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## THE STRUCTURAL NARRATIVE ANALYSIS IN APPLICATION: THE CASE OF MEANING EXPLICATION

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*The paper scrutinizes the topic of meaning manifestation and signification made known by the act of interpretation, which amounts to finding organising principles of a text and rules of combination. The language of narrativity is a set of generational and transformational instances, disguising textual content and initiating interpretation as such. The paper discusses the levels of description which assist in tackling the concept of change, or difference in degrees, as the result of both the artificial operation of rewriting the text on various methodological grounds and real dynamics justified by the obvious layers of the plot. The elementary units of meaning articulation covered by this article run the gamut from Roland Barthes' distributional and integrational narrative units to Algirdas Julien Greimas' deep and surface structures with special stress on the narrative programs and narrative analysis, which is of primary interest here. In the end, analytic instruments elaborated by Greimas are effectively adapted to interpret the case of Edgar Allan Poe's story William Wilson.*

**Keywords:** narrative units, narrative utterances, levels of description, catalysers, function, Greimas.

### 1. Introduction

People are culturally predisposed to meaning. Its collapse badly affects one's humdrum existence and brings about a great deal of distress and despondency, pulling the rug from under one's feet. Meaning is a thing people search and long for and simultaneously a driving principle, an uncontrollable force that effectuates living and keeps a person going. The unwritten semiotic wisdom says that there are no meaningless provinces of our reality: provinces that have not been signified and articulated yet are what exist. According to semioticians that are about to be commented on in this paper, the quality of being meaningful arises from an exercise of

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translating something into something else: the free unsymbolisable space between the language and metalanguage releases a surplus, which turns the meaning into a focal point of discourse and, nonetheless, an interdefinable category which does not have a house of its own.

If it is possible to afford a somewhat metaphorical definition of meaning, which is already a figurative conception, then it won't be redundant to say that this article revolves around the mystery of meaning diffusely defined here as a string-puller of whom we know nothing. Algirdas Julien Greimas is a leading star in the article: his take on meaning is provided within the narrow scope of narrative syntax as a method of text formalisation and applied to a literary text, which is conceptualised in concordance with his categorical framework. The semiotic pursuits Greimas undertook led him to the project called «structural semantics» (Greimas, 1966), whose chief ambition is to give a scientific tint to semantics envisaged at the levels of semic analysis and actantial one to that measure. Another author is a bit more of a philosopher than a semiotician: it is Roland Barthes, who is responsible for a slightly different way of envisaging structural analysis. Barthes helps to identify the limitations in Greimas' approach and comes up with a solution that partly expands the realm of meaning. In everyday speech, people usually associate meaning with an inaccessible depth of things concealed from one's eyes. In truth, the meaning is closer than we think.

## **2. Narrativity and its role in the generation of meaning**

Greimas is concerned with the idea of narratives being analysed by means of structuralist methods to the extent to which his ambitions of detecting the meaning spread. According to Denis Bertrand, in Greimas' pursuits narrative is a jumping-off point (Bertrand, 2019) for getting the hang of meaning and, in a similar vein, the general condition that throws light on the matter of semiotic make-up yielding the bits and pieces of meaning — how text is straddled with it — rather than meaning itself. From the vantage point of Greimassian narrative grammar, what one is required to do when exploring the meaning is to come to terms with its transformational-generative twists and turns mapped out in the abstract-formula summaries of a fictional universe.

Describing a set of distinct details as meaningful implies detecting a certain tension steering the plot's course, say a change that causes a character to move, interact, and be identified as a subject that is endowed with a specific number of characteristics reflecting a specific class of situations. In other words, people inadvertently posit the meaning by interpreting the products of their own creation: it emerges from the act of interpretation as soon as the question of meaning inaugurates the question of how signification ordinarily unfolds and how things happen to signify at all. What Barthes is trying to say and actually says in his *Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives* is that there is nothing in each and every single text that has ever existed and currently exists except meaning, given that even movements — which are not exactly narrative and that seem to be secondary and

unessential in respect to the abstract fictional whole — as well as stationery items signify and tell a story by definition.

