

Semiotics and Novel

السيمياء والرواية

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Abstract:

This study aims to present a new reading and a different vision for understanding the fundamental paradoxes between narrative semiotics by addressing the identification of similarities and differences between them, while attempting to combine semiotic depth with philosophical and psychological depth. This approach allows for the production of new meanings and connotations of the text based on deep interpretations that add to the body of semiotic approaches and studies of texts, enriching them intellectually. What is the concept and nature of the emergence of semiotics and the novel? How is the narrative text analyzed according to semiotic analysis? And what is the vision that semiotic analysis takes of the Bible?

Keywords: Semiotics; Narrative; Symbols; Arabs; West.

ملخص المقال:

تهدف من خلال هذه الدراسة إلى تقديم قراءة جديدة ورؤيا مغايرة لفهم المفارقات الأساسية بين السيمياء الرواية وذلك من خلال التطرق إلى تحديد أوجه الاختلاف والتشابه بينهم مع محاولة الجمع بين العمق العلاماتي والعمق الفلسفي والنفسي، وهو ما يسمح لنا بإنتاج معاني ودلالات جديدة للنص وفق تأويلات عميقة تضاف إلى رصيد المقاربات والدراسات السيميائية للنصوص وإثرائها فكريا. فما مفهوم وطبيعة نشأة السيمياء والرواية؟ وكيف يتم تحليل النص الروائي وفق التحليل السيميائي؟ وما هي الرؤية التي يقدمها التحليل السيميائي للدراسات الروائية؟

كلمات مفتاحية: سيمياء؛ رواية؛ رموز؛ عرب؛ غرب.

introduction

In light of the intellectual and artistic transformations witnessed by the contemporary world, and in an era where human consciousness is moving towards understanding meaning, the novel has become a fertile ground for the formation of significations and the proliferation of meanings. It is one of the most important narrative literary genres that reflect human reality in all its complexities through the interaction of a group of elements represented by characters and events within a defined time and place. The novel is no longer read merely as a story but has evolved into a complex human discourse representing a mirror of society, carrying philosophical, intellectual, and psychological perspectives in the form of interconnected and intertwined relationships of meanings and signs.

From this standpoint, the interest in modern narrative writings has increased by giving them space for literary and artistic analysis through modern critical methods, the most important of which is the semiotic method, as it is capable of delving into the depths of texts and revealing their complex relationships and hidden structures. It is an analytical tool that seeks to deconstruct the semiotic system of the textual structure, which is a complex discourse of signs and symbols that produce and convey meaning. Semiotics as a method transcends the linguistic to include non-linguistic signals, images, and various semiotic functions. This is offered by the narrative discourse, which is an integrated narrative structure rich in cultural symbols, psychological conflicts, and various implicit ideologies that govern the narrative world. The semiotic method strives to uncover this, opening new horizons for the reader towards interpretation and the generation of meanings and connotations that go beyond superficial reading.

2. Semiotics

2.1. The Concept of Semiotics:

Semiotics as a science belongs to modern linguistics, which is the commonly accepted view among most critics and thinkers. However, there is disagreement among them regarding the precise definition and terminology of this science, despite it having a single underlying meaning, due to differing orientations and opinions. So, what is the meaning of semiotics, both linguistically and technically?

2.1.1. Semiotics linguistically:

The term semiotics has appeared in many contexts and has been defined in several dictionaries. Most of them indicate that the word "semiotics" is derived from the triliteral root verb (سَوَمَ—sawama). It is mentioned in Lisan al-Arab that: "As-Sawma, as-Sima, as-Simaa, and as-Simiya: the sign or mark; and the branding of horses (sawama) means placing a mark on them... Al-Jawhari sees it as 'masooma', meaning it has seals such as signet rings. As-Sawma with a dhamma means a mark placed on sheep (Manzur, 1993, p. 440). It here refers to a sign or distinguishing characteristic, a mark placed on something to differentiate it from others. Historically, Arabs branded camels and sheep, i.e., placing marks on their bodies to identify ownership, such as branding on the skin. Thus, the meaning of semiotics here is the feature or attribute that distinguishes things and people.

