

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SEMIOTIC APPROACHES TO THE NOTION OF TEXTUAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN AN AUTHOR AND A READER (A. J. GREIMAS, F. RASTIER, J. KRISTEVA)

This article concentrates on a couple of semiotic approaches working out, on the one hand, the mediated character of reducing interpretative trajectories to the actual translation into the language of narratives (A. J. Greimas) or the language of textuality (F. Rastier), and, on the other, the direct, apparently unmediated passage to the visceral physicality of the verbal signifying system, which make semantic and syntactic components perfunctory to interpretation in a way (J. Kristeva). Greimassian universal narrative grammar dismantles signifying units, navigating in the network of narrative utterances. Rastier's approach structures textual artifacts by unearthing semantic constituents crucial for semiotic analysis. Kristeva examines what is behind the curtain instead of sorting out the significance of the text's content as a special category and the possibility of procedure allowing its interpretation. These three authors are compared in the context of two approaches that come to grips with the author/reader pair.

Keywords: narrative syntax, narrative utterances, narrativity, textuality, verisimilitude, communication.

Introduction. Collecting the dots that constitute the interpretative paths one follows occasionally is the multilayered process, which sets the wheels of the author/reader dyad in motion. The communication axis, or verbal and non-verbal message exchange significantly propelling the plot, unfolds within the written text in terms of the links between characters as well as outside it, in the realm of a reader who is constantly getting in touch with an author in the course of interpretation. The extent to which the voice of the reader is felt more than that of the author depends on the premises of an interpretative approach chosen or, what's more important, on the notion of articulated meaning lying at the core of signification exerted in a given text.

In this paper, I endeavor to nail down three approaches elaborated by Algirdas Julien Greimas, François Rastier, and Julia Kristeva respectively and, at the end of this undertaking, draw the contrast between Kristeva's theory and the approaches of the other two philosophers/linguists. The logical conclusion of the project of structural semantics and universal narrative grammar developed by Greimas is an elimination of the author.

Greimassian procedure, which boils down to translating elements of meaning located on the deep levels to the narrative syntax describing narrative trajectories, is analogous to parsing the linguistic sentences: nothing "personal" stands behind the strict structures which steal the show from the author to a considerable degree. In opposition to that, Rastier reinvigorates the spirit of the author by replacing Greimas' conception of narrativity as a means of deciphering the meaning with his theory of semiotic textuality which mainly focuses on a variety of interpretative instructions left by the author-individual and the author-society.

Even though the aforementioned approaches do not quite fall under the same category, their meeting point originates in the claim to translate the text into manageable chunks, into a sort of artificial language which ensures indirect access to the fictional universe. Julia Kristeva opts for an approach that is fundamentally different. What she does stands light years away from the reconstruction of meaning. It is rather a reconstruction of compulsions that guide authors and readers, making them coalesce.

Literature review. This article is, first and foremost, teeming with references to the French semioticians, who were grappling with typically semiotic topics at the

intersection of linguistics and literary/narrative studies. As I compare a handful of approaches tackling the text as a signifying system that is structured in a certain way, three distinct authors come to the fore, offering their vision of signification and strategies for interpreting things. Algirdas Julien Greimas is a former member of the International Association for Semiotic Studies, who, despite his controversial political activities, is considered to be one of the greatest representatives of semiotics without whom what was deepened and revalued in the wake of his investigations would have been impossible. The actantial model and semiotic square are presumably the most recognizable concepts associated with his name, not to mention other semiotic theories which put him closer to modal logic and analytic philosophy. The case in point here is Greimas' *Structural Semantics* and several articles taken from *On Meaning*.

Another consummate professional in the field of semiotics mentioned here is François Rastier, a member of the Paris School of Semiotics, the author of *Meaning and Textuality* relevant for my research. He criticizes Greimassian universal grammar, talking much about the resemblance of Greimassian ambitions to Chomskian ones expressed in transformational and generative grammar. Constructing the premises on which textual semantics (his brainchild) stands, Rastier also frowns upon the postmodern concept of intertextuality developed by Julia Kristeva, another central figure I give credit to in this paper. Kristeva is a member of the International Association for Semiotic Studies. Profoundly influenced by Lacanian psychoanalysis, she is responsible for combining psychoanalytic ideas – giving them a feministic tint by the way – with semiotics. Kristeva earned her name mostly for her works that manage to reason over the mental states of depression and abjection so that *Revolution in poetic language* and *Séméiotikè* are less popular.

In this article, I allude to Kristeva's works that are less popular but have a kind of affinity – in what concerns the manner of speech – with Greimas' and Rastier's probing. In addition, the name of Joseph Courtés – his *Semiotic analysis of discourse* in particular – happens to pop up at times in my article. However, I am mostly interested in his interpretations of Greimassian theories and also the Analytical Dictionary of Semiotics that Courtés and Greimas made together.

Methods. The methodology in this paper encompasses areas of semiotics, linguistics, and narratology. Methods used to explore the main topic of the article center around narrative and structural analysis, comparison, and contextualization.

Findings. The actantial narrative syntax advanced by Algirdas Julien Greimas and Jacques Courtés suffers from reductionism in the sense of projecting the grind of narrative structures onto all texts independently of their nature and genre. Obviously, they arrive at discovering the already-given meaning immanent to the text. By contrast, subjectivism, as François Rastier points out (Rastier, 1997: 4), gets rid of the intricacies of the textual inner organization and resorts to the person of a reader, who ignores things that are said and neglects the author's remarks scattered along the way, relying solely on his/her unique experience. The subjectivist strategy was pretty widespread among postmodern artists and philosophers who sided with the primacy of idiolect as an individual style of an author over sociolect as an assemblage of social norms and conventions arranging a system of prescriptions and interdictions. Roland Barthes' *The Death of the Author* and Nathalie Sarraute's *The Age of Suspicion* showcase the largest intellectual letdown of the century, declaring typically Nietzschean verdicts a la "God is dead, we have killed him", the letdown culminating in the distrust toward an overprotecting author as a sacral category that accurately structures the whole of the text and leads the reader, that is to say, tells what one should see and what shouldn't.

The point is that the disciples of postmodernism, on the one hand, not quite explicitly recommend transcending the meaning of every text, no matter how old it is, and, on the other hand, generate brave new forms of writing, say the stream-of-consciousness technique and non-linear impasse-like plots which activate ambiguity and, consequently, contribute to the freedom of semantic choice. Although the XXth century zeitgeist spreads the motif of the reader gaining the power of speech at the expense of the author's authority being discredited, an intellectual property right, that is the rights of authors, paradoxically turns out as intangible and highly important as never before. Putting forward the conception of textuality, which is the continuation of the project of interpretative semantics, and managing the dichotomy of subjectivist/objectivist visions which map out the interpretative paths, François Rastier distinguishes between productive and, respectively, descriptive approaches which deal with the meaning texts elicit.

He follows the descriptive approach, which considers a text to be a set of interpretative instructions given by its author. These instructions support the plausible interpretations under which the meaning is posited as an objective entity, that is to say, qualitatively constrained but quantitatively unlimited. François Rastier pits the method of rewriting the text against the method of reconstructing it, reconstructing "the initial situation of communication" based on three systems at work: the system of functional language, sociolect, and idiolect (Rastier, 1997: 29). That's why Rastier criticizes the postmodern notion of intertextuality and the universal grammar, on which the Greimassian narrative semantics pivots: the former abandons pragmatic conditions, relativizes the text, and overstates the case of communicative factors that affect the process of interpretation to the point when a given text

dissolves in the chaos of other texts it refers to; the latter employs procedures for generating/rewriting the meaning regardless of its occurrences in the intertextual network of signifying properties.

The language of analysis that Greimas invents enables the researchers in the interdisciplinary field to extract narrative structures locked up in the text in order to pave the way to the meaning as if by understanding the overall structure one gains familiarity with what the text means. The point is that narrative analysis is the way to articulate the meaning. The process of articulation includes an operation of horizontal or vertical conversion of one level into another and switching that results either in semantically invested items of the narrative grammar or the austere syntax, which portrays the relations between utterances of states and utterances of doings, as well as the status of narrative subjects and value-objects in their semiotic existence (Greimas, 1987: Introduction by Paul J. Perron). Greimassian procedure catches the transformational and generative nature of the plot's fabric that might be deciphered simply when the first movement is spotted, that is to say, the narrative doing, which triggers the sequential order of events and gives birth to the characters. Neither utterances of states nor utterances of doing exist on their own. Greimas defines the narrative program as an abstract formula consisting of utterances of doings that take hold of the utterances of state (Courtés, 1991: 90).

