas*), which signifies the mask that an actor wears, portraying a role or presenting a specific appearance before an

audience. Consequently, the term evolved to denote the façade a person presents. The term (personas) originates from the English word (personality), signifying personality, and the term (person) evolved into a literary concept representing the literary mask. In literary criticism, this denotes the active self within a work, which can encompass various facets; potentially, the author is among those facets. This will lead to the character embodying a human personality type found in both individuals and society, while the other type is depicted in the notable typical characters of artistic expressions like novels, theater, and cinema.

The character is recognized as the primary force that propels the unfolding of events in the novel. Various ideas have arisen regarding the character because of its significant role in the studies and advancements observed in the creative, artistic, and critical fields. It serves as the primary general axis that emphasizes the event and bears the initial responsibility of demonstrating the significance of the issue presented in the narrative and its worth. It is also true for every character in the novel, whether negatively or positively. Regarding individuals who do not take part in the discussion, they are not part of the characters. Instead, they are regarded as elements of the description.” Everything mentioned above validates the significance and impact of the character in the narrative, as well as its crucial function in emphasizing both the event and the central issue. Thus, it serves as a device that enables the novelist to effectively emphasize the incident and its progression. Philip Hamon described it as a character in the narrative being more of a creation made by the reader than one constructed by the text itself. It serves as a guiding instrument employed by the reader via their interpretation and comprehension of the text, while also assisting the novelist in effectively expressing and relaying their concepts to the reader. A key element in the story, it serves the most significant purposes of the book, and the whole function in the novel relies on it. Consequently, it cannot be

eliminated. The idea of personality has developed throughout history. Certain individuals consider it a language matter, whereas others see it as a collection of elements. This has generated the curiosity of numerous researchers in personality by studying it and emphasizing its artistic and realistic elements.

### **Character in the semiological direction**

Semiotics is the field that examines the existence of signs, regardless of their origin, as this discipline focuses on analyzing all linguistic signs and signals in the context of what is referred to as social life. Regarding the semiotics of the fictional character, this model addresses it by positing that it functions as a sign that acquires meaning and worth through tradition and literary context, and the character engages with other literary components. Vladimir Propp is regarded as the pioneer in proposing the notion of understanding the structural perspective of character based on functions, as the word in a sentence is not seen as holding meaning beyond its context, but instead derives its significance from the role it fulfills. Propp describes the function as the role of the agent, understood through its significance within the narrative's mystery. In other words, the occurrence is viewed as a function as long as it is influenced by a sequence of preceding events that emphasize it and following events that stem from it. According to Propp, the characters are connected through action circles, with each circle consisting of a collection of functions. The sum of these functions is thirty-one, distributed among seven characters, specifically:

1- The malevolent or hostile character: This character causes suffering to the hero or a family member, ensnares the hero into its trap, and then assaults him.

2- The aiding character: Its role is to select the hero and provide him with the magical item that assists him in completing a specific mission.

3- The supporting character: Their role is to assist the hero in overcoming the abuse and accomplishing the goals they aim to pursue.

4- The nature of the prince: or the character being sought whose responsibilities are shared between her and her parent.

5- The nature of the sender: one of her responsibilities is to assign the hero a challenging mission.

6- The hero's character: embarks on the challenging task given to her, ultimately to receive a marriage proposal or a monetary reward as her prize.

7- The nature of the fraudulent hero: It begins with a research intent grounded in deceitful assertions to gain the reward.

It is observed through Propp's categorization of characters that they are not determined by their traits and qualities, but instead by the roles they fulfill. He omits only one character from this definition, which is that of the princess, since he defined it with the same distinctive attribute. Gremias denotes the subordination of ACTANTS, though he actually differentiates between actors and factors; both are envisioned to undertake or finalize the action and can encompass not just humans but also inanimate entities, like fate and destiny. The distinction between them lies in the fact that factors are broad categories defined for each deficiency, whereas actors are fictional characters possessing unique traits in the narrative based on Gremias' framework. This universal model is founded on six factors from which three relationships emerge:

A- The connection of desire: This connection emerges between the desiring one (the self) and the object of desire (the subject), where

this self, if in a state of distance, longs for connection, and in this condition, an essential development takes place that Gremias refers to as “the funeral,” which is oriented either towards union or division based on the nature of desire.

