Exploration of Mythological Elements in Contemporary Narratives

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Edited by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword

Analysis of Mythological Elements in Contemporary Narratives within the Scope of Narratology and Semiotics

Mythology is one of the primary sources from which narratives are derived throughout history. In addition, various fields such as: social values, science, and philosophy can also be considered narrative sources. On the one hand, mythology shows the existence of social order and a worldview perspective. On the other hand, mythology can be used as a means to explain unsolvable mysteries. The word 'mythology' comes from the word 'myein' meaning "to tell secret information" in antiquity, and the word "mythos" is the narrative of such secret information. The sum of such cumulative narratives is one of the most critical factors that enables social memory formation.

Mythology, which represents facts that symbolise social memory, is frequently used to reveal new situations, phenomena, or ideas in literature, art, or any other intellectual field. There are different information sources in societies. Religion and philosophy are the first sources that come to mind that provide information to societies. However, since knowledge and information are constantly changing, they will take on different forms depending on the developments in science and societies.

Mythology, as social memory, also carries within it certain information that is available and useful for societies. For example, while writing a novel or story, an author can benefit from incorporating science, religion, daily information, common sense, myths, or philosophy. Depending on the chosen theme of a written text, such as a novel, archaeology, chemistry, or space sciences can also be useful throughout the production process of the semantic universe of the text. These are the proven methods or, in other words, a novelist's arsenal that can be used to explain facts or phenomena.

Since mythological subjects and their areas of use are pretty extensive, a mythical theme that is abundant in terms of symbols and figures can help explain many issues. "In any case, imagination can offer valid data and responses which cannot be claimed to be totally true but at least acceptable,

true like. These creations of the mind, tales made up to shed light upon all the big questions that come to our minds, are called myths."[1]

Myths can be used in different types of narratives as well as in daily, political, or ideological discussions. These kinds of myths are used as analogies and derived from the use of comparison, metaphor, and metonymy. However, it should be kept in mind that a mythological event cannot only preserve its mythic features, but by making some changes, it can be recounted in ways that serve the purpose of the enunciator. For instance, recounting the mythological narrative "Simurg" can be fulfilled through mimesis, but the author can tell one or two events with this known mythic theme as the subject of enunciation. Mimesis, or exemplification of the narrative of Simurg, is in question here. However, the same author can also narrate any subject s/he wants with the help of that mythologic theme. Different societies know the narrative of Simurg under different names. For instance, the Iranians named this bird "Simurg", the Arabs "Zümrüd-ü Anka", the Turks "Huma Bird", and in western mythology, it was called "Phoenix". However, these diverse narratives of the bird are an excellent way to explain another case. The subject of enunciation used a mythic theme, but preferred to slightly alter the theme to suit his/her purpose.

Human beings in every society produce myths at all stages of their lives that are appropriate for their period. Every society is aware that its own mythological world has been altered through time and eventually became what it is today. "Every culture has its own myth, and people cannot live without a metaphor, nor can they live without a myth. Some people somehow lead their lives abiding by one or another myth."[2] Cultural values, including customs, are made up of different systems. Societies and the people within them never create something absolute; they instead choose to synthesise their knowledge intellectually. Mythic choices can also be respected in this context. People may prefer expressing their thoughts by selecting specific syntheses from the mythological systems.

The most common subjects in mythologies are: "to look for something's origins, search for someone's roots, the end of the world, returning (regressus ad uterum), receiving help from beings with supernatural powers, acquiring supernatural strength from a mythic object, etc."[3] These

[1] Bottero, Jean. 2006. *Kültürümüzün Şafağı: Babil*. Translated by Ali Berktay. 2nd Edition, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi. p. 110.
[2] *Quoted from* Pinto, Jean-Jacques. 2004. Linguistique et Psychanalyse: Pour une Approche Logiciste. *Marges linguistiques*. *8*, 88-113.
[3] Günay, V. Doğan. 2020. Söylenin İşlevi ve Anlamlandırılması. *Düşünbil*, *87*, 6-11. Ankara: Desen.

are some of the most frequently used mythic themes that societies can apply at any time. To summarise, mythology is considered as the collective memory of societies and holds many secrets within itself. Mythos has familiar themes. The subject of enunciation makes extensive use of this state of familiarity. "It depends on the talent and creativity of the subject of enunciation since literary works, composed of mythology, are powerfully created from the authors' imaginary world. Therefore, such literary works require a certain linguistic revolution and rebellion from their writers. This is a must for the sophisticated creation of their art since it requires writers to have an idiosyncratic semantic universe full of implicit and referential signs."[4]

Accordingly, the freedom of the subject of enunciation in creating her/his narrative is essential. Such freedom can be linked to Saussure's "paradigmatic/syntagmatic dichotomy."[5] For Kalelioğlu, the creativity performance of the enunciation subject emerges on two different axes; the axis of selection (paradigmatic axis) and the axis of combination (syntagmatic axis). Narratives can be produced with the free and qualified acts of the enunciation subject on these axes. The communicative value of the narratives hinges upon the producer's talent that will also determine the artistic value of the narrative produced by the subject of enunciation.[6]

Fictional narratives generated as a result of the act of the enunciation subject on the stated axis are known as "plot fantasmatic"[7] and possess similar qualities to those of myths, legends, and tales, which preserve social memory. Myths have didactic and ethical purposes, and they are based on experiences in a world of unknown origins, set of values, and worldview. Jean-Marie Floch examines social values and functions. For instance, 'mythical value' is an exchange with its practical and symbolic functions that symbolises creation.[8] Accordingly, it is possible to talk

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[4] Kalelioğlu, Murat. 2018. *A Literary Semiotics Approach to the Semantic Universe of George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, p. 61.