It might be outlined with a pretty decent degree of precision that the emphasis Barthes puts in his conspicuous ruminations appears to make the meaning coextensive with a kind of signifying background against which all signifying units are placed to cement the hermeneutic whole. This position runs parallel to Greimas' «teaching» which postulates the necessity to articulate meaning to grasp it or achieve zero-degree-like access to it: one of the ways of doing that is structuring the discourse, discovering implicit variables baked into the plot, hidden structures that border on straightforward manifestation liable to be processed and interpreted further. Perhaps it is better to broach the subject of meaning in the context of a particular effect that structural elements of the text elicit by ultimate referentialisation as a point at which a strong link to extra-linguistic reality is established so that this or that character or situation she is tossed into rings true to the reader.

In fact, Greimas brings into play larger and smaller semiotic entities constituting the structure of signification, embarking on the interpretative adventures which lead to the jungle of textual semantics despite the fact that he focuses on syntax and semantics to equal measure. As Carl W. Roberts and Yong Wang admit, Greimassian narrative analysis reveals that meaning originates in binary oppositions organised through logical relationships of contradiction, contrariety, and complementarity between terms brushing up against each other and coming into being in virtue of one another (Roberts, Wang, 2005). In other words, he partly states that the meaning Greimas grapples with is rooted in deep fundamental structures, which is the most abstract level operating with abstract data, while equalising the process of interpretation to the analysis of textual artifact at several levels of description and with different categorical apparatus is a centerpiece of Greimassian interpretative strategy.

The crucial methodological requirement that heralds the narrative actantial model of structural analysis is to translate a given text into narrative structures. The course of translation stretches from the deep fundamental plane, which is the domain of logical relations, to the surface actantial narrative plane of the syntax that comes out semantically invested as the analysis proceeds and the new level of description reinvigorates a small amount of concrete information with respect to particularised wholes, such as characters that have names and circumstances that signalise spatio-temporal parameters of actions which solidify the plot. Although narrative syntax is made out of narrative syntagmas that are in charge of what is habitually called sequential order, or the aspect of combination intrinsic to the syntagmatic dimension of language, it occasionally evokes the paradigmatic basis of which the semiotic square is an epitome: this paradigmatic backbone jogs the virtual memory of the surface level every time an abstract formula depicting the character's struggle is built.

Roberts and Wang came to the conclusion that meaning is situated at the level of semantics inasmuch as semiotic units gain it with the aid of semantic input. As a matter of fact, there is much more to the meaning than meets the eye: its innate

tendency to evade definition is symptomatic of its transformational quality mentioned earlier in this paper, it is scattered throughout deep and surface levels of description, differentiating and then integrating the signifying pieces of one universe. Reviewing accomplishments fulfilled by Greimas in his meaning-bent linguistic projects, Bertrand calls attention to one important feature that, in my opinion, positions meaning as a meaningless category because of being empty, or, to put it another way, being defined by its usage: it is the transformation registered in a given story via representation of «transition from one state to another, from poverty to wealth, from humiliation to glory» (Bertrand, 2019).

Still, narrative units do not work the way linguistic entities do. Respectively, an assumption that the composition of narrative utterances might be easily and successfully drawn from linguistic sentences is detrimental to narratives regardless of the «genre» they belong to. For instance, Roland Barthes states that narrative units turn up either superior or inferior to the phrase, bearing resemblance to the idiom, that is, the linguistic phenomenon having to do with contextually stable and technically indivisible particles of meaning (Barthes, 1966). By and large, narrative blocks encase more than what is actually spelled out inside them: Barthes specifies the content of narrative formations by appealing to «connoted value», the gist of narrativity. He distinguishes between *distributional narrative units* (Function) conditioning relations on the same level and *integrational narrative units* (Indices) that suggest the movements between levels.

Pushing events to correspond to each other, distributional functional components of narrativity split into two subclasses: the subclass of cardinal functions, which serve to open the horizon of possible subsequent scenarios, and that of catalysers that stand for the sudden alterations of the narrative trajectories (Barthes, 1966). Unlike distributional units expressing the function per se, integrational components cover plot details, whose functionality is not obvious due to being related to the identity of the characters, or atmosphere, as Barthes puts it. Indices, together with informants, create the circumstantial background of the story. It seems that the need for functional syntax is critically unavoidable: Barthes argues that syntactical relations between indices and informants are that of juxtaposition, whereas implication is a pivotal operation that renders cardinal functions and catalysers activated (Barthes, 1966).

