

STRUCTURALISM: A LINGUISTIC
MODEL AND ITS APPLICATION
TO JACK LONDON'S THREE STORIES

Semiramis YAĞCIOĞLU

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T. C.
Yükseköğretim Kurulu
Dokümantasyon Merkezi

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Semiramis YAĐCIOĐLU

CURRICULUM VITAE

I was born in Antakya in 1949. I graduated from The American College For Girls, Arnavutköy in İstanbul in 1967 and took my B.A from The Department of English Literature and Language, İstanbul University in 1971. After working as the manager of a tourism agency for a brief period, I started working as Instructor of English at Ege University. Since then, I have been working there. In 1979, I gained a Postgraduate Diploma in 'The Structure of Modern English' at The University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, England.

My publications include several translations of short stories by Mark Twain and Nikolay Gogol.

I am married and I have a son.

Semiramis YAĞCIOĞLU

ÖZGEÇMİŞ

1949 yılında Antakya'da doğdum.

İstanbul, Arnavutköy Amerikan Kız Kolejinden 1967 yılında mezun oldum. Aynı yıl girdiğim İ.Ü.Edebiyat Fakültesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümünü 1971 yılında bitirdim. Kısa bir süre turizm sektöründe yönetici olarak çalıştıktan sonra, 1973 yılında açılan sınavı kazanarak, E.Ü.Yabancı Diller Okulunda, İngilizce Okutmanı olarak çalışmaya başladım. Halen aynı görevdeyim.

1979 yılında, bir yıl süre ile Newcastle Upon Tyne Üniversitesinde (İngiltere), "Modern İngilizcenin Yapısı" konusunda lisans üstü eğitim gördüm ve diploma aldım.

Mark Twain ve Nikolay Gogol'un kısa hikâyelerinden yaptığım çeşitli çeviriler yayımlanmıştır.

Evliyim. Bir oğlum var.

Semiramis YAĞCIOĞLU

INTRODUCTION

Literary Structuralism flourished in the 1960's as an attempt to apply to literature the methods and insights of Ferdinand de Saussure who is considered to be the founder of structural linguistics. French Structuralism may be regarded as the realization of Saussure's dream of a general science of signs - Semiology. In his view, all cultural phenomena are systems of signs which are structured like a language; the individual elements have value or meaning only in so far as they are part of a system. In other words, meaning is the product of relations and systems, and conventions rather than of any inherent features. As Oddvar Holmesland lucidly points out :

It [Structuralism] is based on the recognition that actions and objects only make sense with respect to a set of institutional conventions. Culture is seen to consist of a set of symbolic systems, and the meaning of language depends on a whole system of constitutive rules. The study of literature must accordingly be an attempt to explain how these systems work, and what conventions make literature possible.¹

As well as basing their literary theory on linguistic concepts of sign and system to analyze texts, Structuralists called upon Saussurean distinction of *langue* and *parole* in order to establish a new approach to literature. Just as Saussurean linguistics is not concerned with individual utterances (*parole*) but with the language system (*langue*), the Structuralists regard individual works of art as instances of *parole* which are governed by the rules which belong to a general system of literature, the *langue*.

In order to isolate the true object of inquiry, that is the system, Structuralists exclude the author and cancel history. Whereas the author is the 'creator' of a text in traditional thought, for Structuralists "writers cannot use writing to 'express' themselves, but only draw upon that immense dictionary of language and culture which is 'always already written'². As for history, Structuralists are not interested in the development of the novel throughout literary history but in the system underlying literary practice.

There is no doubt that structuralism represented a major challenge to the traditional critical practice by undermining deep-rooted beliefs about the nature of literature, the most important of which being that a good book tells about human life. Structuralists have maintained that literary discourse has no truth function. Therefore, Structuralism has been accused of 'demystifying' literature. Meaning is no longer the product of the writer's or reader's experience of the real world but of the relations and differences which operate within the text.

Structuralism, then, does not present an additional insight to the already existing academic approaches to literature but is a revolutionary method which attempts to define the conditions of meaning by largely drawing upon language, the organization of which "precedes any message or reality and indeed these are products constructed by the language system and not vice versa"³.

For Todorov a narrative is a large sentence. In a certain way it is the out line of a little narrative.⁴ The Structure of the text is similar to that of a sentence in five respects.⁵

1. Just as a sentence expresses the thoughts of a speaker, so the text articulates the writer's thoughts. However the meaning of the text is more complex than those of individual sentences which make up the text. Therefore, understanding individual sentences does not entail understanding of the text as a whole.
2. Just as a sentence is a sequential combination of words (syntagmatic relationship), so the text is a sequential combination of characters and events which help to define these characters.
3. Just as the meaning of a sentence is related to the meaning of individual words present in the sentence so the meaning of a text is the product of the meaning of units that make up the text.
4. The meaning of each word (or the meaning of each unit in a text) is derivable by reference to the other words which are co-members of the same class and by its very difference from them. (paradigmatic relationship.).
5. In sum, the meaning of a text, just like a sentence, is produced by the syntagmatic relationships (possibilities of combination) and paradigmatic relations (functional contrasts) which operate within the text.

As a result, Structuralism largely draws upon linguistic concepts such as langue/parole, syntagmatic/paradigmatic relations, and the concept of sign in the analysis of literary works. As Diana Knight very effectively summarizes :

Structuralism introduced into the study of literature a set of concepts and a new vocabulary by which its object - perhaps a narrative or a genre in general, perhaps a specific literary work - would be first decomposed and then recomposed into an abstract model intended to show how it worked.⁶

Structural analysis, then, involves discovering what the nature of the signs in a text are and how the system which governs their use and combination operates.⁷ This can be done by decomposing the text into functional units. This process is called segmentation, the aim of which is to show the distribution of meaning. Distribution of meaning can be determined by identifying functional units which is a "paradigme with various members, any of which can be chosen for a particular story."⁸ The function of each unit is determined by its relation to the rest of the sequence. It is this relation of a functional unit with other units which come before and after that produces its meaning and its capacity to integrate with a unit of a higher level that 'transforms' its meaning and generates multiplicity of meaning in the text.⁹ The analyst may consider each functional unit at two levels: spacial and temporal.

The meaning of a text can be determined by a synchronic reading of relations between functional units at various levels. Thus reading for Structuralists emerges as an act of uncovering different levels of meaning implicit in a text. According to Barthes reading is not passing from one word to the other but going from one level to another.¹⁰

The question raised in this study is whether modern structuralist

theories provide a valuable model for critical analysis of texts and to what extent analysis of narrative structure helps interpretation of meaning. However at the moment the reader proposes that the text is about something different than what it appears to say, he introduces his implicit knowledge about the conventions of literature, as Jonathan Culler has suggested. Structuralist methodology seems to invoke this ability of the reader implicitly by resorting to mythical reading in the final analysis. The conclusion arrived at here is that applied structuralism offers guidance in the interpretation of literary texts.

In this study, Jack London's stories have been analyzed by a structural approach without taking into consideration the development each story represents in Jack London's career as a writer. Neither the dominant philosophies of his time which inform his stories are taken into consideration. Information about his life is also deliberately left out since Structuralism declares the writer 'dead'.

Jack London's stories have been chosen because they lend themselves to structural analysis in the sense that they contain multiplicity of meaning which can be recovered by determining syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations between the component units through a synchronic reading, that is reconstructing the texts as a functional whole.

Chapter I discusses the relevance of linguistics to literary studies by emphasizing points of contact between two areas of study.

Chapter II concentrates on Saussure's major themes which inform subsequent studies and on major representatives of structuralist narratology.

Chapter III is devoted to the application of Structural analysis to Jack London's three stories, The Call of the Wild, White Fang, and 'Love of Life'.

Conclusion attempts to provide an answer to the question how structural analysis will take one a certain distance and where a reader brings his implicit knowledge into play in assigning meaning to a text.



CHAPTER I

Relevance of Linguistics to Literary Studies

An ideal way would be to relate the development of linguistics and its implications for the study of literature simultaneously, with reference to the important points of contact between them. However, there are so many points of contact that to give them adequate attention would produce a chaotic picture. Therefore, it will be necessary to present briefly those concepts of modern linguistics which have been most influential on literary studies first, and then it will be appropriate to discuss Structuralism in general with particular reference to its place in literary studies.

Questions about the nature of language have preoccupied the minds of people throughout history. However, it was only during the first half of present century that studies on language acquired a scientific status and it is largely on account of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure that structural linguistics achieved the status which was to make it the dominant paradigm of our times for the analysis of other cultural phenomena. Although due attention will be given to Saussure's work in the next chapter, it will be necessary to state briefly some of his themes in order to follow the streamline of developments in linguistics until the recent decade.

Saussure understood human speech to be composed of two aspects, which he called *langue* and *parole*. *Langue* is the system underlying acceptable usage, which a community manifests in everyday usage. *Parole* is the individual's act of speech. It is through *parole*, which is available for direct observation, that a linguist can arrive at an underlying system,

the *langue*. To this end, consideration of a large number of *paroles* would be necessary.¹

Saussure rejected the traditional idea that language was the accumulation of words and their primary function is to refer to the 'things' in the world. Words are not symbols which refer to 'things' but are signs. Signs are made up of two parts: a mark, called a signifier, and a concept, called a signified. Hence 'things' have no place in the Saussurean model:

~~SYMBOL = THINGS~~

SIGN = $\frac{\text{SIGNIFIER}}{\text{SIGNIFIED}}$

Like Saussure, Ogden and Richards, whose major work The Meaning of Meaning bear great affinities to Saussure's Cours de Linguistique Générale, maintain that there is no natural relationship between language and reality. They maintain that we cannot escape from the structure of language. However, the structure of our language and the structure of the world are far from being the same. Although they start from the same point of departure they move into a wholly different direction than Saussure. In contrast, they stress the point that words point to 'things' in the real world.

For Saussure, the elements of language do not acquire meaning as the result of some connection between words and things but they acquire meaning only because they happen to be parts of a system of relations. Consideration of the sign system of traffic lights may help to clarify the point being made.²

The signifiers red - orange - green have meaning only in so far as they function within the system.

<u>signifier</u> : <u>red</u>	<u>signifier</u> : <u>orange</u>	<u>signifier</u> : <u>green</u>
signified : stop	signified : prepare for 'red' or 'green'	signified : go

Each color in the traffic system performs its function of signification by marking a difference: 'red' is 'not green'. Hence, for Saussure, as Terry Eagleton wrote :

Meaning is not mysteriously immanent in a sign but is functional, the result of its difference from other signs.³

For Saussure any sentence is a sequence of signs. Each sign contributes something to the meaning of the whole and each sign contrasts with all the other signs in the language. Consider, the sentence She may come tomorrow. This sentence consists of four signs in a particular order. This linear relationship between the signs present in the sentence is called a syntagmatic relationship. In addition to this relationship, there is another one which is called paradigmatic. In the above sentence there is a clear relationship between the other signs I, you, we which are not present in the sentence. All these signs form a little system called the pronoun system. However, only one of the signs belonging to this system can be used at a particular moment. In other words the speaker has to make a choice. Thus, as David Crystal points out "in a system of this kind the meaning or 'value' of each sign in the system is derivable by reference to the other signs which are co-members of it."⁴

The Saussurean distinction between syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships may be shown as follows :

Pradigmatic relationship	Syntagmatic relationship			
	she	my	came	tomorrdw
you	should	sleep	now	
I	can	go	soon	

Language seen as a network of structures and systems was to underlie a number of theories thereafter. Indeed, linguistic circles of Copenhagen and Prague owe much to Saussure's ideas.

The first major developments in structuralist studies were based on the advances in the area called phonology. In the early period of American anthropological linguistics, greater emphasis was given to the use of phonetic methods to obtain an objective transcription of speech data. It was maintained that a linguist had to keep a complete record of all the vocalizations he encountered when analyzing a language since he would never know in advance which sounds of a language would constitute meaningful bits. The next step was to distinguish the sounds which were important for the differentiation of meaning. Hence the need for an abstract notion for expressing contrastivity arose, which was to be called phoneme. Although the germ of such a notion was present in the work of the Polish scholar, J. Baudouin de Courtenay and it was also implicitly present in the Saussurean distinction between Langue/Parole, it remained undeveloped until the late twenties. It was, then, that linguists of the Prague Circle developed the concept into a theory.⁵ The Russian linguist N. Trubetsky in his Principles of Phonology argued for the need of treating Phonology as a separate branch.

The phoneme was a concept which kept words distinct by making phonological oppositions. /θ/ is different from /t/ because it helps the hearer differentiate 'tree' from 'three'. The phoneme, then, is the lowest level element in a language system which provides the conditions for

making meaning distinctions. The concept of phoneme has been one of the major concepts which has been responsible for organizing people's way of thinking in the first half of this century. People looked for phoneme-like distinctive units elsewhere. It was a valuable concept for dividing up the continuum of experience into meaningful units.

The publication of two extremely influential books, Z. S. Harris' Methods in Structural Linguistics and Outline of English Structure by G. L. Trager and H. L. Smith marks the culminating point of American Structuralism, foundations of which had been laid in the twenties and thirties. Both of the books along with Charles Carpenter Fries' The Structure of English laid out techniques for discovering the structure of languages. The data, or the corpus, consisted of samples collected from the actual usage of people, that is the spoken and written manifestations of language. The aim was to determine the patterns in this data. On the basis of the data hypotheses about structure were formulated. As Roger Fowler has stated:

Structure was a generalization, or abstraction, extracted from texts by the application of techniques of **segmentation** - chopping the texts into nearly juxtaposed units - and **classification** - sorting the resulting segments into different categories according to the similarities and differences of their distributional behaviour. And it was believed that this structural analysis could be carried out in a mechanical fashion: that linguistic technicians could be trained in the methods so effectively that two separate analyses of the same data would yield the same results. What is more, the structuralists argued the practicality (and necessity) of conducting analysis without recourse to the meanings of utterances under investigation. In theory, this

condition meant only that syntactic and phonemic tests were best conducted without appeal to semantic criteria.⁶

This insistent exclusion of semantic criteria stemmed from the belief that if data could not be observed objectively and measured using standard techniques, then it would fail to satisfy the conditions of scientificness. Therefore, the structural linguists concentrated on a kind of approach which was empirical in character in order to put linguistic studies on a scientific footing. The same insistent exclusion of meaning was to characterize literary structuralism for the same reason: "to establish for literary studies a basis as scientific as possible."⁷

The approach developed in the late fifties known as 'generative grammar', most influential representative of which is Noam Chomsky, sharply reacted against this empirical approach. Chomsky maintained that a corpus which is made up of a limited set of data could not account for a whole language, but would reflect a partial and selective picture."⁸

Chomsky argued that a sentence such as :

The cats were chasing a mouse

would be represented in the structural grammar as a sequence of a NP (Noun Phrase - the cats) and a VP (Verb Phrase - were chasing a mouse). This information could be presented in the following rule :

$$S \longrightarrow NP + VP$$

In the same way a rule

$$VP \longrightarrow V + NP$$

tells us that were chasing a mouse consists of a verb followed by a NP. A third rule

NP → Art+N

assigns the structure 'Article Followed by noun' to the cats and a mouse

However, as Chomsky argued, such an analysis will not be able to account for ambiguous sentences such as *The chicken is ready to eat* or the fact that *A bus ran over him* and *He was run over by a bus* are synonymous in spite of their difference in structure.⁹ On the other hand speakers of a language are able to account for such cases. Then, linguistic theory should answer the question 'How did we reach our understanding of them?' It can be concluded that speakers of a language have internalized a system of rules which enable them to decode language and this system of rules is not found in the structure underlying the corpus but lies outside it, the most likely place being the minds of the speakers of the language. Thus Chomsky makes a distinction, which was to make great impact in the following years, between a person's knowledge of his language - the system of rules he has internalized - and his use of the language in real life situations.¹⁰ The former is called competence and the latter performance. Hence David Crystal has suggested:

The main way in which we can find out it [competence] is by introspection, by asking ourselves how we react to (or interpret, or analyse) a given sentence.¹¹

Chomsky's point of view marks a shift from the empirical character of the linguistic studies in the first half of this century to a mentalistic approach. As we shall discuss shortly, this shift in focus in linguistic studies was to be reflected in the structural approaches to literature.

The realization that cultural and social phenomena are not simply

events but events with meanings has led to the idea that cultural systems may be better understood if they are treated as 'languages'. Frederic Jameson explains this fact very clearly :

Understanding consists in the reduction of one type of reality to another; that true reality is never manifest on the surface.¹²

In other words, if human actions have meaning, there must be an underlying system of differences which makes this meaning possible.¹³

One can view a myth, a football game, a religious ceremony, and a system of tribal kinship as a system of signs. The best examples of such analyses can be found in Roland Barthes Mythologies (1957) and Systeme de la mode (1967). Barthes interprets all social events and practices as sign systems similar to the model of language. A system (langue) underlies any actual performance (parole). According to him the garment system works like a language. He makes a Saussurean distinction between system and speech in the language of garments.¹⁴

System

Set of pieces, parts or details which cannot be worn at the same time on the same part of the body.

Any variation corresponds to a change in meaning.
toque -- bonnet -- hood

Juxtaposition in the same type of dress of different elements:
skirt -- blouse -- jacket¹⁵

To make a garment of speech we choose a particular sequence (syntagm) of pieces. Each piece could be replaced by other pieces belonging to the same group. Wearing a grey skirt/red blouse/a black jacket may be

considered the same as a sentence uttered by an individual for a particular purpose. Raman Selden pointed out that :

The elements fit together to make a particular kind of utterance and to evoke a meaning or style. No one can actually perform the system itself, but their selection of elements from the sets-of garments which make up the system express their competence in handling the system.¹⁶

Structuralism is, thus, based, in the first instance, on the realization that human actions have a meaning and hence they are signs. Second, signs are not independent elements but are defined by a network of relations. Third, the concept of system is crucial. Finally, discovering general laws (grammar) which underlie individual phenomena should be the aim of any analysis.¹⁷ In short, Structuralism, as Robert Scholes defines, is "a way of looking for reality not in individual things but in relationships among them."¹⁸

Literature can also be viewed as a system of signs. For Robert Scholes :

Every literary unit, from the individual sentence to the whole order of words can be seen in relation to the concept of system in particular. We can look at individual work, literary genres, and the whole of literature as related systems and at literature as a system within the larger system of human culture.¹⁹

Structuralist theory of narrative stems from certain linguistic metaphors. Todorov works for establishing a general 'grammar' of literature. Syntax is the basic model of narrative rules. Todorov and

others talk of narrative syntax. The most elementary syntactic division of the sentence unit is between subject and Predicate ($S \rightarrow NP + VP$): The following sentence could be the core of a well-known tale.

The warrior (subject) slew the dragon with his sword (the predicate) If we substitute a name for the subject and the dragon and 'axe' for the 'sword', we then have:

Beowulf slew grendel with his axe.

Another linguistic concept the structuralist narrative theory calls upon is the concept of phoneme:

Just as the phonemic structure of a language rests on the principle that a sound's function is determined by what it is phonemically felt to 'oppose' as much as by what it actually, phonetically is, so our fundamental concepts of 'meaning' present themselves to us through the opposition we feel to exist between basic 'semes' or semantic units.²⁰

Dark is defined by its opposition to 'light', just as 'up' is defined by its opposition to 'down'. According to French Structuralist Greimas, the world 'takes shape' because we perceive differences.²¹

The meaning of a literary text which is made up of set of signs is the product of the differences between the signs and the structure of the relationships between the signs, and not the product of the relationship between the text and the 'real world'. This relationship is purely arbitrary in the Saussurean sense. This concept of the autonomous existence of the text has characterized the works of all Structuralists from the linguists of the Prague School to French

Structuralists. They assumed that the structures they describe are all objectively present in the text and can be perceived by anyone. Therefore they were able to claim that the theory they were advocating was scientific.

To define the literary text as a structure is to view it as a set of Saussurean signs ... in which both signifiers and signifieds are governed by a single complex system of relationships ... It calls attention to the organization of the text in its totality, the structure of the text being simply the totality of the relationships that obtain within.²²

However, this constant emphasis on the text itself as a system of signs with a structure of its own, independent of the real world, underestimates the role of the reader as the perceiver of the meaning present in the text. The question 'How is it that the reader makes sense of a text?' remains to be answered. In the final analysis a literary text is an act of communication. The writer (addresser) writes a text (the message) to be read by the reader (addressee).

It was Jonathan Culler who made the first attempt to answer the above question. Although Culler accepts the premise that linguistics provides the best model of analysis for all human practices, he maintains that Noam Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance offers a better model than Saussurean distinction of *langue* and *parole*. Chomsky's distinction provides a model for his attempt to shift the focus from the text to the reader. He argues that skilled readers seem to know how to make sense of a text when they face one. In other words, there seems to be rules which govern the sense a reader might make out of a certain text. Thus, Culler maintains that the structure which underlies the

reader's act of interpretation should be formulated rather than the one in the system underlying the text. His argument goes as follows :

To read a text as literature is not to make one's mind a tabula rasa and approach it without preconceptions; one must bring to it an implicit understanding of the operations of literary discourse which tells one what to look for.²³

Anyone who is not acquainted with literature and not familiar with the conventions by which literary works are read will find it difficult to go beyond the surface of the text. In other words, although he will be able to understand sentences, he will not be able to read it as literature. This is because, as Cuiller says, "he has not internalized the 'grammar' of literature which would permit him to convert linguistic sequences into literary structures and meanings."²⁴

Having discussed 1) how structuralism defines the literary qualities of the literary text 2) what relation it proposes between text and author, 3) how it views the relationship between text and reality and 4) what role it assigns to the reader, we can proceed into discussing the developmental stages of Structuralist narratology in more detail.

CHAPTER II

From Linguistics to Structuralist Narratology

Ferdinand de Saussure

The work which played the most important role in shaping of linguistic thought in Europe over the thirty or more years which followed its publication in 1916 is Ferdinand de Saussure's Course in General Linguistics (Cours de Linguistique Générale). It was a posthumous compilation based on students' notes. Because of its fragmented nature, the book's influence is derived from single passages. Saussure's conceptions can best be summarized by a series of oppositions, such as synchrony versus diachrony, language (Langue) versus speech (parole), paradigmatic versus syntagmatic, signifier versus signified, and by notions such as the arbitrary character of the linguistic sign and binary oppositions.

a. Synchrony versus diachrony

Language study before Saussure was mainly diachronic; it was mainly interested in the way languages change through time. Saussure maintained that this approach gave only a partial account of linguistic phenomena. It meant tracing the history of individual linguistic facts through centuries. This approach led to a neglect of the properties of language as a system.

Synchronic study, on the other hand, considers how a language functions as a system at a given moment in time. It analyzes the relationships between its components. It examines how a language works, not how it develops. The synchronic study of language, then, is an attempt

to determine, shall we say, what is involved in knowing French at any given moment in time whereas the diachronic study of language is an attempt to trace the changes its elements undergo through various stages in history. The two must be kept separate. Otherwise, the diachronic approach may entail in the falsification of the linguist's synchronic description. For example, the fact that French noun *pas* (step) and the negative adverb **pas** derive from a single source has no function in modern French. In modern French they are distinct words and function in different ways.¹ Jonathan Culler explains Saussure's concept in the following way :

Language is a system of interrelated items and the value and identity of these items is defined by their place in the system rather than by their history.²

Once Saussure accepts his starting point as the distinction between synchronic and diachronic approach, and moves into the synchronic system, another distinction emerges, that between *langue* and *parole*.

b. *Langue* versus *parole*

Saussure emphasized the importance of seeing language as a system. This led him to make a further distinction. He understood language (human speech as a whole) to be composed of aspects, which he called *Langue* (the language system) and *Parole* (the act of speaking). Language is that faculty of human speech present in all normal human beings which is inborn but which requires the correct environmental stimuli for proper development.

Langue was considered by Saussure to be the totality of a language. It is deducible from an examination of the memories of all the

speakers of that language. *Langue* is something which the speaker can make use but cannot create it or modify it by himself. It is a social phenomenon. Thus *langue* can be described as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation system of a community.³

The actual act of speaking (*parole*), on the other hand, is a personal, dynamic activity. It exists at a particular situation, whereas *langue* exists apart from any particular manifestation in speech. The *parole* is irrelevant to Saussure's theory because it is always incomplete and varies according to individual personality and style. The study of *langue*, on the other hand, is concrete because it can be investigated.

According to Saussure, there are two kinds of relationship in the system of language.

- a. the relationship of each unit to the whole
- b. the relationship between units

David Robey points out that in Saussure's view:

Language is not an agglomeration of separate facts but a closed system, in the sense that the function of each element depends entirely on its position within the whole.⁴

Niether a part nor a whole is conceivable without the other. All entities that make up language have meaning only when they are in relation with the other entities in an utterance. They have no value (or meaning) whatsoever when they exist in isolation. Jameson has stressed the point:

... being relational rather than substantialist, (Saussure's opposition) thus strikes directly at the kind of isolation of a single apparently free-standing element.⁵

Saussure viewed language as a system and its fundamental units were signs which were arbitrary and differential.

c. Signs

A linguistic sign, for Saussure, is made up of two elements: a sound image and a concept. He maintained that we cannot recognize sounds as linguistic units unless concepts are attached to them and we cannot have concepts independent of their corresponding sound-images. The definition of the Saussurean sign is as follows:

The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name,
but a concept and an acoustic image.⁶

For the sound-image, the term signifier is used and for the concept signified. The sign made up of these two elements is arbitrary because the association between a particular sound-image and a particular concept is purely a product of linguistic convention, not of any natural link. As Jameson points out, the doctrine of arbitrariness of the sign eliminates the myth of a natural language:

At the same time it serves to throw psychological considerations of language into a different plane as well: for now what distinguishes human beings is no longer that relatively specialized skill or endowment which is the power to speak, but rather the more general power to create signs; and with this the royal road from linguistics to anthropology is thrown open.⁷

In the domain of conventional signs, there is no natural reason why a particular signifier and signified should be attached. Therefore, the relationship is different from that between the signifier and the

signified in the case of a portrait where it involves an actual resemblance between the two. In the case of an index the relation between the two is causal: fever means illness and clouds mean rain.⁸ In the sign as Saussure understood it the relationship between the signifier and signified is purely arbitrary and conventional: 'tree' means a class of green vegetable objects not by resemblance or causal connection but by a mutual understanding established between the members of English speaking community.

The Saussurean sign does not stand for something else. It does not reflect or express our experience of things. Rather, it articulates it. Instead of things determining the meaning of signs, signs determine the meaning of things. Signs, or words, are identified not by "virtue of any intrinsic qualities in them but by virtue of their difference from one another".⁹

Each sign in the system has value only in so far as it is different from other signs. It acquires value by its opposition to the other units. Jameson clarifies Saussure's view:

We cannot identify a word as a singular masculine noun without at the same time apprehending it as not being a plural, or a feminine word, or an adjective. This type of simultaneously identifying and differentiating awareness holds true all the way down the smallest meaningful units of the word, namely phonemes and their particular distinctive units.¹⁰

The basic form that distinctive features can take is that of a series of binary oppositions.

d. Binary oppositions

Jameson has suggested that language perception follows in its operation "the Hegelian law that perception is negation. All concepts are defined by a binary relationship with their opposites, e.g. Light/Dark or negatives, e.g. Light/Non-light. Hence there is a tension between presence and absence or between positive and negative signs which make up the terms of the binary oppositions."¹²

Indeed, the relations that have influenced Structuralists immensely is the notion of binary oppositions. Roman Jakobson considered binary oppositions as the fundamental operation of the human mind, "which was basic to the production of meaning."¹³

Culler, on the other hand, has suggested that binarism can be misleading :

Binary oppositions can be used to order the most heterogenous elements, and this is precisely why binarism is so pervasive in literature. When two things are set in opposition to one another the reader is forced to explore qualitative similarities and differences, to make a connection so as to derive meaning from the disjunction. But the very flexibility and power of binarism depends on the fact that what it organizes are qualitative distinctions, and if those distinctions are irrelevant to the matter in hand, then binary oppositions can be very misleading. Precisely because they present factitious organization. The moral is simple : one must resist the temptation to use binary oppositions merely to devise elegant structures... The relevant structures are those which enable elements to function as signs.¹⁴

Hence a sign is a 'form' and not a 'substance' which derives its meaning from its differential quality and cannot be isolated from the system to which it belongs. Saussure explains this principle by giving the 8.25 p.m. Geneva-to-Paris Express as example. We feel that it is always the same train although the locomotive, coaches, and the personnel are usually different. This is because the 8.25 train is a form and not a substance. Its identity is derived from its place in the system of trains. It is therefore clear that for Saussure the relationships which signs have with each other are essential to define them. Such relations are of two kind: syntagmatic and associative.

e. Syntagmatic and associative (paradigmatic) relations.

A sign is in opposition with other signs which come before and after it in a sentence. It has with the preceding and following signs a syntagmatic relationship in which the units are arranged in sequences. According to Lepschy :

This is a relationship in praesentia, i.e. between elements (the sign in question, and the preceding and following one) which are all present in the message.¹⁵

The term syntagmatic was attached by Saussure to the sequential relationships that a given language allows, i.e. between the three sounds that make up the word /m e t/ or the syntactical relationship between the words "He met her on the train."

Yet to understand a language sequence, it is not enough to recognize the relationship between the elements present in it. The relationship between an element present in a sequence and those that are

not is called the associative relationship.

This is a relationship in absentia, i.e. between the element in question, which is there, and other elements, which are not there in that particular message.¹⁶

In the sequence "He met her on the train," there is a clear relationship between the first sign He and the other signs she, you, I etc., which are not present in the sequence. This set of signs forms a little system in itself, i.e. the personal pronoun system. Only one sign and only one can be used at this point in the sequence in question. David Crystal expresses this as having a 'choice':

This may be expressed as having a choice as to which sign we can use at any place in the structure. It is worth noting how in a system of this kind the meaning or 'value' of each sign in the system is derivable by reference to the other signs which are co-members of it.¹⁷

Later Hjelmslev, one of the prominent linguists of the Copenhagen School, applied the term 'paradigmatique' for this type of relationship. The term covers not only the different forms in a sub-system but all forms of association of form and meaning.

A given word can be seen as the point of intersection of a bundle of different strings of association.¹⁸

Paradigmatic relations which determine the possibility of substitution, are especially important in the analysis of literary texts.

Russian Formalism

While Saussure's Theory of Language determines the essence of Structuralism, Russian Formalism determines its literary basis. Russian Formalism played an important role in the development of Structuralist theory. The Structuralist desire to formulate a theory of literature distinct from other disciplines owe a debt to Formalist theory.¹⁹

The appearance of Victor Shklovsky's essay on Futurist poetry is regarded as the beginning of Russian Formalism.

Formalist theory emerged as a collective effort of two small groups of students - The Opajaz group based in Petersburg and the Moscow Linguistic Circle. The Opajaz Group (The Society for the Study of Poetic Language) consisted of students of literature who were dissatisfied with existing forms of literary study. Victor Shklovsky, Boris Eikhenbaum, Osip Brik, and Yury Tynyanov are the best known members of the group. The Moscow Linguistic Circle consisted of linguists who were interested in "extending the field of linguistics to cover poetic language",²⁰ Roman Jakobson being the best known member.

Formalist theory emerged as an attempt to put literary studies on an independent basis and to make the study of literature an autonomous discipline. The efforts of the Formalists were directed towards justifying the independent existence of literary studies. Thus the first problem for the Formalists was to define its subject matter.

Earlier theories of literature tended to see literature either as an expression of an author's personality and world vision or as a mimetic representation of the world in which he lived. The Formalists

argued that to see a literary work as an expression of the personality of the author leads inevitably to biography and psychology. To regard it as a picture of a given society leads to history, politics, or sociology.²¹

Formalists maintained that literature could not be reduced to anything else. In other words, what constitutes literature, according to them, was its difference from other disciplines. As with Saussurean linguistics, Russian Formalists aimed at disentangling the literary system from other systems. In order to isolate the intrinsic qualities of literature, their first moves had to be negative. They started by excluding all mimetic and expressive definitions of literature. As Ann Jeferson states :

The formalist definition of literature is a differential or oppositional one... Indeed the object of literary science turns out not to be an object at all, but a set of differences.²²

The key term of the Russian Formalist theory is the concept of defamiliarization (*bstranenie*). According to Shklovsky, art defamiliarizes things that have become habitual or automatic, thereby refreshing our sense of life and experience. He wrote :

Habitualization devours works, clothes, furniture, one's wife and the fear of war... And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things to make the stone stony.²³

We may conclude that the opposition between habituation and perception forms the basis of Formalist theory of literature.

In case of poetry, practical or everyday language, the automatized

element, is made strange. Poetic language attracts attention to itself and "such attention results in renewed perception of the very material quality of language itself."²⁴ Formal devices such as rhyme and rhythm affect our perception of ordinary words and draw our attention to their sound texture. We come to notice words which in ordinary circumstances fail to notice. Thus defamiliarized perception of words was considered as the basis of poetry by Formalists. They maintained that formal devices were the means by which defamiliarization was achieved. Ann Jefferson has suggested that :

The Formalist preoccupation with form derived from their preoccupation with the specificity of literariness and never constituted an end in itself.²⁵

Hence literariness and form became synonymous. However, it was soon realized that literary devices themselves were subject to automatization. While the early Formalists saw a work of art as the sum total of its devices, later Formalist theory introduced a distinction between device and function as the result of the realization that devices themselves were subject to automatization. The defamiliarizing effect of a device depends on its function in the work in which it appears and not on its mere existence as a device.²⁶

A work of art will include automatized elements which are of secondary importance. They are "subservient to the defamiliarizing or foregrounded elements."²⁷ As Tynyanov puts :

Since a system is not a free interplay of equal elements but presupposes the foregrounding of one group of elements (à dominant') and the deformation of others, a work becomes literature and acquires its literary function through just this dominant.²⁸

The components of a work are differentiated from practical language as well as from other formal components which have become automatized. With the notion of 'foregrounding' in the literary work, the Formalists were able to distinguish the literary from the non-literary.²⁹

For Frederic Jameson the usefulness of the concept of defamiliarization lies in "The way it describes a process valid for all literature without in anyway implying the primacy of one particular element (such as metaphor) or one particular genre over the others."³⁰

In sum, the concept of defamiliarization serves as a means of distinguishing the literary from the non-literary. Secondly, it establishes a 'hierarchy' within the literary work by making a distinction between 'dominant' and 'automatized' elements. Finally, it leads to a change in the concept of literary history. Literary history is no longer viewed as a continuity of tradition as it is the case with idealistic history. It is considered as a series of abrupt discontinuities. Each new literary movement is seen as a break with the dominant artistic conceptions of the preceding generation. David Lodge refuses to explain the changes in literary fashion in terms of external circumstances - social, political, economic circumstances and compares the shifts between modernist and antimodernist dominance to the predictable movement of a pendulum and suggests that the process must have some cause within the system of literature itself.³¹ It is clear that his view stems from the theories of Russian Formalist critics.

As for narrative discourse, Russian Formalists made a distinction between two aspects: *fabula* and *sjuzet*.