[5] De Saussure, Ferdinand. 1959. *Course in General Linguistics*. Translated by Wade Baskin. New York: Philosophical Library, pp. 124-138.

[6] Kalelioğlu, Murat. 2018. Multidisciplinary Approach to the Texts: Semiotic Analysis of the Process of Meaning Construction in O. Henry's The Gift of the Magi. In M. N. Doru & Ö. Bozkurt (Editors). *Dil Bilimleri: Klasik Sorunlar-Güncel Tartışmalar*. 811–865. Mardin: Mardin Artuklu University.

[7] Kristeva, Julia. 1996. Les Métamorphoses du 'Langage' dans la Découverte Freudienne: Les Modèles Freudiens du Langage. In *Sens et Non-sens de la Révolte*, 51-102. Paris: Fayard, Coll.

[8] Floch, Jean-Marie Floch. 1990. *Sémiotique, Marketing et Communication. Sous les Signes, les Stratégies*. *Formes sémiotiques*. Paris: PUF, pp. 130-131.

about the creative function of mythical uses in contemporary narratives that is quite functional and useful for the subject of enunciation.

Myths are generally fictions dealing with supernatural characters, entities, and events fabricated to explain historical or natural phenomenon. People in ancient times spoke about their weaknesses, fears, and their struggle against nature through mythical narratives. Fantastic creatures mostly appear at the end of a phase of transformation or metamorphosis. Such structures are fictional and have the ability to influence and support each other. The transformations of fantastic centaurs indicate that these structures have narrative properties. In such narratives, there is an ongoing established order that is disrupted by an event. This disruption continues throughout the narrative, and towards the end of the narrative, the problem is resolved. Just as this is valid for a mythic legend, the case also applies to a novel, novella, story, epic, cinema, or theatre.

Nevertheless, every fictional structure has its own specialities. For example, there can be a magical object or animal in an epic, or in a novel or novella, there can be a person or a technological apparatus. However, regardless of the genre, a goddess, a magical object in a mythical narrative, or an old man with a white beard in an epic, or any character in a novel will be accepted as an actant in different shapes with various purposes.

Creatures can easily be found in fictional structures from ancient times. These creatures are naturally not human; yet, they possess humanly features such as a human head or body for people to perceive and visualise them easily. Other parts of the creature may have the features of a bull, bird, horse, fish, and other various animals. A creature with a human head and bull horns and a creature with wings and a horse's body are implemented as supportive actants in various narratives. Many creatures of these types are present in ancient Greek mythology. These creatures can undertake one or more actantial roles such as sender/receiver, subject/object, and helper/opponent. In narratives, these are functional tasks comprising actants, their values, roles, and relations that can be revealed with the help of semiotic analysis tools.

Numerous analysis methods have been used to analyse narratives. One of them is semiotics based on linguistics, epistemology, logic, and mathematics from a transdisciplinary perspective. For Kalelioğlu, the transdisciplinary character of semiotics enables it to enlarge its system and form its metalanguage. Semiotics, which is at the intersection of different sciences, has become a discipline that can analyse both literary and non-

literary texts.[9] The main objectives of semiotic analysis are: 1) to be able to reveal the functions performed by actants in a specific fictional structure, 2) to illustrate the signification process within the narrative through dichotomies, 3) to read the narrative in both paradigmatic and syntagmatic contexts and evaluate the various relationships of the constitutive elements in both the surface and deep levels, and lastly, 4) to exhibit functions placed in the deep structure of the narrative beyond the surface structure with the help of an analysis apparatus called the semiotic square. These four objectives provide a partial list of the objectives used in the semiotic analysis.

Another analysis method is narratology. There are different kinds of relationships between narratology and semiotics. For instance, semiotics accepts everything as a text to be studied. Narratology regards "anything that tells or presents a story, be it by oral or written text, picture, performance, or a combination of these"[10] as narratives. For Kalelioğlu, the meaning of 'text' is used in a broad sense in semiotics. Visual/non-visual or linguistic/non-linguistic productions are accepted as a narrative. For example, novels, films, dramas, myths, musical performances, etc. are regarded as a text[11] and 'narrative'. The terms 'text' and 'narrative', which form both methods' area of examination, exhibit how inclusive both theories are.[12]

Different analyses can be conducted that are related to the narrative in a way that will support the semiotic analysis. For example, identifying people on different levels, such as the subject of enunciation (author), subject of enunciatee (reader), subject of enunciated utterance (narrator), recipient of enunciated utterance (diegetic=receiver), subject of utterance (speaker/listener –narrative person=character) and describing how their actions are handled in the context of narratology. Also, other features such as the narrator, perspective, focalisation, time, space, and speed that contribute to the narrative should be dealt with in narratology.[13] This is a

[9] Kalelioğlu, Murat. 2020. Act of Signification: From Narratology to Semiotics within the Scope of Interdisciplinary Approach. *RumeliDE Journal of Language and Literature Studies*. Special Issue, 97-113. DOI: 10.29000/rumelide.814075.

