

Concepts of Discourse Analysis in the French Structuralist School

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Sending date ;27/02/2025	Acceptance date :01/06/2025	date of publication :07/06/2025
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Abstract:

Narrative theory emerged in the early 20th century with the Russian Formalists, who first attempted to develop scientific approaches to studying literary texts, Vladimir Propp's groundbreaking work on the morphology of folktales established a systematic method for analyzing narrative structures, laying the foundation for subsequent theoretical developments.

This methodological approach was later adopted and refined by the French Structuralist School, which expanded these concepts into a comprehensive framework for discourse analysis. This paper examines the key theoretical contributions of prominent French structuralists—Tzvetan Todorov, Gérard Genette, Algirdas Julien Greimas, and Roland Barthes—whose work fundamentally transformed literary criticism and discourse analysis.

Their collective efforts to develop systematic methodologies for text analysis have had profound and lasting effects on literary theory and criticism worldwide, establishing new paradigms for understanding how meaning is constructed in texts.

This raises an important question: To what extent did the efforts of the French Structuralist School influence critical and literary movements globally? This paper argues that their theoretical innovations not only revolutionized discourse analysis but also catalyzed new critical approaches that continue to resonate throughout contemporary literary studies.

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Keywords: Discourse Analysis, Structuralist, Narratology, Russian Formalists.

الملخص:

أحاول أن أعرض في هذا المقال بشكل شامل ومفصل مساهمات المدرسة البنيوية الفرنسية في تحليل الخطاب والنظرية السردية، حيث سأقدم نظرة شاملة على أعمال المفكرين البارزين في هذا المجال، منهم: "تزفيتان تودوروف وجيرار جينيت وألجيرداس جريماس ورولان بارت"، ويغطي المقال مفاهيم النظرية الرئيسية بشكل مفصل، كما يسلط الضوء على أهمية مساهماتهم في تطوير النظريات السردية.

أقدم في هذا المقال تحليلاً نقدياً عميقاً لمساهمات المدرسة البنيوية الفرنسية، حيث سأناقش التأثيرات والنتائج المترتبة عن هذه المساهمات، كما سأسلط الضوء على نقاط القوة والضعف في النظرية البنيوية، وأعرض الانتقادات والآراء المختلفة حولها، أما من حيث الأهمية العلمية لهذا المقال فهي محاولة لتبسيط الضوء على أهمية المدرسة البنيوية الفرنسية في تطوير النظرية الأدبية والنقدية.

يمثل المقال إسهاماً مهماً في مجال تحليل الخطاب والنظرية السردية، حيث يلخص ويحلل مساهمات المدرسة البنيوية الفرنسية، مما يوفر فهماً شاملاً لمفاهيمها النظرية، ويفتح باب البحث والنقاش لطروحات وشروحات فكرية أخرى تفيد الطلبة والباحثين في هذا التخصص العميق.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تحليل الخطاب، البنيوية، علم السرد، الشكلايون الروس.

1. Introduction

Narrative and discourse analysis represent fundamental approaches to understanding how meaning is constructed, transmitted, and interpreted in texts. Discourse analysis, in particular, examines how language functions beyond the sentence level to create coherent units of meaning. It investigates the structural relationships between linguistic elements and explores how these relationships generate significance within specific social, cultural, and historical contexts. The French Structuralist School developed systematic methodologies for analyzing these complex relationships, transforming our understanding of how literary texts operate.

This paper adopts a descriptive methodology to examine the theoretical frameworks developed by key figures of the French Structuralist School—specifically Tzvetan Todorov, Gérard Genette, Algirdas Julien Greimas, and Roland Barthes. Each of these theorists contributed distinctive concepts and analytical tools that collectively established new paradigms for discourse analysis.

Their work raises a central question: Were the efforts of the French Structuralist School sufficient in developing comprehensive frameworks for discourse analysis? And how did these theoretical innovations influence literary and critical movements globally?

Several hypotheses guide this investigation:

- ✓ The French Structuralist School's systematic approaches to narrative analysis provided more comprehensive analytical frameworks than previous literary theories.
- ✓ Despite their methodological rigor, these approaches contain inherent limitations that later theories attempted to address.
- ✓ The global influence of French structuralism varied significantly across different cultural and intellectual contexts, with certain aspects being adopted while others were modified or rejected.
- ✓ The theoretical innovations of the French Structuralist School laid the groundwork for subsequent developments in poststructuralism, narratology, and discourse analysis.