B- The connection of communication: It emerges from a need that requires a reason and an impetus behind it, which Gremias refers to as the sender. This does not occur independently; rather, it is aimed at the recipient. This connection inevitably traverses the relationship between the self and the subject.

C- The conflictual relationship: This dynamic unites two contrasting elements, identified as “the assistant” and “the opponent.” The first supports the self, whereas the second hinders its attempts to connect with the subject.

By examining these three connections, we gain a comprehensive understanding of the global model as outlined by Gremias. It pertains solely to itself, and it is not entirely provided beforehand. It must be constructed, and the text achieves this self-creation through the process of reading. This void morpheme manifests via the signifier of expression and the nuances of the meaning of expression. Moreover, the significance is not presented at the start or the conclusion of the text, but is understood throughout the entire piece. Similar to the linguistic sign, a character is defined not solely by its role in the narrative, but also by the connections it builds with other characters..

### **The concept of character according to Philip Hamon**

What sets Hamon apart from other critics and scholars regarding the fictional character is his commitment to writing a detailed, comprehensive article that proposes a concept for character and methods for its analysis. He also gained from diverse viewpoints, attempting to harmonize them, as he mentioned in his article numerous trends that explored the concept of character through

research and theory. In the piece titled *For a Semiological Law of Character* and through the citations that accompanied his article, he offered ample and precise clarifications of the topics from which he gained insights, and he did not restrict himself to merely citing references and page numbers as typically done. Hamon's idea of character connects with numerous critics from whom he gained insights, and it aligns more with linguistics. He viewed it as a linguistic symbol made up of a signifier and a signified, in his opinion.

Examining the character from a semiotic viewpoint, it is perceived as a semantic unit and a sign that can be analyzed and described, arising solely from its dialogue, actions, or the commentary made about it in the text. The character within semiotics can be characterized as a sort of doubly detached morpheme, an unstable morpheme expressed through a fragmented signifier (a collection of signs) that relates to a fragmented signified (meaning) or the character's value. He additionally examined the character as an empty morpheme, whose framework relies on actions and attributes and derives its significance and reference from discursive contexts that remain incomplete unless fulfilled. In this, he states that there exists a system of equations embedded in a context that maintains the text's readability, implying that the character acts as a symbol within the text's structure, fused with other symbols, and that its universality is attained solely by interpreting it in relation to a network of connections with other characters, regardless of their nature. Its position in the narrative text The idea of character is not solely a literary notion, but instead relates to the grammatical role that the fictional character plays within the text. Regarding the literary role of the character, it involves the critic managing the cultural and aesthetic criteria.

### **Character Dimensions**

Creating and illustrating fictional characters is a challenging task, prompting the writer to utilize methods and tools to portray his characters with accuracy and attention, such as illustrating the character through their actions and behaviors with subtle hints during storytelling, dialogue, and creative expression. Through the accumulation of these subtle details, the parameters of depicting the character become evident to the observer, which are:

A- The physical dimension: The physiological dimension refers to the human form, including one's height or short stature, beauty or attractiveness, and imperfections, as the body serves as the link to the larger realm, which is the universe. A person's existence fundamentally involves a physical presence, as the body is not solely a material or biological entity, but an integral aspect of one's identity. It can be stated that the physical aspect is the outward dimension, as it examines the external traits of the character. It is a collection of outward physical attributes and traits that define the character, whether these traits are articulated directly by the writer (narrator) or by one of the characters, or by the character themselves while describing their denial, or subtly implied through their behavior or actions. This indicates that it relies on the character's perceived identity from his outward looks. From the information above, the significance of this dimension's role is evident, as it indicates a photographic analysis of the character and highlights its crucial aspect of the fictional persona.