[10] Jahn, Manfred. 2017. *Narratology: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative*. English Department, University of Cologne, p. 20.

[11] Kalelioğlu, Murat. 2020. Başarı/Başarısızlık Bağlamında Öznenin Yaşam Mücadelesine Göstergebilimsel Bir Bakış. In *Düşünbil*, *92*, 8-14. İstanbul: Düşünbil.

[12] Kalelioğlu, Murat. 2020. Act of Signification: From Narratology to Semiotics within the Scope of Interdisciplinary Approach. *RumeliDE Journal of Language and Literature Studies*. Special Issue, 97-113. DOI: 10.29000/rumelide.814075.

[13] Günay, V. Doğan. 2018. *Bir Yazınsal Göstergebilim Okuması: Kuyucaklı Yusuf*. İstanbul: Papatya Bilim, pp. 108-121.

partial list of the technical cases that need to be clarified during the narrative analysis process.

Whether it is semiotics or narratology, one of the significant aspects of the theories is being able to interact with other disciplines. Semiotics and narratology are two significant theories suitable for producing new narrative analysis methods by blending together and/or blending with other theories. The chapters of this book pave the way for conducting interdisciplinary studies by applying these theories. In conclusion, different mythological narratives produced in different societies at different times have been analysed within the framework of an interdisciplinary perspective in this study. This collective work will provide readers with substantial information regarding different mythological narratives and their analysis, incorporating various methods, tools, and perspectives.

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CHAPTER ONE

WEEPING GODS OF THE EXISTENTIAL
APPROACH:
A SEMIOTIC LOOK AT MYTHOLOGY

MUSTAFA SARICA

Introduction

Mythology is the common work of yesterday's unknown authors. These stories, circulating on the infinite limits of the human imagination, are still a source of inspiration for today's writers, despite all the incredible things they contain. These narratives, which envelop the truth in exaggeration and imagination, have been an effective source in bringing the realities of the past to the present. Mythology is the literary art of mummification that sends the truth to eternity and seeks to preserve the truth with exaggeration. This work is a semiotic touch to existential writers' efforts to exist by dipping their quill in mythology ink.

Writing tradition in Europe began to go beyond Latin in the 1000s. Romans' productions on the Greek cultural heritage began to be addressed by new languages and cultures, this time emerging in Europe. The principle of imitating the ancients of the classical movement and taking nature as an example caused Greek works to be rewritten in Western languages regardless of their type. As a result, Greek and Roman mythology also inspired the non-Greco-Roman cultures.

This movement, which started with the classical movement, did not stop in the 20th century. The existentialist movement brought back the mythological elements of antiquity and "new" definitions were brought to the "old" in this regard. Existential philosophy was presented to the masses with mythological examples and literary works.

Sartre, Camus, Ionesco, Beckett, Genet, Adamov and the others chose to describe today's problems with yesterday's mythological metaphors.

Although the definition of existentialism is controversial, the view of the universe and the position of human in the universe have been their common approach. Generally, their fondness for existence evolved into an intense complaint due to the mortality of this existence and others have shown that they are the stakeholders of the same movement with the issues such as absurd, pessimism, alienation, fear, and absence.

They used mythology and symbolism to describe; we chose to use semiotics to understand. Among the many authors using mythological motifs, we have tried to describe the three representatives of existentialism. Camus, Ionesco, and Vian saw mythological stories to reflect their own vision of life.

Mythology is the work of yesterday's unknown authors. These stories, circulating on the infinite limits of the human imagination, are still a source of inspiration for today's writers, despite all the incredible things they contain. These narratives, which envelop the truth in exaggeration and imagination, have been an effective source in bringing the realities of the past to the present.

Barthes does not see mythology as a field that distorts reality. On the contrary, it sends the truth to the next millennia, preserving it in its own private package and with some encryption.

"Si paradoxal que cela puisse paraître, le mythe ne cache rien : sa fonction est de déformer, non de faire disparaître" (Barthes 1957, 194).

"Paradoxical as it may seem, the myth does not hide anything: its function is to distort, not to make disappear."

Mythology's deformation of knowledge is due to the reflex of entrusting it to the future with exaggeration and shine. In this case, we must understand mythological packaging as an armor, shell and guardian of truth. As a result, mythology is the literary art of mummification that sends the truth to eternity and seeks to preserve it with overstatement. This work is a semiotic touch to existential writers' efforts to exist by dipping their quill in mythology ink.

Method and the objective of the work

The aim of this study is to examine how existentialist writers use mythological motifs to reflect existential elements and to explain the references made by these uses with semiotic method. The bridge between sign meaning and understanding is the link between the symbol and its load of meaning. Understanding takes a journey, a mental process, and

reasoning.

Without this effort it is not easy to reach meaning. The sign is the result of the consistent relationship between signifier and signified. If the bond between the two does not reflect reality, it will be appearance, not sign, and appearance will be deceiving. Where there is communication, there will always be communication problems. Because communication is the result of a process and this process tries to achieve meaning by using some tools such as text, sound, symbol and image. Since metaphor and similar word games require two or more operations, reaching meaning requires more information, interpretation and effort.