Through a careful examination of primary texts and secondary scholarship, the researcher seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how French structuralist approaches to discourse analysis have shaped contemporary literary theory and criticism. By delving into the intricacies of these approaches, the researcher aims to find convincing answers to the central problem and validate the hypotheses. This exploration will contribute to a deeper understanding of the impact of French structuralism on modern literary studies.

2. Narrative Concepts in Tzvetan Todorov's Work

Tzvetan Todorov (1939-2017), a Bulgarian-French literary theorist, made significant contributions to structuralist narrative theory, particularly through his development of narratology as a systematic approach to analyzing literary texts. His work bridges Russian Formalism and French Structuralism, establishing methodological frameworks that continue to influence literary analysis.

2.1 Todorov's Theoretical Framework

Todorov's approach to narrative analysis centered on identifying universal structural patterns in literary texts. In his seminal work "Grammaire du Décaméron" (1969), he proposed that all narratives follow certain structural principles that can be systematically analyzed, similar to linguistic structures.

Todorov argued that "the story coincides with a complete syntagm that proceeds from a state of equilibrium through a phase of disequilibrium to a new equilibrium" (Todorov, 1969, p. 75). This tripartite structure—equilibrium, disequilibrium, new equilibrium—forms the foundation of his narrative theory.

In "Poétique de la prose" (1971), Todorov further developed his narratological approach by identifying five key stages in narrative progression:

- ✓ Initial situation (state of equilibrium)

- ✓ Disruption of the equilibrium by an event or action
- ✓ Recognition of the disruption
- ✓ Attempt to repair the disruption
- ✓ Reestablishment of equilibrium (similar to but different from the initial situation)

This model provided a systematic framework for analyzing narrative structure across diverse texts. As Todorov explained, “The minimal complete plot consists in the passage from one equilibrium to another... An ‘ideal’ narrative begins with a stable situation which is disturbed by some power or force” (Todorov, 1977, p. 111).

Todorov also made crucial distinctions between different aspects of narrative:

- **Histoire** (story): The events as they chronologically occurred.
- **Récit** (narrative): The manner in which the events are presented.
- **Narration**: The act of telling the story.

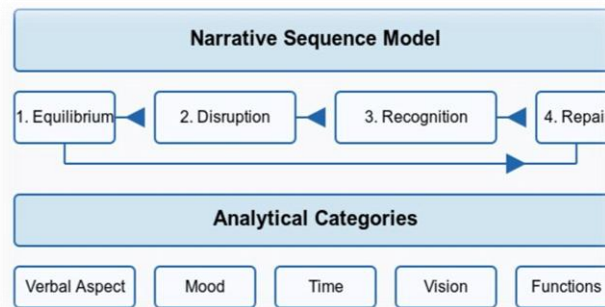
This tripartite distinction enabled more nuanced analysis of narrative structures and became foundational for subsequent narratological investigations (Todorov, 1966, p. 126).

2.2 Todorov's Contribution to Genre Theory

Beyond his work on narrative structure, Todorov made significant contributions to genre theory. In “Introduction à la littérature fantastique” (1970), he defined the fantastic as a genre characterized by hesitation: “The fantastic occupies the duration of this uncertainty... The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event” (Todorov, 1975, p. 25).

This definition emphasized the reader's experience of uncertainty as constitutive of the genre itself.

Todorov's approach to genre classification was systematic and structural. He argued that genres should be understood as theoretical constructs rather than empirical categories, writing that “a genre, literary or otherwise, is nothing but this codification of discursive properties” (Todorov, 1990, p. 18). This theoretical perspective on genre has proven influential in literary studies, offering a methodological alternative to historical or thematic approaches to genre classification.

Fig.1. Schematic Representation of Todorov's Narrative Theory

Source: Prepared by Researcher

2.3 Critical Reception and Limitations

While Todorov's work has been influential, it has also faced significant criticism. Jonathan Culler (1981) argued that Todorov's structural approach sometimes reduced the complexity of literary texts to abstract models, writing that "the application of structural models can lead to reductive readings that fail to account for the specific cultural and historical dimensions of texts" (p. 189).

Similarly, Teresa de Lauretis (1984) criticized structuralist narratology for its insufficient attention to gender, noting that "the structural models of narrative developed by Todorov and others systematically exclude considerations of gender as a significant category of narrative analysis" (p. 103). This critique highlights the tendency of early structuralist approaches to prioritize universal structures over sociocultural specificity.

Poststructuralist critics have further questioned Todorov's emphasis on binary oppositions and stable structures. Derrida's deconstructive approach challenged the very possibility of the kind of structural stability that Todorov's models presuppose (Derrida, 1978, p. 278). As Belsey (2002) notes, "Todorov's models assume a stability of meaning that poststructuralist theory fundamentally questions" (p. 67).

Despite these criticisms, Todorov's work remains foundational to narrative theory. His systematic approach to narrative analysis established methodological frameworks that continue to influence contemporary literary criticism. As Rimmon-Kenan (2002) acknowledges, "Despite valid criticisms of his work, Todorov's contribution to narratology has been crucial in establishing systematic approaches to narrative analysis" (p. 115).

3. Narrative Concepts in Gérard Genette's Work

Gérard Genette (1930-2018) developed perhaps the most comprehensive and influential narratological framework within French structuralism. His systematic approach to narrative analysis, primarily outlined in "Figures III" (1972) and "Nouveau discours du récit" (1983), established a precise terminology and methodology that continues to inform narrative theory and literary criticism.

3.1 Genette's Narratological Framework

Genette's narratology centers on three fundamental aspects of narrative discourse:

- ✓ **Tense** (Temps): The temporal relationships between story and narrative
- ✓ **Mood** (Mode): The regulation of narrative information
- ✓ **Voice** (Voix): The narrating situation and its relationship to the narrative

Within each of these categories, Genette developed detailed analytical concepts that provide tools for precise narrative analysis.

●Narrative Tense:

Genette's analysis of narrative tense focuses on the temporal relationships between the story (the chronological sequence of events) and the narrative (how these events are presented). He identified three key aspects of this relationship:

- ✓ **Order**: The relation between the sequence of events in the story and their arrangement in the narrative. Genette introduced terms such as **analepsis** (flashback) and **prolepsis** (flashforward) to describe temporal displacements. He noted that "any narrative is a sequence twice temporal... There is the time of the thing-told and the time of the narrative" (Genette, 1980, p. 33).
- ✓ **Duration**: The relationship between the time events take to occur in the story and the space devoted to them in the narrative. Genette identified several pace-related techniques:
 - **Summary**: Events are condensed
 - **Scene**: Story time and narrative time are approximately equal
 - **Pause**: Story time stops while description continues
 - **Ellipsis**: Story time passes but receives no narrative space
- ✓ **Frequency**: The relationship between how often an event occurs in the story and how often it is narrated. Genette distinguished:
 - **Singulative** narration: Narrating once what happened once
 - **Repetitive** narration: Narrating multiple times what happened once

- **Iterative** narration: Narrating once what happened multiple times.

●Narrative Mood

Genette's concept of mood addresses the regulation of narrative information, particularly through **distance** and **focalization**:

- ✓ **Distance**: Concerns the degree of mimesis (showing) versus diegesis (telling) in the narrative. Genette distinguished between:
 - **Narratized speech**: The most distant form of speech representation
 - **Transposed speech** (indirect discourse): Mediates character speech
 - **Reported speech** (direct discourse): Creates an illusion of immediacy
- ✓ **Focalization**: Describes the perspective through which narrative events are presented. Genette identified three types:
 - **Zero focalization**: The narrator knows more than any character ("omniscient" narration)
 - **Internal focalization**: The narrator knows only what a given character knows
 - **External focalization**: The narrator knows less than the characters, reporting only external actions

Genette argued that "most of the theoretical work on this subject... suffers from... a regrettable confusion between... who sees? and who speaks?" (Genette, 1980, p. 186). His concept of focalization helped clarify this distinction.

●Narrative Voice

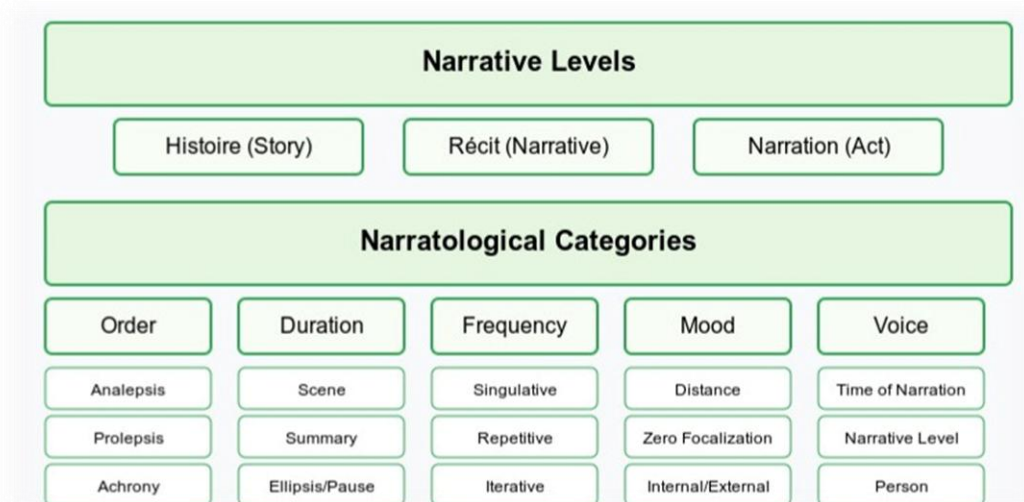
Voice concerns the narrating situation and its relationship to the narrative. Genette analyzed voice through several categories:

- ✓ **Narrative level**:
 - **Extradiegetic**: Narration from outside the story
 - **Intradiegetic**: Narration from within the story
 - **Metadiegetic**: A narrative within a narrative
- ✓ **Relationship to the story**:
 - **Heterodiegetic**: The narrator is absent from the story they tell
 - **Homodiegetic**: The narrator is present as a character in the story they tell
 - **Autodiegetic**: The narrator is the protagonist of the story they tell
- ✓ **Time of narration**:

- **Prior** narration: Prophetic narrative, telling what will happen
- **Simultaneous** narration: Contemporaneous with the action
- **Subsequent** narration: The classical position, narrating what has happened
- **Interpolated** narration: Between moments of the action

Genette's analysis of these narratological categories provided unprecedented precision in describing narrative structures. As he stated, "Analysis of narrative discourse thus implies a study of the relationships between narrative and story, between narrative and narrating, and (to the extent that they are inscribed in the narrative discourse) between story and narrating" (Genette, 1980, p. 29).

Fig.2. Schematic Representation of Genette's Narratological System



Source: Based on Genette's "Narrative Discourse : An Essay in Method" (1980) , page 98.

3.2 Critical Reception and Limitations

Genette's narratological framework has been widely influential but has also faced significant criticism. Some scholars have questioned the universal applicability of his categories, arguing that they may be more appropriate for analyzing certain types of narrative (particularly classical French novels) than others.

Monika Fludernik (1996) has challenged Genette's narratological framework for its insufficient attention to the experiential aspects of narrative, arguing that "Genette's model, focused as it is on technical aspects of narrative discourse, fails to account adequately for the experiential and cognitive

dimensions of narrative” (p. 323). Her “natural narratology” attempts to address this limitation by incorporating cognitive perspectives.

Feminist critics have also pointed out the gender-blindness of Genette’s approach. Susan Lanser (1992) argues that “Genette’s narratology, like most classical narratology, ignores gender as a significant category of narrative analysis” (p. 19). She proposes a feminist narratology that would incorporate considerations of gender into the analytical framework.

Postcolonial critics have further observed that Genette’s model tends to universalize Western literary forms. As Gayatri Spivak (1990) notes, “Genette’s narratological categories, while presented as universal, actually privilege Western narrative traditions and may be inappropriate for analyzing non-Western narrative forms” (p. 156).

Despite these limitations, Genette’s work remains foundational for narratology. His precise terminology and systematic approach have provided tools for rigorous textual analysis that continue to influence narrative theory.

As David Herman (2007) acknowledges, “Whatever its limitations, Genette’s narratology remains the most comprehensive and systematic approach to narrative analysis developed within structuralism” (p. 274).

4. Narrative Concepts in Algirdas Julien Greimas’s Work

Algirdas Julien Greimas (1917-1992), a Lithuanian-French linguist and semiotician, developed one of the most systematic and influential approaches to narrative analysis within the structuralist tradition.

His work focuses on the deep structures of meaning that underlie narrative texts, offering analytical tools that have been applied across diverse fields, from literary criticism to anthropology.

4.1 Greimas’s Semiotic Square and Isotopies

Greimas’s approach to textual analysis was deeply influenced by structural linguistics, particularly Saussure’s concept of language as a system of differences. In “Sémantique structurale” (1966), he developed the concept of the semiotic square (carré sémiotique), a visual representation of the logical relationships between semantic terms. The semiotic square maps the relationships of contradiction, contrariety, and complementarity between key terms, providing a systematic framework for analyzing the deep structure of meaning in texts.

As Greimas explained, “The semiotic square represents the elementary structure of signification, the logical articulation of any semantic category” (Greimas &

Courtés, 1982, p. 308). This analytical tool reveals how binary oppositions function within texts and how meaning emerges from the complex relations between terms.