B- The social dimension: The personality is developed through this aspect, as the individual's influential social surroundings significantly contribute to shaping their identity, its development, and defining its characteristics. The social dimension refers to the character's connection to a specific social class or the social details pertaining to the character's status, beliefs, and social relationships (such as profession, class—e.g., worker/middle class/feudal bourgeois, low social status, affluent/capitalist ideology,



authority...). Overall, this aspect pertains to the rise and social strata during a specific period or phase. It also encompasses social conditions and the character's connections with other people. From it, we can discover all aspects concerning the character's life, including education level, financial situation, and interactions with their surroundings. Consequently, the social aspect manifests in everything surrounding the character and influences his actions or behaviors. Through it, we can discover all aspects related to this character, including their education, religious and intellectual influences, financial condition, and social standing.

C- Psychological dimension: It refers to the psychological characteristics associated with the inner essence of the personality (thoughts, feelings, emotions, sentiments...). Personality represents one of the most intricate and concentrated aspects of psychology. This is due to the fact that it encompasses physical, emotional, and moral characteristics when they interact with one another for a particular individual residing in a specific social context. This aspect is reflected in the nature of the personality and what sets it apart from others, like being virtuous or wicked. It is also represented in its actions or words, as well as the emotions and feelings it conveys (sadness, joy, anger, stability). This dimension arises from the two earlier dimensions. Our psychology is what fulfills our social and physical existence. In examining these three dimensions, we discover that they are interconnected with one another. Each one influences the other and is influenced by it. While character is inherent, it is influenced by upbringing and surroundings, with the mental dimension shaped by culture and raising. Clothing reflects the preferences of its wearer.

Consequently, no personality can lack these three dimensions. Personality consists of a combination of physical and psychological characteristics (both inherited and learned), along with customs, traditions, values, and emotions that influence how others perceive

an individual through their interactions. At the conclusion of our exploration of personality dimensions, we determine that it is a intricate blend of three foundational dimensions (physical, psychological, and social).

### **The factorial structure of the narrative text**

This concept stems from the narrative text, and considering the aforementioned, we observe that semiology owes its origin to Propp, as he shifted the focus from linguistic analysis to narrative analysis. He clarified that the novel consists of various components and depended on a range of interactive and reciprocal connections among them. In his book *Morphology of the Folktale*, he referenced the various functions within the novel's structure, noting that these functions emerge and vanish based on the text's specifics.

Then came "Claude Levi-Strauss," who reevaluated "Propp's" functional model and noted that "Propp" concentrated on surface structures without delving into the deeper structures in his folk tale analysis. This resulted in substitutional projections within deep narration, causing him to detach form from content, which is unacceptable in structural studies. Based on these insights, "Strauss" formulated his new perspectives by examining studies that pertain to myths from various cultures, discovering that what "Propp" considers secondary or fundamental may be essential in another text. Narrative texts attained their peak development through Alfred Greimas, who utilized the contributions of earlier scholars to create his overarching model. He condensed Propp's functions into six, organized into three pairs: (sender, addressee – self, subject – auxiliary, and opponent). Subsequently, he analyzed the internal structures of texts.

### **Trends in Semiology**

The trends in semiology revolved around three main trends, namely: The American trend, the French trend, and the Russian trend.

The American trend: This movement was centered around the concept of signs, and leading this trend was the philosopher and logician "Peirce," associated with the American school known as "instrumentalism." In this domain, both De Saussure and Peirce approached the sign from their respective areas of expertise; since "Peirce's" notion alone cannot establish a trend, his views on the sign remain obscure, yet they were influenced by "Gerard de l'Odal" and "Molyneux" regarding the concept of the sign.

The French trend: It encompasses a collection of trends, with each utilizing a term that signifies nearly the same concept, yet it highlights the distinction among those who employ semiology, semiotics, and semantics. The word "semiology" became associated with the examination of non-linguistic signs, whereas "semiotics" became linked to the analysis of linguistic systems and more.