Although these mind games require more mental effort, they add aesthetics and interest to literary works. Indeed, rolling the stone down again by the gods, carried by Sisyphus to the top is understood as a reference to the monotony of human life. Did the unknown authors of the myth, who described the life cycle with this metaphor, imagine that this analogy would still be used thousands of years later to describe the vicious journey of human life? How many comments have been made for a single incident like a legend?

Our aim is not to read fairy tales. We want to take the meaning out of hiding. This requires the guidance of *semiotics*. Yes, the *sign* is the light that meaning seekers apply. What we call *signified* is another name for meaning.

Our source, citation and comment layout will be as follows.

Figure 1

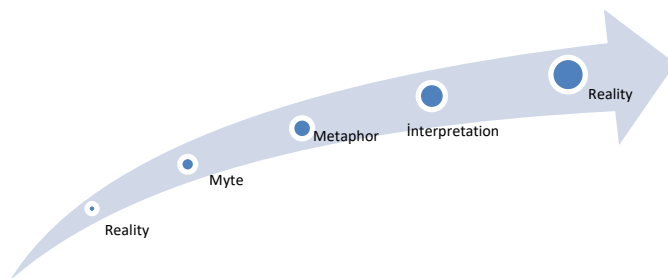Maybe this legend did not have a true reference to the truth. However, subsequent comments relate it to real life. Existentialist theory has used this event to describe the fate of today's man who is caught between the problems of existence and daily affairs.

In this article, we will try to read semiotically the reflections of mythological events in literature and life. In doing so, we will try to

approach with the sign theories of Ferdinand de Saussure and Rolland Barthes, the philosophical thought developed by existentialist writers such as Albert Camus and Ionesco by using myths.

The Problematic

Although ancient Greece and Rome used to write since a very early period, new cultures that emerged after the 1000s were introduced to writing quite late. We know that Western thought and literature is nourished by Antiquity, which the classical movement brought ancient works back to the agenda by rewriting them, especially in French, and this constitutes the basis of the writing tradition in European countries.

Later, reference to ancient Greek and Roman thought and mythology in almost every field, showing them as a source caused a certain frustration and boredom in some scientific circles.

The fact that Greek mythology is a source in almost every case must have bored George Dumezil that he does not seem enthusiastic to return to this field in her later works.

> "D'autres dossiers plus urgents et plus prometteurs m'occupaient et l'abus de la référence grecque m'avait si souvent fourvoyé en 1938 que j'ai ensuite été trop prudent" (Dumézil 1987).

> "Other more urgent and more promising dossiers occupied me and the abuse of the Greek reference had so often led me astray in 1938 that I was then too careful."

The repetitions on this subject are actually enough to give him the right. However, it is unthinkable that historical legendary, literary and philosophical interpretations do not feed and influence other ideas. Moreover, pairing the Sisyphus legend with today's people shows how fiction serves reality. This situation shows with examples what kind of skill literature has in telling the truth and enhancing expression. Because, we witness that the events that philosophy cannot explain sufficiently with its own expression on this subject, literature can accomplish with aesthetic methods.

Yes, the success of literature to tell, semiotics exhibits for understanding. We know that semiotics can be used in understanding, explaining and hiding. We accept that literature is a field that exhibits with aesthetics the narrative function of semiotics. In this article, we will benefit from the narrative ability of literature and the understanding function of semiotics.

Semiotics is a branch of science that, according to the definition of

Saussure, will take place above linguistics and all other branches of science. All expressions and communication methods are dependent on signs. Meaning is illuminated by the light and guidance of a sign. We need them to tell as well as to understand. According to this definition, signs are not just words or writings. The universe itself and everything it contains are also indicative and carrying meaning. Apart from being itself, everything also refers to the entities and subjects it is related to. For this reason, we justify the following definition of Saussure.

> "On peut donc concevoir une science qui étudie la vie des signes au sein de la vie sociale, elle formerait une partie la psychologie sociale et par conséquent de la psychologie générale ; nous la nommerons sémiologie (du grec sémeîon, "signe"). Elle nous apprendrait en quoi consistent les signes, quelles lois les régissent. Puisqu'elle n'existe pas encore, on ne peut dire ce qu'elle sera ; mais elle a droit à l'existence, sa place est déterminée d'avance. La linguistique n'est qu'une partie de cette science générale, les lois que découvrira la sémiologie seront applicables à la linguistique, et celle-ci se trouvera ainsi rattachée à un domaine bien défini dans l'ensemble des faits humains" (1995, 33).[1]

> "We can therefore conceive of a science which studies the life of signs within social life; it would form part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology; we will call it semiology (from the Greek semeion, "sign"). It would teach us what signs consist of; what laws govern them. Since it does not yet exist, we cannot say what it will be; but she has the right to exist, her place is determined in advance. Linguistics is only a part of this general science, the laws that semiology will discover will be applicable to linguistics, and the latter will thus find itself attached to a well-defined domain in the whole of human facts."

Signs for not only the human species but for all living things and beings are monumental written steles of living and existence. Roots that follow water and minerals in the soil, branches that follow light in the air are meaning hunters in pursuit of their signs. Substances that are the subject of physics and chemistry also exhibit unity and differences in pursuit of their own signs.