Another key concept in Greimas's semantic theory is the "isotopy," which refers to the repetition of semantic categories that ensures the coherence and homogeneity of a discourse. Greimas defined isotopies as "redundant semantic categories which make possible the uniform reading of a story" (Greimas, 1983, p. 131). By identifying isotopies, analysts can trace semantic patterns across a text and understand how coherence is maintained despite apparent discontinuities.

The Actantial Model

Perhaps Greimas's most influential contribution to narrative theory is his actantial model, a framework for analyzing the fundamental roles and relationships that structure narratives. Expanding on Vladimir Propp's analysis of fairy tales, Greimas reduced Propp's 31 functions to six fundamental actantial roles organized in three binary oppositions:

- ✓ **Subject/Object:** The protagonist (Subject) pursues a goal or desired object (Object)
- ✓ **Sender/Receiver:** The entity (Sender) that initiates the quest by establishing values and motivating the Subject, who, along with others, potentially becomes the beneficiary (Receiver)
- ✓ **Helper/Opponent:** Forces that aid (Helper) or hinder (Opponent) the Subject's quest

Greimas argued that "the actantial model constitutes...a veritable interpretative grid, by means of which any narrative discourse...can be analyzed" (Greimas, 1987, p. 107). This model provides a systematic framework for analyzing the fundamental structure of narratives across different genres and cultural contexts.

The actantial model reveals how narrative functions as a quest structure, with a Subject pursuing an Object of desire. As Greimas explained, "The Subject is defined by its relationship to an Object of value... this relationship between Subject and Object is the axis of desire" (Greimas & Courtés, 1982, p. 203).

The Narrative Schema and Narrative Programs

Greimas further developed his narrative theory by proposing a canonical narrative schema, which outlines the logical sequence of stages that structure narrative progression. The canonical narrative schema includes four components:

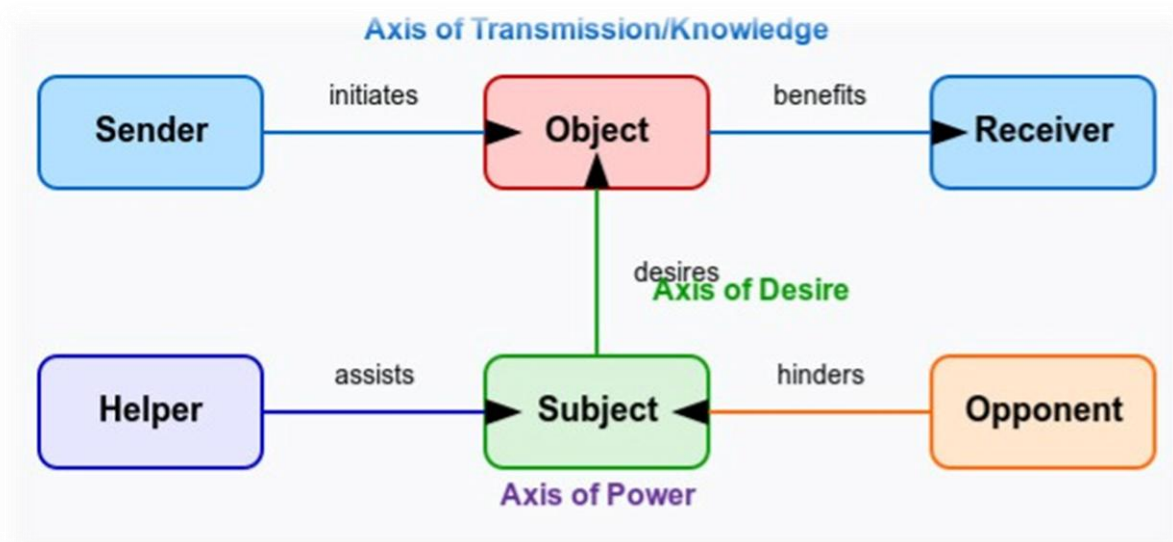
- ✓ **Manipulation:** The establishment of a contract that initiates the narrative action
- ✓ **Competence:** The acquisition of abilities (wanting, knowing, being able) necessary for action
- ✓ **Performance:** The central action or transformation in the narrative
- ✓ **Sanction:** The evaluation of the performance and the distribution of rewards or punishments

This schema provides a “generative trajectory” for analyzing how narrative meaning is produced, from deep semantic structures to surface manifestations.

Within this framework, Greimas introduced the concept of “narrative programs” (programmes narratifs), defined as “the elementary syntagm of the narrative syntax, comprising a state or transformation predicated of a relationship between a subject and an object” (Greimas & Courtés, 1982, p. 245). These narrative programs form the building blocks of narrative complexity, as they can be nested within each other or linked in various ways.

Greimas also distinguished between “conjunctive” and “disjunctive” narrative programs, referring to the union or separation of Subject and Object. This distinction allows for nuanced analysis of narrative trajectories and transformations.

Fig.3. Schematic Representation of Greimas’s Actantial Model



Source: Prepared by Researcher

4.2 Critical Reception and Limitations

Greimas's semiotic approach to narrative analysis has been widely influential but has also faced significant criticism. Some critics have questioned the universality of his models, arguing that they may not adequately account for the cultural and historical specificity of narrative structures.

Paul Ricoeur (1985) critiqued Greimas's actantial model for its ahistorical character, arguing that "the actantial model, in its quest for universal structures, risks neglecting the temporal and historical dimensions of narrative" (p. 89). Ricoeur's hermeneutic approach emphasizes the interpretive process and the temporal character of narrative, aspects that are less central to Greimas's structuralist framework.

Feminist critics have also questioned the gender blindness of Greimas's models. Teresa de Lauretis (1984) argues that "Greimas's actantial model fails to account for the gendered nature of narrative roles and functions" (p. 118). She proposes a feminist revision of the actantial model that would attend to how gender shapes narrative structures.

Postcolonial critics have further pointed out the Eurocentric assumptions underlying Greimas's semiotic approach. As Homi Bhabha (1994) suggests, "Greimas's narrative models, presented as universal, actually reflect Western epistemic frameworks and may be inappropriate for analyzing non-Western narrative traditions" (p. 201).

Despite these criticisms, Greimas's work remains foundational for narrative semiotics. His systematic approach has provided analytical tools that continue to influence research across diverse fields. As Thomas Pavel (1989) acknowledges, "Whatever its limitations, Greimas's semiotic approach to narrative has provided one of the most comprehensive frameworks for analyzing the deep structures of meaning in texts" (p. 138).

5. Narrative Concepts in Roland Barthes's Work

Roland Barthes (1915-1980) was perhaps the most versatile and influential of the French structuralists, whose work evolved from early structuralist approaches to pioneering poststructuralist perspectives. His contributions to discourse analysis span multiple works and reflect a continuous development of thought that ultimately challenged many of the foundational assumptions of structuralism itself.

5.1 From Structural Analysis to Poststructuralism

Barthes's early work, particularly "Mythologies" (1957), applied structuralist methods to analyze contemporary cultural phenomena. In this text, Barthes examined how everyday objects and practices (wrestling matches, advertisements, toys) function as signs within cultural systems of meaning. He developed a theory of myth as a "second-order semiological system" that transforms history into nature, making ideological constructs appear natural and inevitable.

As Barthes explained, "Myth is a type of speech defined by its intention much more than by its literal sense; and in spite of this, its intention is somehow frozen, purified, eternalized, made absent by this literal sense" (Barthes, 1972, p. 124). This analysis revealed how cultural meanings are constructed and naturalized through semiotic processes.

In "Elements of Semiology" (1964), Barthes further developed structural methods for analyzing sign systems, adapting Saussure's linguistic concepts to broader cultural analysis. He explored how systems of signification operate through the interplay of denotation (literal meaning) and connotation (cultural associations).

However, Barthes's thought evolved beyond strict structuralism, particularly in his later works such as "S/Z" (1970). Here, he moved from analyzing closed systems of meaning to exploring the plurality and indeterminacy of texts. Barthes distinguished between "readerly" texts (*textes lisibles*), which encourage passive consumption, and "writerly" texts (*textes scriptibles*), which invite the reader's active participation in constructing meaning.

As Barthes stated, "The goal of literary work (of literature as work) is to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text" (Barthes, 1974, p. 4). This shift marked Barthes's transition toward poststructuralist perspectives that emphasized the openness and multiplicity of textual meaning.

The Five Codes of Narrative

In "S/Z," Barthes developed a complex method of textual analysis based on five codes that operate within narrative texts:

- ✓ **Hermeneutic Code (HER):** Creates enigmas or puzzles that drive the narrative forward through the desire for resolution. As Barthes explained, "The hermeneutic code structures the enigma according to the expectation and desire for its solution" (Barthes, 1974, p. 75).