Also, the meaning of semiotics appears in Qatr al-Muheet by Al-Bustani as: "Semiotics: the mark, beauty, and joy; the science of semiotics is applied to the unreal or to magic.

The marked one is known by the mark, and good character.(al-Bustani, undated print (1869),)

The term "semiotics" in Qatr al-Muheet suggests moral attributes and features and is linked to magic, as both depend on symbols and signs.

Meaning a distinguishing sign or mark—all these carry the same meaning. In other words, semiotics means the symbol, indication, sign, or mark.

2.1.2. Semiotics (Terminologically):

Semiotics has occupied a large space of interest among researchers, critics, and scholars due to its great importance in the field of literary studies, cultural and artistic discourses, and daily communication.

2.2. Semiotics among the Arabs:

Munther Al-Ayadi believes that semiotics, or "the theory of signs," is a term upon which all researchers have agreed, from ancient Greek times to the modern era, as they view it as a scientific discipline that makes communication systems the subject of study, research, and analysis.

The analysis of these systems, to understand their significance and implications, follows a systematic methodology that studies and researches different communicative discourses.

It becomes clear to us that semiotics is a science concerned with studying and understanding human behavior at various levels—words and actions—reaching into the intellectual and cultural structures of societies. This is done by decoding these structures and searching for the hidden meanings behind different discourses, cultures, and individual behaviors.

More precisely, semiotics is "a branch of linguistics that studies signs or symbols according to a specific systematic framework, highlighting and identifying linguistic or visual signs within literary texts and social life." It seeks to analyze these spoken or visual signs and symbols embedded in various human and cultural discourses. That is, it aims to deconstruct these discourses—structured within a certain system—and attempt to extract the implicit meanings inferred within a given context.

Salah Fadl summarizes this by saying that semiotics is "the science that studies symbolic systems in all meaningful signs and how they convey meaning." Consequently, most Arab critics agree that semiotics is a science concerned with the study of signs and symbols in the various discourses and cultural systems produced by humans, probing their inner meanings to understand their significance, delving deep to uncover their hidden aspects, and analyzing their structure within specific contexts.

2.3. Semiotics In the West:

On the other hand, several Western critics and writers—foremost among them the pioneers Charles Sanders Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure—have defined semiotics. Peirce linked semiotics to logic, asserting that our correct understanding of symbols and signs relies on sound logical thinking.

In Peirce's view, logic is just a part of a broader system—semiotics—because it relies on signs, symbols, and signals to generate ideas, represent them, construct arguments, and ensure their validity. Semiotics, however, investigates the nature of those signs and symbols. Thus, for Peirce, semiotics focuses on the relationships and structural forms of signs that generate meaning.

As for Saussure, he believed: "We can imagine a science that studies the life of signs within social life. It would thus be part of social psychology, and consequently of general psychology. We shall call it semiology, from the Greek *sèmeion*, meaning 'sign'." Semiotics, as a science, focuses on tracing the life of a sign—its development, interaction, and impact on society. Regardless of its type, any sign holds meaning

within a social context. In other words, semiotics focuses on how signs interact within society.

It also seeks to study and analyze the relationship between signs and human cognitive processes like learning and perception. Thus, Saussure's semiology is the science concerned with understanding how signs function within society and how they produce meaning, through the mental and intellectual processes of human beings, reflecting their behavior and how they are influenced by their environment, which helps shape their identity.

Similarly, Pierre Guiraud defined semiotics as the science that "studies systems of signs—languages, signaling systems, instructions, etc.—a definition that includes language as part of semiotics (Kamel, 2003, pp. 18-19)." This definition aligns with the previous ones in affirming that semiotics is a science concerned with studying various signs and symbols and how they are constructed. Guiraud's perspective broadens the concept of semiotics to include all forms of symbolic communication, making language—despite its complexity—just one element in a much larger network of sign systems that shape our world. Julia Kristeva also explained the essence of this science by stating: "The study of verbal and

This shows that semiotics encompasses both language and other sign systems to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of human communication—which is the fundamental mission of semiotics.