What is strikingly noticeable about the Greimassian project is that he favors logic over temporality in his models of textual analysis. As Barthes stresses, a thin border separating the chronological order of narrative events from logical ones is inordinately blurred in the process of interpretation. In the case of Greimas, reconstruction of the story takes the shape of dismantling narrative structures, which attributes narrativity to the discourse in focus. For the sake of doing an interpretative exercise later on in this article of mine, it is important to clarify a particular topic called the levels of description that crop up in Barthes' piece of writing as well as in Greimas' opening premises. Barthes delineates three levels of description: function, action, and narration (Barthes, 1966). In comparison to that, Greimas

has more floors of the meaning analysis: converting elements from the deep level into their counterparts located on the surface plane, one is free to undergo all stages of translation on the horizontal axis at the same level — discoursivisation of narrative structures (Greimas, Courtés, 1982) will be the final stage — or to stop at one point.

### 3. Signifying irrelevancies: on the verge of meaning

Contrary to Barthes' vision of functions which are not alien to insignificant details constituting the plot, Greimas places them at the level of surface narrative syntax. Thus, the notion of a function expresses merely an action performed by or upon the subject, an utterance of doing. There is no place for insignificance in Greimas' abstract formula depicting the narrative program and, to cap it all, information that is considered to be unimportant from the perspective of the meaningful whole remains behind the syntactical layout. In other words, by looking at such a formula it is impossible to draw the portrait of the character and general atmosphere of the scene for obvious reasons. The closer one is to the surface of meaning, the more concrete data is pronounced available. The difference between the aforementioned approaches is that Barthes allows for non-narrative elements in his breakdown of the text, while Greimas banishes them from the territory of narratives.

Imagine the plot in which a small detail X introduced at the beginning ends up unexplained and, consequently, it leaves an impression that the story could have gone well without it: X looks useless in retrospect. Greimas' formula will not even let us know that X has ever taken place in the reality of the story: from his viewpoint, this detail would fail to serve any function whatsoever. Injecting semantic aspects into it won't do any good. By contrast, in Barthes' terms, the shortage of significance on the part of detail X is already functional in virtue of filling up spare space in the narrative. X might be a catalyser, one of the candidates for altering the course of the story and accelerating the events. Its factual status may be unarticulated, but its significance looms over the characters in anticipating the mind of the reader, retaining its «in absentia» quality to it.

The first thing that comes to mind when talking about the plot details being discarded at the finish is the anticlimactic detective fiction flick of Michelangelo Antonioni titled *Blow-up*, which best represents the recurrent feature of this director's narrative style. The central line of *Blow-up*, which is a mysterious murder, hangs in the air and never touches the ground. We do not know whether the killing actually happened or the principal character — a bored, inert, and inscrutable guy, a typical character from Antonioni verse by the way — just made it up when figuring out a photo of something that is believed by him to be a crime scene. Although suspiciously strange, or unusual, the behavior of certain characters alongside other minor details hint at a pinch of objectiveness with regard to the murder, *Blow-up*'s ending refuses point-black to explain what the story was all about, striking anticlimactic note as if the murder did not matter all the time. It is an example of how signifying nothing by negating the importance of introductory details is already a story

with plenty of functional layers in it. It would be difficult to describe something similar to *Blow-up* in Greimassian categories, however universal they claim to be.

In opposition to Greimas, François Rastier concentrates solely on the textual semantics carried out by basic components contributing to the semantic level. According to Rastier, textual analysis, or productive reading, circles around four components: all texts 1) have specific and generic themes culminating in its isotopy, which is a necessary condition of the text being readable and discernible (thematics), 2) have chains of events put into temporal order and processes/actions that last a definite or indefinite period of time, that is to say, temporal and aspectual features which give an account of transformations saturating the plot (dialectics), 3) have living instances, such as enunciators and receivers, responsible for narrative exchanges (dialogics), and 4) have linearisation done, arranging the units of expression plane and content plane (Rastier, 1997).