- ✓ **Proairetic Code (ACT):** Governs the logic of actions and behaviors, organizing events into sequences. “The proairetic code applies to the actions themselves: it is the code of ‘what happens’” (Barthes, 1974, p. 18).
- ✓ **Semic Code (SEM):** Concerns the connotations that contribute to character and thematic development. These connotations create “a kind of flicker of meaning” (Barthes, 1974, p. 19) that enriches the text beyond its denotative level.
- ✓ **Symbolic Code (SYM):** Organizes semantic oppositions and antitheses that structure deeper patterns of meaning. This code “establishes the multivalent and reversible relationships that lead the readerly text to a kind of plural coherence” (Barthes, 1974, p. 20).
- ✓ **Cultural Code (REF):** Refers to shared cultural knowledge, stereotypes, and commonplaces. This code “permits the discourse to establish itself upon a certain support of knowledge or wisdom shared by writer and reader” (Barthes, 1974, p. 21).

This multidimensional approach to textual analysis emphasizes the plurality of meaning and the active role of the reader in constructing it. Rather than seeking a unified, authoritative interpretation, Barthes’s method embraces the text’s “writerly” qualities—its openness to multiple readings and its resistance to closure.

The Death of the Author

One of Barthes’s most influential concepts is “the death of the author,” articulated in his 1967 essay of the same name. This provocative thesis challenges the traditional view of the author as the authoritative source of textual meaning. Instead, Barthes argued that “the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author” (Barthes, 1977, p. 148).

According to Barthes, focusing on the author’s biography, intentions, or psychology limits textual interpretation and reinforces a capitalist ideology of individualism. He proposed instead that “a text is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash” (Barthes, 1977, p. 146).

This concept radically reconfigured the relationship between author, text, and reader. Rather than being a passive recipient of authorial meaning, the reader becomes an active producer of textual significance. As Barthes stated, “The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed

without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination" (Barthes, 1977, p. 148).

From Work to Text

In his 1971 essay "From Work to Text," Barthes further developed his poststructuralist approach by distinguishing between the "work" (oeuvre) and the "text" (texte). The work is a material object, a finished product that can be held in the hand or placed on a bookshelf. The text, by contrast, is a methodological field, a process of production that extends beyond the physical boundaries of the work.

As Barthes explained, "The work is concrete, occupying a portion of book-space (in a library, for example); the Text, on the other hand, is a methodological field... The work can be held in the hand, the text is held in language" (Barthes, 1977, p. 156-157). While the work is closed and definitive, the text is open and plural, constantly generating new meanings through its interaction with readers and other texts.

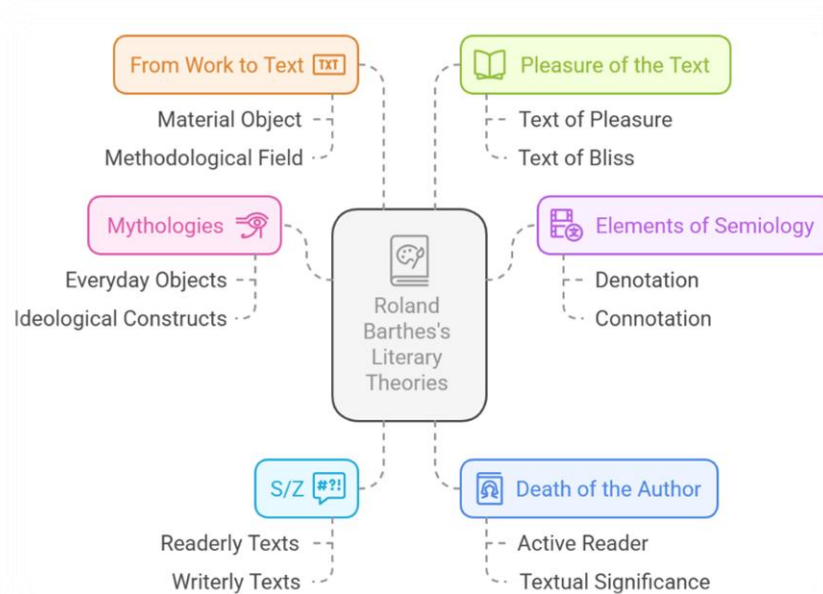
This distinction emphasizes the intertextual nature of all writing. Rather than being an original creation of an individual author, the text is "a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (Barthes, 1977, p. 146). This view challenges the romantic notion of authorial originality and highlights the social and cultural dimensions of textual production.

The Pleasure of the Text

In "The Pleasure of the Text" (1973), Barthes explored the affective dimension of reading, distinguishing between "pleasure" (plaisir) and "bliss" (jouissance). Pleasure derives from comfortable, familiar texts that confirm existing expectations and cultural codes. Bliss, by contrast, arises from texts that disrupt conventional expectations and challenge established meanings.

