



The Narrative Component in the Play "Barriers Without Borders" by Nouredine Amroun

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Abstract ;(not more than 10 Lines)

The semiotic approaches outlined by Greimas stand out among the semiotic methods, having proven their effectiveness as a robust model for analyzing and interpreting the signs of the dramatic text, particularly in terms of its narrative component. These approaches enhance its prominence within the literary scene and underscore the blending of literary genres.

*The narrative structure in theater serves to convey the text's message and the author's vision, which becomes evident through a critical examination of its profound meanings, guided by a unique critical perspective. In this article, we delve into the study and analysis of the narrative component in the play **"Barriers Without Borders"** by the Algerian playwright **Nouredine Amroun**, drawing upon the foundations and procedures of Greimasian narrative semiotics. We have explored the entirety of transitions spoken in the narrative programs and also examined the functional structure as both layout and procedure in the text, highlighting the confrontation between two opposing parties to elucidate the subject's value.*

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The Narrative Component in the Play "Barriers Without Borders" by Nouredine Amroun

1. Introduction

Julien Greimas focused on semiotic studies, establishing a set of procedures based on the generative trajectory of the theory, without neglecting both the superficial and deep levels alike. Thus, Greimas' project transcends the boundaries of the apparent simplicity to interrogate the complex inner workings and analyze its levels as an organized set of relations highlighting the articulations of meaning, and manifestations of meaning in the text.

Through narrative semiotics, we can evaluate and arrange all elements governing the relations within the text. We can use the semiotic square to determine the correspondences and suitable relations for this text.

Greimas employed all his efforts in his semiotic project to reach the semiotic square with precise results and understand the genesis and course of these correspondences and relations that control the establishment of oppositional and contradictory relations generating dynamic conflict on the text's surface. This study explores the narrative path and tests its representation of the narrative semiotic theory, relying on its tools and procedures as defined by Greimas, and applying them to the dramatic text "Barriers Without Borders."

Accordingly, we sought to dissect the narrative structure in the play 'Barriers Without Borders' by examining the narrative component that represents the states and transformations and the set of narrative programs formed by the selves and the action roles they performed during the transformation.

To discuss the manifestations of the action structure, the analysis will be limited to the major selves in the text and linking them to their narrative programs. Therefore, controlling the relationship between the events of the play and its characters allows us to uncover the conflict parties and determine the action logic through the relationships that organize the narrative.

Based on the foregoing, the research problem revolves around:

- What are the narrative construction techniques employed in the play "Barriers Without Borders" by Nouredine Amroun?

2. Summary of the play

Sofian, a student, returns to his homeland after completing his studies in Bologna. Upon his arrival at the airport, he faces harassment from a police officer, leading to a debate between them about politics and culture. The officer tries to accuse him of harboring regressive, toxic ideas. After being searched and detained, he is transferred to an inspecting officer for further questioning.

The officer questions the relationship between music and medicine, to which Sofian responds that it is the nourishment for the soul and emotion. This leads to accusations of espionage, and they beat him until he collapses. After receiving medical attention, the doctor orders experts to verify his statements. Sofian's composed music plays, soothing the inspector, and the scene ends with applause for him.

The Narrative Component in the Play "Barriers Without Borders" by Nouredine Amroun

3. The Narrative Structure in "Barriers Without Borders":

Narrative semiotics aims to unveil the architecture of the text, "for meaning exists only with difference, a principle enshrined by semantics as its path for exploring the evolution of structural studies." (Nadia, 2008, p. 10)

We will focus on A.J. Greimas as a model of this semiotic direction and his significant role in the Paris semiotic school. By tracking the series of changes, sequences, and connections specific to states and transformations occurring to the actors, we divide the narrative component as follows:

3.1 Narrative Utterances:

This refers to the character's action, consisting of meaningful units related to the verbal chain and a series of states depicting the character's situation, possessions, and transformations. Through the analysis of the utterances in "Barriers Without Borders," we find that the narrator focused on the strategy of transformative action aimed at moving the characters according to a specific narrative program, giving each of them their role according to the following scheme:

Equilibrium —————> Disequilibrium

(Hope/Ambition)—————> Reality/Disappointment/Collapse of Ambition

"Barriers Without Borders" begins in segment (A) of the introductory section, with sequences of utterances reflecting Sofian's ambition for the society he returned to, to be open to the culture of the other. "Tastes differ, and this is evident in the clothing (Amroun, 2006, p. 14) "

Do citizens and the authorities respect cultural diversity?! Or is it only acceptable in clothing." This moves us to a situation of regret about the reality Sofian encountered at the airport: "Sofian to a traveler standing behind him: The airport has remained the same as I saw it four years ago, nothing has changed except for the presence of a special counter for those with diplomatic immunity, and behind every counter, one police officer instead of two." (Amroun, 2006, p. 13) And his words "A mostly illiterate people are expected to build a civilization!..." "(Regretfully) (Amroun, 2006, p. 13)

The true measure is the human mind, individually and collectively..." (Amroun, 2006, p. 31)

"Sofian (perplexed) If you have spare time and mingle with the passengers, then I am not prepared..." (Amroun, 2006, p. 39)

The state of disturbance escalates through utterances of defense "I am not a wizard," "Respect me, I am not a thief," (Amroun, 2006, p. 43) "I cannot teach something I hate," (Amroun, 2006) (Amroun, 2006, p. 50) "I don't know these pills," (Amroun, 2006, p. 50) "I know nothing about these organizations." (Amroun, 2006, p. 51)

3.2 Narrative Segments:

Segmenting the text is a fundamental step in the analysis as partial ideas, indicating the textual unity resulting from segmentation. (Ben Malek, 2000, p. 189)

It allows us to distribute the discourse into several segments, each detailing a part of the narrative movement, distinguished by events, lexicon, and style unique to it.

According to Greimas, text segmentation is linked to criteria such as "textual spaces and sequential themes" in the discourse's genesis and various discursive components (...), and anything that can stamp the discourse with significance and create meaning effects contributes collectively to constructing the text's meaning. (elabed, 2008, p. 60)

The Narrative Component in the Play "Barriers Without Borders" by Nouredine Amroun

Identifying discourse segments is an important methodological procedure for facilitating the comprehension of text components. It is a process of dividing the utterance to determine its units, usually based on specific demarcations (des marqueurs) considered as discursive elements capable of setting boundaries between the discourse segments. ((A.J) Greimas, 1979, p. 87)

Through the semiotic narrative analysis of the play "Barriers Without Borders," we find it divided into two acts: the first act into five scenes and the second into two scenes. However, looking at the actors' performances allows us to divide it into:

➤ The first segment (Introduction):

It begins from: "Sofian to a traveler lined up behind him: The airport has remained the same as I saw it four years ago, nothing has changed except for the presence of a special counter for those with diplomatic immunity, behind every counter, one police officer instead of two (Amroun, 2006, p. 13)

" To: "The police officer: Enough with evasion and philosophy, you have the field and the lived reality in front of you, and you will see things and things... Welcome to your country." (Amroun, 2006, p. 19)

➤ The second segment (Main):

It begins from: "The customs officer: Open your bags, give me your passport." (Amroun, 2006, p. 20)

To: "We must think of another trick to imprison him with, for example, inciting rebellion and disturbing public security." (Amroun, 2006, p. 20)

➤ The third segment (Final):

It begins from: "The second investigator: Ladies and gentlemen, the professors are present, some hesitated, and others refused to come, but the director of music will punish them (Amroun, 2006, p. 86)

To: "Sofian: Art is the comfort of the human soul, and we must pay attention to it to resort to it whenever we are tired... from the human pursuit to alleviate the suffering of his fellow human." (Amroun, 2006, p. 100)

3.3 Actantial Model:

The actantial model classifies a set of roles encountered in the story. In Greimas's conception, an actant can be represented by more than one actor and is not necessarily a person. Greimas distinguishes between two levels in the concept of the narrative character:

The actantial level, where the character assumes a general, abstract concept focusing on roles rather than the entities performing them. These include the narrator, the narratee, the speaker, the addressee, known as communication actants.