Rastier's theory is at odds with the universalist effects that Greimassian narrative grammar produces. He calls off the fundamental role of narrative structures and disagrees with the idea that text narrativisation is the only possible way of articulating textual content. Leaving the door open for the restoration of an «initial meaning» on the basis of preliminary pragmatic conditions engendering the situation of communication, Rastier wants to revive the notion of a genre that has been neglected by Greimas (Rastier, 1997). If it is possible to draw a conclusion from Rastier's *Meaning and Textuality* and put it into one simple sentence it would probably be something that says meaning is a complex encounter of literary norms and regulations, linguistic and circumstantial restrictions, and interpretative clues left by the author of the text.

The fact that the number of viewpoints is unlimited to a certain degree does not entail that one is allowed to mind her own business about the meaning and maintain that the process of interpretation is a subjective and intensely personal activity. Neither Greimas nor Barthes in their search for the levels of description pays attention to the factors exterior to the text. Greimas is the only one — amongst the other two — who examines literally the deepest paradigmatics ever conceived of: the thing is that his semiotic square exhibits a sort of primordial pre-linguistic paradigmatics which hinges on logical forms ensuring the first arrival of linguistic entities. The narrative utterance is an instrument that comes to the fore during further textual analysis. Even though the concept of function proposed by Barthes differs from that of Greimas, it is not to say about the concept of narration. Barthes defines narration as the level that integrates functions into actions and vice versa (Barthes, 1966).

The same goes for Greimas' narrativity. Narrativisation is not only a mandatory requirement proposed by a limited circle of explorers but also a popular trend permeating the plethora of various fields. Gerald Prince argues that one has compelling reasons to declare the narrativist turn in the light of novel types of thinking and making philosophy, which gives narratives the name of a pretty widespread «hermeneutic grid» (Prince, 2004). Thus, Greimas echoes the intellectual mood of the century when he devises universalist narrative grammar, which is a tool for

getting to the bottom of textual artifacts and at the same time a method that enables us to be familiarised with, as Thomas Pavel says, the «universally present level» which is relevant not as much to a particular case of articulated meaning as to the production of meaning in general (Pavel, 2004). Greimas in collaboration with Joseph Court s elucidates the components of the narrative syntax, linking structural investigations to skeleton-like binary units described through transformations (signifying variables versus states of things), signifying constants, and corresponding agents as authors of actions versus patients, which are objects or objectified subjects of exchange.

#### **4. The structural narrative analysis of *William Wilson* written by E.A. Poe**

Since each narrative component is about transformations within a semantic universe, be it individual or collective, the logical category of modality comes into play: modality literally makes things happen, activating subjects of doings, subjects of states, and modal/descriptive objects. In other words, narrative utterances are modal in the first place.

Besides, in the narrative picture of the world, human actions consist of competencies, the presupposed element that modalises performances, which is, in turn, the presupposing element. The utterance of doing, which overdetermines the utterance of state, articulates a narrative program (NP) depicting the narrative trajectory completed by an actor at a particular stage. Those NP in which competence is acquired gain the quality of being instrumental, which is not to say about basic NP, are performance-oriented. In his famous book titles *Semiotic analysis of discourse* Courtés ventured out into the narrative analysis of 1) the social phenomenon of strikes and 2) G. Maupassant's story. I would love to do something similar with Edgar Allan Poe's short story *William Wilson* which is dry regarding the plot details but tremendously multilayered, susceptible to the plurality of interpretations. To start off, my analysis involves the syntactic structure unraveling actants (subjects and objects) and types of relations between them.

This analysis will show semiotic formalisation at work. Grosso modo, the recurrent theme of Poe's story has to do with doppelgangers that, by the very fact of their existence, undermine one's identity, one's knowledge of the self. The principal character starts with being confident in his longings, even malicious ones, and, by the end, totally loses identity, the firm ground, during the instance when he finds out that the stranger, who had been chasing him his entire life, is himself. Yet the detail indicating a splitting ego of Poe's character is clear from the outset: he says his name is William Wilson and hastily adds that it is not his name.