Based on the above, the concept of semiotics in the West is not fundamentally different from that in the Arab world. It is a science concerned with studying signs, symbols, and signals—whether linguistic or non-linguistic—analyzing them within their specific contexts, and understanding their structures, systems, and compositions. Saussure's semiology focuses on the study of signs in language and social systems and is based on a binary model of the sign. In contrast, Peirce's semiotics has a broader scope: it studies signs in everything and in various scientific fields, and his model of the sign is triadic.

Greimas is considered one of the key contributors to the development of semiotics, following Peirce's triadic sign model but adding narrative to semiotic analysis. He considered narrative a system of interactive relationships between semiotic signs and introduced his well-known project of the semiotic square.

In Conclusion, the development of semiotics in the modern era—as a foundational science and as a critical method—was spearheaded by Western philosophers and thinkers, particularly scholars from Europe and America. They were the true pioneers, laying down the principles of text analysis and cultural discourse studies, building on ideas already hinted at by ancient Greek philosophers.

Today, semiotics has influenced all fields of knowledge and human inquiry. As a postmodern methodology, it granted modern studies a degree of freedom and depth that went beyond the restrictions and rigidity imposed by modernist approaches. The rise of semiotics as a broad, liberated science provided literary and cultural discourses with deeper meaning, aesthetic dimension, and wider interpretive possibilities.

3. The Novel

3.1. The Concept of the Novel:

3.1.1. Linguistic Meaning:

The word novel (riwāyah in Arabic) is derived from the linguistic root rawā ("روي"). In Lisān al-'Arab by Ibn Manẓūr, it is stated: "Rawā' alā al-rajul bi-l-rawā': he fastened it onto him so that he would not

fall from the camel's back when overcome by sleep; and rawā the ḥadīth or poetry riwāyah: he carried and transmitted it, hence he is a rāwī (pl. ruwāt); and rawā the camel water riwāyah: he carried and transported it; and it is said rawā'alayhi al-kadhib: he lied about him (Abu al-Fadl Jamal al-Din Makram ibn Manzur, translated by: Amer Ahmad Haidar and others., 1999, p. 382).” Thus, the meaning of riwāyah here refers to the carrying and transmission of water, news, or speech.

These connotations clearly link riwāyah to the idea of transmission, whether of news or stories—an association that aligns with its function as a narrative literary genre, which we will explore further in its technical definition.

3.1.2. Technical Definition:

The definitions of the novel vary widely in the literary arena, shaped by different critical schools and intellectual orientations.

In this sense, the novel is a narration of human reality—either as it is, as a fragment of it, or as something resembling it with a degree of similarity.

A novel is a long narrative work in prose that reflects the realities of human life through an intricate plot and characters who evolve as the story unfolds.

It is well known that the short story also has a narrative structure connected to lived human reality, through an attempt to depict it. From this perspective, the novel does not differ from the short story, as both are prose narratives depicting some form of reality. However, they differ in other characteristics.

Aḥmad Abū Sa'd offers a more detailed definition, describing the novel as: “A collection of events with varying impacts, representing several characters on the broad stage of life, spanning a long period of time. Some researchers consider it the prose literary form that developed from the ancient epic (Saad, 1995, p. 25).”

Abū Sa'd thus links the novel to the ancient Greek and Roman epic, which relied more on imagination in its attempt to portray reality. The novel, in his view, is a continuation of the epic tradition but in a new prose literary form.

Murtāḍ also sought to highlight some features of the novel, noting that it is “long in size, though usually shorter than the epic; rich in linguistic craftsmanship, with a language that may lie between the poetic language of the epic and the colloquial language of the modern play; it relies on diversity and abundance in characters; and it is distinguished by a gentle handling of time, space, and events.

Thus, the novel is a relatively long narrative, rich in a blended language of poetic and colloquial registers, built upon the elements of characters, time, and place within a given sequence of events. Notably, the novel intersects with other literary genres—both ancient and modern—sharing with them certain fixed characteristics.