The actor level, where the character takes the form of an individual performing a role in the narrative. (Lahmdani, 1991, p. 52)

Greimas refers to the sequence of states and transformations as a narrative program related to the relationship (subject-object) and its communicative or separative transformations (elabed, 2008, p. 69)

This transformation, or the execution of the narrative program, requires an actantial actor, given there is a state and transformation. The actantial actor can be:

The actor of the state: In a relationship of communication or separation with the object of value, the relationship (subject-object) defines the state's utterance or the actor of the state.

The Narrative Component in the Play "Barriers Without Borders" by Nouredine Amroun

The actor of action: The transformation in the relationship, either by communication or separation, is generally symbolized as follows:

Actor of action [Subject Actant $\cup$ Object Actant] (Subject Actant $\cap$ Object Actant)

- ✓ "Actor of action" represents the acting subject or the actor of the action.
- ✓ "Subject Actant" refers to the actant of the self.
- ✓ "Object Actant" denotes the actant of the object.
- ✓ The arrow symbolizes transformation.
- ✓ The intersection symbol ($\cap$) indicates connection.
- ✓ The union symbol ($\cup$) represents separation.

The actor and the object (object of desire):

It represents the focal point of the actantial model, indeed the vital element within it, because this relationship is established in a goal-oriented position in accordance with the actor's ability to possess the desired object. This realization occurs through investigation whenever access to it is impeded:

1.The sender and the receiver (communication axis)

2.The helper/opponent (conflict axis)

The procedural construction of the actantial model in "Barriers Without Borders" can be followed as follows:

[Subject - Object]

The relationship between the subject and the object is the focal point of the actantial model, as the subject can only be defined through the existence of the object, which is the goal of the subject. Likewise, the object can only be defined in its relationship to the subject. The existence of the former mandates the existence of the latter, and this relationship is determined by the state's utterance used to indicate the type of relationship between the subject and the object ((A.J) Greimas, 1979, p. 181)

The first introductory segment:

(Inside the airport in the arrivals hall, travelers are lined up in front of the border police counters, tables with entry cards, and signs saying "Welcome to our esteemed visitors" in three languages, and another saying "Enter, for you are safe." Four armed soldiers are ready to shoot at any moment, three meters below the signs.)

It begins with: "Sofian to a traveler lined up behind him: The airport has remained the same as I saw it four years ago, nothing has changed except for the presence of a special counter for those with diplomatic immunity, behind every counter, one police officer instead of two (Laajimi, 1991, p. 40)

To: "The police officer: Enough with evasion and philosophy, the field and the lived reality are in front of you, and you will see things and things... Welcome to your country."

At the beginning of the play, the narrator describes the character "Sofian," a young man returning to his homeland after completing his studies in Bologna. Through the examination of utterances in

The Narrative Component in the Play "Barriers Without Borders" by Noureddine Amroun

this segment, it is clear that Sofian was in a communicative relationship with the object of value (proving his innocence) and his adherence to cultural diversity through his dialogue with the traveler: "The airport has remained the same as I saw it four years ago" (Amroun, 2006, p. 13) and his statement "Tastes differ, and this is evident in the clothes. Do citizens and authorities respect cultural diversity?! Or is it only acceptable in clothing (Amroun, 2006, p. 13)

" and his rejection of the regressive ideas held by the police officer. "

The police officer: Bologna is a capitalist European country, which means you carry rotten regressive ideas.

Sofian: Smiling, Mr. Police officer, I am a student and nothing more matters to me. Besides, Bologna is a socialist country in the Warsaw Pact.