The doppelganger emerges as a symptom of self-alienation the main character undergoes, or William Wilson gets his name and, accordingly, the first notion of his own self thanks to the doppelganger, that is, the integral, all-naming, intelligible part of him; William Wilson steps on the path of evil, that is to say, gaining profit from those who are weak in body and mind, because the doppelganger talks him

into this, or, quite the opposite, William Wilson's double plays the role of super-ego inducing the feeling of guilt and holding back from committing callous acts — these questions are among the most common ones.

Usually, attention is drawn toward the etymology of the character's name. Perhaps the expressions «will I am» and «son of will», which cohabit within his name and surname, imply not so much the will or its absence, which constitutes the internal logic of his deeds, as the non-authentic and non-autonomous nature of Poe's hero. Since his name is based upon the repetitive words that confuse the context of proper names and the context of general concepts (will), it is obvious that such an incongruous blend aims at creating dissonance and building existential tension.

The story narrated by William Wilson contains several narrative programs, that are not always connected smoothly. NP in which the moment of losing balance is fixed is the following: NP1 = F1 ( $S_2 \rightarrow (S_1 \vee O)$ ).  $S_2$  stands for a boy who looks like William Wilson (at this stage the reader is ignorant that this boy is a double),  $S_1$  for William Wilson himself, and O for the feeling of dominance. The boy (anti-subject, or opponent) who looks like William Wilson (subject, or hero) disjoins him from the feeling of dominance at school. Then William Wilson makes an attempt to harm or kill his school rival: NP2 = F2 ( $S_1 \rightarrow (S_2 \vee O_1)$ ), where  $O_1$  is the boy's life. Reciprocity between two programs exemplifies the structure of negative exchange, which is the portrayal of «mutual» deprivation with counter-gifts in the center of action:  $F1 (S_2 \rightarrow (S_1 \vee O)) \leftrightarrow F2 (S_1 \rightarrow (S_2 \vee O_1))$ .

The point is that William Wilson falls short of NP2. The story's finale is about making a circular movement towards the initial ego which, after localising the threat, endures a symbolic death. Poe brings in the secondary character, Mr. Glendinning, who plays a part in punishing William Wilson and marks the second case of his debasement. In NP3 William Wilson disjoins Mr. Glendinning ( $S_3$ ) from a large amount of money ( $O_2$ ) when gambling: NP3 = F3 ( $S_1 \rightarrow (S_3 \vee O_2)$ ). Afterwards, the doppelganger pops in and draws the attention of the gambling audience to the high cards hidden in William's coat. As a result, he leaves a room and drops out of Oxford University in disgrace. Suppose our hero is manipulated by the double, which makes him cheat on Mr. Glendinning. The structure of manipulation lies in two utterances of doing: NP4 = F3 ( $S_2 \rightarrow F4 (S_1 \rightarrow (S_3 \vee O_2))$ ). Prior to NP4 the situation of attribution unfurls: NP5 = F5 ( $S_2 \rightarrow (S_1 \wedge O_3)$ ). With the help of the doppelganger, William Wilson acquires the competence of wanting-to-cheat ( $O_3$ ) which is presented in the form of virtual modality. Equipped with the competence necessary for fulfilling an act of cheating, William Wilson appropriates the money of poor Mr. Glendinning. Whether William is framed up or it was his own choice to take advantage in such a dishonest manner, this question is disambiguated in the following sentence: «When, therefore, Mr. Preston reached me that which he had picked up upon the floor, and near the folding-doors of the apartment, it was with an astonishment nearly bordering upon terror, that I perceived my own already hanging on my arm (where I had no doubt unwittingly placed it) and that



the one presented me was but its exact counterpart in every, in even the minutest possible particular» (Poe, 1850).