As Barthes wrote, "Text of pleasure: the text that contents, fills, grants euphoria; the text that comes from culture and does not break with it, is linked to a comfortable practice of reading. Text of bliss: the text that imposes a state of loss, the text that discomforts... unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions" (Barthes, 1975, p. 14).

This distinction between pleasure and bliss corresponds to Barthes's earlier contrast between readerly and writerly texts. Both theoretical frameworks emphasize the experiential dimension of textual engagement and the transformative potential of texts that challenge conventional modes of reading.

Fig.4. Schematic Representation of Barthes's Narrative Concepts

Source: Prepared by Researcher

5.2 Critical Reception and Limitations

Barthes's work has been immensely influential across multiple disciplines but has also faced significant criticism. Some scholars have questioned the political implications of "the death of the author," arguing that this concept might undermine the agency of marginalized writers just as they are gaining recognition. As Seán Burke (1992) argues, "The death of the author may have liberating effects in some contexts but can be politically problematic when applied to texts by writers from marginalized groups whose authorial identity is politically significant" (p. 175).

Others have criticized Barthes's later work for its apparent aestheticism and retreat from political engagement. Terry Eagleton (1983) suggests that "in moving from structuralism to post-structuralism, Barthes shifts from a potentially radical political semiotics to a more apolitical aestheticism" (p. 141). This critique questions whether Barthes's celebration of textual pleasure represents a departure from the more explicitly political dimensions of his earlier work.

Some critics have also questioned the practicality of Barthes's analytical methods. Jonathan Culler (1983) notes that "the five codes identified in S/Z, while theoretically sophisticated, prove unwieldy in application to other texts" (p. 83). This observation highlights the potential gap between Barthes's theoretical innovations and their methodological applicability.

Despite these criticisms, Barthes's work remains foundational for contemporary literary theory and cultural studies. His evolution from structuralism to poststructuralism exemplifies the theoretical developments that transformed intellectual discourse in the late twentieth century. As Catherine Belsey (2002) acknowledges, "Barthes's theoretical trajectory, from structural analysis to poststructuralist critique, charts a path that many literary theorists have followed" (p. 92).

6. CONCLUSION

The French Structuralist School made profound and lasting contributions to discourse analysis and narrative theory. Through their rigorous methodologies and systematic approaches, Tzvetan Todorov, Gérard Genette, Algirdas Julien Greimas, and Roland Barthes transformed how we understand narrative structures and textual meaning. Their collective efforts established new paradigms for literary analysis that continue to influence contemporary theoretical discourse.

Todorov's narrative grammar provided systematic frameworks for analyzing narrative structures, while his exploration of genre theory offered methodological approaches to categorizing literary texts.

Genette's comprehensive narratological framework introduced unprecedented precision in describing temporal relationships, focalization, and narrative voice. Greimas's actantial model and semiotic square revealed the deep structures of meaning that underlie narrative texts, providing analytical tools that extend beyond literary criticism to diverse fields of inquiry.

Barthes's evolution from structuralism to poststructuralism exemplifies the theoretical developments that transformed intellectual discourse, particularly in his influential concepts of "the death of the author" and the distinction between "readerly" and "writerly" texts.

Returning to our initial questions: Were the efforts of the French Structuralist School sufficient in developing comprehensive frameworks for discourse analysis? And how did these theoretical innovations influence literary and critical movements globally?

The evidence suggests that while these structuralist approaches provided unprecedented analytical precision, they also contained inherent limitations that subsequent theoretical developments sought to address. The tendency toward universalizing models often came at the expense of cultural, historical, and political specificity—limitations that poststructuralist, feminist, and postcolonial critics have importantly highlighted.

Nevertheless, the global influence of French structuralism has been profound and enduring.

These theoretical innovations established methodological foundations that continue to inform literary criticism, cultural studies, anthropology, linguistics, and numerous other disciplines worldwide. The analytical tools developed by the French structuralists provided systematic approaches to textual analysis that transcended impressionistic criticism, enabling more rigorous engagement with literary and cultural texts.

The lasting significance of the French Structuralist School lies not only in the specific methodologies its members developed but also in the theoretical questions they raised about the nature of narrative, the construction of meaning, and the relationship between texts and readers.

Even as subsequent theoretical movements have challenged certain structuralist assumptions, the fundamental insights of Todorov, Genette, Greimas, and Barthes continue to inform how we read, analyses, and understand texts across diverse cultural contexts.

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