The police officer: So, you are a communist carrying atheism in your mind.

Sofian: Are you against socialists, capitalists, fundamentalists, then with whom are you?" (Amroun, 2006, p. 14)

Thus, we can formulate the following schema:

(S.C): A1 (Sofian) →	A2 Sofian's self $\cup$ O (Cultural diversity)	}
(S.C): A1 (Sofian) →	A2 Sofian's self $\cap$ O (Cultural diversity)	

Communicative program

The second segment (Unrealized utilitarian program):

Sofian's submission to inspection

(Inside the airport in the customs wings, four moving ground escalators for bags, travelers waiting for their bags, the traveler advances his bag in front of the customs inspection table.)

It begins from: "The customs officer: Open your bags, give me your passport." (Amroun, 2006, p. 17)

To: "We must think of another trick to imprison him with, for example, inciting rebellion and disturbing public security." (Amroun, 2006, p. 20)

In this segment, Sofian tries to establish a connective relationship with the primary object of value (proving that the manuscripts are musical notes and not espionage documents), where Sofian sought to convince everyone to respect other opinions and the necessity of integrating cultures to enrich society's ideas, remaining steadfast in defending his principles to find himself in a circle of accusation and subjected to verbal and physical violence. "

Sofian: (Surprised) Art is something beautiful, and learning from other nations respects the other opinion and intellectual dialogue and coexistence of individuals... and it's better to be with the first successful model because it triumphed and is no longer subject to debate... better than being with a

The Narrative Component in the Play "Barriers Without Borders" by Nouredine Amroun

politically closed society, culturally handicapped, socially collapsed, economically rigid, and the bitter truth is that their thinking is without essence (Amroun, 2006, p. 20)

(S.C): A1 (Sofian) $\longrightarrow$ A2 Sofian's self $\cup$ O (Proving his innocence)

(S.C): A1 (Sofian) $\longrightarrow$ A2 Sofian's self $\cap$ O (Proving his innocence)

Communicative utilitarian program

The third segment (Realized):

The narrative program is realized through the series of states and transformations of the object and its achievement. The self goes through the phases of the narrative schema to achieve this, requiring a basic program aimed at obtaining the object of value.

(S.C): A1 (Sofian) $\longrightarrow$ A2 Sofian's self $\cup$ O (Proving his innocence)

(S.C): A1 (Sofian) $\longrightarrow$ A2 Sofian's self $\cap$ O (Proving his innocence)

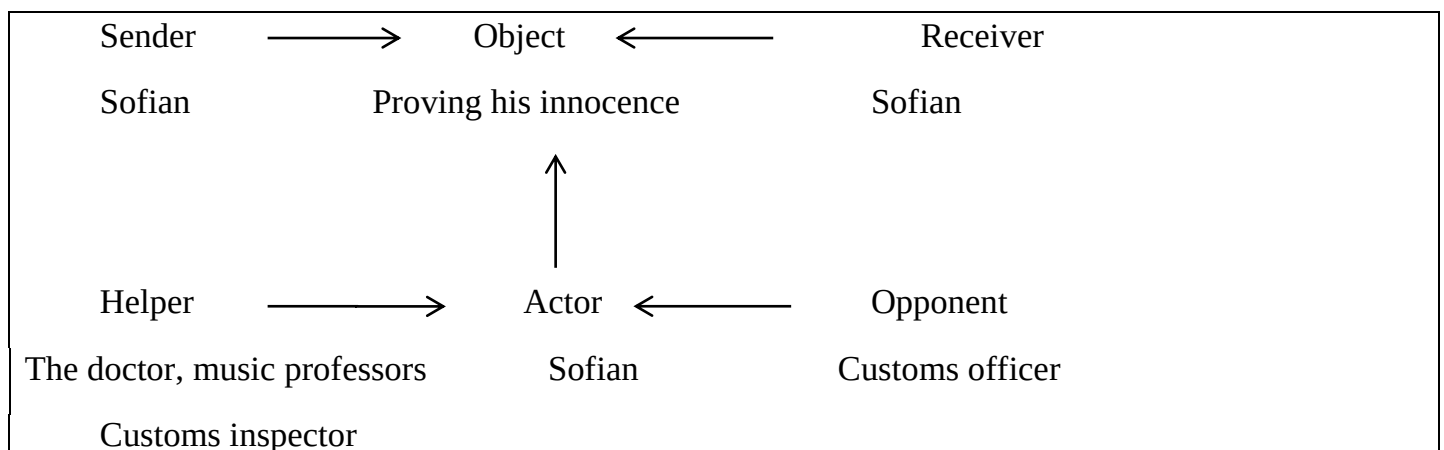
Realized program

[Sender - Receiver]

Achieving the self's desire acts as a driving motive, which Greimas calls "the sender," and its function is to preserve and embed original values and ensure their continuity. (Amroun, 2006, p. 24)

The realization of desire is not entirely subjective but is also directed to another agent, "the receiver (Laajimi, 1991, p. 40)

Actantial model of Sofian's self



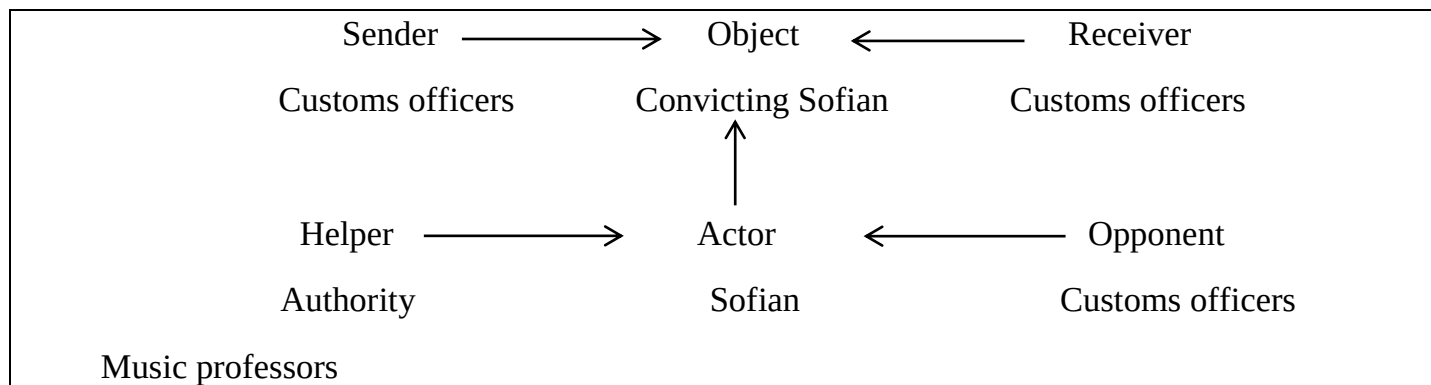
Sofian successfully established the connection in the end due to the availability of formal values qualifying him to achieve his narrative program, leading us to the following equation:

Actor 1 $\longrightarrow$ Hypothesis $\longrightarrow$ Update $\longrightarrow$ Goal

The Narrative Component in the Play "Barriers Without Borders" by Noureddine Amroun

Sofian → Proving innocence → Convincing customs officers → (Positive +)

Actantial model for customs officers



The customs officers failed to establish the connection in the end due to the absence of formal values qualifying them to achieve their narrative program, leading us to the following equation:

Actor 1 → Hypothesis → Update → Goal

Customs officers → Accusing Sofian → Using force → (Negative -)

[Helper - Opponent]