The chronological succession of events postulates the act of Mr. Preston, who gives the coat, as anterior, and the (passive) act of William, who receives it, as posterior, under the condition that it is the same coat. However, in a given context, there are two different coats for William and one and the same for Mr. Preston, who «overlooks» the difference. The principal hero is the only person who sees two coats. In addition, William says nothing about not only being unfairly blamed but also about the coat that is not his, as if nobody could have believed in an imaginary enemy anyway. The third scene in which the main character stops fleeing from the ever-lasting enemy resolves the mystery. William Wilson stumbles upon him at the last-straw ball masquerade. He acquires the modal object of value ( $O_4$ ), which is an emotion and a strong intention, wanting-to-kill ( $NP6 = F6 (S_1 \rightarrow (S_1 \wedge O_4))$ ), and kills the life-long cause of his moral sufferings ( $NP7 = F7 (S_1 \rightarrow (S_2 \vee O_1))$ ). The final step, which resumes the hero's narrative trajectory, presupposes the subject (sender, or judge) that is expected to verify and ascertain the fulfillment of the task and evaluate its quality. In this story, William Wilson is the subject of sanction resulting in punishment inflicted upon the addressee, our antagonist. The object taken from the double in the utterance of the disjunctive state is life ( $O1$ ). Now when the secret is revealed, the two subjects of doings and states observed in narrative programs synchronise into one actor that faces a total pulverisation of the self in the last minutes of conscious life. William Wilson has understood everything at last by looking at himself in the mirror in which he expected to see the enemy. Strangely enough, the synchronisation of two opposing elements of his consciousness gave rise to the appearance of the third superior judging «entity» which gives an account of what happened with two others: «You have conquered, and I yield. Yet, henceforward art thou also dead—dead to the World, to Heaven and to Hope» (Poe, 1850).

Why does the story, narrated from the first-person perspective, culminate in the first-person perspective sentences put into quotation marks at the end? If William Wilson is dead, no matter symbolically or physically, who is talking then? The personhood of a talking being is of second importance insofar as it highlights and concludes alienation. The value of attaining self-knowledge is death.

According to Courtés' typology of discourses, Poe's story should be understood as a conflation of theological discourses, in which the narrative programs of manipulation prevail, and adventure stories, abundant in actions (Courtés, 1991). It does not take much effort to realise the oddness of the words «theology» and «adventure» when applying them to what happens in the small world of William Wilson. Disregarding the problematic topic of typology, I want to sketch out some points that this austere formalisation reaches. First of all, the formula shows that the situations of deprivation dominate the plot and overdetermine the course of the hero's actions. Those rare narrative programs representing attribution boil down to the situations in which familiarisation with competence is necessary for exerting an action. Additionally, the structure of manipulation puts on display the

troubled self of the subject whose grasp of reality is unclear and hazy one way or another. The last action illustrates autosanction affirmed by the syncretisation of the subject and anti-subject.

## **Conclusion**

The framework of Greimassian narrative grammar answers the question of what exists and how to express what signifies what. Therefore, the narrative organisation of *William Wilson* describes transformations fixed in utterances of states and doings and ceases to convey processual subtleties unable to be formalised. For instance, NP2 is to reconstruct the scene of attempted murder, but how it is written suggests that the murder was actually committed. Indeed, the formulas of narrative programs fail to catch the moments of uncertainty — be or not to be, kill or not to kill — indicating what might have entered the scene but did not. Barthes's narrative vocabulary that includes the concept of catalysers accounting for the possible underdeveloped, not yet developed, or not bound to be developed trajectories can better manage the data, which exists in absentia. The explanatory force of Barthes' model of structuring narrative discourses is extremely helpful in filling the gaps that the actantial narrative grammar misses. Having nothing to do with actions and thus being excluded from the formula, the atmosphere of imprisonment and jarringly minimalistic darkness emblematic of Poe's writing narrates a lot about the protagonist/antagonist.

In sum, Greimas subordinates the meaning of meaning to that of importance. The surface narrative syntax picks up only relevant and significant information and locks it up in condensed symbols that communicate narrative situations. Plot elements of a text have meaning in so far as they seem important and functional. In this light, narrativisation is a procedure of ascribing importance to several things weaving the text. Deep levels of meaning postulated by Greimas are beyond the scope of this article: that is why Poe's *William Wilson* was observed from the perspective of the surface narrative syntax. Greimassian grammar reduces the text to narrative structures and creates a class of difficulties that hinders the reader's progress in spotting slight changes in meaning right away. Barthes' parlance guarantees more loose textual interpretation so that the content of the written piece does not suffer much from being unfairly truncated.

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#### АНАЛІЗ СТРУКТУРНОГО НАРАТИВУ В ЗАСТОСУВАННІ: ВИПАДОК ПОЯСНЕННЯ ