



Structure and Openness in Literary Semiotics: A Comparative Study of Greimas, Eco, and Barthes

M. Akbar Kurtubi Amraj^{1*}

¹Universitas Pamulang

*dosen01690@unpam.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This article offers a comparative analysis of three foundational figures in literary semiotics: Algirdas Julien Greimas, Umberto Eco, and Roland Barthes. Drawing on the philosophical traditions of Hegel, Kant, and Nietzsche, the study examines how each theorist articulates distinct approaches to textual meaning, structure, and interpretation. Greimas develops a rationalist framework centered on structural semantics and coherence; Eco positions himself between rationalism and postmodern multiplicity by proposing a model of textual openness constrained by interpretive competence; and Barthes advocates for the primacy of the signifier and the aesthetics of polysemy, resisting conceptual closure through a Nietzschean lens. Methodologically, the article employs close reading and comparative conceptual analysis to highlight epistemological tensions and intersections among the three thinkers. Ultimately, the study maps the evolution of literary semiotics as a dynamic dialogue between structure and openness, coherence and ambiguity, authorial intention and readerly participation.

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Algirdas Julien Greimas;
Roland Barthes;
Textual Meaning;
Umberto Eco

How to Cite in APA Style:

Amraj, M. A. K. (2025). Structure and Openness in Literary Semiotics: A Comparative Study of Greimas, Eco, and Barthes. *IJLHE: International Journal of Language, Humanities, and Education*, 8(1), 265–278.
<https://doi.org/10.52217/ijlhe.v8i1.1828>

This is an open access article under [CC-BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) license.



INTRODUCTION

Semiotics refers to an analytical method first introduced by American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure later proposed the term *semiology* in 1915 to describe a similar approach. Although “*sémiologie*” and “*sémiotique*” are nearly synonymous, the former is more commonly used in European contexts, while the latter tends to prevail in Anglo-Saxon academic circles. Whether termed *semiotics* or *semiology*, this field is generally defined as the science of signs, encompassing the totality of human experience as it is mediated through sign systems (Liszka, 1996).

From a theoretical standpoint, semiotics is a highly heterogeneous field. When situated within the broader aesthetic philosophies of Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche, this heterogeneity becomes even more pronounced (Scruton, 2001). The domain of literary semiotics is most prominently represented by scholars such as Algirdas Julien Greimas, Umberto Eco, and Roland Barthes. However, even foundational concepts such as Saussure's "signifier" (*signifiant*) and "signified" (*signifié*) cannot be said to possess definitive boundaries or meanings. Nevertheless, semiotic inquiry—largely shaped by the terminological contributions of Saussure and Louis Hjelmslev—has significantly enriched twentieth-century literary criticism by providing it with new analytical momentum.

Many semiotic theories are closely intertwined with developments in linguistics, though they are equally indebted to longstanding philosophical debates concerning the nature of the object. As such, semiotic criticism is philosophically rooted in the work of Charles Sanders Peirce and linguistically grounded in Saussure's theories. More recently, Paul de Man—one of the leading figures of the so-called "Yale Deconstructionists"—has aligned semiotics with the tradition of classical rhetoric (O'Driscoll, 2017).

The terminology developed by Greimas, Eco, and Barthes in their semiotic analyses has brought new dimensions to semiotic criticism (Eco et al., 1989). This article aims to (1) present the heterogeneous structure of semiotic aesthetics, (2) offer concise explanations of key concepts developed by Greimas, Eco, and Barthes, and (3) sketch a general framework of semiotic criticism as it has evolved since the 1960s.

Barthes departs from Greimas in his treatment of textual meaning. While Greimas, influenced by Hegel, adopts a fundamentally rationalist outlook, Barthes constructs a semiology based on Cartesian principles and rationalist logic. Like Greimas, Umberto Eco shares a rationalist orientation, yet he simultaneously draws upon a Nietzschean framework. In this way, Eco occupies a theoretical position that lies between Greimas and Barthes.

Eco's semiotic theory is rooted in Kantian notions of cognition and versatility. He integrates several concepts from Greimas—concepts also endorsed by Barthes—thereby establishing points of convergence among the three theorists. Still, as will be shown below, semiotics exhibits a multidimensional structure comparable in complexity to philosophical aesthetics.