However, one injects semantics into the syntactical structure of the narrative utterance at the higher level of particularizing the text by means of discoursivization and figurativization, which both lay foundations for the referential illusion (Greimas, Courtés, 1982: 147–1488). The particularity of referential mechanisms hangs on their ability to guarantee the concreteness and substantiality of what appears to be solely a manifestation, a part of an indistinct whole. Greimas sheds some light on the surface level procedures which essentially indicate particularization unraveling syntactic and semantic components of the narrative. Discoursivization and figurativization fix references to the exterior world in the manner in which concretization climaxes in further distancing from the substratum (Greimas, Courtés, 1982: 85, 118). Actorialization, spatialization, and temporalization as the operating components of discoursivization bring the concrete reality into life by saturating the already anthropomorphic narrative syntax with the semantic determinants (Greimas, Courtés, 1982: 8, 247). Greimassian narrative grammar forsakes the author's presence because the analysis he proposes is rigorously immanent.

Contrary to Greimas, Rastier opines about the importance of factoring in socio-cultural context alongside the writer's parlance identifiable through the manner of the character's speech. He puts forward the notion of represented communication: enunciators – which, in the processual area of narration-enunciation, are synonymous with the authors of a story – and receivers interact intra- or extra-dialogically depending on whether they are included in or excluded from an explicit, or factual, universe. Rastier purposefully reformulates an old theory of genres that comes from Platonic and Diomedean ruminations on how literary discourses look like. The dramatic genre gives a free rein to characters that never endure the pressure of the poet's deus-ex-machina-style interventions. It falls under "the genus activum vel imitativum" contrary to "the

genus enarrativum" specific to the lyrical genre in which the person of a poet is felt (Rastier, 1997: 60). The epic genre adds up to the amalgamation of drama and lyrics, amalgamation yielding the "genus commune".

The dichotomy of enunciator/receiver bears resemblance to the "genus commune", sweeping aside the question of whether it is correct to unite the subject of enunciative narration, who is a literary character, and the physical author into the whole, into rather an impersonal subjectivity. Julia Kristeva holds a much more multifaceted model of figuring out the semantico-syntactical bearers of subjectivity conditioning the reader's perception. She breaks down the subjective infrastructure of a text into 1) the subject's dyad of the sender/receiver, which epitomizes the economic relations of the producer-consumer type, 2) the zerological subject presented by the anonymous author who is the real outside of the fictional universe, 3) the singular third-person pronouns which 4) undergo concretization and gain the legitimate proper name divided between 5) the subject of utterance and 6) the subject of enunciation (Kristeva, 1969). It is hard not to notice that the problem of whether, while analyzing, one should turn to the distinction between communicative performance under the aspect of duration (enunciation) or accomplished communicative performance (utterance) takes a back seat in Rastier's proceedings.

Kristeva pays attention to the horizon of utterance and that of enunciation, as far as the psychoanalytic account of psychic apparatus is concerned. In other words, the subject that with each step toward the final enunciation behaves differently is needed, in as much as Kristeva forces the structure of narrative-discursive subjectivity to jibe well with the Freudian second topic, which aspires to account for the psychic apparatus in terms of Ego/Superego/Id. Rastier's methods save their descriptive force, which in Kristeva's works is intertwined with psychologization/hypostatization mostly grounded in confusing the object language and metalanguage, the process of creating a thing, and the results of the creative activity. That's why the subject of narration and the physical author together with his intentions and driving motifs seem one and the same thing at one point and separate realms at another. Furthermore, Kristeva's intertextuality is quite likely to treat a text as a "no man's land" despite arguing the innate dialogism that might be discovered on the primordial floor called geno-text (Kristeva, 1974) that is a conceptual "descendent" of Greimassian deep level.

The critical lack of examples displaying the practical value of the concept of paragrammatism that Kristeva brings in complicates the understanding of her main goals: it is not always clear whether she turns the spotlight on a language in general or on the poetic language, specific semiotic practice. One of the most peculiar things about Kristeva is that she intends to withdraw from the classic Aristotelian subject-predicate sentential structure which is logical in the first place and, because of that, demonstrates the ontological dominance of logical world picture and logical forms over everything else including linguistic "operations" that are posterior. Julia Kristeva picks up a subjectively tinted words "modalizer" and "modalized" (Kristeva, 1969), words liberated from any anthropomorphic hints which are compelling in the narrative grammar of Greimas.

