

A Literary Semiotics  
Approach to the  
Semantic Universe of  
George Orwell's  
*Nineteen Eighty-Four*



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By

Murat Kalelioğlu

Cambridge  
Scholars  
Publishing



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This book first published 2018

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-2018-8

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-2018-9

*Dedicated to  
in loving memory of my beloved mother  
Muazzez KALELIOĞLU*



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## FOREWORD

The multiple reading which is mentioned within the context of interpretation and explanation of the literary texts is a reliable approach to go beyond the text. In literary texts, the reading styles that are developed in the direction of subjectivity by connotative reading which shall be done upon denotative reading can be the point in question. In such connotative reading, readers will be able to interpret the signs in accordance with their value judgments that means the extension of the meaning of the text. A literary text has as many meanings and interpretations as the number of its readers. Every reader will read and explain the same text within his/her subjectivity. Hence, there is a view as the meaning in literary texts are infinite, and cannot be finished.

On the other hand, analyzing literary texts does not mean an interpretation that is entirely realized according to readers' desires. Instead, there are various methods that have been developed to analyze those texts. The gained results will be consistent and reliable as long as every method has a consistent theory, and does the analysis within the borders of the text. In textual studies, there are different stages and approaches to signify the text itself. The study and interpretation of the texts are sometimes done for educational purpose at schools. However, textual analysis is an academic study method since the text is addressed and studied in detail according to the method chosen in integrity. Some information is required to achieve such specific studies or analysis. For instance, a literary text can be analyzed in detail under the light of the following methods such as stylistics, psychocritics, thematic critique, intertextuality, and comparative literature. Different approaches can also be added to those. Another form of textual analysis method is literary semiotics approach which is methodologically more contemporary, systematic in terms of application, and more consistent than the others regarding the obtained results.

Murat Kalelioğlu has undertaken the analysis of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* which is one of the most outstanding novels in English literature by using literary semiotics approach. This study method that Kalelioğlu has applied includes reading the text in detail, analyzing, and interpreting it to be able to reach the narrative grammar of the text in a semiotic sense. The chosen novel as a research object of Kalelioğlu's study has been a very controversial one both in the period of its

publication and at present. In a sense, it is a novel that portrays what the social structure would be in the future in a futurist style of expression which can be accepted as a proof indicating that the narrative is a dystopic work of art. The subject of the novel is a very eristic one that brings up the adverse effects of the oppressive regimes carried out by dictators to maintain their social, political, legal, and economic domination over the country. Semiotically speaking, therefore, the masterpiece of Orwell has been one of the most controversial novels at all times around the world what makes it valuable to analyze the generative process and the organization of the meaning universe of it as a text.

The semiotic analysis of the generative process of a novel with such a controversial subject will be fascinating. Indeed, Mr. Kalelioğlu has taken up a challenge in this analysis he has written up. Perhaps, his attempt to reveal the semantic organization of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in a semiotic point of view would be the first in the field. When we evaluate Kalelioğlu's work in this respect, this analysis has an instructive role for the subsequent researchers who want to analyze narratives in the field of literary semiotics.

The results that Kalelioğlu has reached after performing multiple and intensive semiotic readings are impressive and intriguing. We suppose that the relations between narrative persons (actors) which had not been noticed until now have been able to be set forth in various ways. In the semiotic analysis, six actants can be found by the roles that the persons undertake besides the narrative persons. In different segments, the same narrative person/s can be seen in different actantial, performative and functional roles throughout the narrative. Moreover, that can be seen as an effective form of analysis to display a narrative person's various roles, his/her/its supporters, and opponents in the narrative. Kalelioğlu has addressed and assessed these relations among actants within the context of the narrative programme in detail.

Literary semiotics suggests a three-stage analysis such as discursive level, narrative level, and thematic level analysis. First, the first level of meaning should be analyzed and described explicitly. The description should be a kind of representation of the process of actorialization, temporalization, and spatialization in the novel. The second stage is where narrative-semiotic structures are addressed. That is the most basic stage where the narrative corpora are analyzed. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is also a narrative, and thereby the narrative-semiotic stage has an essential role in the analysis of the novel. Kalelioğlu has addressed the narrative profile, actants in each segment in the narrative, and the modal values that those actants pursue to reach the value objects in a quite detailed way in this

stage. He also has been able to unfold much information that an average reader cannot do the same with a surface (ordinary) reading act. In the last stage, how some of the abstract or ideal values in the narrative have arisen at the thematic level has been addressed. In this context, semiotic square analysis and semic analysis become prominent to reach the implicit/deep meaning of the novel in his research.