Greimas holds that both literary and non-literary texts possess a coherent conceptual structure and are thus open to interpretation. In this regard, he aligns with Enlightenment philosophers such as Hegel. Eco, by contrast, adopts a more cautious stance toward the conceptual limits of aesthetic representation—a position that reflects his affinity with Kantian aesthetics. Nevertheless, Eco remains committed to leveraging the analytical tools offered by theoretical inquiry.

At its core, these semiotic approaches aim to revisit traditional aesthetic problems through the lens of contemporary conceptual frameworks. In other words, they re-examine enduring issues using new epistemological and methodological paradigms. For instance, Eco's view that aesthetic objects delineate the boundaries of conceptual knowledge traces back to Kant's philosophy, arguably echoing *The Critique of Judgment*. Similarly, Barthes' notion of the aesthetics of the signifier may be understood as a rearticulation of Nietzsche's critique of rationalism. At the same time, this approach laid the groundwork for the development of deconstruction as a critical method.

METHOD

This study employs a comparative conceptual analysis rooted in literary semiotics, focusing on the theoretical constructs of Algirdas Julien Greimas, Umberto Eco, and Roland Barthes. The methodology follows the tradition of close reading and conceptual mapping found in critical theory and literary philosophy. According to Culler (2000), "the task of theory is not only to interpret texts but also to interrogate the assumptions and categories that make such interpretations possible," which aligns with the study's effort to identify the foundational concepts shaping each theorist's semiotic model.

By theoretically interpreting the primary texts of these thinkers, the study examines their respective notions of meaning, textual structure, openness, and interpretation. The analysis involves juxtaposing their models to trace epistemological differences and points of convergence. As Eagleton (1983) asserts, "comparison in literary theory is less about agreement and more about foregrounding tensions that reveal deeper ideological or epistemic assumptions." This comparative strategy helps uncover how Greimas's structuralism, Eco's interpretive pragmatics, and Barthes's deconstructive aesthetics each offer distinct but overlapping ways of engaging with texts.

According to Eco in *The Limits of Interpretation* (1990), "every text proposes a model of the reader capable of cooperating in its actualization," which justifies the inclusion of reader-response theory as a subcomponent of the study. This helps illuminate how textual meaning is produced not solely through authorial structure (as emphasized by Greimas), but through interpretive interaction (Eco) or the polysemic openness of the signifier (Barthes).

Furthermore, this method attends closely to the philosophical inspirations of each thinker:

- 1) Greimas's rationalist epistemology and structural semantics derive from Hegelian dialectics and Saussurean linguistics.
- 2) Eco's interpretive theory incorporates Kant's critique of aesthetic judgment and his skepticism toward conceptual closure.

- 3) Barthes's emphasis on the play of the signifier is deeply rooted in Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics and truth.

By situating the analysis within these intellectual lineages, the study embraces Paul Ricoeur's notion of the "hermeneutics of suspicion", where interpretation involves decoding layers of ideology and signification to expose latent structures of meaning (Ricoeur, 1970).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Greimas and the Study of Meaning

From any perspective, Greimas's structural semiotics cannot be considered a mere reiteration of Hegelian doctrines or rationalist thought. Rather, Greimas developed a systematic framework aimed at extensively uncovering the meanings embedded in both literary and non-literary texts (Greimas, 1987). His approach embraces a conceptual engagement with texts, signaling a shift away from the focus on specific literary features or literariness per se—as seen in the works of figures like Jakobson and Barthes—and toward the determination of textual meaning (Jakobson, 1960; Barthes, 1977).

It is well known that Hegelian Marxists, including Lucien Goldmann, proposed that the foundations of philosophical and literary texts are structured semantically. They maintained that political, philosophical, commercial, and literary texts are all amenable to semiotic analysis (Goldmann, 1975). Greimas's work aligns with this view in significant ways. According to Greimas (1983), such an analytical method allows for the revelation of both semantic and narrative formations within texts. Indeed, there is a striking parallel between Goldmann's notions of *structure significative* or *mentale* and Greimas's concept of deep structure (*structure profonde*) (Goldmann, 1964; Greimas, 1983). In both models, textual unity is conceived as an organized structure. However, Greimas's notion of textual unity, though systematic, leans more toward rationalist epistemology than Hegelian dialectics.

Greimas was certainly aware of the specific and characteristic features of literature. Particularly in his early writings—such as *Structural Linguistics and Poetics* (1967) and in the introduction to his collected essays *Semiotic Studies* (1972)—he emphasized the "isomorphism" between the expression and content planes of poetic texts (Greimas, 1972). He sought to identify the unique dimensions of poetic discourse, especially within lyric poetry, where he attempted to demonstrate a precise harmony between phonetic and semantic units. This concordance is most evidently illustrated in his reading of Shakespeare's second sonnet:

*When forty winters shall besiege thy brow
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field*

Here, the alliteration in *besiege* and *brow* is associated with the phonetic domain, while the pairing of *dig* and *deep* acoustically evokes the act of digging itself. As such, the sonnet couplet reflects an intrinsic unity between expression and content (Greimas, 1972).

In his later work, Greimas distanced himself from a sole focus on the relationship between semantic and narrative structures across various genres—scientific, legal, political, and literary (Greimas, 1987). Unlike Hegelian Marxists who tended to subsume philosophical, scientific, and literary texts under overarching ideologies and accessible worldviews—often at the expense of each text’s particular elements—Greimas maintained a more linguistically grounded approach. As a linguist and semiotician, he was inspired by the methods of New Criticism and Russian Formalism, yet his theoretical proximity to Marxist thought remains evident (Ricoeur, 1970; Barthes, 1977).

Thus, Greimas’s structural semiotics represents a rigorous and rationalist methodology that both transcends and interacts with traditional ideological critiques. His system, rooted in linguistic formalism but extended into broader epistemological domains, continues to offer a nuanced and systematic framework for textual meaning analysis across disciplines.

2. UMBERTO ECO: From the Avant-Garde to Postmodernism

Umberto Eco occupies an intellectual position situated between Greimas and Barthes. In his earlier works, he emphasized the interpretative multiplicity inherent in literary texts but later refined this position, contending that while a range of interpretations can be productive, others are unproductive or even misleading (Eco, 1990).

Eco’s early aesthetics resonated with Russian Formalism and the linguistic theories of Roman Jakobson. Jakobson, influenced by Kantian aesthetics, highlighted art’s autoreflexivity—its tendency to refer to itself rather than to external realities. Eco adopts this view in *L’Opera Aperta* (1962), asserting that artistic works are self-referential systems rather than mere reflections of authorial intention or social truth (Eco, 1962/1989; Jakobson, 1981).

This alignment places Eco in a Neo-Kantian framework during his early phase. Like Jakobson, Eco promoted artistic autonomy, supporting avant-garde ideals such as defamiliarization—a technique that disrupts habitual perception. Italian semioticians of the early 1960s, prior to the student revolts of 1968, widely endorsed such techniques as part of a broader avant-garde response to the emotional sterility of capitalist modernity (Eco, 1962/1989; Jameson, 1984).

Eco admired James Joyce for his radical narrative experimentation, viewing him as a model for aesthetic resistance to modernity’s fragmentation. Joyce’s narrative techniques—nonlinear, holistic, and structurally complex—embodied what Eco

described as a “melting” of language, revealing the avant-garde’s critical capacity (Eco, 1962/1989).

Unlike Adorno, who was skeptical about the transformative power of negative aesthetics, Eco saw avant-garde methods such as demystification and defamiliarization as tools for social critique. Although he rejected certain movements like Surrealism and Futurism, he emphasized form’s subversion as a means to expose ideological conditioning embedded in cultural forms (Adorno, 1997; Eco, 1990).

Eco’s view of art diverged from critical theorists who demanded a direct linkage between aesthetic production and societal critique. Instead, he became increasingly wary of the ways in which aesthetic forms were absorbed into the technocratic logic of late capitalism (Eco, 1990; Jameson, 1991). Italian semioticians, Eco among them, held that true artistic expression is marked by opacity and resistance to definitive interpretation, maintaining a tension between clarity and conceptual indeterminacy (Eco, 1990).

Eco delineated between two types of textual openness: primary openness, arising from reader engagement, and secondary openness, emerging from the formal structure of the text—a concept linked to Ingarden and Iser’s phenomenological theories (Eco, 1990; Ingarden, 1973; Iser, 1978).

Later, Eco redefined openness to highlight the displacement of denotative meanings by connotative ones, where literary texts disrupt conventional language through semantic transformation. He identified this as the creation of a new semiotic system governed by *special codes* or authorial idiolects (Eco, 1979, 1990).

For instance, in Kafka’s *Before the Law*, the term “law” no longer signifies within a standard legal framework but gains new meanings through Kafka’s unique idiolect, particularly in *The Trial*. The connotative layering shows how everyday language is reassembled to produce new interpretations (Eco, 1990).

Eco also drew on Jan Mukarovsky’s aesthetics, asserting that polysemy and interpretive openness enhance aesthetic value. He argued that while literary texts resist unified conceptual interpretation, they must still possess coherent internal structures to facilitate meaningful communication (Mukarovsky, 1970; Eco, 1990).

In *The Limits of Interpretation* (1990), Eco criticizes both medieval literalism and modern textual relativism. He advances a theory grounded in a dialectic between the structure of the text and the interpretative freedom of the reader, emphasizing that interpretation must be constrained by textual coherence to avoid arbitrariness (Eco, 1990). Eco’s semiotic reading of Allais’s *Un Drame bien parisien* illustrates this theory.

He identifies multiple narrative layers—those recognized by naive readers and those discerned by critical readers—demonstrating how interpretative competence shapes textual understanding (Eco, 1990). This distinction is sharpened in his treatment of isotopy, adapted from Greimas, where recurring semantic units help

guide interpretation toward coherence. The naive reader may lock onto one isotopy, ignoring narrative ambiguity, whereas the critical reader navigates multiple isotopies, uncovering deeper meanings (Greimas, 1987; Eco, 1990).

Eco further distinguishes between *use*—a spontaneous, often superficial engagement with the text—and *interpretation*, which involves analyzing the work's structure and semantic layers, ideally enacted by what he calls the *model reader* (Eco, 1979, 1990).

The interplay of Kantian and Hegelian elements in Eco's thought becomes especially clear in his later work. While Kantian openness emphasizes multiplicity and heterogeneity, the Hegelian component stresses synthesis and interpretive boundaries. The reader's task is to navigate both using semiotic competence (Eco, 1990; Kant, 2000/1790; Hegel, 1975).

Eco's theory hinges on the concept of *encyclopedic competence*—the idea that a reader brings a vast, culturally informed knowledge base to interpretation. This competence, elaborated in *Lector in Fabula* (1979), enables readers to identify narrative topoi and textual isotopies (Eco, 1979).

Understanding historical fiction, for instance, requires not just literary knowledge but also familiarity with the historical and cultural contexts referenced in the narrative. This integration of literary and general knowledge defines the reader's encyclopedia, which Eco sees as crucial for interpretation (Eco, 1979; Genette, 1982).

Textual openness, Eco argues, is bounded at both the semantic and pragmatic levels. The first is constrained by textual topics and isotopies; the second, by the reader's sociocultural experience and encyclopedic limitations. Some texts—especially ancient ones—remain partially incomprehensible due to the loss of relevant intertexts or historical knowledge (Eco, 1990; Ingarden, 1973).

Ultimately, Eco maintains that a text encourages certain readings while discouraging others, and that the legitimacy of an interpretation hinges on the internal coherence of the text itself. This aligns closely with Ingarden's phenomenological insight that meaning emerges in the dialectic between text and reader (Eco, 1990; Ingarden, 1973).

3. Roland Barthes: The Aesthetics of Nietzsche

Roland Barthes differs significantly from figures such as Greimas and Eco. In his later works, he arrived at the conclusion that it is difficult to trust any semantic structure that limits the openness of a text and the metamorphoses of meaning. His aesthetic approach was inspired by Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics. Barthes played a major role in popularizing the key arguments and issues of deconstructionist theory, which is one reason for his inclusion in this discussion (Barthes 1975; 1977). At the same time, Barthes functioned as a bridge between

semioticians and deconstructionist thought; his multifaceted approach is often described as Nietzschean in character (Culler, 2003).

In Barthes, one observes a conceptual shift from Kant and Hegel toward Nietzsche. This shift encompasses a movement from content to the plane of expression, and from strong (Cartesian, Hegelian) or weak (Kantian) conceptualizations to a radical rejection of the concept itself. Barthes sought to interpret this transition within the context of his own intellectual development and attempted to demonstrate its validity. His intellectual trajectory moved from a systematic, conceptual orientation toward a Nietzschean understanding of the signifier as inherently multivalent (Barthes, 1975,).

Barthes's intellectual development can be divided into three distinct phases. The first phase is characterized by ideological critique within a Neo-Marxist and critical theory framework. Works such as *Writing Degree Zero* (1953) and *Mythologies* (1957) belong to this early period (Barthes, 1972). In his second phase, Barthes sought to engage with science, or at least the idea of scientificity. Influenced by Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology, Barthes developed a systematic approach to the semiotics of fashion in *The Fashion System*. Here, he argued that the pleasure of systems had been replaced by the superego of science. This transition set the stage for the third phase of his thought. As Nietzsche asserted, Barthes eventually moved from an "indifferent science" to an emphasis on *jouissance*—the pleasure found in the text and the signifier (Barthes, 1975).

More specifically, this third phase—central to the present study—is marked by the playful stickiness that arises from the polysemy of the signifier. It echoes Nietzsche's suspicion of conceptual dominance, revealing the deception of metaphysical truth and subjective character through rhetorical and metaphorical traps (Barthes, 1977). In his final decade, Barthes abandoned the concept of structure, a move that helps to explain why he is categorized as a poststructuralist. He replaced the notion of structure with non-conceptual terms such as *signifying practice* (*pratique signifiante*) and *play* (*jeu*).

Barthes, in his analysis of Balzac's novella *Sarrasine*, famously argued that the ideal text is not a structure of signifieds but rather "a galaxy of signifiers" (*une galaxie de signifiants, non une structure de signifiés*) (Barthes, 1975). Nevertheless, the precise function of the signifier in his textual theory and aesthetic framework remains ambiguous. Had Barthes defined and delimited the signifier using specific premises, one might argue that it was used metaphorically. However, Barthes's concept of the signifier extends far beyond the phonetic dimension of the sign—it is an image, a musical tone; a generalized, polysemous, and irreducible graphic symbol.

Barthes's critique has been widely interpreted as a defense of polysemy against semiotic theories that prioritize the content plane over the expression plane. In rejecting these theories, Barthes implicitly condemned Cartesian rationalism and,

by extension, the rationalist systems of Saussure and Greimas. He compared Saussure's concept of the signified to the role of gold in economics, suggesting that just as gold functions as a formal basis for economic value, the signified serves as the formal, rationalist basis for linguistic meaning—a concept Barthes dubbed “the gold of the signified” (Barthes, 1977).

Following Nietzsche, Barthes and other deconstructionists emphasized the particularity of the sign—its graphic and phonetic specificity—while relegating general components (such as the signified or concept) to a secondary role. Generally speaking, Barthes's poststructuralist outlook reveals a strong inclination toward particularity and a critique of universal rationalism. This tendency was further popularized through the publication *Tel Quel*, which included contributions from Barthes, Derrida, Julia Kristeva, and Jean-Joseph Goux (Quel, 2017)

These thinkers sought to expose the link between conceptual dominance rooted in the metaphysical tradition and social domination shaped by fluctuating market values. According to the *Tel Quel* authors, from Aristotle to Martinet, many scholars have agreed that dialects reflect the shifting values of signs.

In his resistance to the signified and to full signification, Barthes—like his *Tel Quel* peers—argued that change is not general but rather specific and non-equivalent. Accepting the variability of the signified, Barthes and his contemporaries launched a critique of the authorial figure, whom they held responsible for homogenized meaning. They viewed meaning through the lens of hermeneutics and Hegelian-Marxist totality, arguing that clarity and signification are added on top of meaning through radical critique. The subject, long seen as the guarantor of coherence, was ultimately sacrificed. From a Barthesian perspective, the concept of the author is inseparable from the sign: the author moves from the signified to the sign, from content to form, from project to text. By rejecting the supremacy of conceptual content over form, Barthes envisioned the text as a seductive trap of signifiers, a process of signification not grounded in semantics or Greimasian deep structure, but in the open play of the sign.