However, in the *Revolution of poetic language*, she states that logical relations and operations are prior to any acquisition of language, any symbolic activity, and considerably more unconscious than the semantico-syntactical building material of a sentence. This idea of the subject, who requires self-alienation and separation in order to differentiate/thematize the world by means of thetic consciousness and be aware of the fundamental subject-object relationships which signalize an act of identification, is influenced by Husserl's phenomenology. Kristeva even uses three logical laws advanced in Boolean algebra as a jumping-off point in the analysis of poetic languages (Kristeva, 1969). In other words, she defines poetic language in a negative way of contrasts by exhibiting how it is dissimilar to the language of logic or language as such. At the same time, Kristeva makes up the word "signifiante", which pays homage to Lacanian *jouissance* (Kristeva, 1974), to mark the primeval basis of symbolic acts, be it verbal language or non-verbal, the death drive investment in a sense of an uncontrollable compulsion pushing the subject to the verge of meaning or retaining the inertial motion, symbolic sustenance in the symbolic system.

The degree of signifiante is higher in poetic languages where the subject-author is merely blinded by his innermost death/life force. That explains why Kristeva argues poetic languages are neither abstract nor concrete. Rastier criticizes the very idea of intertextuality (Rastier, 1997: 11). He believes that postmodernists-poststructuralists do not effectively prioritize the basal features of textual semiotic systems, falsely ascribing symbolic values to elementary units that are too minimal and insignificant (phonemes, for instance) or indulging in unabashed generalizations and controversial categories justifiable merely for a specific class of literature. Rastier borrows from Bühler the organon model of communication, which presupposes a sender performing the expressive function, a receiver marked by the appealing function, and the states of things whose function is representation.

All in all, an act of communication disclosing the natural world referentializes the narrative, obliging the reality (or at least its elements) that is not already there to correspond to the current fictional state of affairs. Writing literary texts means asserting the truth beyond the lines, the truth-in-itself and for-itself, the truth which is more of the plausibility and reader's eagerness to accept whatever it takes. It is one of those mystical moments when the reader inclines to think that s/he has understood the meaning in its entirety. Verisimilitude is the simulacrum of abstract truth, a discourse about the discourse of truth which has obliterated any references and renounced the ambitions for taking shape of an identical copy of reality (Kristeva, 1969). The reader, who is so impressed by the text that it eventually suppresses and in borderline cases appropriates the external world, forgets whether what he was reading corresponds to the known surroundings.

The thing is that the state of oblivion and absolute forgetfulness is the first sign of the meaning effect that confines a given subject to the referential illusion felt at the fullest when it comes to iconic messages. Our perception is already predisposed to decipher only specific, non-random details. Thus, the knowledge of things, the knowledge of how they ought to be, prompts a highly-organized and unimaginably complicated process of seeing. Regardless of the prior information sculpting

the physical perception, iconicity produces the strongest impression of the world, referring to the world "as it is" in the most persuasive way. Although the "pure" world is hardly recognizable in iconic signs related to abstractionism or cubism, it is obvious that the social side of signification is common to all types of signs. Referential illusion entails that the subject searching for meaning suddenly discovers the ground on which it stands: instead of being genuinely given, this ground is graspable through 1) the separation from the amorphous mass of the world and 2) rebirth of an unnamable entity which obtains its identification, second existence in the symbolic order, in the hierarchy of cultural layers, as Kristeva taught us.

Transgression, an act of violating syntactical restrictions of the sentence or overused semantic constructions due to cravings for new art forms or unparalleled individual style, points to the fragility of symbolic laws that might be substantially harmed but never fully diminished. Foreclosure of the symbolic existence that is so often associated with experimental art in no way reaches the end, in as much as the receiver is still capable of deciphering the message. Therefore, novels or stories written in the stream-of-consciousness style transgress the traditional linear narratives widespread in the literature, even though awareness of the violation presupposes the very ground that has been violated. Here is the point of no return: once the black matter of an unrepresentable abyss was structured and embedded in the language system, the initial point from which it emerged has transformed into an unattainable enterprise, whereas the infringer of the symbolic law finds the accomplices among the representatives of official institutions in the sense that no writer or painter ever succeeded in total negation of the tradition as soon as s/he has something to depart from.

The only vision we capture through the prism of the narrative actantial syntax is that of subject/object-driven formal positions arranging narrative utterances which allude to generative trajectories. On the surface plane, the analysis covers syntactical information about the principal characters which are articulated in pair with corresponding functions classified and grouped in concordance with the special cases of utilization. Greimas arrives at two types of messages – functional messages concerned with dynamic predicates which in mythological contexts designate the sphere of God's activities/ functions and qualificative messages revealing static predicates which represent God's qualities in the mythological languages (Greimas, 1966). This straightforward typology touches on the universal dichotomies of identity/alteration, permanence/change, and states/transformation crystallized in the narrative utterances of doing and utterances of states. Moreover, Greimas emphasizes time and again that two object-terms are the minimum minimum of an elementary semiotic-semic structure because at least two objects are required in order to be related somehow on the semantic axis and thus identified in virtue of the difference.

Henceforth, verisimilitude hits the ground when this "as if", or fictional seeming, crops up, announcing the artificiality of the campaign. Julia Kristeva goes into literary verisimilitude in her outline of semanalysis in the chapter "Wanting-to-say and verisimilitude" in which she starts off with thoughts around the sense of literary discourses (Kristeva, 1969). Kristeva outlines the

wanting-to-say-the-truth of the author, which founds the intentionality of the discourse – intentionality superior to the author/receiver conversation.

Discussion and conclusions. The issue of direct and indirect access to an act of communication between the author and the reader is exactly what is at stake in this paper. François Rastier probes into the phenomenon of textuality which is central to his semantics-oriented strategy of decoding the text, allowing for the contextual basis of a produced message and pragmatic underpinnings of an act of communication and intending to revive the theory of genres. Greimas' vision of the necessary conditions through which the meaning is grasped revolves around the narrativization of enunciation: setting up the fundamental elements which constitute signifying units and convey the meaning of the textual message, one constructs an artificial language that reduces part and parcel of the text to the narrative trajectories mostly described in syntactical terms.

Both narrativity and textuality embody the ways that mediate our perception of the world of fiction exposed to interpretation. Rastier's semantic overdeterminants and Greimas' syntactic structures might be utilized for interpreting texts of different sorts and styles. The paper shows that Julia Kristeva drastically diverges from the line of thought that advocates for translating the text for the sake of its meaning articulation. The philosophical enterprise she has been involved in consolidates equally the subjectivity of a reader and that of an author: they form dialogic or monologic bonds.

What matters in her approach is the splitting of the subject which does not possess an identity in its own right. The operational modality of wanting-to-say, which stands for intentions, desires, and needs of the subject that creates, complements the wanting-to-say and wanting-to-see of the receiver whose identity is shrouded in mystery described from the perspective of the dark underbelly of his psychic life. While Greimas and Rastier strike with inventing explanatory models which make the meaning visible and give an opportunity to analyze the verbal message, Kristeva is having a blast reasoning over the process of signification and reading external to the semblance of the plot encapsulated in the message. Philosophical reflections on the approaches addressing subjectivities, which consolidate the text, fit right into the problematic themes raised by semiotics.

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КОМПАРАТИВНИЙ АНАЛІЗ СЕМІОТИЧНИХ ПІДХОДІВ ЩОДО ПОНЯТТЯ ТЕКСТУАЛЬНОЇ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ МІЖ АВТОРОМ ТА ЧИТАЧЕМ (А. Ж. ГРЕЙМАС, Ф. РАСТЬЄ, Ю. КРИСТЄВА)

Увагу сконцентровано на кількох семіотичних підходах, що дають раду, з одного боку, опосередкованому характеру редукції інтерпретативних траєкторій до перекладу на мову наративів (А. Ж. Греймас) чи на мову текстуальності (Ф. Растьє), а, з іншого боку, прямій безпосередній доріжці, яка веде до пронизливої фізичності вербальних систем означення, які роблять семантичні та синтаксичні компоненти в певному сенсі незначущими щодо інтерпретації (Ю. Кристева). Допомагаючи орієнтуватися в мережі наративних виразів, універсальна наративна граматики А. Ж. Греймаса здійснює розбір одиниць означення на частини. Ф. Растьє наближається до структур текстуальних артефактів шляхом розкопування семантичних складників, які є важливими для семіотичного аналізу. Замість з'ясувати значливість змісту тексту як окремої категорії та можливості процедури, що дозволяє його інтерпретацію, Ю. Кристева досліджує залаштування. Порівнюються три автори в контексті двох підходів, які так чи інакше ладять із діадою автор / читач.

Ключові слова: наративний синтаксис, наративний вираз, наративність, текстуальність, правдоподібність, комунікація.