The Russian trend: Semiological studies were novel in Russia; however, within a brief timeframe, they experienced significant growth under the influence of Russian formalists. This trend emerged due to the dissemination of the methodological crisis that marked Russian literature during this period. In other terms, the crisis or the earlier discussion regarding semiology in Russia unfolded along four avenues: A heritage inherited from formalism, acknowledging that there are principles guiding it, which is also elaborated upon in the book *Lectures on Semiology*.

### **The semiological approach and its elements**

The semiological method is a post-structuralist approach that historically stemmed from structuralism nearly. The primary challenge we encounter regarding semiology pertains to terminology, since certain scholars assert that the components of the semiotic methodology are:

The linguistic structural component: which pertains to the arrangement of the text and its language.

The artistic aesthetic element: which pertains to the artistic creativity present in shaping the form within the text.

The semantic utilitarian aspect: which pertains to the writer, his surroundings, and the intertextual connections with other works.

Thus, the semiotic or semiological method relies on including the experimental material; meaning, the text is examined from various perspectives, including language, sound, color, shape, and all elements that signify meaning, until we attain an effective extraction of the text's content. It is the method that examines the text based on its features and connects it to external semiotic systems, like the environment, for instance. It broadens to encompass human culture or extends to cover the domain of the human self. This method depends on an in-depth examination of the text and extends further by deciphering the meaning behind the language, considering the connotations of the signs within the text, like color, movement, rhythm, sound, and structure. It is a method that does not analyze the text in a rigid manner, but instead focuses on discovering the instrument for interpretations.

### **Phases of the Semiological Method**

Semiology is the study of linguistic and non-linguistic signs; it examines signs, signals, symbols, and visual icons. Semiology is methodologically grounded in the processes of deconstruction and synthesis as well. Semiology examines the text within its internal structural framework, analyzing its components and reassembling them by investigating the content's form. Semiology seeks to understand the principles of difference and its importance. The meaning is uncovered and the importance is derived through the clashes, discrepancies, and contradictions among the linguistic textual signs. The aim of analyzing texts both semiologically and practically is to explore meaning and importance, as well as to infer

the logical and semantic structure that produces the texts. The approach consists of three tiers.

**Neutral analysis:** This refers to the investigation of the internal factors that govern the creation of meaning, setting aside any external references like the context of the text and the author's life history. Thus, the meaning should be seen as a result stemming from a web of connections that tie the components together.

**Structural analysis:** Meaning derives its existence from differences, and is shaped by those differences; comprehending the meaning of statements and texts presupposes the existence of a system based on a network of relationships. This consequently results in the acknowledgment of the text's elements, which hold no significance apart from the web of relationships that exist among them. Consequently, focus should be directed solely towards the factors that shape the system of variation and the different harmonious coherences. Structural analysis necessitates an internal descriptive examination of the text, along with an examination of the content's form and its structural frameworks.

**Discourse analysis:** While structural linguistics, with its various schools and approaches, focuses on examining the sentence by beginning at several methodological levels—from the smallest unit, the sound, to the largest linguistic unit, the sentence, and in reverse order—semiotics extends beyond the sentence to encompass discourse analysis. These three levels are methodological tiers that frequently assist us in analyzing, comprehending, and engaging with texts based on two surface and underlying structures. At a surface level, the narrative complex is analyzed, which outlines the order of states and the series of narrative changes and its condition, while the rhetorical complex in the text is defined by the arrangement of meaning forms and their resulting impacts. Regarding the deep structure level, we discuss two layers, semiological and semantic, both of which are significant in the semiotic analysis of texts.

## **The significance of character in the narrative**

In the nineteenth century, character held a significant position in novelistic art, becoming separate from the plot, and the events were largely structured to enhance understanding of the characters or to introduce new ones. Alan Robb connects the fascination that nineteenth-century novelists had with characters to the increasing importance of the individual in society and their quest for autonomy; this he termed "excessive worship of the human." This suggests that for these writers, characters embodied the traits of their social class, with all narrative elements aiming to highlight the character, maximize its significance, and assert its presence in every circumstance.

In other words, the character stayed connected to societal life, while society transitioned to the literary character, which defied established norms and evolved into complex forms across different novels. In this instance, the character does not stay secondary to the event or influenced by it; instead, they become an integral element, essential for the narrative's coherence. It is widely recognized that "Lukacs" consistently highlights the importance of maintaining the hero's presence in the text and ensuring their proper placement. The character in the novel is not random; instead, he operates towards a particular objective, governed by unbreakable laws. From this, we derive that the hero symbolizes someone unique among the others who drive the story, leading us to conclude that he cannot be regarded as a character. Given the numerous challenges associated with depicting the character in the novel, it is important to establish a clear procedural approach that helps us in identifying the character and enables semantic classification. In this context, "Philip Hamon" suggests two fundamental measures that are effective in accomplishing this task as efficiently as possible. The following two measures are:

The numerical assessment: It examines the volume of consistently provided information clearly regarding the character.

The qualitative assessment: In other words, how this information regarding the character is conveyed—does the character express it about himself directly, or does it come indirectly through the methods used by other characters or the author? Some novelists refrain from providing any visual descriptions, while others offer it straightforwardly, and some leave the task to other fictional characters, based on the earlier criteria.

Vladimir Propp attempted to characterize the identity of a character within the story broadly, focusing on its actions while also considering the connections it has with the ensemble of characters in the narrative. Philip Hammon states that the character in the narrative is primarily created by the reader, rather than being solely shaped by the text itself. The fictional character is developed by the creator from the essence of his imagination, intended for a specific artistic goal, and it is not the author who pragmatically asserts that the character then surpasses the individual, while also encompassing him simultaneously. It is the manifestation that unfolds within the individual for his concept, and perspectives on the character have shifted among critics and across different periods.

While in traditional novels, characters were regarded as living entities with their own physical presence, they are now viewed more as "individuals." These characters previously held the most significant role in any fictional work, leading all novelists to emphasize the depiction of their characters' traits. Consequently, certain French critics viewed the novelistic character, much like the cinematic or theatrical character, as not being apart from the imaginary realm it inhabits, along with all its entities and objects, asserting that the character cannot thrive in our minds as a solitary entity, but is instead connected to a framework, and through it solely

exists with all its facets, and this perspective significantly enhances the importance of the character.

The character serves as a semantic unit, defined as a distinct signified, that can be analyzed and described. If we accept the logical premise that a fictional character emerges from units of meaning, and that it is articulated or expressed accordingly, it becomes a foundation for maintaining the narrative and its variations. It appears that story semioticians find common ground on this matter. The significance of the character arises from meaningful units and spoken sentences, playing a highly impactful role in various aspects of narrative creativity. It's important to note that Fromm was the pioneer in exploring the social aspects of character, highlighting how society, along with its social and political contexts, transforms inherent abilities into social skills. These social abilities form the core of the social character, which is collectively held by individuals within the same culture, yet can differ from person to person within that culture. This is what many authors have used, and it has been leveraged in numerous fictional pieces, particularly realistic ones, as the character reflects society directly.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, following the attempts to address every facet of this subject, we come to track the key outcomes we achieved. The character comprises a intricate blend of fundamental dimensions, namely the physical dimension, the psychological dimension, and the social dimension. The relationships among the characters in the novel resulted in forming various connections that helped foster interaction within the narrative. According to Philip Hamon's semiotic mechanism for categorizing characters based on image pathways, we observe a variety among characters, encompassing referential types, repetitive elements, and connections, thereby deepening and broadening their complexity. The semiotic analysis examines the character as a sign in order to uncover the authentic



hidden meaning. The book is viewed as a progression from history to the current time, and a struggle between the individual and the external. The character serves as the foundation and cornerstone of the narrative framework, and in its absence, the novel turns sterile and lacking in human substance, as it is the focal point for ideas and significances that the events encircle. Semiology has traversed an extensive path in contemporary Western linguistic and critical theory. Since the 1960s, the discipline of semiotics has demonstrated growing engagement. One reason that sparked interest in it is the variety of subjects it covers.

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