Barthes's avant-garde aesthetics highlight not only the primacy of the signifier but also the central role of *jouissance* and desire—concepts shaped by Nietzschean influence and essential to textual production. In a 1981 interview, Barthes reflects on the corporeality of writing, stating, “At all times, the writer is a body, not an ideology. There is always a choice in the text, and we participate in that choice with our modernity,” emphasizing that writing is an embodied and affective act rather than a purely ideological one (Barthes, 1981). Within this frame, Barthes juxtaposes his own views with those of Sade, Fourier, and Loyola—three figures he sees as inventors of “languages of desire” (*des langues du désir*)—not because of their ideologies, but because of their discursive classifications of eroticism, social models, and spiritual practice, respectively (Barthes, 1977.). For Barthes, these discursive systems are grounded in desire itself, which drives the very act of meaning-making.

Barthes's theorization of textual openness hinges on the idea that the reader should be an active participant in constructing meaning, especially in *scriptible* (writable) texts. These contrast with *lisible* (readable) texts, which are closed and invite passive consumption. In Barthes's terms, the *writable* text demands engagement and interpretation, functioning as a site of aesthetic and intellectual play (Barthes, 1975). Yet, in a paradoxical gesture, Barthes turns his critical lens toward classical, readable texts, particularly those that foreground ambiguity. He claims that "the avant-garde text is a text that has not yet been written," implying that readable texts, while anchored in past traditions, can still serve as models for future writing if engaged properly (Barthes, 1981).

A notable case study in Barthes's late thought is his reading of Balzac's *Sarrasine*, which he analyzes in *S/Z*. Barthes interprets the story as emblematic of textual polysemy. The tale's central figure, Zambinella, whose ambiguous gender identity resists binary classification, is framed by the phonetic duality in the title "Z/S"—a contrast between softness and hardness, femininity and masculinity (Barthes 1974, 17). Through such oppositions, Barthes illustrates how *Sarrasine* embodies the type of semantic plurality he champions.

Barthes further explains that the act of reading involves decoding various interpretive codes—what he terms *lexies*, or discrete units of meaning. These *lexies*, governed by multiple codes (hermeneutic, symbolic, proairetic, semic, and cultural), guide the reader's journey through a web of interpretive possibilities. Meaning, therefore, is not imposed by the author but generated through the reader's interaction with these codes (Barthes. 1974). Louis-Jean Calvet, elaborating on Barthes's work, describes this as a *direction potentielle de lecture*—a potential path that reading might take, based on the cues embedded in the text (Calvet 1994, 126).

In his analysis, Barthes identifies five distinct codes, each corresponding to a potential reading of the text and accounting for five possible meanings:

1. The Proairetic (Action) Code - organizes the causal sequence of the narrative;
2. The Hermeneutic Code - revolves around the ambiguity of Zambinella's identity;
3. The Semic Code - includes the semantic markers of characters' actions, particularly focusing on the masculinity-femininity opposition;
4. The Symbolic Code - elucidates the narrative's polysemy in detail;
5. The Referential Code - comprises the allusions to broader cultural knowledge and reasoning structures, albeit defined rather vaguely by Barthes.

Barthes engages with Balzac's *Sarrasine* through a genuinely semiotic approach and demonstrates a sincere commitment to this method. He establishes the polysemous nature of the text while not denying the existence of a deeper structure—or at least a set of coherent semantic frameworks—within Balzac's

narrative. His claim that the story operates through a universal semantic opposition between activity and passivity, mapped onto the castrating/castrated binary, aligns closely with the structuralist analysis as conceived by Greimas. The latter's observation—that Barthes invokes the concept of deep structure only to subvert it—is not entirely unfounded.

A text is neither a unidirectional message nor an indefinable plurality of signs. It constitutes a dynamic synthesis of openness and closure. It cannot be reduced to a static deep structure or a multiplicity of readings. Indeed, as Umberto Eco has pointed out, the reader's response is always a reaction to something that has been structured in advance.

CONCLUSION

The semiotic theories of Greimas, Eco, and Barthes represent distinct yet intersecting modes of engaging with textual meaning. Greimas offers a rationalist and systematic approach grounded in structural semantics, emphasizing coherence and deep structure. Eco builds on this framework but introduces a critical balance between textual openness and interpretive constraint, combining Kantian epistemology with reader-oriented theory. Barthes, in contrast, undermines the authority of semantic structures altogether, advancing a Nietzschean aesthetic of the signifier that foregrounds desire, play, and polysemy. Together, these thinkers chart a complex terrain for semiotic literary criticism—one that oscillates between rational coherence and interpretive freedom. Their collective insights affirm that literary meaning is not merely constructed within texts but also dynamically shaped by philosophical traditions, cultural competence, and the active participation of readers.