Murat Kalelioğlu has assessed the results he reached at the end of the semiotic analysis of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* narrative in the conclusion part. It is apparent that there will be much new information that readers can learn from this extensive semiotic analysis of the novel. Kalelioğlu's study is seen as a qualified prototype to observe the functions realized by the real persons, legal persons, and collective persons with their situational and performative roles that they undertake throughout the novel.

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## PREFACE

Semiotics is an analytical approach to interpret the facts approach to analyze and interpret the facts and incidents related to societies and cultures. Therefore, it is possible to define the approach as an art of signification of signs produced by people. The theory of semiotics enables to analyze both linguistic and non-linguistic signs including implicit and abstract concepts within a system. The system represents a specific semantic universe which is created thanks to the articulation of those concepts and signs with each other.

Semiotics is an umbrella term divided into multiple sub-divisions. Whether scientific or non-scientific, each of these divisions stands for different branches. One of those branches is the literature whose semantic universe is created by the intimate interaction of signs with each other. It is the literary language, far from conventional language, which makes the texts complicated, but precious. The value and complexity of the work of art stem from the linguistic revolution of its author who generates the fictional world of it mysteriously. As a result of the usage of implicit signs and symbols, the text turns into an enigmatical meaningful whole which needs to be discovered.

It is the work of semioticians to systematically unfold that arcane universe, which is full of complex and implicit signs. Semioticians are the experts who can always ascribe a meaning to the goings-on around them with their metalinguistic ability. They are the sign hunters who can investigate the meaning formation process of all kinds of texts to reveal the implicit and invisible facts to make the work of art comprehensible.

The research object of this study<sup>1</sup> is George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* narrative which is presented with a sophisticated structural organization from the deep to the surface meaning layers. What makes the text worthwhile is, in fact, the world of imagination of Orwell and the

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<sup>1</sup> This book entitled as "A Literary Semiotics Approach to the Semantic Universe of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*" is the revised version of the Doctoral Dissertation entitled "Analysis of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* Narrative within the Framework of Literary Semiotics Theory" and submitted by the author in February 2018 at İstanbul Aydın University, Institute of Social Sciences, English Language and Literature Program.

mastery of him in selection and combination of signs in both paradigmatic and syntagmatic dimensions. Literary semiotics approach and its analysis procedure mainly considered throughout the analysis as the focal point of this study is related to language and literature. Thus, the study has been conducted with a multidisciplinary perspective based on language, literature and semiotics fields. In this respect, the structural organization of the semantic universe of Orwell's narrative has been analyzed within the scope of Greimas's semiotic analysis trajectory. Throughout the analysis, a systematic procedure from the surface to the deep structures in the text has been strictly followed to achieve the aim of the semiotic reading act.



## ABBREVIATIONS

NP	: Narrative programme
BNP	: Basic narrative programme
SNP	: Sub-narrative programme
S1/2/3	: Segment one/ two/ three
S1/BNP	: Segment one / Basic narrative programme
SSq	: Semiotic square
S	: Subject
O	: Object
vO	: Object of value or value object
aS	: Anti-subject or opponent
Sn	: Sender
R	: Receiver
H	: Helper
$\wedge$	: Junction
$\vee$	: Disjunction
$S \wedge vO \vee aS$	: Subject has the object; whereas, the opponent does not have the object
$S \vee vO \wedge aS$	: Subject does not have the object, but the opponent has the object



## INTRODUCTION

Since the existence of human beings, people have been making vigorous diligence to account for the relationship between the living and non-living beings which presents the facts of life. As signifying practitioners, they also put in effort to explain the connection between themselves and the beings represented by signs that requires a dynamic process called signification. It is the process in which the meaning makers struggle to clarify the relationship between the signs and their reflections in the real world that constitutes the truth which makes life meaningful.

On the one hand, humanity has produced signs. On the other hand, they have tried to transfer the meaning of these signs to others through the communication instruments. It has always been a matter of debate to what extent that the receiver understands the assigned meaning. However, it is possible to come across the traces of the efforts of reaching the truth coming from the past to present is not only in academic disciplines fall under science and art umbrella but also in everyday life spheres of social life.