We, as the human species, chase after subtleties in discourse, writing, and expression. We are looking for the meaning behind these indicators. Let us now try to understand these existential writers in a semiotic way with their reference to mythological subjects.

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[1] Taken from the *Cours de linguistique générale.* Paris : Editions Payet & Rivages, 1995.

Telling the truth through fiction in Camus and Ionesco

Those who saw and lived through the two world wars suffered no less than those who died in this war. The pessimism in their language has been a separate indicator of their misfortune. The words they use while complaining also bear the memory of this pain. Words that describe existentialism such as absurd, irrational, and disappointment give an idea of what period they lived in. Sartre's *Wall*, Camus's "*Plague"*, Ionesco's "*Rhinoceros*", and Vian's *"I'll Spit Your Graves"* are all literary signs of this painful life.

The Plague that Camus describes in his novel is no different from the stone *Sisyphus* had to roll. Ionesco's fight with the *Rhinoceros* is no different from Camus's confrontation with *The Plague. The plagu*e in the novel is perhaps fiction, Ionesco's rhinoceros maybe not real, *Sisyphus*'s stone maybe not, and maybe there is no *Sisyphus* either. However, the human being who resists the conditions offered by life is real. Man, who is strangled with even more difficult problems of existence than rhinoceros is real.

People who do not shed tears to the murder and suffering in the main news cry to fictional movies. Yes, fiction is not real, but the effect it leaves on souls is real. Aesthetic expression, rhetorical discourse makes itself listen better. Oratory and addressing, pathetic expression find more interlocutors. That is why legend overcomes truth, fiction overcomes non-fiction. This is why legends come across ages, while the facts disappeared thousands of years ago. Discourse, rhetoric, aesthetics transform communication from a simple interaction into a source of joy.

Camus and others therefore chose to tell the truth through legend; they made clear what happened with imagination and chose to tell the present with the past. When we look at it from this perspective, Camus's *Plague* is reality, not fiction. Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* run around our streets. Every modern person has loads heavier than *Sisyphus's* stone on his back.

Dr Rieux in the Plague worries much more than *Sisyphus*. Moreover, he himself is very concerned for his patients. Fighting against rhinoceros, *Bérenger* realizes what *Dr Rieux* is doing in another space, at another time. As you can see, the heroes of existential fictions are wandering among us. They reflect the pain and anger of not being able to fit their endless desires and dreams in a short life.

Human life tormented by monotonous lifecycle, endless desires, a limited life and waiting for death turn life into a trap, a trap in time. Ionesco complaints about a life like this.

"Le soir tombe. Et ça recommence. L'ivresse n'arrange rien" (Ionesco 1967, 210).

"Night is falling. And everything starts all over again. Getting drunk is useless."

The desperation of *Sisyphus* and the pain of today's people who have ontological problems are common. The pain does not end, if it ends it starts again, living is feeling the pain.

"... apprenez-moi à défaire ces nœuds. Je sais que je dois les faire moi-même, je sais que c'est un travail que chacun doit faire pour soi-même, mais donnez-moi tout de même un peu de lumière afin que je voie comment sont noués ces liens que je ne peux desserrer" (Ionesco 1967, 94).

"... teach me how to untie these knots. I know I have to do them myself; I know that it is a job that everyone has to do for themselves, but still give me some light so that I can see how these bonds are made that I cannot loosen."

It is not overlooked that Camus conceals his feelings more than Ionesco and tries to take a more noble stance. Ionesco and his heroes expect a light of salvation from the universe, God or any savior until his dying breath. He always hopes that a last-minute help can come at any time. This situation does not change in his diaries or plays. He is in love with life. Rather, it emphasizes existence and staying that way. He prefers to exist in pain like *Sisyphus*.

"Nous pourrions tout supporter d'ailleurs si nous étions immortels" (Ionesco 1963a, 121).

"We could put up with anything if we were immortal."

Camus is also angry and complaining about the meaninglessness of life. His mind and heart cannot offer him a sanctuary like God, either. Not being able to find a refuge to hide in the face of the suffering in the world, a hug to cry makes him even angrier. His famous "*L'Homme révolté*" is a result of these feelings.

In his novel *The Plague*, *Dr Rieux* gives this answer to those who ask why he does not go beyond the walls and strive to save the sick even though he does not believe in God:

"-Voilà, dit Tarrou. Pourquoi vous-même montrez-vous tant de dévouement puisque vous ne croyez pas en Dieu ? Votre réponse m'aidera peut-être à répondre moi-même. Sans sortir de l'ombre, le docteur dit qu'il avait déjà répondu, que s'il croyait en un Dieu tout-puissant, il cesserait de guérir les

hommes, lui laissant alors ce soin. Mais que personne au monde, non, pas même Paneloux qui croyait y croire, ne croyait en un Dieu de cette sorte, puisque personne ne s'abandonnait totalement et qu'en cela du moins, lui, Rieux, croyait être sur le chemin de la vérité, en luttant contre la création telle qu'elle était" (Camus 1947, 120).

"There you go, said Tarrou. Why do you yourself show so much dedication since you don't believe in God? Maybe your answer will help me to answer myself. Without coming out of the shadows, the doctor said he had already answered, that if he believed in an almighty God, he would cease to heal men, leaving him that care. But that no one in the world, no, not even Paneloux who believed in believing in it, did not believe in a God of this kind, since no one abandoned himself completely and that in this at least, he, Rieux, believed to be on the way to truth, fighting against creation as it was."