REFERENCES

- Adorno, T. W. (1997). *Aesthetic theory* (R. Hullot-Kentor, Trans.). University of Minnesota Press. (Original work published 1970)
- Barthes, R. (1972). Sémiologie et médecine. In *Les sciences de la folie* (pp. 37–46).
- Barthes, R. (1974). *S/Z* (R. Miller, Trans.). Hill and Wang.
- Barthes, R. (1975). *The pleasure of the text* (R. Miller, Trans.). Hill and Wang.
- Barthes, R. (1977). *Image-music-text* (S. Heath, Trans.). Hill and Wang.
- Barthes, R. (1977). *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* (R. Howard, Trans.). University of California Press.
- Barthes, R. (1981). An interview with Roland Barthes. *Tel Quel*, 86, 3–15.
- Culler, J. (2003). The vicissitudes of text. *e-Rea. Revue électronique d'études sur le monde anglophone*, 1(1). <https://journals.openedition.org/ereaa/150>
- Eagleton, T. (2011). *Literary theory: An introduction*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Eco, U. (1962/1989). *The open work* (A. Cancogni, Trans.). Harvard University Press. (Original work published 1962)

- Eco, U. (1979). *Lector in fabula: La cooperazione interpretativa nei testi narrativi*. Bompiani.
- Eco, U. (1990). *I limiti dell'interpretazione*. Bompiani.
- Eco, U., Magli, P., & Otis, A. (1989). Greimassian semantics and the encyclopedia. *New Literary History*, 20(3), 707–721.
- Genette, G. (1982). *Figures of literary discourse* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). Columbia University Press.
- Goldmann, L. (1964). *The hidden God: A study of tragic vision in the Pensées of Pascal and the tragedies of Racine* (P. Thody, Trans.). Routledge.
- Goldmann, L. (1975). *Cultural creation in modern society*. Telos Press.
- Greimas, A. J. (1967). The relationship between structural linguistics and poetics. *International Social Science Journal*, 19(1). <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000262128>
- Greimas, A. J. (1972). *Essais de sémiotique poétique*. Larousse.
- Greimas, A. J. (1983). *Structural semantics: An attempt at a method* (D. McDowell, R. Schleifer, & A. Velie, Trans.). University of Nebraska Press.
- Greimas, A. J. (1987). *On meaning: Selected writings in semiotic theory* (P. J. Perron & F. H. Collins, Trans.). University of Minnesota Press.
- Ingarden, R. (1973). *The literary work of art: An investigation on the borderlines of ontology, logic, and theory of literature* (G. G. Grabowicz, Trans.). Northwestern University Press.
- Iser, W. (1978). *The act of reading: A theory of aesthetic response*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Jakobson, R. (1960). Linguistics and poetics. In T. A. Sebeok (Ed.), *Style in language* (pp. 350–377). MIT Press.
- Jakobson, R. (1981). *Selected writings, Vol. III: Poetry of grammar and grammar of poetry*. Mouton.
- Jameson, F. (1984). Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism. *New Left Review*, 146, 53–92.
- Jameson, F. (1991). *Postmodernism, or, the cultural logic of late capitalism*. Duke University Press.
- Kant, I. (2000). *Critique of the power of judgment* (P. Guyer & E. Matthews, Eds. & Trans.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1790)
- Liszka, J. J. (1996). *A general introduction to the semiotic of Charles Sanders Peirce*. Indiana University Press.
- Mukarovsky, J. (1970). *Aesthetic function, norm and value as social facts*. University of Michigan Press.
- O'Driscoll, M. (2017). Baltimore–New Haven 1966–1983; or, Deconstruction. In I. Buchanan (Ed.), *A companion to critical and cultural theory* (pp. 73–89). Wiley-Blackwell.

Quel, T. (2017). Tel Quel in cultural-political hell. In R. Wolin (Ed.), *The wind from the East: French intellectuals, the cultural revolution, and the legacy of the 1960s* (p. 233).

Ricoeur, P. (1970). *Freud and philosophy: An essay on interpretation* (D. Savage, Trans.). Yale University Press.

Scruton, R. (2001). *German philosophers: Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche*. Oxford University Press.