For many centuries, the leading actors are the exertive thinkers and scientists who struggle to reach the truth by rendering the unknown into the known with reference to the signs generated by the societies. Throughout the signification journey in understanding and explaining life from the perspective of the perception of truth, they have various ways to handle the matter. They assert different theories to reach the truth itself as well as claiming many ways for the sake of perceiving the reality of the phenomena around the world.

However, there is one significant point that cannot be ignored; it is the *language* which helps to bring all efforts and ideas from the past to present. In this context, as of the beginning of the twentieth century, science has been classified in itself, and it has been divided into different branches so as to be able to perceive, understand and explain all phenomena of life within their systems. Also, the contribution of the branching out process associated with language is the emergence of the discipline as *linguistics*.

From the past to present, Ferdinand de Saussure—who is known for his crucial contributions to linguistics and associated with the concepts and theories of linguistics—is the founder of modern linguistics and

semiology in Europe. According to Saussure, linguistics which is connected to the study of natural language is one of the sub-categories of semiology. Although there is no scientific room to place semiology, Saussure (1959, 16) thinks that semiology is an umbrella term which contains linguistic studies in itself. Moreover, the data and rules acquired by semiology can be implementable to linguistics.

Linguistics examines signs—*langue system*—which belongs to natural language. However, the need to study other kinds of signs that take place in different systems emerges. For this reason, Saussure (16) points out *semiology*—the study of signs—to propose a solution to the essence of a more comprehensive and broad discipline which is able to analyze the signs that belong to other systems rather than to the system of language. He makes a distinction between *langue* and *langage* while he is classifying signs used by human for communication. *Langage* is a broad concept that covers all types of communication instruments including language. At this point, it is vitally important to know about that the scientific field of studying *langue* is *linguistics*, while the science that studies *langage* is *semiology*—semiotics. By this way, in the sense of eliciting the meaning of signs that belong to the world, humanity, and societies, *semiotics* is a scientific project to analyze all kinds of informative signs and symbols in the communal life.

Semiotics is a scientific discipline which is interested in all kinds of signs. Eco (1976, 7) asserts that “semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign”. These signs can be from colloquial to literary language, from body language to visual phenomena, from sound to every kind of objects. The discipline is interested in the relationship of the signs with the reality (Chandler 2007, 2). Even feelings and expressions and other features of all living and non-living things and creatures can also be studied as a sign within the frame of semiotics.

Saussure founded modern semiotics in the early twentieth century. The aim of Saussure, who “saw linguistics as a branch of *semiology*” (Chandler 2007, 7), is to reveal not only the function of linguistic systems but also non-linguistic systems via semiology. In this context, he elucidates the concepts of the signification process as; *signifier*, *signified* and *sign*. According to him, there is no integration of an expressed sign and its object; on the contrary, the sign integrates the *mental concept* (signified) and *sound-image* (signifier) (Saussure 1959, 66).

For instance, the sing *teacher* (word) can be produced by the interaction of two components as the signifier *t-e-a-c-h-e-r* (sound image) and the signified *teacher* (mental concept) within the production process. As a result of the intimate interaction of these components, the sign is

produced and becomes a meaningful word. The interaction process between the signifier and the signified is called as *signification* which represents the process itself.

The relationship between the signifier and the signified in language is arbitrary (Saussure 1959, 67). Due to the arbitrary relationship, it is assumed that there is no physical and logical relation between signifier and signified although both sides of the sign are the inseparable parts of the signification process. Accordingly, it can be inferred that signs have a close relationship with each other in Saussure's meaning production trajectory. This *relationship* forms the primary concern of semiology, which focuses on the function and relation of signs with each other, and the contribution of this connection to the signification process.

Since the 1960s, semiotics has been developed theoretically by the works of Saussure's followers such as Roman Jakobson, Vladimir Propp, Louis Hjelmslev, Algirdas Julien Greimas, Tahsin Yücel, and the others. The discipline has gained a new shape and identity as a multidisciplinary approach due to the significant, concrete, and consistent studies since then. As a result of its applicable characteristics in different fields, semiotics has been divided into sub-branches in many disciplines such as humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, formal sciences, and applied sciences to study the meaning.

The developments in the field help semioticians to extend the scope of semiotic studies. For example, semiotics has become one of the most important aspects of media theories in recent years. It can be applied to cinema, television, and theater. Moreover, it is also applicable to the field of medicine, architecture, veterinary, communication and information-related areas (Parsa and Parsa 2004, 6). As a result, semiotics which is still in the process of development has gained prestige as a multi/inter/transdisciplinary approach.

Semiotician Jean-Marie Floch (1985, 45) refers to the three significant sources of contemporary semiotics. These are cultural anthropology, linguistics, and epistemology. There are many researchers under the heading of these sources that Floch brings forward within the framework of modern semiotics. For example, in cultural anthropology, the significant researchers such as Marcel Mauss, Vladimir Propp, Georges Dumézil, and Claude Lévi Strauss were interested in very different ways of thinking to analyze societies and the dynamics of their cultures created with non-verbal signs with the help of semiotics. In linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure, Roman Jakobson, Nikolai Troubetzkoy, Louis Hjelmslev, Viggo Brøndal, Émile Benveniste, Roland Barthes, and Algirdas Julien Greimas are accepted as some of the leading figures. Rudolf Carnap, the

representative of the Vienna School of Logic, and Alfred Tarski, the leading figure of the School of Math in Poland are the important figures in epistemology. In phenomenology, It is possible to mention Edmond Husserl, Maurice Merleau Ponty, Bernard Russell, and Ernest Cassirer who defend that the scientific project of semiotics requires thinking on being scientific.

Floch's semiotic perception based on the various scientific domains has the characteristics of being *metascience*. For this reason, modern semiotics which is based on the ground of *cultural anthropology*, *linguistics*, and *epistemology*, tends to analyze and interpret both intralinguistic and extralinguistic signs and concepts within their systems.) Semiotics is basically a metalanguage which stands for an approach of how signs are used, and how they function in all domains of human intellectual and aesthetic production (Danesi 2017, 61. Therefore, it is an undeniable fact that semiotics cannot be isolated from other disciplines as it has a close connection with them. Semiotics is applicable to all other sciences that leads semioticians up to use it in different branches of science. Semiotics claims to investigate the formation of signification including linguistic and non-linguistic structures (Martin and Ringham 2006, 2). Therefore, the theory covers both scientific and non-scientific signifying systems, social practices, and signification procedures.

As a result of the intimate interaction between the scientific domains of literature and language, the field of *literary semiotics* comes into existence which represents one of the inter/trans/multidisciplinary branches of modern semiotics today. In this context, as the primary purpose of this study is closely related to language and literature, we mainly take account of the scientific data based on Algirdas Julien Greimas's analysis theory grounded Saussure's general thoughts on semiology.

Greimas contributes much to the semiotic studies. His semiotics tends to be both a general thought on signification and a whole analysis method in the way of the analysis of meaningful objects (Yücel 2015, 127). Greimas, who places a great emphasis on developing a systematic and consistent analysis method of signification, endeavors to turn semiotics into a scientific branch. Greimas "is concerned primarily with the relationship between signs, and with the manner in which they produce meaning within a given text or discourse. [...] It takes a more wide-reaching approach and, is of greater practical use" (Martin and Ringham 2006, 2). In this study, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* narrative will be analyzed within the scope of Greimas's semiotic approach because of the systematic, concrete, and consistent analysis tools and

methods of semiotics he proposed to analyze the structural organization and meaning production process of all kinds of meaningful texts.

## Aim

The subject of semiotics is not to answer the questions such as what does the text say, who says the text, or what are the possible external—societal, individual, and historical—effects on the text. Instead, it is mainly interested in *how* signs are created, *how* they are articulated with each other to create the meaning in the text, and *in what ways* the meaning is created in different semantic layers within its system. The study necessitates focusing on the relations of the formative elements in the text which leads us to reach the narrative syntax that makes it possible to observe the underlying structures in different semantic strata of the text. Moreover, the approach helps us to analyze the meaning production process, as well as to observe the ways of the articulation process of meaningful items with each other to create the whole text.

The main purpose of this study is to figure out the semantic organization of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* narrative synchronically within the scope of the following research question:

*“How is the signification process of Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four constituted? In what ways is the semantic universe of the narrative organized to become a meaningful whole throughout the signification process?”*

Before initiating a systematic analysis, the value of Orwell's narrative in terms of literature, the effect of it in its period, and its place in the history of literature will be discussed. The discussion will be left out of the analysis process since it aims to provide a prior knowledge to the reader before the semiotic reading act. Then a detailed analysis process will be initiated incrementally for each of the following purposes which will support us to reach the answers to the leading research question stated above.