The third category forming the actantial model consists of a helper and an opponent. In their quest for the object of value, the hero encounters individuals, animals, or entities that assist them in reaching their goals. They also encounter obstacles that prevent them from achieving their ultimate goal, thus defining the helper in providing aid to the actor to achieve their desire, while the opponent acts as a barrier in the actor's path to achieving their desire. (Lahmdani, 1991, p. 35)

The opposing narrative program operates to "create obstacles by either preventing the achievement of desire or communication with the object," assuming the existence of "at least one narrative program contrary to it viewed through opposing transformations." (Benkrad, 1994, p. 48)

It is based on opposition or contradictory desires, and in this segment, the relationship linking the main self "Sofian" with the opposing self was confrontational from the beginning without justification (Courtés, 2007, p. 111)

1- The Police Officer's Self:

Conversely, the narrator describes the police officer's self, who harbors petrified ideas, leading Sofian to find himself in an argument with him due to the cultural and ideological differences between them, continuing until the end of the scene:

"The police officer: You respect all professions! Even those specializations that distort our civilization and trample on our constants." (Bou Choufrah, 2011, p. 55)

The Narrative Component in the Play "Barriers Without Borders" by Nouredine Amroun

Here, the actor is established through Sofian, who found himself confronting the police officer's ideas, which later transform into a subject matter achieving a connective relationship with the greater value (proving his innocence).

The utterances of the first segment are connected with the object of value, allowing us to formulate the narrative program established by the acting self (the police officer) as follows:

(S.C): A1 (The police officer) $\longrightarrow$ A2 The police officer's self $\cup$ O (Skepticism)
(S.C): A1 (The police officer) $\longrightarrow$ A2 The police officer's self $\cap$ O (Skepticism) }

Communicative program

The Customs Officer's Narrative Program:

Narratively, the customs officer establishes himself as a sender by virtue of his legal authority to scorn Sofian's ideas and oppose all his thoughts, accusing him of betraying the community's ingrained principles and even assaulting him:

"The customs officer: (mockingly) Indeed, globalization forces us to become slaves, and even to strive to become slaves! A doctor who doesn't understand economics! Nor politics! University graduates! And what good is art? Does it provide bread for the hungry? It teaches our children to dance, and theater corrupts us, nothing more, nothing less. You've corrupted foreign countries? And now you want to corrupt our society with your worthless art..." (Amroun, 2006, p. 18)

"The customs officer: You know better than a minister (raises his hand and slaps Sofian)

Sofian: Raise your hand (The inspector and the customs officer attack him and beat him until Sofian falls)." (Amroun, 2006, p. 24)

The Customs Officer's Utilitarian Program:

(S.C): A1 (The customs officer) $\longrightarrow$ A2 The customs officer's self $\cup$ O (Proving innocence)

(S.C): A1 (The customs officer) $\longrightarrow$ A2 The customs officer's self $\cap$ O (Proving innocence)

Unrealized utilitarian program

The Customs Inspector's Narrative Program:

The customs inspector establishes himself as an opposing actor through a narrative program to achieve a connective relationship with the primary object of value (proving his innocence).

The object of value desired by the customs inspector is to eliminate Sofian's ideas and accuse him of espionage. Upon examining the utterances of this segment, it is clear that the customs inspector was in communication with the primary object.

"The inspector: (flipping through the book of musical notes and the fax machine) This is music! A criminal... You lie to your conscience, your homeland, and the members of your community. We are the protectors of the homeland from filth like you and your strange ideas... Come with me." (Amroun, 2006, p. 56)

The Narrative Component in the Play "Barriers Without Borders" by Nouredine Amroun

"Sofian: You want a personal honorable declaration or something else? Or do you want me to declare your desires and concepts? That's not a declaration! And I am free, or do you want us to be ruled by those who believe in freedom only their freedom to oppress their brothers?... (Amroun, 2006, p. 39)

The inspector: (interrupting by slapping Sofian and kicking him) You must tell the truth..." (Amroun, 2006, p. 48)

The Inspector's Utilitarian Program:

(S.C): A1 (The inspector) $\longrightarrow$ A2 The inspector's self $\cup$ O (Proving innocence)

(S.C): A1 (The inspector) $\longrightarrow$ A2 Sofian's self $\cap$ O (Proving innocence)

Unrealized utilitarian program

The Utilitarian Program for Assisting Actors:

The customs officer

Contributed to resolving the situation and saving Sofian from the clutches of the inspector and the customs officer by ordering the doctor's arrival, prohibiting them from abusing him, and dealing with him lawfully:

"The customs officer: You are responsible for inspection within the airport, not for exercising violence! Did any of your officers order you to do that? Moreover, it's the specialized authorities that decide whether someone is a spy or not. (Amroun, 2006, p. 53)

Your job is to relay the information to those in charge of combating espionage."

Yet, as a cunning character, this is evident from his statements:

"The customs officer: The customs inspector despised the customs officer.

The customs officer (confused): We used violence to eliminate the saboteurs!

The customs officer: And did I say no? But within the legal framework that refuses the intervention of powers..." (Amroun, 2006, p. 60)

The Doctor's Narrative Program:

Contributed to treating Sofian and saving him: "The doctor: Why don't you treat the human being as a human and rush to violence without even being sure of his actions..." (Amroun, 2006, p. 61)

The First/Second Investigator's Narrative Program:

Employees at the security branch specializing in counter-espionage, they adhered to their job's demands, not treating Sofian with violence or disdain, and sought help from specialists by bringing in professors from the music institute, characterized by their strictness and seriousness in applying the law.

The Narrative Component in the Play "Barriers Without Borders" by Nouredine Amroun

The Investigators' Utilitarian Program:

(S.C): A1 (The investigators) $\longrightarrow$ A2 The investigators' self $\cup$ O (Applying the law)

(S.C): A1 (The investigators) $\longrightarrow$ A2 The investigators' self $\cap$ O (Proving innocence)

Unrealized utilitarian program

The Music Teachers' Narrative Program:

The main self received genuine assistance from the music teachers in achieving the object of desire, serving as support and a pillar for Sofian's self during his use of persuasive action in executing the primary task (proving his innocence).

After enlisting the music teachers, Sofian's innocence was established as they decoded the manuscripts to reveal they were musical notes.

The first investigator: "Tell us, what is the title of this book or these manuscripts?"

The first musician: "Musical notes for Mozart's Forty-first Sonata." (Amroun, 2006, p. 59)

The second musician: (flipping through the pages) Ignorance is the destroyer of people and their humanity. It's better I perform these pieces with my colleagues."

The first investigator: "You have all the freedom, the important thing is to find a solution to this problem."

The second musician: (heading to the piano and sitting down) "Join me, friends." Sofian: (following the rhythm with his feet) "Wonderful, well done, how beautiful the music is..."

The first investigator: (applauding) "You've delighted us and alleviated the tiredness we were feeling." (Amroun, 2006, p. 87)

The customs officer: (continuing to applaud) "Indeed, critical thinking is only formed through concepts, not rituals and molds, and the truth is I didn't know that the music of these manuscripts was this beautiful... I'll teach my children the art of music and other arts from tomorrow...100" (Amroun, 2006, p. 99)

(S.C): A1 (Music teachers) $\longrightarrow$ A2 Sofian's self $\cup$ O (Proving his innocence)

(S.C): A1 (Music teachers) $\longrightarrow$ A2 Sofian's self $\cap$ O (Proving his innocence)

Realized program

3.4 The Investigative Square:

The narrative moments in storytelling involve role exchanges among the actants, complicating the narrative process. This results in genuine performance only evident with the aid of an artificial performance.

The Narrative Component in the Play "Barriers Without Borders" by Nouredine Amroun

Thus, the investigative square aids the analyst in identifying and uncovering the story's characters; it explains the game of masks based on confrontations between hidden or unknown heroes and exposed and punished traitors.