Fabula (the story) is the raw material of the narrative. that

is, events in their chronological order. It is "the story as it might have been enacted in real time and space, a seamless continuum of innumerable contiguous events"³² in David Lodge's words. *Sjuzet*, on the hand, by rearranging events of the story, defamiliarizes them and opens to perception. Working along these lines Geràrd Genette established two areas in which *sjuzet* transforms *fabula*: time and point of view. He also introduced categories of order, duration, and frequency in the temporal re-arranging of the *fabula* by the *sjuzet*. Order concerns the relation between the order of events in the *fabula*, which is always in chronological order, and the order of events in the *sjuzet*, which need not be in order. Duration concerns the relation between the duration of events in the *fabula* and the time taken to narrate them. Frequency concerns the relationship between the number of times an event occurs in the *fabula* and the number of times it is narrated in the *sjuzet*. According to Genette there are four possibilities: telling once what happened once, telling *n* times what happened *n* times, telling *n* times what happened once, and telling once what happened *n* times.³³

For the Russian Formalists the role played by reality in the construction of a literary work is only secondary. The Formalists evaluate literature not for its mimetic capacity. In the Formalist view a change in the literary fashion is not the result of a changed reality but refreshed perception of formal devices.³⁴

The similarity between Saussure's view of language which excludes the referential dimension and Formalist position is evident. As Ann Jefferson has suggested :

Meaning is not determined by the subjective intentions and wishes of its speakers: it is not the speaker who directly imparts meaning to his utterances, but the linguistic system as a whole which produces it. Transposed onto literature, this at once excludes both the author and reality as points of departure for interpretation.³⁵

The similarity rests on the fact that Formalists spoke of the work of art as a system, whose elements were defined by their relations to one another.

To conclude, the contributions of Russian Formalism may be summarized as follows:

First, the status of the author underwent a dramatic change. Literariness and not individual works of literature written by such and such author became the object of literary studies. For them literature has nothing to do with the author's vision. The author is merely an expert in using formal devices; "what he might or might not know about life is irrelevant to the job."³⁶

Second, they abolished the traditional distinction between form and content. The traditional view that form subordinates content was radically changed and the order of priority was reversed. Impeded form became the condition of literariness.

Roman Jakobson

After 1930, the participants of the Russian Formalism were unable to produce any work of theoretical importance. Most of them like Eikhenbaum and Tamashevsky devoted their energies to less controversial types of literary study while Shklovsky put his services at the disposal

of socialist realism.

However the ideas of Russian Formalism were carried on in the work of the Prague Linguistic Circle, which was founded mainly by a group of linguists like the Muscovites before them. Roman Jakobson, a former Muscovite had left for Czechoslovakia and actively took part in the Circle's foundation.

As a Formalist, his interest mainly lies in the attempt to give an account of the poetic function of language. His point of departure is, of course, linguistic theory. The notion of polarities and the notion of equivalence are the two linguistic notions which he postulates in order to account for the particular character of language when it is used poetically. Jakobson draws upon Saussure's distinction concerning syntagmatic and associative axis of linguistic performance.

Working on the linguistic problems of the disorder called aphasia, Jakobson noted that one type of a phasia showed 'contiguity disorder', the inability to combine elements in a linear sequence. While the other showed 'similarity disorder', the inability to substitute one element for another.³⁷ Jakobson points out that the two types of disorder strikingly corresponds to the two basic rhetorical devices which permeate all literary works of art: metonymy and metaphor.

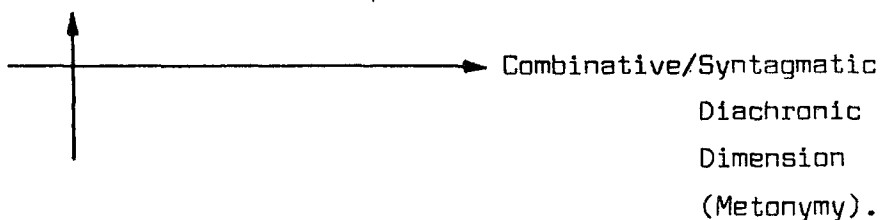
In the metonymic statement 'Çankaya rejects the accusations' a specific building is proposed as referent of the president of the Republic of Turkey. In other words, "Çankaya" functions as the equivalent to the president of the Republic of Turkey. Metonymy is based on sequential association between the literal subject (the president) and its replacement (where he lives).

In the metaphor 'The villagers flocked into the big cities', the movement of sheep is proposed as 'equivalent' to that of the villagers. Thus metaphor is based on an analogy between the villagers' movement and the sheep's movement.³⁸ The following quotation from Terence Hawkes may be helpful in clarifying Jakobson's position:

Thus messages are constructed, as Saussure said, by a combination of a 'horizontal' movement, which combines words together, and a 'vertical' movement which selects the particular words from the available inventory or 'inner storehouse' of the language. The combinative (or syntagmatic) process manifests itself in contiguity (one word being placed next to another) and its mode is **metonymic**. The selective (or associative) process manifests itself in similarity (one word or concept being 'like' another and its mode is **metaphoric**. The opposition of metaphor and metonymy therefore may be said to represent in effect the essence of the total opposition between **synchronic** mode of language (its immediate, co-existent, 'vertical' relationship) and its **diachronic** mode (its sequential, successive, linearly progressive relationships).³⁹

The two dimensions may be represented as follow:

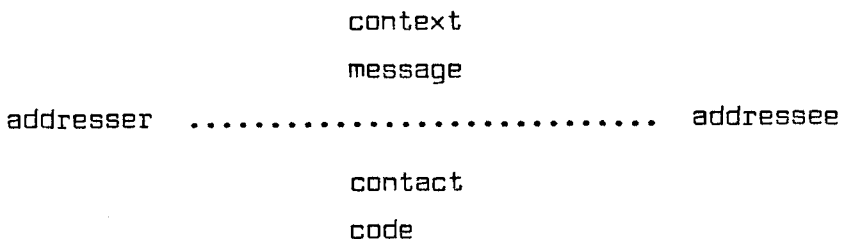
Selective/Associative Synchronic
Dimension (Metaphor)



Through his study of aphasia, Jakobson makes the significant claim that human language does in fact function on the basis of two fundamental dimensions which were first recognized by Saussure and that these dimensions lie in the heart of rhetorical devices which have long been recognized as characteristic of poetic use of language.

He also maintained that it was the dominance of metonymy or metaphor which determined the genre of literary style.⁴⁰

According to Jakobson all communication consists of a message sent by an addresser to an addressee. The message may be oral, visual, electronic, etc. It must be formulated in terms of a code. Moreover the message must refer to a context which is understood by both parties. This enables the message to make sense. In short, according to Jakobson's formulation 'meaning arises from the total speech act which is made up of the six factors mentioned above and not merely supplied by the 'message.' This can be seen in the following diagram :

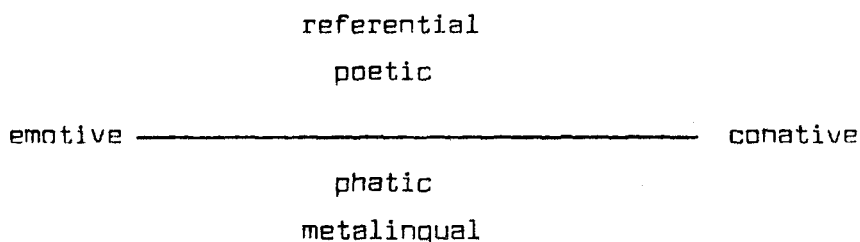


Depending on the factor towards which the communication may find itself orientated, the 'meaning' may change. since the six elements involved in the process of transmission are never in perfect ballance. Thus 'context' may be dominant in one situation, or the code in another, or the contact in another situation :

Jakobson maintains that each of the six elements involved in the

process of transmission of a message has a functional role.

The functional dimensions may be shown as follows:⁴¹



If the communication is orientated towards the 'message', the poetic or aesthetic function dominates. Hawkes wrote :

"... Jakobson's comprehensive (and fundamentally structural) view of the way language operates confirms and reinforces that crucial insight into the nature of verbal art ... For it is of the distinctive essence of the aesthetic use of language, seen thus 'functionally' and in relation to the totality of human communication, that it is self-conscious; concerned above all to draw attention to its own nature, its own sound-patterns, diction, syntax etc. and not to refer primarily to some 'reality' beyond itself ... As a result it systematically undermines the sense of any 'natural' or 'transparent' connection between signifier and signified, sign and object. ... Verbal art, seen thus, is not referential in mode and does not function as a transparent 'window' through which the reader encounters the poem's or the novel's subject. Its mode is auto-referential; it is its own subject."⁴²

Jakobson's influence was mainly felt through his efforts of applying structural linguistics to the analysis of poetic language. In the analysis of prose Propp may be regarded as the pioneer figure.

Propp and his followers among whom French Structuralist critics emerge as an important group have tried to confront questions of fundamental importance: how should we define narrative? what are the basic units of fiction? how are those structured? what are the underlying rules which govern literary practice?

Vladimir Propp

Propp represents the Formalist position within literary structuralism. He draws on certain elementary linguistic analogies like other structuralist critics who contributed to the development of a structuralist theory of narrative. The basic model of narrative rules is Syntax, the most elementary syntactic division of the sentence unit being between subject and predicate: the knight (subject) slew the dragon with his sword (predicate). Evidently this sentence could be the core of a tale. The essential structure is not altered when we substitute a name (Launcelot) for the "knight", or 'axe' for 'sword'.⁴³ It is this analogy between the sentence structure and narrative that represents Propp's point of departure.

Through his work on a hundred Russian fairy tales, Propp found out that the typical characters (hero, villain etc) made up the 'subject' and the typical actions in such fairy tales constituted the 'predicate'. In other words he was able to formulate that although the personages of a tale vary, their functions in the tales are constant. He defined "function" as "an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action".⁴⁴ He distinguishes a basic set of thirty-one functions upon which the whole corpus of tales is constructed. "A function is the basic unit of narrative language and refers to the significant actions which form the narrative. These follow

a logical sequence, and although no tale includes them all the functions always remain in sequence."⁴⁵

functions

1. One of the members of a family absents himself from home.
2. An interdiction is addressed to the hero.
3. The interdiction is violated.
4. The villain makes an attempt at reconnaissance.
5. The villain receives information about his victim.
6. The villain attempts to deceive his victim in order to take possession of him or of his belongings.
7. The victim submits to deception and thereby unwittingly helps his enemy.
8. The villain causes harm or injury to a member of a family.
- 8a. One member of a family either lacks something or desires to have something.
9. Misfortune or lack is made known: the hero is approached with a request or a command; he is allowed to go or is dispatched.
10. The seeker agrees to or decides upon counteraction.
11. The hero leaves home.
12. The hero is tested, interrogated, attacked. et., which prepares the way for his receiving either a magical agent or helper.
13. The hero reacts to the actions of the future donor.
14. The hero acquires the use of a magical agent.
15. The hero is transferred, delivered, or led to the whereabouts of an object of search.
16. The hero and the villain join in direct combat.
17. The hero is branded.
18. The villain is defeated.

19. The initial misfortuner or lack is liquidated.
20. The hero returns.
21. The hero is pursued.
22. Recue of the hero from pursuit.
23. The hero, unrecognized, arrives home or in another country.
24. A false hero presents unfounded claims.
25. A difficult task is proposed to the hero.
26. The task is resolved.
27. The hero is recognized.
28. The false hero or villain is exposed.
29. The false hero is given a new apperance.
30. The villain is punished.
31. The hero is married and ascends the throne.⁴⁶

In addition to the thirty-one functions, Propp identifies seven "spheres of action." This involves the eight character roles of the fairy tale.

- 1- villain
- 2- the donor (provider)
- 3- the helper
- 4- the princess (a rough-for person) and her father.
- 5- the dispatcher
- 6- the hero (seeker or victim)
- 7- the false hero⁴⁷

The villain may also be the false hero, and donor may also be the dispatcher. In other words one character may play more than one of these roles in any given tale. One role may employ several characters, that is,

in a given tale there may be multiple villains.

As Raman Selden and Robert Scholes have suggested, although these functions abstracted by Propp **represent** the structure of a master-tale present in fairy tales, it is possible to detect them in comedies, myths, epics, romances and stories in general.

Claude Lévi-Strauss

Unlike Propp, Lévi-Strauss is concerned not with an aesthetic form but with a logical form: the system of ideas embodied in primitive mythology :

"The aesthetic reconstruction of a myth, which shapes it into a folk tale or fairy tale, is for him a transformation which obscures the original logic of the myth"⁴⁸

For Lévi-Strauss myth is a body of materials which always reach us in some modified form and must be reconstructed from the obscured forms. For him a myth is a kind of message in code. The code can be broken and the message deciphered. He begins by breaking down the mythic narrative under consideration into units. Each unit can be summarized by a short sentence. He reduces the mythic narrative into relational units called "**mythemes**" which function in the same way as phonemes and morphemes do in linguistics. In other words by breaking down the mythic narrative into mythemes he looks for the 'phonemic' structure of myth.⁴⁹ The next step is the arrangement of mythemes. The proper arrangement of mythemes is crucial for decoding the message encoded in the myth. The mythemes are organized in binary oppositions-like the basic linguistic units. His analysis of the Oedipus myth is a case in point :

"The general opposition underlying the Oedipus myth is between two views of the origin of human beings : (i) that they are born from the earth (one); (ii) that they are born from coition (two)." ⁵⁰

Unlike Propp, Lévi - Strauss is not interested in the sequence of narrative units but in the structural pattern of the myth and the structural linguistic model is the method by which he uncovers the basic structure of the human mind embodied in the myth.

A.J.Greimas

A.J.Greimas worked along the lines of Propp's theory. Whereas Propp focused on a single genre, e.g.fairy tale, Greimas aims to formulate the universal grammar of narrative. To this end, he applies a semantic analysis of sentence structure to narrative discourse. His argument for a 'Structuralist' approach to the matter of meaning is embodied in two influential books Semantique Structurale (1966), and Du Sens, (1970). He begins with the basic notion of binary opposition. This notion is the basis on which his semantic theory rests. For him, perception of differences is the basic human conceptual mode: ⁵¹

"A narrative sequence embodies this mode by the employment of two actants whose relationship must be either oppositional or its reverse, and on the surface level this relationship will therefore generate fundamental actions of disjunction and conjunction, separation and union, struggle and reconciliation, etc. The movement from one to the other, involving the transfer on the surface of some entity -a quality, an object- from one actant to the other, constitutes the essence of the narrative." ⁵²

In order to emphasize the structural relationship between the actants he reduces Propp's seven 'spheres of action' into three pairs of binary oppositions.⁵³

Subject / object
 Sender / receiver
 Helper / opponent

The pairs of actants describe three basic patterns which occur in all narrative.

1. Desire, search, or aim (subject/object)
2. Communication (sender/receiver)
3. Auxiliary support or hindrance (helper/opponent)

He reduces Propp's thirty-one functions to twenty in order to account for the various possible narrative sequences. For example, he combines the functions of "prohibition and 'violation', which Propp considers separately, since he maintains that these concepts cannot be perceived independent of each other. Greimas groups these functions into three structures (syntagms):

1. Contractual structures: in which the situation involves the establishment and breaking of contracts, alienation and/or reintegration.
2. Performative structures: in which the situation involves trials struggles, the performance of tasks.
3. Disjunctive structures: the situation involves movement departure, arrival.⁵⁴

Greimas' work emerges as a refinement of Propp's ideas and aims at constructing a finite set of rules or a competence of narrative which will generate the performance of stories.

Tzvetan Todorov

Like Propp, Greimas and others, Tzvetan Todorov believes that all the syntactic rules of language are restated in narrative - rules of agency, predication, adjectival and, verbal functions, mood, aspect. 'Proposition' is the minimal unit of narrative. It can be an 'agent' (e.g. a person) or a 'predicate' (e.g. an action). Using Todorov's method, the propositional structure of a narrative may be expressed in the following manner.⁵⁵

X is king
 Y is X's mother
 Z is X's father

 X marries Y
 X kills Z

In this structure every phase of the narrative is shown by a proposition. X, Y and Z denominate agents. They may either function as the subject or the object of a proposition.⁵⁶ The first and the last propositions contain predicates. Predicates may function like adjectives (e.g. to be a king) or they may operate like verbs to indicate any change in situation. A group of propositions forms a sequence. Five propositions make up a basic set of sequence which describes a certain state "which is disturbed and then re-established albeit in altered form."⁵⁷ A succession of sequences forms a text. Thus sequence and text emerge as two higher levels of organization, propositions being the first step.

Todorov exploits Boccaccio's Decameron (Grammaire du Décaméron, 1969) in order to establish a universal syntax of narrative.

CHAPTER III

Structural Analysis of Jack London's Three Stories

In this chapter Jack London's The Call of the Wild, 'Love of Life', and White Fang will be analyzed by adopting a structural approach.

Jack London handles the problem of transformation of the narrative *fabula* into a particular *sjuzet* in a fairly straight-forward manner. There is not much to comment on with regard to the ordering of events. We do not find radical dislocation and rearrangement of chronological order that we encounter, for instance, in Faulkner. London narrates his stories in the order they occur. The handling of time which concerns what Gerard Genette calls *duration* affects the pace of the narratives. The pace of the narratives is rapid due to the economy with which characters are delineated. In fact no description of characters occurs except when the description serves as a sign. Descriptions are compressed and overtly symbolic rather than realistic in function. Locations are described with more details but still in an overtly symbolic way.

The procedure of segmentation adopted in the analyses of these stories is based on the spatial oppositions and the distribution of characters in space. A further type of segmentation is introduced which invokes the interaction between the protagonist of each story and other characters.

Thus the methodology is based on the kernel oppositions in the texts under consideration. For Culler, this is the basic model which we apply unconsciously in the process of reading. Postulating on Greimas' *fort-term* homology, he suggests that:

What the reader is looking for in a plot is a passage from one state to another—a passage which he can assign thematic value ... First of all, the incidents of the plot must be organized into two groups and these groups must be named in such a way that they represent either an opposition (problem and solution, refusal and acceptance or vice versa) or a logical development (cause and effect, situation and result). Secondly, each of these groups can in turn be organized either as a series of actions with a common unifying factor which serves as name for the series, or as a dialectical movement in which incidents are related as contraries and named either by a temporary synthesis or by a transcendent term which covers both members of a contrast.²

It is evident that different procedures of segmentation may be adopted in the analysis of a text. However one type of segmentation will not present advantage over another type. What is important is the consistency of the procedure adopted.³

THE CALL OF THE WILD

FIRST READING :

Jack London's The Call of the Wild is a story about the adventures of a dog called Buck which is kidnapped and dispatched on a long journey. Buck is kidnapped by Manuel, the gardener's helper, from Judge Miller's place and sold to a man who finds dogs "with strong muscles by which to toil and furry coats to protect them from the frost" for the men rushing into the Northland in quest of "a yellow metal".

Since Buck is the only character which interacts with all the other characters in the story, he is clearly on a different level from all the others in the story. The other characters are Judge Miller, Manuel, François and Perrault, Hal, Mercedes and Charles, and John Thornton. Spitz and the Moose are the animal characters with which Buck enters into direct combat.

Situation Reflected in the Story :

From the functional point of view, the reader observes that there are four categories into which these characters may be fitted. Buck is clearly the main character/hero of the story since he interacts with each of the characters. Judge Miller, François and Perrault, Hal, Mercedes and Charles, and finally John Thornton are Buck's masters who replace one another as the story develops. Manuel fits the category of the villain because he is the one who victimizes Buck and brings about a reversal in Buck's situation. Spitz and the Moose form the fourth category. Though they can also be considered as villains, Buck's relationship with them is on a different footing than his relationship with Manuel.

The distribution of the characters according to their functions in the story can be shown as follows.

I	II	III	IV
Buck	Manuel	Judge Miller François and Perrault Hal, Mercedes, Charles John Thornton	Spitz Moose

The distribution of these characters in space reveals significant clues in the way of determining the meaning of the story.

Judge Miller lives in a big house in the "sun-kissed" Santa Clara Valley. The house stands back from the road half hidden among the trees, "through which glimpses" can be "caught of the wide cool veranda that ran around four sides. There are great stables, "rows of vine-clad servants' cottages, an endless and orderly array of out houses". From the description above, the reader can deduce the fact that this is a world where everything is in order and life seems to be flowing easily. Another important feature is that it is sheltered from the outside world. The fact that it is called "Judge Miller's place" also signals the information that this piece of land is a place where law and order reigns. Later in the story this place is referred to as the Southland.

Being the gardener's helper, Manuel neither wholly belongs to the house nor to the outside. His situation as a marginal character justifies his position as the villain for it is difficult to identify his position. As the person having relationships outside and the one who kidnaps Buck, he signals the message that danger is to be expected outside Judge Miller's place.

All the other characters live in the Northland which is described as a "hostile", "cold" and "dark" environment.

Thus, the distribution of the characters in relation to place may be shown in the following manner.

Space	Southland Judge Miller's Pl.	College Park	Northland	
Characters	Judge Miller	Manuel	François and Perrault Hal, Charles and Mercedes John Thornton	Spitz Moose

By combining the functional and spatial distribution of characters, we may arrive at the first mytheme.

MYTHEME I

Space	Southland ORDER	College Park DANGER	Northland CONFUSION (DANGER)	
Characters	Judge Miller	Manuel	François and Perrault Hal, Charles and Mercedes John Thornton	Spitz Moose

As the hero of the story, Buck travels from the Southland into the heart of the Northland. There is sufficient evidence in the story as to Buck's position in the Judge's house.

"Buck was niether a house-dog nor kennel-dog. The whole realm was his. He plunged into the swimming tank or went hunting with the Judge's son's; he escorted Mollie and Alice, the Judge's daughters, on long twilight or early morning rambles; on wintry nights he lay at the Judge's feet before the roaring library fire; he carried the Judge's grandsons on his back, or rolled them in the grass... Among the terriers he stalked imperiously... for he was king-king over all creeping, crawling, lying things of Judge Miller's place, humans included.

His father, Elmo, a huge St. Bernard, had been the Judge's inseperable companion, and Buck bid fair to follow in the way of his father." (p. 44)

However Buck's kingdom is confined within the borders of Judge Miller's place and he is in fact under the Judge's protection. It is when the Judge is absent that he is kidnapped.

His situation is entirely different in the Northland.

"Every hour was filled with shocks and surprise. He had been suddenly jerked from the heart of civilization and flung into the heart to things primordial. No lazy, sun-kissed life was this, with nothing to do but loaf and be bored. Here was neither peace, nor rest, nor a moment's safety. All was confusion and action, and every moment of life and limb were in peril. There was imperative need to be constantly alert; for these dogs and men were not town dogs and men. They were savages, all of them, who knew no law but the law of club and fang." (p 55)

Hence we arrive at mytheme II.

MYTHEME II

Place	Southland CIVILIZATION Law of love and fellowship Shelter	Northland WILDERNESS Law of Club and fang Danger
Buck	Lazy Sheltered	Tailing Exposed to danger

Action Reflected in the Story :

Now let us consider the following statements.

1. Buck is kidnapped.
2. Buck is jerked from the heart of civilization and flung into the heart of things primordial.
3. Buck is made to toil under the fierce conditions of trail life.

Although Buck is the grammatical subject of these statements,

he is clearly the patient of the action expressed in the predication of each statement. Things are done to him. His actions are essentially reactions. He learns how to fight in the manner of a wolf, to strike and to leap away and to steal which marks Buck "as fit to survive in the hostile Northland environment." Even his combat with Spitz is a reaction because it is Spitz which attacks first.

His meeting with John Thornton occurs when Buck is in no condition to follow the trail; he has been mistreated by Hal, Charles, and Mercedes and exhausted. It is at this very moment that he is in need of help that John Thornton (Helper) comes to his rescue. Until this point, Buck is the patient rather than the actant in the story. John Thornton becomes a father-figure.