This talk carries the secrets of the Camus personality through *Dr Rieux* as well as *The Plague* novel. If the burden of *Sisyphus* shoulders is a rock, *Dr Rieux* bears on his back the responsibility of treating an epidemic that threatens all the people of a city. In this case, the novel *Plague* guides humanity as a modern version of *The Myth of Sisyphus*. As you can see, while *Dr Rieux* embraced his work with honor, he chose the resistance like Bérenger, the hero of "*Rhinoceros*". The difference between Ionesco and Camus is that the first hesitates from time to time, while the second always manages to take a rebellious attitude. However, the common approach of both is this: This life is worth living. It is unacceptable to choose suicide just because an eternal existence is not possible. Choosing to live against all its meaninglessness and absurdity and resisting the conditions of existence will add a real meaning to this life. This is what Sisyphus does every time the rock rolls down again. This is what *Dr Rieux* did instead of waiting for angels from heaven while people were breaking through the plague. This is what *Bérenger* does as all humanity turns into monsters.

For writers like Sartre and Camus, the reason for this extraordinary effort is man's terrible loneliness in the universe and in nature. This loneliness, helplessness, and hopelessness are the source of existential human energy. That is, it takes its strength from its weakness and loneliness. This rebellion makes his existence meaningful. Man, who builds his own life against all known and unknown difficulties deserves this existence.

"Avant que vous viviez, la vie, elle, n'est rien, mais c'est à vous de lui donner un sens, et la valeur n'est pas autre chose que ce sens que vous choisissez" (Sartre 1996, 74).

"As long as you live, life is nothing, but it's up to you to make sense of it, and value is nothing other than that sense you choose."

This same phenomenon appears as a different interpretation, a different situation under the same stream of thought. While writers like Sartre and Camus, existentialist thinkers like Heidegger dwell on a more pessimistic perception of the world; Christian thinkers like Kierkegaard paint a more positive picture.

The moralist writers of the existentialist movement like Gabriel Marcel do not speak of a world without God. They show no anger and disrespect to God rather than thanking them for the extraordinary life they faced.

It disturbs Sartre that those who interpret existentialism without breaking with God are referred to as "moralists". Sartre objects to this interpretation with his work "*Existentialism is a humanism*" (Sartre 1996, 74).

It can be easily said that existentialism, as a literary movement, serves more to explain and announce this system of thought. In this respect, Camus, Ionesco, Beckett were among the most remarkable. Instead of hard-to-read and hard-to-understand philosophical texts, they brought the masses together with novels and theatrical works that exhibited the human condition very well and made them think rather than entertain them, but they were less tiring and less confusing.

Their use of mythology in explaining their own thought currents and making this complex situation more understandable for large audiences made existential literary works even fun. Semiotics is a natural method used to be understood as well as to describe events. Meaning in the mind is possible by collecting many data. Human intuitive abilities as well as five senses help to understand and explain. Semiologists such as Saussure, Peirce, and Barthes helped to emerge these already existing natural methods as a science and method.

Barthes argues that myths are their own language and that this language must be deciphered. Myths approached with these principles have a lot to say to people and history. It can even be said that myths have assumed the function of history when the science of history was not established and solidified yet (Barthes 1957, 201).

Let us now try to see more clearly in semiotic ways, the landscape presented by the existentialist writers Camus, Ionesco and Sartre (Sartre 1972) with mythological examples. Just as there are no limits to telling, there can be no limits to understanding. All efforts are for the painting to always be clearer. The table below will better show us its relationship to mythology, semiotics, and truth.

The Myth of Sisyphus			
The Rock			
Author	Camus	Ionesco	Sartre
Opponent	the plague	rhinoceros	nausea
Historical reference	Nazism	Nazism	social events
Ontological reference	existential problems	existential problems	existential problems

Figure 2

The writers of the period who lived through the two world wars and saw the Nazi catastrophe complained of moral deprivation as well as ontological problems. In fact, the destruction caused by man in the world is due to an ethical stance that he cannot achieve in the face of existence problems. For this reason, we have included not only the existence problems but also the disasters the world has experienced by man. Both authors tell in their diaries and essays that their symbolic stories express all the problems that human beings are in.

In the legend of Sisyphus, the problems faced by the heroes of Sisyphus and Camus and Ionesco show a great similarity. This situation is already a desired and built aesthetic intervention. This attempt fits the debates on the place of human in the universe into a literary framework. In the eyes of existentialists, it lifts an absurd, painful, pessimistic event to a more literary, more euphoric level with mythological references.