The relationship between the actor and their action is not only about communication and separation but also about the truthfulness of the relationship, which can be honest, deceitful, secret, or false. Thus, each current relationship is evaluated from two aspects: "internal" and "external," generating several scenarios:

- ✓ If the situational relationship is positive both externally and internally, it under the category of truth (external+internal).
- ✓ If the current relationship is negative on both levels (no external+no internal), then the relationship is false.
- ✓ If the current relationship is negative externally but positive internally (no external+internal), it aligns with the category of a secret.
- ✓ If the current relationship is positive externally but negative internally, then this falls
- ✓ relationship is classified as a lie (external+no internal).

Returning to the play "Barriers Without Borders," Sofian strives to prove his innocence and convince others of his ideas, leading to a positive relationship between his external and internal aspects (internal+external), achieving honesty. In the eyes of the customs officers, Sofian is corrupt and treacherous...

The customs entered a relationship positive externally but negative internally because they were (external+no internal), resulting in the deceit they practiced on Sofian...

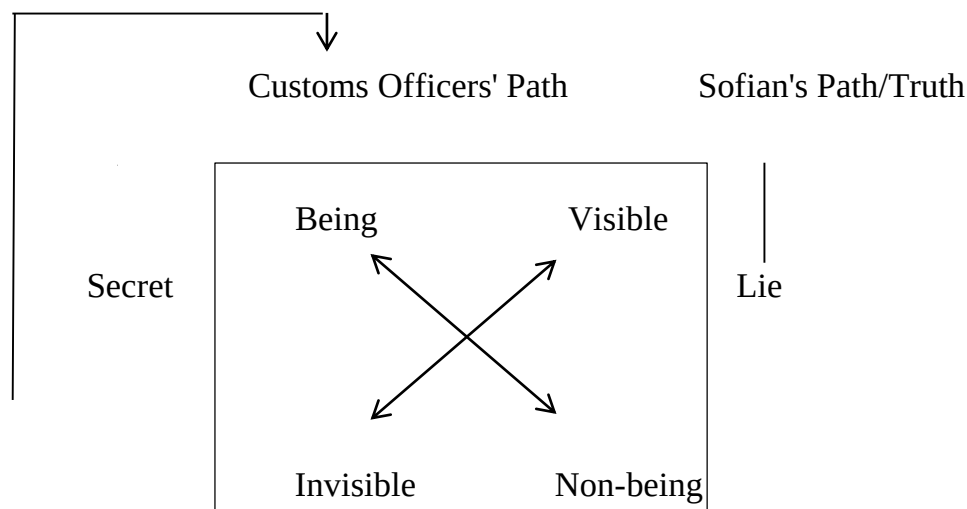
This relationship between the actor and the object of value is not just about separation or communication; it's about the authenticity of the current relationship itself, as the connection - for example - between the actor and the object of value can be genuine, false, or invalid without changing the nature of that current relationship; because the internal often differs from the external.
(Bou Choufrah, 2011, p. 13)

Truth: Sofian's honesty is shown in his adherence to his ideas despite the pressures he faced, never abandoning his principles.

Lie: Manifests in the customs officers' attack on Sofian and condemning him without verifying the manuscripts, insulting and abusing him.

Secret: Is represented by the customs officers hiding their malicious intentions under the guise of law.

The Narrative Component in the Play "Barriers Without Borders" by Nouredine Amroun



4. Conclusion:

At the end of this research, which explored the narrative component in the play "Barriers Without Borders," we can draw several conclusions:

- Narrative programs are closely linked to actantial schematics.
- The system of relationships and organizational systems formed the narrative programming through a series of states and transformations of actants.
- The variety of narrative programs revealed the dramatic conflict in the play.
- The object of value achieved a duality combining both positive and negative aspects.
- The narrative component played a significant role in semiotic narrative analysis, revealing the relationships between characters, objects of value, and the actants' operational paths.

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