"This man had saved his life, which was something but, further, he was the ideal master. Other men saw to the welfare of their dogs from a sense of duty and business expediency; he saw to the welfare of his as if they were his children." (p.108)

Buck is attached to him almost like a helpless baby is attached to his mother.

"For a long time after his rescue, Buck did not like Thornton to get out of his sight. From the moment he left the tent to when he entered it again, Buck would follow at his heels." (p.109)

A reversal of roles takes place when Buck rescues Thornton from the river and starts a sled of a hundred pounds. What is significant here is that Buck does all these deeds for the love of Thornton. In other words, there no longer exists a situation in which Buch is required to do things. He performs all these 'heroic deeds' only because he wants to.

This reversal of roles may be shown as follows.

MYTHEME III

Thornton	Buck
Protector ↓ Protected	Protected ↓ Protector

Together, they set on a journey to the East after a fabled lost gold mine. "the history of which was as old as the country." They are after 'the treasure hard to attain.' They face into the East on an unknown trail to achieve "where men and dogs as good as themselves had failed." However, together, they accomplish this difficult task and find the lost gold mine. It is here in the forest surrounding the Lost Cabin that Buck begins to hear the sounding of the call more forcefully, which he has been hearing since he came to the Northland.

"And closely akin to the visions of the hairy man was the call still sounding in the depths of the forest. It filled him with a great unrest and strange desires. It caused him to feel a vague, sweet gladness, and he was aware of wild yearnings and stirrings for he knew not what." (p.125)

The urge to answer the call becomes irresistible. "One night he sprang from sleep with a start, eager-eyed, nostrils quivering and scenting, his mane bristling in recurrent waves. From the forest came the call." (p.125)

He follows the sounding of the call into the forest and meets his "wild brother" and he knows that he is "at last answering the call."

But remembering John Thornton, he starts on the back track.

"John Thornton was eating dinner when Buck dashed into camp and sprang upon him in frenzy of affection... For two days and nights Buck never left camp, never let Thornton out of his sight. He followed him about at his work, watched him while he ate, saw him into his blankets at night and out of them in the morning. But after two days the call in the forest began to sound more imperiously than ever." (p.128)

The deep attachment Buck feels for Thornton keeps him away from answering the call. Hence another change in their relationship takes place.

MYTHEME IV

Thornton	Buck
Protector	Protected
↓	↓
Protected	Protector
↓	↓
Prohibitor	Prohibited

While away from the camp in quest of the sound, he kills a big Moose already wounded by the Yeehats. On his return, he finds out that Thornton and his friends are also killed by the Yeehats. Thornton (the Prohibitor) being dead, Buck is free to answer the call at last and in order to avenge Thornton he kills most of the Yeehats, a deed as a result of which Buck earns the title "the Evil-Spirit." Yeehats never enter the valley which he selects "for an abiding-place." The valley becomes his kingdom, thus attaining a similar position to the one he had at the beginning of the story.

A structuring of Buck's story may be as follows :

- 1) Buck is king
- 2) He falls into a trap and is kidnapped
- 3) He is dispatched on a long journey
- 4) During the course of the journey, he suffers from mistreatment and encounters demons with which he enters into direct combat.
- 5) A helper comes along at a time when he most needs help.
- 6) They set on a journey to find the "treasure hard to attain."
- 7) They find the treasure
- 8) Buck is rewarded by being king again

This structure is evidently similar to that of the mythic quest of the 'treasure hard to attain.' However there are several questions left unresolved in the readers mind. What is the nature of the call that keeps sounding from the forest? What is the nature of the visions that keeps coming to him at night (in the dark)? And why does Thornton act as an obstacle on Buck's way to answering the call? In order to find answers to these questions, the reader must find what these signifiers signify. This leads the reader to the re-reading of story which will be attempted in the final chapter.

'LOVE OF LIFE'

'Love of Life' is a story about a man's struggle to stay alive in the terrible conditions of the Northland. He is a man from the South who has come so far to the North in quest of a yellow metal, gold. Because he strains his ankle he is in no condition to keep up with his friend. He pleads in distress, but his friend does not even turn his head. Deserted and in distress, he tries to follow his friend's

trail. He stubbornly tries to hold on to the thought that he will be able to reach Bill.

Bill would be waiting for him there, and they would paddle away South down the Dease to the great Bear Lake. And South across the lake they would go, ever South, till they gained the Mackenzie. And South, still South, they would go, while the winter raced vainly after them, and the ice formed in the eddies, and the days grew chill and crisp, South to some warm Hudson Bay Company post, where timber grew tall and generous and there was grub without end.(p.144)

It becomes clear that South is the direction which represents survival. It is warm, secure and plenty of food can be found there.

```

The South
  ↓
warm
  ↓
secure
  ↓
plenty of food

```

The North, on the other hand, is "empty of life."

There were no trees, no bushes, nothing but a gray sea of moss scarcely diversified by gray rocks, gray lakelets, and gray streamlets. The sky was gray, there was no sun nor hint of sun. (p.147)

```

The North
  ↓
No sun
(No warmth)
  ↓
empty of life
  ↓
No food

```

But South constantly eludes him like an obscure object of desire. Finally overcome by hunger in the most terrible sense, he loses his reason and is totally directed by his desire to find something to eat. Consequently he loses his course.

He was mastered by the verb "to eat." He was hunger-mad. He took no heed of the course he pursued..(p.150)

He reaches a point where he no longer feels hunger. His senses are numbed.

While he had no desire to eat, he knew he must eat to live. (p.151)

Thus act of eating becomes equated with the word life.

to eat = to live

When hunger awakes in him, he changes upon a ptarmigan nest.

There were four newly hatched chicks, a day old - little specks of pulsating life no more than a mouthful; and he ate there ravenously, thrusting them alive into his mouth and crunching them like egg-shells between his teeth. (p.153)

In this place, in the North, only instincts become operative, and he turns into an animal because of his desire to live.

Blinded by hunger and toil, he strays to the Arctic Ocean where he is seen by a group of scientists on the whale-ship Bedford. Three weeks after he is rescued he babbles incoherently of his mother, "of sunny Southern California, and a home among the orange groves and flowers." (p.163)

Although there is plenty of food on board of Bedford, he is constantly tortured by the fear of a possible famine. Like a miser hoarding gold, he hoards biscuits donated by sailors.

He was taking precautions against another possible famine - that was all. He would recover from it, the scientific men said; and he did, ere the Bedfords's anchor rumbled down in San Francisco Bay. (p.164)

The story 'Love of life' hinges on the binary opposition of the North and the South.

MYTHEME

North	South
Dark ↓ Cold ↓ Lack of Food ↓ Death	Sunny ↓ Warm ↓ Plenty of Food ↓ Life

Hence we arrive at the basic Semiotic model $A : B :: -A : -B$.⁴

The meaning emanates from the opposition between South and North. An understanding of what symbolic level the South and the North pertain to provides vital insight about the symbolic level at which to read the entire story.

However, the structural reading attempted fails to answer the questions in the readers' minds as to the nature of the sick wolf which appears at the protagonist's heels at the moment he turns into an animal. The sick wolf seems to be a counterpart of his personality. An attempt to underpin the function of the sick wolf in the story will be made in the final chapter.

WHITE FANG

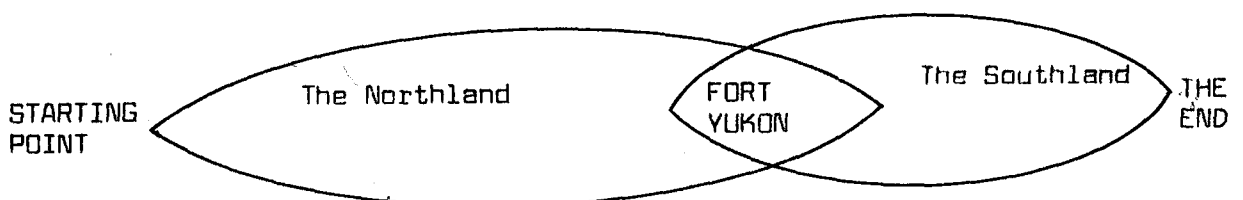
FIRST READING :

J.London's White Fang narrates the struggles of a wolf cub as he grows up in the Artic Circle. He is born of a half-dog-mother and a wolf-father. As he struggles in the relentless Northland conditions for survival he enacts the old 'covenant' between the wolf and man, which goes back to primitive times, by which the wolf adopts the man-god for protection and food while in turn he obeys and protects his master.

The wolf cub, later to be named W.F., is the only character which interacts with all the other characters in the story. Therefore, he is clearly on a different level from all the other characters in the story; he is the subject/hero. The other characters are the She-Wolf (his mother), Gray Beaver, Beauty Smith, and Weedon Scott. Lip-lip and Cherokee are animal characters with which White Fang enters into direct combat.

Surface Structure :

The story consists of five chapters, three of which are devoted to White Fang's struggles in the Northland. Chapter four is about White Fang's ordeal in Fort Yukon while Chapter V is devoted to White Fang's process of adaptation to a wholly different environment, the Southland. Since Fort Yukon is the place where people from the Northland interact with people from the Southland; it clearly represents a point of intersection. Thus the formal structuration of the book may be represented as follows :



The Northland is a place which is continuously referred to as as 'dark', 'savage', 'lone' and 'cold' place.

Dark spruce forest frowned on either side the frozen waterway the trees had been stripped by a recent wind of their white covering of frost, and they seemed to lean toward each other, black and ominous, in the fading light. A vast silence reigned over the land. The land itself was a desolation, lifeless, without movement, so lone and cold that the spirit of it was not even that of sadness. There was a hint in it of laughter, but a laughter more terrible than any sadness - a laughter that was mirthless as the smile of the Sphinx, laughter cold as the frost and partaking of the grimness of infallibility. It was the masterful and incommunicable wisdom of eternity laughing at the futility of life and the effort of life. It was the Wild, the Savage; frozen-hearted Northland Wild. (p.169)

The Northland which is delineated with no other word than 'darkness' is the place where White Fang's efforts to survive starts. Here, even the daylight is 'gray'.

Fort Yukon is the place where the 'savage' Northland and 'soft' Southland meet. It is the place where the "Superior-gods" from the Southland and their dogs with 'no fur' come into contact with the inhabitants of the Wild. Thus Fort Yukon functions as the point at which the Northland is set in opposition to the Southland.

Whereas the Northland is characterized with 'darkness', the Southland is depicted with words like 'soft' and 'warm'. This is a place where life is 'soft and easy'. (p.386) Here the days pass by quietly. "streaming their unbroken sunshine over the Santa Clara Valley." (p.391).

The distribution of the characters in the story reveals significant clues in the way of determining the meaning of the story.

The She-Wolf, White Fang's mother, and Gray Beaver with whom White Fang makes his first covenant belong to the Northland. Beauty Smith, the only character who is depicted in full detail as to his ugly appearance is the second Man-god who tricks Gray Beaver into selling White Fang to him. He is the person who victimizes White Fang and brings about a reversal in White Fang's situation. All the indices in the book point to the fact that Beauty Smith fits the Proppian Category: the villain.⁵ Living in Yukon he neither wholly belongs to the Northland nor to the Southland. His situation as a marginal character justifies his position as a villain.

'Radiant' and 'warm' Weedon Scott who turns up at the very moment White Fang is nearing death seems to embody all the attributes associated with the place he comes from, the Southland. He clearly fits Propp's category of helper.⁶

By combining spatial characteristics and spatial distribution of characters, we may arrive at the first mytheme.

MYTHEME I

Space	NORTHLAND savage DARKNESS	FORT YUKON DANGER	SOUTHLAND SUNSHINE
Characters	She - Wolf Gray Beaver Lip Lip	Beauty Smith Cherokee	Weedon Scott and his family.

Situation Reflected in the Story :

As the hero of the story, White Fang travels from the Northland to the Southland. There is sufficient evidence in the story as to White Fang's situation in the Northland.

Life is anything but easy there. A continuous strife for survival shapes the lives of creatures who inhabit this dreary place.

And in his own dim way he learned the law of meat. There are two kinds of life, his own kind and the other kind. The other kind included all live things that moved. And out of this classification arose the law. The aim of life was meat. Life lived on life. There were the eaters and the eaten. The law was : EAT OR BE EATEN. -- He saw the law operating around him on every side. (p.243).

In other words, if White Fang had thought in the manner of a man, "he might have epitomized life as a voracious appetite, and the world as a place wherein ranged a multitude of appetites, a chaos of gluttony and slaughter, ruled over by chance, merciless, planless, endless." (p.244). Though creatures living in the Northland are free to kill, there are times that it is not possible to find a single prey to feed on for days. Scarcity of food, famine, is to be expected any minute in the wilderness. White Fang enters into allegiance with man in this hostile environment in order to receive a piece of meat and to find a little warmth by the campfire. In turn he toils in harness and protects his master's property.

On the other hand, life in the Southland is smooth and happy.

There was plenty of food and no work in the Southland, and White Fang lived fat and prosperous and happy. Not

alone was he in the geographical Southland, for he was in the Southland of life. Human kindness was like a sun shining upon him, and he flourished like a flower planted in good soil.(p.358).

Here, the relationship with a master is based upon friendship and love.

In the Northland he had evidenced his fealty by toiling in harness; but there were no sleds in the Southland, nor did dogs pack burdens on their backs. So he rendered fealty in the new way, by running with master's horse.(p.388).

Hence we arrive at Mytheme II

MYTHEME II

Place	The Northland Wilderness Law of Eat to be-beaten lack of food DANGER	The Southland Civilization Law of Love and Fellowship. Plenty of food SHELTER
White Fang	Toiling lean + hungry Exposed to danger	lazy fat sheltered

Action Reflected in the Story :

Now let us consider the following statements :

1. The cub is given a name.
2. He is called White Fang.
3. White Fang is taken to the Southland by Weedon Scott.
4. He is called "Blessed Wolf" by the Scotts.

Although White Fang is the grammatical subject of these statements, he is clearly the patient of the action expressed in the predication of each statement. He is like a 'soft clay' which gradually acquires shape as he grows up.

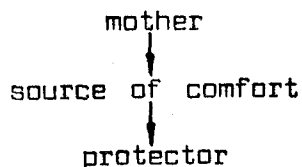
He doesn't even have a name at the beginning of the story. He is like a space upon which forces act to shape his existence.⁷

White Fang is born from a half-dog mother and a father who are clearly the leaders of the wolf pack they live with. Thus he is clearly "different" from any other wolf in the pack and the circumstances of his conception may be regarded as unusual.⁸

Like any newborn, White Fang's first interaction occurs with his mother. The She-wolf is the source of warmth and nourishment.

And long before his eyes had opened, he had learned by touch, taste, and smell to know his mother—a fount of warmth and liquid food and tenderness. (p.221).

She is not only the source of comfort but the figure who protects him when he is in danger :



The She-wolf gives birth to White Fang in a 'dry and cosy' cave. His world is limited by the walls of this cave. Knowing nothing about the world outside, he is never oppressed by the narrow confines of his existence. But it does not take him long to discover that one wall of his world is different from the rest. This is the mouth of the cave and

"The source of light." The cub and his brothers and sisters are drawn towards this source of light like a plant is drawn towards the sun.

The light drew them as if they were plants; the chemistry of the life that composed them demanded the light as a necessity of being. (p.222).

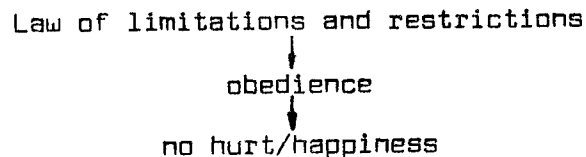
It can be concluded that light serves as a signifier for the essence of life :

$$\text{mouth of the cave} = \frac{\text{light}}{\text{necessity of being}}$$

At this point mother emerges as a figure which drives her puppies from the source of light. Therefore the source of light is perceived as a "white wall" confining their existence. It is apprehended as "impenetrable" because the mother makes them see it as such.

It was in this way that the gray cub learned other attributes of his mother than the soft, soothing tongue. In his insistent crawling toward the light, he discovered in her a nose that with a sharp nudge administered rebuke... (p.223)

Thus a rule is formulated in the gray cub's brain: He must keep away from the mouth of the cave. If he violates this rule, then hurt will result :



The mother, as the executor of the law becomes a figure which prohibits her son from the source of life, the mouth of the cave. Their

relationship may be shown as follows.

MYTHEME III

Mother	White Fang
protector ↓ prohibitior	protected ↓ prohibited

Ironically, mother is the figure which blocks the gray cub's way to growth which is equated with "life".

Instinct and law demanded of him obedience. But growth demanded disobedience. His mother and fear impelled him to keep away from the white wall. Growth is life and life is forever destined to make for light. (p.229)

MYTHEME IV

Obedinence to Mother ↓ keeping away from white wall ↓ No growth ↓ Death	Disobedience to Mother ↓ breaking the white wall ↓ growth ↓ life
---	--

This brings us to the basic Semiotic model $A : B :: -A : -B$

Growth : No growth :: life : Death.

On a larger scale, White Fang's quest from the 'dark' Northland to the 'radiant' Southland emerges as a tropistic quest. Reaching Southland means expansion; therefore a higher state of existence. Finally there, White Fang through a 'heroic dead' (by saving Judge Scott

from being murdered) achieves the ultimate state of happiness. As a token of being finally recognized by the Scott family he is given the name "Blessed Wolf." as if receiving knighthood from the King of Sierra Vista.

"Yes, Blessed Wolf" agreed the Judge. "And henceforth that shall be my name for him." (p.400).

A Structuring of White Fang's Story may be shown as follows.

- 1) The hero's mother is a royal virgin.
- 2) His father is a king.
- 3) The circumstances of his conception are unusual.
(He is one-fourths a dog).
- 4) He sets on a long journey.
- 5) During the course of the journey, he suffers from mistreatment and encounters demons (Beauty Smith Lip Lip and Cherokee) with which he enters into direct combat.
- 6) A helper comes along at a time when he most needs help.
(Scott rescues him from being killed by Cherokee)
- 7) Together they set on a journey.
(Scott and White Fang board a ship to go to the Southland).
- 8) A difficult task is proposed to the hero.
(Weedon Scott's wife wants White Fang to protect the Judge from the criminal.)
- 9) The Task is resolved.
(Judge is saved)
- 10) The hero is recognized.
(White Fang is given a name).
- 11) He ascends the throne.
('And outside he went, like a king').

This structure evidently consists of some selection of the Propopian functions. However, consideration of the nature of relationships

in the story will help the reader to arrive at a further level of meaning.

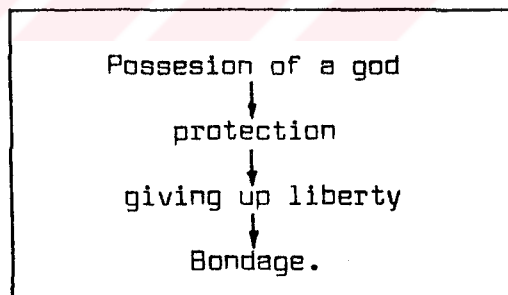
SECOND READING :

The relationship between mother and son serves as a paradigm for all the other relationships in the story.

Although White Fang transgresses the law of obedience and breaks the white wall in order to step into the outside world which promises growth and life, he soon loses his liberty by making an allegiance with Gray Beaver that results in his bondage.

For the possession of a flesh and blood god, he exchanged his own liberty. Food and fire, protection and companionship, were some of the things he received from the god. In turn he guarded the god's property, defended his body, worked for him and obeyed him. (p.287).

MYTHEME V



Since bondage means obedience to laws set by the master and obedience in turn means no growth, this is a relationship which permits no growth. This is a relationship based on mutual acceptance of certain terms. And the terms do not include extending affection and love. In contrast, love is the principle which governs his relationship with Weedon Scott.

Like had been replaced by Love. And love was the plummet dropped down into the deeps of him where like had never gone. And responsive out of his deeps had come the new thing-love. That which was given unto him did he return. This was a god indeed, a love god, a warm and radiant god, in whose light White Fang's nature expanded as a flower expands under the sun. (p.352).

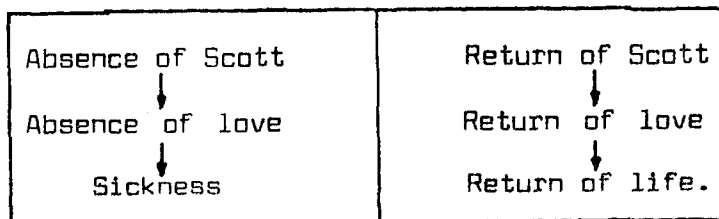
White Fang's attachment is so intense that to receive a caress from this 'radiant' god or to accompany him down into the town, White Fang is ready to go even without 'Meat'. Therefore love signifies nourishment in this relationship.

signifier : love
 signified : nourishment

Weedon Scott's absence for a brief period results in White Fang's falling ill to the extent of losing interest in life. However, as soon as he returns, life begins to flow through him again, "splendid and indomitable."

The relationship may be shown as follows.

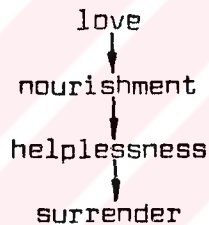
MYTHEME VI



White Fang has always avoided contacts. With Weedon Scott, it is different; He is the only person he tolerates a touch from.

The one thing of which he had always been particularly jealous, was his head. He had always disliked to have it touched. It was the wild in him, the fear of hurt and of the trap, that had given rise to the panicky impulses to avoid contacts. It was the mandate of his instinct that head must be free. And now, with the love-master, his snuggling was the deliberate act of putting himself into a position of hopeless helplessness. It was an expression of perfect confidence, of absolute self-surrender (356-57).

We, then, have the following order of signs :



Essentially, then, White Fang's relationship with both Gray Beaver and Weedon Scott are the same; that of BONDAGE.

MYTHEME VII

Gray Beaver	Weedon Scott
protection ↓ Brutality ↓ Bondage	protection ↓ love ↓ Surrender (Bondage)

Growth is not to be expected out of this relationship because by living in the Southland of life, White Fang is essentially transgressing a law: Law of self-preservation.

Here he was compelled to violate his instinct of self preservation, and violate it he did, for he was becoming tame and qualifying himself for civilization. (p.382).

London seems to be offering a stark choice between accepting the evil consequences of freedom or the tyranny of a law and order state (Judge's place). White Fang's natural instinctual self-preservation is tamed by domestication.

With reference to Greimas, White Fang emerges as a story with a Contractual Structure (Syntagmes contractuels) in which the situation has the overall bearing of the establishing and breaking of contracts, alienation and re-integration.⁹

In keeping with the structural reading laid out, all three of the stories may be reduced to the spatial opposition between the Northland and the Southland.

Although all of the stories abound by a wealth of indices towards the opposition between the Northland and the Southland, the most explicit instance is to be found in White Fang.

The Aurora was the first steamboat of the year for the Outside, and her decks are jammed with prosperous adventurers and broken gold seekers, all equally as mad to get to the Outside as they had been originally to get to the Inside.(p.362-63).

The fact that the words "OUTSIDE" and "INSIDE" are written in Capital letters points to the fact that these words have a signification function.

To conclude the structural reading of the stories it will be necessary to state the opposition between the Northland and the Southland once again.

In Binary opposition :

The Northland	The Southland
Wilderness	Civilization
↓	↓
Darkness	Sunlight
↓	↓
Lack of food	Plenty of food
↓	↓
DANGER	SHELTER
↓	↓
INSIDE	OUTSIDE

In the final analysis the reader is left with the unresolved question as to what these places signify.

CONCLUSION

Finally, we can make an attempt to answer the questions which were left unresolved at the end of the structural reading of The Call of the Wild, 'Love of life, and White Fang.

In The Call of the Wild the reader finds sufficient number of signposts which direct him to read the story on a different level.