3.1.3. The definition Novel in the West:

The definition of the novel in Western thought is not far removed from those offered by Arab critics and writers.

Mikhail Bakhtin sees the novel as: “A literary genre that cannot be confined to a fixed definition, due to its flexibility and ability to accommodate multiple voices (Mikhail Bakhtin, translated by Jamal Shahid, 1982, p. 66).” Thus, the novel is a genre whose meaning is difficult to fix in a single agreed-upon definition, given its multitude of characters and its overlap with various other genres.

George Lukács considered the novel to be the most important literary form in bourgeois society. He meant that the novel combines both fiction and reality, which makes its emergence closely linked to

bourgeois societies, where it flourished and became widespread due to the circumstances and changes characteristic of such societies. Consequently, its themes became increasingly diverse, and it came to serve as a mirror reflecting the realities of these societies.

The novel is primarily defined by its formal characteristics, which are usually associated with the concept of fiction; therefore, the element of imagination is considered a constant, essential, and defining characteristic of the novel.

From all these definitions, it becomes clear that determining a single, precise definition of the novel remains problematic due to its constant evolution and the diversity of its literary, intellectual, and critical schools. Nevertheless, there is general agreement in considering it a flexible narrative genre that reflects the complexities of human existence—its reality interlaced with imagination.

3.2. The Emergence of the Novel

3.2.1. Among the Arabs:

Classical Arab heritage contains various narrative forms that can be considered as the roots of the novel or as early precursors to it—early attempts at long-form storytelling. These forms differ from the modern novel in structure and purpose, but they share with it a reliance on narration and storytelling.

Scholars of Arab heritage are divided into two camps regarding the novel. One camp believes it is a natural evolution of earlier stories and the *maqāma* genre—a natural extension of prose heritage such as epics and folk tales. The other camp maintains that the Arabic novel did not exist in classical literature and is instead a modern art form (Ismail bin Mubarak bin Salem Al-Ajmi, 2024, p. 2).

A close reading of historical studies and records of the Arabs reveals a rich and abundant literary output across different genres, with the main difference perhaps lying only in terminology. In the pre-Islamic (*Jāhiliyya*) period, Arabs had numerous and diverse stories; they were fascinated with history and tales about their ancestors, kings, knights, and poets. They had a strong interest in prose in various narrative forms because it was best suited to portray their lives and environment. Arabs were known for storytelling and passing down news of their forebears, from pre-Islamic times into the Islamic era.

Farouk Khourshid argues that Arabs were familiar with stories and narrative fiction due to the influence of the Qur'an, from which they learned mastery of narration and its rules. He stresses that this was not new to them, and that “the existence of this phenomenon in the early Islamic era means it is a continuation rather than something entirely new.

Khourshid attempted to outline the stages of the novel's emergence among the Arabs in ancient times, starting with “the era of books of reports that appeared in the Umayyad period and continued into the Abbasid period... followed by contemporary authorship at the end of the Umayyad and early Abbasid periods, such as *Kalīlawadimna* and *Ibn Ishāq's Sīra*, later edited by Ibn Hishām. Then came the popular folk tales collected in works such as *One Thousand and One Nights*.

This suggests that Arabs knew narrative art in stages—from the Umayyad to the Abbasid period—in the form of reports, letters, stories, and biographies, often presented in the *maqāma* style. Dr. Nasreen Taher supports this view, noting that “the Arabic novel existed in the Abbasid era, as in works like *Al-Bukhalā'* by *Al-Jāhiz*, *Kalīlawadimna* by *Ibn al-Muqaffa'*, and *One Thousand and One Nights* by an anonymous author... but at that time this art was not known by the name ‘novel’ (Nesreen, 2016, p. 215).”

Among the finest works that could be considered complete and refined narratives is, according to Abdulmalik Mortad, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* by Ibn Ṭufayl, which he considers “a novel that lacks very little” to meet the definition.

Thus, the novel existed in Arab culture and literature from pre-Islamic times through the Abbasid era as narrative prose, though known under other names, such as *maqāma*, which spread widely in the Abbasid period. The *maqāma* genre “occupied an important place in literature... reaching its peak, studied and admired by students and writers throughout the Arab World

. It even became known in Eastern Jewish and Christian circles, where it was translated and imitated in Hebrew and Syriac.

The spread and development of Arabic narrative arts were also influenced by translation and contact with the West. Many earlier Arabic books and stories—such as *KalīlawāDimna* and *One Thousand and One Nights*—were translated into other languages. Likewise, Western works were translated by Arab scholars and writers, who adopted Western techniques and excelled in applying them to various types of novels: historical, political, social, and others.

One notable example of such translations is that “in 1867, al-Tahtawi became the first to translate a novel in the history of Arabic literature, translating *The Adventures of Telemachus* by Fénelon, published in Beirut under the title *Mawāqī‘ al-Aflāk fī Waqā‘i‘ Tīlīmāk* (Ahmed, 2022, p. 148).”

From then on, the novel began to spread widely in modern Arab society, with an increasing number of works by various Arab authors.

As for which was the first novel—whether from ancient or modern times—some scholars suggest that “the earliest novel in human history was *The Golden Ass* by Apuleius, or Apuleius of Madauros, born in the Algerian city of Madaurus. Others consider *Hadith ‘Īsā ibn Hishām* by Muhammad al-Muwayliḥī as the starting point for the genre, while some see *Zaynab* by Muhammad Husayn Haykal (1912) as the first true Arabic novel (Al-Ajmi, 2024, p. 2).”

From this perspective, the Arabic novel remains a subject of debate among critics, scholars, and researchers—some supporting its ancient roots and precedence, others rejecting this and viewing it as a modern genre arising from contact with Western literature and culture.

However, the most accurate view remains that Arabs have known narrative art since ancient times, as a form of storytelling serving human expression—depicting situations, emotions, and the Arab environment—though perhaps in forms not yet called “novels.” In modern times, it evolved further, acquiring the techniques and features of the novel as suited to the contemporary era.

3.2.2. In the West

The Western novel represents one of the most prominent literary achievements in the history of European civilization, reflecting profound transformations in society, thought, and art. From oral tales, myths, and ancient epics to complex works of fiction that delve into the depths of the human psyche.

The novel’s journey has been long and transformative. It did not emerge as an independent literary art separate from other forms until relatively recently, passing through various stages over the centuries. As noted, “there were literary works dating back to ancient and medieval times, but the characteristics specific to the novel itself did not begin to appear until it became the form that expressed the bourgeois society.

In ancient times, some characteristics of the modern Western novel were already present in Greek and Roman myths and epics. Its development was influenced by the rise of the bourgeois class in European society, which led it to reflect the social realities of the time. Hegel considered the novel an art form that replaced the epic in the context of societal evolution, thus viewing it as a development from the Greek epics, which reflected the prevailing values and culture of that era. The novel inherited some characteristics from

the epic, particularly in its depiction of social conditions and everyday life.

As a distinct art form, the novel began to emerge and develop: “After the medieval narrative style, the modern novel became subject to other ideological modifications.

Consequently, the novel’s themes and approaches evolved in line with society’s intellectual currents, adapting to the realities and ideologies of the time.

Researchers generally agree that the modern novel first emerged in France. Some scholars point out that the original meaning of the French word "roman" (novel) referred to a beautiful and poetic narrative work. In its early stages, the novel in France was characterized by a romantic style, focusing on themes of love, nature, and artistic beauty in the telling of its stories.

The genre then went through artistic stages shaped by societal conditions and refined by critics. As Georg Lukács stated: “The first outlines of a comprehensive aesthetic study of the novel only appeared with classical German philosophy... and during that very period, the practical instructions of great storytellers regarding their own practices began to resurface, containing deeper theoretical meanings (Walter Scott, Goethe, Balzac...).” From this, it is clear that the principles of the novel were solidified during this period and applied by leading novelists in their works.