Let us once again look at Camus, Ionesco and Sartre's references in the light of this semiotic perspective.

obstacles
- Sisyphus / rock
- Dr Rieux / the plague
- Bérenger / Rhinoceros
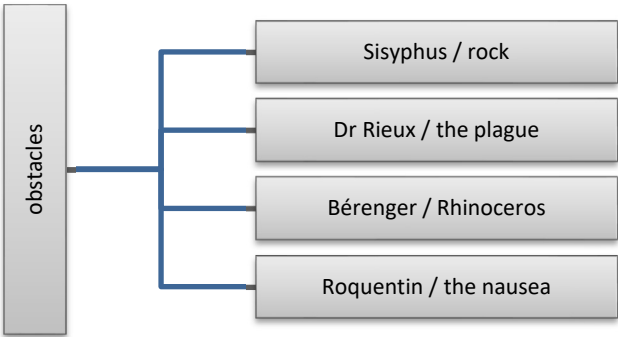- Roquentin / the nausea

Figure 3

What appears as a rock in Sisyphus becomes a wall in Sartre, a plague in Camus, a rhinoceros in Ionesco. However, these references may be the second of the nested rings. Depending on the narrative power of the author and the propagation ability of the meaning, these rings can get longer and longer. Indeed, the epidemic in the novel Plague refers to both Nazism and existence problems. In the play of Rhinoceros, Ionesco was not contented with an adventure fiction. It is not creatures that appear out of nowhere that turn human life upside down. What is told through this analogy is that man turns into a terrible creature and again makes the world narrow to man. We know that Ionesco focuses on human ethical issues as well as existence problems. As someone who saw Nazism and experienced the catastrophes of two world wars, he actually complains about people, not monsters.

While making these comments, we set out not only from the novels or plays themselves, but also from the authors' diaries and essays. As a result, the main source of complaint is the essays and diaries of the authors, in which they really interpret life in their own words. Of course, the Nazi disaster and the conditions of the Second World War, which both authors complain about, will be the subject of mention. However, these are events that can only take place periodically in the existence problems of humanity. The main concern of these thinkers is the position and ontological conditions of man in the universe.

Now let us see the meanings of the signs that are rock in Sisyphus, plague in Camus, rhinoceros in Ionesco with another drawing.
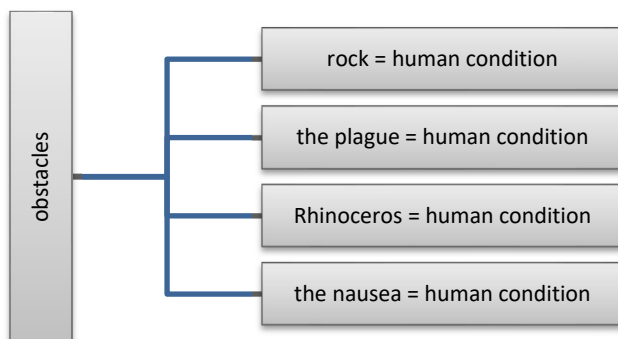

Figure 4

As can be seen, whatever the metaphor subject is, the deepest source of anxiety of our writers / thinkers is existence problems. The examples given

here vary, but the references made by the examples do not. What we call semiotic reading is behind metaphors, examples, signs. This is what Sartre is trying to explain with *The Nausea* and Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*.

Sartre felt the nausea in his soul before he suffered the devastation of World War II. It's like an intellectual epidemic whispering the same inspiration to all modern writers. What was "le mal du siècle" to 18th century writers was the "human condition" to 20th century writers.

Conclusion

Meaning is not a naked and visible entity. Reaching it requires effort, training, and a method that is constantly updated. Literary readings require sophisticated culture and special education as they contain complex metaphors. Semiological writing and reading feeds both production and consumption.

However, another subject that is as difficult to understand is to tell. The one who understands cannot easily convey what he understands. Albert Hamon explains this in the following words:

"We learn less, we teach less, they learn less" (Hamon 1992).

Literary theory finds many positive reasons in reflecting the narration with metaphors. The main reasons for this are listed below.

1. To make it easy to understand.
2. Adding color to the narrative.
3. To make reading enjoyable.
4. Creating a game in the game by applying intelligence games in understanding.
5. Sometimes, to offer readers different options with interpretable very meaningful fictions.

This list can be extended. However, the basic headings it contains are sufficient to explain the subject.

Now let's list the benefits of semiotic reading:

1. Semiotic reading is not content with the first meaning the dictionary gives.
2. The meaning-bearer is to determine where everything can go within the limits of context.

3. Knowing that the same entities and objects can contain different references in different contexts as bearers of meaning.
4. The advantages of being a literate person are indisputable. Semiological reading, on the other hand, reconciles the human being with the universe. Because there is nothing in the universe that is not indicative. Absence is also an indicator.
5. Semiotic reading enables us to distinguish the sign from appearance by establishing contextual relationships between entities and objects. This eliminates the problems of misunderstanding, not understanding, and inadequate understanding.
6. It determines how far we can go in context, by setting the boundaries of the hierarchy of meaning.
7. Where someone else sees things, the semiologist sees meaning.
8. However, objects and entities can gain different meanings according to the need for them. Separate entities looking at the same object may encounter separate references. For example, a dropped coin would not mean the same to a human and a chicken who noticed it.
9. Signs have contextual and variable content, not universal and permanent references.
10. Expressions based on indicators also gain an indicative value. However, the eye on the indicator and the consciousness behind it conditions reading.

The semiotic reading includes all the readings. The ability to read varies depending on individuals, senses, education and attention. If the indicators are not perceived clearly, they are interpreted as appearance and the possibility of error manifests itself. Text reading is a frame reading, and based on the data given, the reader may need to take one or more steps to reach the behind-the-indicator meaning. Field knowledge and reading ability increase the security of the operations to be performed. The accuracy of the readings made by others cannot always be observed by other readers. At the very least, they must have enough infrastructure, skills and knowledge to do semiotic reading. As a result, the signs and the meanings behind them do not appear to everyone to the same extent.