"Buck spent long hours musing by the fire. The vision of the short-legged hairy man came to him more frequently,... and often, blinking by the fire, Buck wandered with him in that other world which he remembered. The salient thing of this world seemed fear." (p.125)

Fear is the word which characterizes this 'other world.'

"He linked the past with the present, and the eternity behind him throbbed through him in a mighty rhythm to which he swayed as the tides and seasons swayed. He sat by John Thornton's fire, a broad breasted dog, white-fanged and long furred; but behind him were the shades of all manner of dogs, half-wolves and wild wolves, urgent and prompting, tasting the savor of the meat he ate, thirsting for the water he drank, scenting the with him, listening with him and telling him the sounds made by the wild life in the forest, dictating his moods, directing his actions, lying down to sleep with him when he lay down and dreaming with him and beyond him and becoming themselves the stuff of his dreams." (p.111)

All the indices point to the direction that "the shades of all manner of dogs" which dictate him his "moods" and direct "his actions" and which become "the stuff of his dreams" are the images which lurk in the unconscious of the human psyche.

According to Jung in his The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious :

"There are present in every psyche forms which are unconscious but nonetheless active - living dispositions, ideas in the Platonic sense, that preform and continually influence our thoughts and feelings and actions." ¹

These "shades", the forces which call him, bring about a conflict between his desire to respond and the "claims of mankind" which evidently represents a force opposite of that represented by the call. The signs "darkness", "fear", "shade", "forest" and "looking backward" help the reader to identify this other world as the unconscious, the opposite being the consciousness. Jung, again, helps the reader to understand this conflict between the conscious and the unconscious in his Symbols of Transformation:

"Conscious and unconscious do not make a whole when one of them is suppressed and injured by the other. If they must contend, let it be a fair fight with equal rights on both sides.

Consciousness should defend its reason and protect itself, and the chaotic life of the unconscious should be given the chance of having its way too - as much of it as we can stand. This means open conflict and open collaboration at once. That, evidently, is the way human life should be. It is the old game of hammer and anvil: between them the patient is forged into an indestructible whole, an "individual." ²

In order to reach this state of wholeness, the individual has to achieve the act of separation from the parents and the "whole family circle

and thus a relative degree of detachment from the unconscious and the world of instinct."³ Thus, Buck's devotion to John Thornton, the father-figure, is his desire to remain in the infantile situation. However, the process of attaining wholeness is a process which is only realized at the end of this separation act. Hence, he is torn between his desire to remain as an infant and to attain the state of wholeness and Thornton acts as the obstacle barring the way to the goal. His death opens the way to this higher state of self-realization, represented by Buck's becoming a demi-god, the Evil-Spirit.

In the story 'Love of Life', there are a number of questions left unresolved at the end of the structural reading attempted. Therefore, a re-reading of the story becomes necessary in order to find answers to questions as to the nature of the hallucinations which bother the protagonist and the signification function of the sick wolf which appears at his heels at the moment he turns into a primitive being directed solely by his desire to find meat, nourishment.

Unable to catch the fish in a pool which he encounters, he is overcome by grief.

Thus he thought, and crumpled up and sank down upon the wet earth. At first he cried softly to himself, then he cried loudly to the pitiless desolation that ringed him around, and for a long time after he was shaken by great dry sobs. (p.149)

Left alone in this 'pitiless desolation' he turns into a primitive being directed only by his desire to find something to eat. He starts seeing hallucinations.

An hallucination began to trouble him. He felt confident that one cartridge remained to him. It was in the chamber of the rifle and he had overlooked it. On the other hand, he knew all the time that the chamber was empty. But the hallucination persisted. He fought it off for hours, then threw his rifle open and was confronted with emptiness. (p.p.153-154)

Totally overcome by hunger, he comes upon the bones where the wolves have made a kill. He pounds the bones to a pulp, and swallows them. Now he is in a state of unconsciousness and in no state to moralize. He has become a primitive being.

His nerves had become blunted, numb, while his mind was filled with weird visions and delicious dreams ... He saw nothing save visions, Soul and body walked or crawled side by side, yet apart, so slender was the thread that bound them. (p.156)

Just at this moment, he hears a snuffle behind him - 'a half-chocking gasp or cough.' A sick wolf emerges. From that moment on the wolf follows his trail, inseparable like his shadow.

Throughout the night he heard the cough of the sick wolf, and now and then the squawking of the caribou calves. There was life all around him, but it was strong life, very much alive and well, and he knew the sick wolf clung to the sick man's trail in the hope that the man would die first. In the morning, on opening his eyes, he beheld it regarding him with a wistful and hungry stare. (p.159)

The sick wolf which clings to his trail like his shadow begins to bother him.

Then began as grim a tragedy of existence as was ever played - a sick man that crawled, a sick wolf that limped, two creatures dragging their dying carcasses across the desolation and hunting each other's lives. (p.161)

All the indices point to the direction that the sick wolf which clings to the trail of the protagonist of the story like his shadow in the 'heart of desolation' is the archetype shadow present in the collective unconscious. According to Jung in his Aion:

The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge, and it therefore, as rule, meets with considerable resistance.⁴

Hence the story 'Love of Life' emerges as a quest for attaining a psychological unity; the 'individuation process.' According to Jung it consists of three stages: 1) Inflation, 2) Alienation, 3) Individuation. In the first stage, ego which only thinks about itself and seeks to be satisfied and the self are juxtaposed completely. In the second one, the individual becomes aware of the fact that everything around us is against us and the forces of the universe are hostile. In the final stage, the individual begins to think that the universe and himself are united into a 'whole'.

Thus all the indices point towards the fact that the protagonist in the story is in the second stage of alienation in which the world is a 'pitiless desolation' without light. He has to go through this stage of suffering in order to attain the state of 'wholeness'.

Like Buck, White Fang is presented with the problem of growth, not in the physical sense but in the spiritual sense. Unlike Buck, he never succeeds in realizing the act of separation. It would have been different had he not met Gray Beaver again after the great famine. Then he would have to lean on himself and not on others.

It was a placing of his destiny in another's hands, a shifting of the responsibilities of existence. This in itself was compensation, for it is always easier to lean upon another than to stand alone. (p.259)

As a result, contrary to Buck's quest, White Fang's quest is characterized by a series of contracts which result in a continuous giving in. In his case, the strife between the conscious and the unconscious ends with the oppressive outweighing of the conscious, which is not healthy in Jungian terms. Therefore his story ends with the image of a sleeping wolf basking in the sunshine, in an environment which is wholly alien to his nature. A wolf's natural element is the North.

In the same fashion, especially in the heat of summer when he suffered from the sun, he experienced faint longings for the Northland. Their only effect upon him, however, was to make him uneasy and restless without his knowing what was the matter. (p.387)

Consequently, the Southland characterized by images of 'light', 'warmth', 'orderliness' and 'prosperity' acts as a sign for the conscious and the Northland characterized by images of 'darkness'- 'confusion', 'fear', and 'starvation' acts as a sign for the unconscious. The conscious is the 'light' side and the unconscious is the 'dark' side of the human psyche in Jungian terms.⁵ This opposition and strife is most powerfully made explicit in White Fang.

And so, fresh from the soft southern world, these dogs, trotting down the going-plank and out upon the Yukon shore, had but to see White Fang to experience the irresistible impulse to rush upon him and destroy him. They might be town-reared dogs but the instinctive fear of the Wild was theirs just the same. (p.308)

Thus the whole quest embodied in each story emerges as a displacement of the individuation process when the text is read on the paradigmatic axis. The Call of the Wild and White Fang, in Lévi-Straussian terms, are aesthetic reconstructions of the individuation process in the form of a mythic quest obscured as stories about dogs called Buck and White Fang respectively. The protagonist's quest in 'Love of Life' emerges as a quest for nourishment, that is to say for fulfilment

Within this myth-perspective, as Oddvar Holmesland has pointed out, "structuralist theories offer invaluable guidance in systematizing archetypal images."⁶ The central cave motif in White Fang plays a crucial role in the mythical scheme. Inside is the isolated wolf cub, outside is the pulsating garden of life. Later this motif is displaced by the central opposition between the Northland, which is the 'Inside' and the Southland, which is the 'Outside'. White Fang himself is an 'isolated' figure in the

Northland. His commune with the others is realized in the Southland. The same is true for Buck and the protagonist of 'Love of Life.'

Mythical reading seems to provide the ultimate link between the central binary opposition Darkness/Light which forms the kernel of the stories under consideration and archetypal images present in every human psyche. Myth is precisely the point at which archetypal images and fictional structure are brought into closest contact. Therefore it is most natural and fitting that structuralist analysis and Jungian interpretation should complement each other. Structuralism seeks to define this universal pattern of the human mind which becomes evident in fictional structure.

We are now in a better position to reconsider the two basic questions posed at the beginning of this study :

1. Do structuralist theories provide a valuable model for critical analysis of texts?
2. To what extent does analysis of narrative structure help interpretation of meaning?

In structuralist activity, then, in order to arrive at the referent, the state of affairs which the utterance (the literary text) is about, the reader must decode the sign system (langue) of the writer's utterance (parole). Structuralist activity involves a repeated activity of going beyond the surface. Each sign serves as a motivation for going beyond the recovered meaning. Indeed the characteristic imagery-geological upheaval and archeology of knowledge - used by Structuralists, namely Lévi - Strauss and Michel Foucault emphasize the repeated uncovering of different levels of meaning.

However at the moment when a reader proposes that a text means something other than what it appears to say, he introduces his implicit knowledge about reading literary texts, the conventions that enable him to make sense. A component of this implicit knowledge lies in the area which Jung calls the collective unconscious. Collective unconscious is an impersonal unconscious which is the accumulation of historical and hereditary modes of all people. The content of the collective unconscious consists of definite forms called archetypes which seem to have organizing value for experience. These forms reveal themselves in dreams, myths, and magic and their repetition lend itself to the understanding of human condition. In this sense myth functions as a clue to human psyche and as a link with the individual.⁷ Thus these (signs) present in every human brain serve as a common signification system for unconscious psychic happenings. In other words, the writer and the readers seem to share a 'common language', a signification system made up of signs called archetypes. Thus decoding the ultimate level of meaning in a text rests on the reader's ability to say that certain signifiers signify certain psychic happenings. And this brings us to Culler's argument that skilled readers seem to have mastered the rules which govern the interpretation of texts. Part of the rules seems to consist of mastering the signification system of the collective unconscious.

In this study the meaning of signs laid out by the writer has been decoded by considering their relationship to other signs present in the system (the story). Each story has been treated as a closed system in the Formalist manner. Recovery of the multiplicity of meaning present in each story has been possible through a second-reading of the stories. In other words, the meaning of each story was determined by reading of relations between functional units at various levels. Reconsideration of

the signs has been helpful in uncovering meanings that would otherwise escape critical attention. Re-reading of White Fang is a case in point. White Fang appears to be a story with a happy ending on the surface. However, deciphering the signs which characterize White Fang's relationship with Weedon Scott proves that their relationship is basically that of bondage, which permits no growth. At this point interpretation demands the knowledge of Jungian interpretation which involves the knowledge of the signification system of the collective unconscious.

These conditions do not imply reservations about the great value of utilizing structuralist theories for readings of texts like Jack London's stories analyzed in this study. Structuralism can no doubt uncover meanings that would otherwise escape critical attention. In fact, the method which disclosed the central opposition of Darkness/Light was based on the structuralist notion of meaning as the product of binary oppositions. Reading the signs correctly reduces the number of possible interpretations. This activity may be regarded as that of a detective trying to read the signs left by a murderer.

To conclude, Structuralism is a scientific enterprise to discover the codes and the systems which underlie all human activity. The disciplines of archeology and geology serve as the models of structuralist enterprise. Only by excavating beneath the given that we can discover the true explanations for what we see on the surface. Structuralism, I believe, offers valuable guidance in reading literary texts. Structuralism has contributed powerfully to my understanding about literature and the universal pattern of the human mind.



NOTES

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