The aim in the first stage is to analyze the *discursive* structure of the novel. In this frame, the following questions will be asked during the analysis process in the first stage:

- 1) What are the *formative elements* of meaning that take place at the discursive level of the narrative?

- 2) How is the *actor* organized as one of the formative elements in the narrative?
- 3) How is the *space* organized as one of the formative elements in the narrative?
- 4) How is the *time* organized as one of the formative elements in the narrative?
- 5) How does the *relationship* of the formative elements (actor-space-time) with each other make a contribution to the formation of the semantic structure at the discursive level of the narrative?

It is expected that the questions stated above help us to reveal the process of transforming the author's literary design into discourse at the discursive level of the narrative.

The purpose of the second stage is to analyze the *narrative-semiotical* structure of the novel. To be able to reveal the narrative structure, it is significant to take the three critical profiles such as *narrative*, *actantial*, and *modal* profiles into consideration at this level. Through the analysis, it is possible to observe the transformation process of an actor into an actant and the relationship of actants with each other in different narrative programmes:

- 1) How many *basic segments* are there in the narrative? Which conditions are taken into consideration while these basic segments are determined? What are the corresponding values of the segments, and the basic themes in each segment in Greimas's narrative programme schema?
- 2) What are the basic narrative programmes identified in each segment? Are there any anti-narrative programmes against the basic narrative programmes? If so, what are the main causes of conflict between the subjects that constitute these narrative programmes?
- 3) Under what conditions are the sub-narrative programmes, which support the basic narrative programmes of each segment, encountered? Are there any anti-narrative programmes against the sub-narrative programmes encountered? If so, what are the main causes of conflict between the subjects that constitute these narrative programmes?
- 4) How is the junctive/disjunctive condition between the subject and the object arranged in each schema? What kind of contributions do these junctive/disjunctive conditions make to the narrative?
- 5) Based on the identified narrative programmes and schemata, which *modalities* are more dominant than the others in the narrative?



What kind of contributions do these modalities make to the narrative?

- 6) What kind of contributions does the narrative-semiotical level analysis make to the meaning universe of the novel?

In the light of the stated questions above, both basic and sub-narrative programmes, the actants and their actions, the relations of actants with each other, the modalities that the actants gain due to their actions, and the added value of all stated formative elements at the narrative-semiotical level will be examined.

Our goal in the third stage is to analyze the deep structure of the text. It is the thematic level of meaning which is for revealing the abstract concepts and ideas that cannot be seen at the first level of semantic structure. It is also the level in which the implicit aims, fundamental values, and underlying logic turn into concrete and visible entities within the system. The underlying logic of the narrative will be exposed through the Greimas's *semiotic square*. In doing so, answers to the following questions will be sought:

- 1) How are the *oppositions* determined on each axis so that the implicit or abstract meanings, which have been created in the deep structure of the narrative by the author, can be analyzed in the semiotic square?
- 2) What kind of contributions does the analysis carry out in the deep structure of the narrative make to the meaning universe of the novel?

The deep structure analysis of the novel will enable us to see the abstract and implicit meanings which are not stated explicitly and cannot be noticed at the first reading attempt in the narrative. The answers that will be obtained for the stated questions above will help us to reach the answer to the central research questions stated previously.

## Methodology

The core point of semiotics is the study of meaning within a particular system which represents the semantic universe of a meaningful whole. It is the primary duty of semioticians to analyze the universe of meaning with the help of the methods and analysis tools of semiotics. Semiotics aims to sort out the process of meaning formation and systematization within the semantic universe through the signification

process (Günay 2002, 11). The situation is also valid for the literary world. In literature, interpreting or explaining the meaning universe of the literary texts is always a challenging act since they are formed by the articulation of abstract, implicit, or complex signs. Hence, different analysis theories and methods are developed to overcome such arduousness. One of them is the literary semiotics theory. Reading and interpreting the literary texts with the methods and tools of the literary semiotics theory requires a careful reading performance from the top (surface) to the bottom (deep). In this case, the act of semiotic reading cannot be considered equal with the ordinary reading act since the previous one requires a challenging and systematic reading performance; whereas, the other does not. Semiotic reading act requires much attention and sensitivity because the analysis needs a systematic effort for both deconstruction and reconstruction processes. As a result of the effort, researchers are also able to constitute their own theoretical model which is applied along the analysis process of the text (Rifat 2011, 36). In the course of the exclusive reading act, the semantic universe of the narrative is reinterpreted and explained within the frame of semiotics.

At every turn, different semiotic discovery carries the researcher to the height of pleasure of reading. In such a case, there are two authors of a text: The one who writes and the one who reads the text. It is the reader who tastes the feeling of pleasure as a meaning producer and can utilize the privilege (Kıran and Kıran 2011, 17). It can be concluded that the reader is as active as the author within the signification process of the text. The significance of this study is to unfold the meaning formation process in the semantic universe of the narrative with the help of methods and tools of literary semiotics. Through the reading process, it is also vital to emerge the relationship of the meaningful entities with each other to observe the ways of articulation of the systems that constitute the meaning of the text.

Insisting on staying in the borders of the text throughout the analysis process becomes more of an issue. Namely, the author, period, incidents, and all the other external factors such as feelings of the author and life experiences are not considered in the study of semiotics. Semiotics views the text, any text as an autonomous unit, that is, one that is internally coherent (Martin and Ringham 2006, 10). In this respect, according to Tahsin Yücel (1983, 55), a critic who tries to analyze and explains a masterpiece with the things around it such as its writer's epoch, and life confronts with the danger of grasping just one side of the text as well as staying distant to the masterpiece itself. Therefore, while implementing the tools and methods of semiotics to the text, it becomes more of an issue

not to cross the borders of the masterpiece to get explicit and reliable results related to the meaning formation process of the text.

It is a must to have a comprehensive knowledge of Greimas's semiotic analysis steps and requirements while investigating the formation and articulation processes of meaning. Moreover, it should be well known what can be put forward in each of these steps during the analysis process. In this respect, Greimas proposed a three-stage analysis levels such as discursive, narrative, and thematic that take place in the "*surface* narrative structures and *deep* narrative structures" (Greimas 1971, 793). Semiotic analysis tries to reveal the process of meaning production and the articulation of meaning to form the text. There is a particular path that should be followed to implement the theory correctly. The procedure should start from the surface toward the deep structures. In each structure, there are remarkable stations that should be taken into consideration. It is necessary to stop and focus on the different meaning layers such as discursive, narrative, and thematic at each stop for a reliable analysis process. So, it can be said that semiotic analysis requires a particular reading journey to explain how the formation of meaning occurs in the text. In addition, semiotics is the theory which needs to have a right and careful reading act that directs readers to figure out the formation of the meaning layers (Günay 2002, 186). In this context, such an analysis is to tackle considering the three-stage analysis including discursive, narrative and thematic levels located at the surface and deep structures of the text.

The first level of meaning is *discursive* level which is also called as descriptive level situated in the surface structure of the narrative. The discursive level represents one of the components of the surface structure of meaning including formative elements such as *actor*, *space*, and *time* by which the level connects itself to the real world. The *actors*, their formation with their qualifications, and states are some of the necessary points that can be analyzed in the surface structure. Besides, the perceived physical condition, the state of mind of the actors, and the relationships of them with each other also can be analyzed. The stated visible qualities of the actors can be observed at the first reading attempt through the analysis process. Also, the *space*, which stands for the occupied zones, locations, and borders by the characters or objects, is analyzed. As for the *time*, it is the analysis of the timeframes in which the actors, spaces, and the incidents take place. In brief, the logical organization of the formative elements at the first level of meaning is handled to emerge how a literary project turns into a discourse.

The second level of meaning is called as the *narrative level* which takes place in the surface structure. However, although it occurs in the

same structural zone with the discursive level, the narrative level is more general and abstract than the previous level. At this point, the grammar of the narrative (narrative syntax) comes into prominence (Martin and Ringham 2006, 12). In this stage, actants of the narrative, their actions, and relationships with each other that take place in Greimas's *actantial narrative schema* are studied. Besides, the process of gaining different modalities of the actants, and the plot in the narrative are examined within the scope of Greimas's *narrative programme*.

The actants, their acts, and functions can be observed due to the actantial narrative schema developed by Greimas. The actants taking place in the narrative are explained according to their narrative functions-actantial roles. An actant can be a *sender* or a *receiver*, a *subject* or an *object*, a *helper* or an *opponent* regarding its functions in the narrative program (Günay 2013a, 199). Accordingly, the roles of the actants can change according to their functions as they are on the move throughout the narration.

The last level of meaning is *the thematic level* that is located in the deep structure of the narrative. "This is the level of abstract or conceptual syntax where the fundamental values which generate a text are articulated" (Martin and Ringham 2006, 15). Moreover, the values which are exposed at this level can be systematized and presented via Greimas's *semiotic square*. The thematic level requires several careful reading acts to reveal the abstract and implicit situations that represent the central theme in the text. In this context, we focus on not visible but invisible and abstract formations and structures in the text (Günay 2013a, 207). That is, we should not insist on staying at one level as we need to go beyond to achieve to reach a detailed semantic organization of the study object in our study.

# CHAPTER ONE

## GENERAL SEMIOTICS

### Signs and Signifying Practices

Semiotic studies go back much further than the twentieth century. Semiotics is the theory which tries to describe meaningful systems and determines the relations of signs with each other in the same system since then. “Semiotic consciousness found its original thematic statement and systematic formulation in the Latin world as it developed indigenously between Augustine thematically (c.397AD) and Poinot systematically (1632)” (Deely 1990, 108-109). People have struggled to interpret their ideas, emotions, and cultural systems that they have transferred one another via linguistic and non-linguistic communication instruments for centuries. During the process, many thinkers and scientists, first, generated ideas related to the concept of the sign by examining the linguistic signs, then they have disseminated these ideas to many areas of human sciences including theology, medical, and other sciences.

Although *semiotics* has come to the fore as a theoretical proposal thanks to the studies of Saussure and Peirce in the twentieth century, referring to the concept of *sign*, and the effort to make it systematic was carried out much earlier. Semiotics in the Medieval epoch was interested in the concept of signs and their reflections in the real world, rather than a scientific discipline (Meier-Oeser 2011). At that time, the concept of sign was handled conceptually by the thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Bacon. Later, John Poinot tried to systematize the study. Thanks to the efforts of the philosophers, many outstanding resources were produced related to the ways of understanding and interpretation of signs during the period. For example, Plato *The ‘Cratylus’ of Plato- B.C. 360*, Aristoteles *On Interpretation- B.C. 350*, Augustine *De Magistro- 389*, *De Doctrina Christiana- 397*, and *Principia Dialecticae- 384*, Bacon *De Signis- 1260*, Poinot *Tractatus de Signis- 1632*,

From the past to present, many different ideas related to signs have been put forward by the representatives of different movements. Since ancient times, the relationships between realism, idealism, and the names

given to these concepts have been studied by many thinkers. It has always been the subject to discuss whether the reality is limited to the world that we perceive with our five senses, or beyond it that we are trying to conceptualize in our mind. Moreover, it has also been the point at issue that the relationship between the concepts itself and the given names to these concepts. In this case, the main reason for the discussion is based on the following issues: Humankind has always benefited from the signs in the course of communication. However, he has always been skeptical about the reality of the connection between the signifier and the signified. The most fabulous reason for it is the fact that the anxiety of confusing with the sign and the representation of the reality of the sign. That is, the danger of assuming the sign itself as the real representation of reality has always existed.

For instance, stoics, who see man's happiness in man himself, believe that human beings must first integrate themselves with the nature to reach real happiness, and think of logic as an upper virtue that holds all the goodness of man overthink about the notion of sign. As Nöth (1995, 15) stated, a sign becomes a meaningful entity by the interaction of the *signifier*, the *signified*, and the *object* within the signification process according to the Stoic perceptions. The sign gains its meaning with the existence of its object in reality. At the end of the efforts, they present a proposal which separates the material object, material symbol, and the meaning from each other. Subsequently, the prominent philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Augustine, who are the advocates of the scholastic philosophy come out of the signs and put forward essential ideas about the notion of signs, their meanings, and interpretations.

It is possible to see the ideas of the thinkers regarding how the communication process actualizes thanks to signs. They believe that the opinions in human thought system can be transferred to others through the signs. In that sense, we need to focus on the perspective of Plato (B.C. 427-347) based on his philosophy of *semiotic realism* which means "the correlates of the sign are assumed to be nonmental entities" (Nöth 1995, 84). According to Plato's realist model of sign, "both sense and reference exist in themselves and would exist even if there were no minds to be aware of them" (84). Accordingly, there is always a predefined notion of everything that exists for Plato. According to Plato, the concepts and words that are created before the object cannot represent the truth itself because they are the copy of our unreliable perceptions (*Cited by* Nöth 1995, 15). The exact reliability of the notions is not in human mind, but it is in the first creation of the signs which represents the truth. It is the predefined existence of the concepts just before the existence of its object.