Camus, Ionesco, and many philosophers, existential or not, complain about the conditions in which human beings are in the universe. These are not people who open their eyes and carelessly consume the life they find themselves in. Maybe they do not have other humanitarian problems such as financial difficulties and have plenty of time to think. This comfort confronts them with ontological problems that will regret coming to this world.

"Cette révolte donne son prix à la vie. Etendue sur toute la longueur d'une existence, elle lui restitue sa grandeur. Pour un homme sans œillères, il n'est pas de plus beau spectacle que celui de l'intelligence aux prises avec une réalité qui le dépasse" (Camus 1942, 78).

"This revolt gives its price to life. Spread over the entire length of an existence, it restores its grandeur. For a man without blinders, there is no more beautiful spectacle than that of intelligence grappling with a reality that transcends him."

While Camus appears to take an honorable stance in the rebellion, Ionesco cries out sometimes with his own identity and sometimes with the mouth of *King Bérenger I.*

LE MEDECIN : Majesté, songez à la mort de Louis XIV, à celle de Philippe II, à celle de Charles Quin qui a dormi vingt ans dans son cercueil. Le devoir de votre Majesté est de mourir dignement.
LE ROI : Mourir dignement ? (A la fenêtre) Au secours ! Votre Roi va mourir (Ionesco 1963b, 38).

DOCTOR: Majesty, think of the death of Louis XIV, that of Philippe II, that of Charles Quin who slept twenty years in his coffin. Your Majesty's duty is to die with dignity.
KING: Dying with dignity? (At the window) Help! Your King is going to die.

This reaction of King Bérenger I explains very well Ionesco's views on the position of man in the universe. This is a very different reaction from Camus' attitude. The view of the masses on this issue has no value. Because they too will be crushed between the gears of the same wheel. King Bérenger I aside from being king asks for help in all his desperation. Ionesco does not use Camus's words such as rebellion and resistance. He cries directly. He laments for not having an eternal life. He does not want to lose the life he knows and values very much. He struggles for the possibility of having a God and taking refuge in his eternity. He questions the universe, life, eternity and absence. He wants to know how and where he came to this life and this universe. He is surprised and angry with those who do not think about it.

"Il m'arrive de me réveiller, de temps à autre, de prendre conscience, de me rendre compte que je suis entouré par des choses, que je suis entouré par des gens et si je regarde attentivement ce ciel ou bien ce mur ou bien cette terre ou bien cette main qui écrit ou qui n'écrit pas : il m'arrive d'avoir l'impression de voir tout cela comme si c'était la première fois. Alors

comme pour la première fois je me demande où je demande : qu'est-ce que cela ? je regarde tout autour et je questionne : que sont toutes ces choses ? où suis-je ? qui suis-je ? que suis-je ? qu'est-ce que l'interrogation ?" (Ionesco 1967, 37).

"I sometimes wake up, from time to time, to become aware, to realize that I am surrounded by things, that I am surrounded by people and if I look attentively at this sky or this wall or this earth or this hand that writes or does not write: sometimes I have the impression of seeing all this as if it was the first time. So, like the first time I wonder where I am asking: what is this? I look around and ask: what are all these things? where am I? who am I? what am I? what is the questioning."

The topics that Ionesco and Camus deal with through stories, plays, and essays are not simple fictions. The burden on the hero of the Sisyphus Legend is the ontological problems of man who finds himself in the world and in being. Sartre's nausea is real. Ionesco's monsters are even more frightening than the rhinos of King Bérenger I. Camus' plague is not limited to the city of Oran.

These writers / theorists told the truth through fiction and carried and explained philosophical issues to larger audiences than philosophers. Moreover, they supported this narrative with myths and made it more understandable and formed aesthetic texts with literary metaphors.

The literary works of Sartre, Camus, and Ionesco are among the best examples of this situation. Readers distinguish that the words Rhinoceros, Nausea, and Plague are much more than fictional inventions trapped in stories. These authors were able to present even the existential problems of man in aesthetics with these skills. They proved that myths are not incredible fairy tales in the garbage of history. They have shown that meaning is not only what appears, but the summary and precursor of what really needs to be understood. They presented the meaning to people in a mythological package with literary metaphors.

The masses who thought they were reading fiction realized that what was told was their own adventure. Semiotic reading is not staying in the stone of Sisyphus. The real thing that chases man is to realize that it is not a creature, but the problems of existence that man finds himself in. What is dizzying and nauseous is not a simple illness, but a life in which death awaits. The heroes created by the authors should not be understood as simple fictional persons, but as speaking sages like philosophers. The protagonist of a literary work can summarize in one sentence a topic that can be commented on for pages. He can fit a philosophy, a stream of thought in a human cry. This scream can summarize and contain all

ontological topics.

We can summarize the works of Sartre, Camus and Ionesco dealing with the problems of existence in a sentence of King Bérenger I.

" Pourquoi suis-je né si ce n'était pas pour toujours ? " (Ionesco 1963b, 42).

"Why was I born if it wasn't forever?"

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