This era also saw the rise of notable novelists from various countries. As Bernard Valette

In other words, Russian novelists seized the lead from the French, with their works distinguished by realism, earning them the title of masters of the novel. Later, American authors made their mark as well.

Some researchers have attempted to identify the pioneers of the novel genre and their works. This involved revisiting the historical origins of the novel, such as "Les Romans" by Madame de Scudéry, "Ibrahim, or the Famous Pasha" (1641-1644), and "The Adventures of Telemachus" by Fénelon, published in 1699.

Many scholars believe that the development of the Western novel was also influenced by contact with Arabic art and literature. “The fantasy and realism in One Thousand and One Nights and other Eastern works were a source of inspiration for many novelists in the 18th century.

They borrowed stylistic and thematic elements from Arabic narratives, facilitated by translations of many Arabic works, including One Thousand and One Nights. Additionally, Hayy ibn Yaqzan was translated twice into English in the 17th century (Murtad, Theory of the Novel: A Study in Narrative Techniques, 1988, p. 24).

Thus, the Western novel emerged and developed over long historical periods, as an extension of earlier artistic forms from antiquity, particularly the epic—viewed by some as its precursor and by others as its artistic counterpart. Its evolution was shaped by newly formulated principles, as well as inspirations drawn from Arabic literature through extensive translations.

4. A semiotic analysis of the novelistic text - The Dream of a Ridiculous Man by Fyodor Dostoevsky - Modela

4.1. Factors and functions:

We can extract and analyze these factors and their functions from the novel before us, according to Roman Jackson's approach. He argued that the novel's characters represent elements that emerge within the narrative structure, which requires other elements for its completion. This analysis allows us to deconstruct the mechanisms of linguistic discourse from a functional linguistic and semiotic perspective, both within and outside the novel, as follows:

- The sender: This is represented by the narrator. On the external level of the narrative, he was from the beginning in a state of self-disclosure and confession, through which he wanted to convey his feelings, desires, and self-narration to the reader. We find this in his statement: "I am a funny man, and they call me crazy. This description would have elevated my status if they had refrained from considering me funny, as they did before (Dostoevsky, The Dream of a Ridiculous Man, 1877, p. 33)

Here we notice the dominance of the expressive function, as he was expressing his inner emotions and conveying his feelings to the recipient and influencing him, through trying to move his poet and attract him to him. Thus, here another function of the sender appears to us in the same context, which is the persuasive function.

This influential function is also evident in its impact on the novel's characters. For example, in the ideal world, he instilled something that changed them for the worse, as "that seed of falsehood seeped into their hearts and they admired it. (Man, 1877, p. 44)

In a way, he disseminated this trait within them, influencing them until they came to love it and it spread among them.

- Recipient: Outside the narrative: This refers to the recipient or reader whom the narrator or sender seeks to influence, to share his feelings and thoughts with, and to reach a conclusion with him regarding his various questions. We find this in his statement: "How much I suffered in my adolescence from the fact that I might not be able to bear it and admit to my friends that I am ridiculous." (Man, 1877, p. 50)

Here we find an impactful function related to the recipient. As readers, we were affected by the words of this character, who was hurt by everyone's judgment, and we felt empathy for him.

Within the novel itself, we find the addressee to be several characters in different situations, such as the little girl whom the protagonist reprimanded and scolded. She then left, seeking help from someone else. This is illustrated in the novel when he says: "Then I stamped my foot and scolded her, but all she did was shout at me: 'Sir!...Sir!' and she suddenly left me, crossing the road quickly like an arrow, towards someone else on the opposite sidewalk." (Man, 1877, p. 51)

The hero's behavior, even without speaking to her, affected the little girl; she understood that he wouldn't help her and wanted her to stay away from him.

- Context:

On an external level, *The Dream of a Ridiculous Man* exemplifies the dreamy nature of Dostoevsky's writing. Published in 1877, it was written amidst the tragedy of the author's imprisonment. This experience profoundly affected him, inspiring him to write about the human condition, adrift in the constraints of anxieties and the strangeness of existence. The narrator here addresses the realistic reader.

Internally, the novel opens with a society characterized by widespread apathy and a pessimistic

outlook on life. This is evident in his words: "I am deeply saddened to see them ignorant of the truth, while I know it. How difficult it is for the one who alone knows the truth! They will not understand. No, they will not understand." (Man, 1877, p. 52)

Thus, the dream in which he experienced beautiful feelings and emotions also served as another reference point for conveying the truth he had previously known and later confirmed after the dream. Herein lies a referential function, reflecting the diverse contexts he encountered, ranging from his experiences within his own society to his observations of the inhabitants of the ideal world. This experience transformed his pessimistic view of existence, prompting him to strive to spread the love and beauty he had witnessed in the dream.

- The Code:

As we previously learned, a code is a set of signs shared between two parties and understood by both. In this narrative, the narrator's language was a blend of direct and indirect language, varying according to the recipient. Between the sender and the reader, we find the code in places within the narrative, such as: "And I began to feel, with all my senses, that nothing had existed during my existence." (Man, 1877, p. 54)

We also glimpse symbols and signs between the sender and the characters of the novel. For example, with the inhabitants of the other world, the language between him and them is unclear and not specific, but despite that, understanding existed between them. He says: "Oh, those people did not try to make me understand them, but they loved me without that, and I understood in return that sometimes they could not comprehend me... and they felt that, so they left me to love and cherish them without feeling hurt in their hearts." (Man, 1877, p. 56)

Perhaps the language between them was not clear, but there was a certain feeling that attracted him to them and them to him, which was love, and it is the most eloquent, beautiful, and profound language in terms of communication and influence.

- The channel:

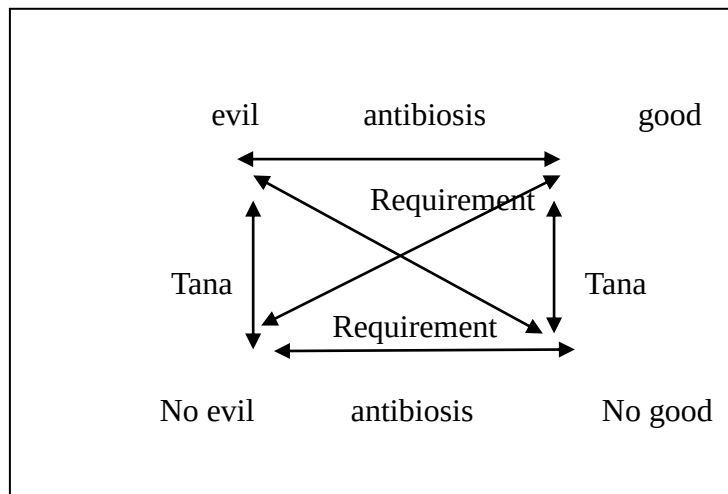
The sense played a prominent role in conveying all the meanings that the narrator wanted, whether external or internal. It was the carrier and transmitter, whether to the reader or to the characters of the novel, as we can see in many places where we find him saying: "But my dream, my dream, carried me to a new life, great, renewed, and strong!...Listen." (Man, 1877, p. 57) Here his words are direct and explicit to the readers, making them eager to listen. The warning was the effective element, and therefore the function was warning-based.

- The message:

The message in the novel *The Dream of a Ridiculous Man* was a single message directed to the reader and his community, which is his knowledge of the truth he lived searching for, and his correct understanding of its truth and existence. To taste happiness, one must know its laws and foundations, which are built on everything that is beautiful, and spread the idea of love among people so that peace may prevail, and everyone may taste happiness.

Based on this, we will try in this novel to apply the factors established by (Greimas) that allow us to analyze the relationships of narrative construction and the contradictory opposing pairs that are the basis of this novel, and to understand the deep meanings in it.

The novel (*The Dream of a Ridiculous Man*) is charged with many opposing dualities, which we limit to the duality of good and evil that formed the basis of the novel, and according to Greimas' square, the representation is as follows:



This box shows us the following:

Goodness: represented by the ideal world that the hero dreamed of, where people are of the highest moral character and the qualities of love, peace, and security are widespread among each other.

Evil: represented in the real world in which the hero lived, and also the one who corrupts the pure world as soon as he arrives in it.

No good: This is the indifference that the hero felt towards his community, and how he treated them. This is evident in his statement: "And little by little I realized that nothing would ever happen."

No evil: This is represented in the feelings of the other world where evil is absent.

According to Greimas, the following relationships arise from this duality:

- Good versus Evil = Opposition.
- No Good versus No Evil = Opposition.
- Good versus No Good = Contradiction.
- Evil versus No Evil = Contradiction.
- Good versus No Evil = Necessity.
- No Good versus Evil = Necessity.

The opposition here manifests in the protagonist's psyche between a world he lived in, dominated by evil, and an ideal world he traveled to through a dream, a world entirely good.

The contradiction is evident in the protagonist's internal conflict, a struggle between his indifference to the world and its people, and the pangs of conscience that awakened his inner feelings. It is also found in the innate perfection and purity of the inhabitants of the ideal world before the defilement and evil spread by the protagonist's presence among them; this is where the contradiction lies within this world.

The relationship of implication is seen in the dream, where the beautiful qualities and innocence of the inhabitants of the ideal world influenced the protagonist, leading to his adaptation to them, his love for them, and his desire for change and transformation.

Through Greimas's square, we can uncover the implicit dualistic relationships hidden beneath the surface structures—opposing dualities that express the moral dimension of humanity, the tension between the acquired and the innate. Fyodor Dostoevsky portrayed these points of contradiction and opposition that constitute the central conflict of his novel, **The Dream of a Ridiculous Man**.

5. The new perspective this paper offers to semiotics

Semiotics is a contemporary critical approach concerned with the study of signs, symbols, and meanings within literary texts and various cultural systems. Semiotic criticism is considered an extension of this theory, as it seeks to analyze the structure of narrative texts and interpret their meanings by deciphering their semantic codes and observing the relationships between signifier and signified within multiple contexts. This aims to provide a comprehensive overview of semiotic criticism by reviewing its fundamental concepts, methodological mechanisms, and its most prominent applications in the analysis of narrative texts.

6. CONCLUSION

Semiotics is one of the most prominent concepts that has left a mark on the fields of literary and artistic analysis. It is not merely a science concerned with the study of symbols and signs, but rather an integrated methodology that seeks to understand how narrative elements—whether words, characters, or events—are transformed into signs that transcend their literal meaning to acquire deeper semantic dimensions.

In the context of literature, and specifically the novel, semiotics is used to decode texts and analyze the symbols that the writer weaves to create multiple layers of meaning. Words are not simply tools used to tell stories or describe characters; they become dynamic symbols that reflect philosophical or social concepts and evoke interaction with the reader on intellectual and emotional levels. This makes reading an interactive experience that enriches the text with new meanings each time it is read, opening the door to multiple interpretations and different ways of understanding the text.

The novel is a key element in the semiotic field through which hidden contexts and symbolic meanings embedded in every phrase or scene can be understood. Signs and symbols within the text interact in a way that allows the story to transcend the limits of traditional narration, transforming it into a complex network of interconnected significations that together form narrative depth beyond the surface.

When semiotics is integrated into the novel, it creates a space for contemplation and interpretation, where each element of the text can carry a meaning that goes beyond its apparent narrative role, becoming part of an integrated symbolic structure. This highlights the importance of studying semiotics to understand its influence on literary texts, as it helps uncover the hidden layers of the text and offers rich readings that open new horizons for deeper and broader understanding of literature—making it an indispensable tool in analyzing novels and grasping their underlying meanings.

Moreover, the novel serves as a tool to understand how the author transforms symbols and signs into instruments for deeper communication with the reader. The novel is not merely a sequence of events and characters; it is a complex web of symbols and meanings that interact with one another to create a unique intellectual and emotional experience.

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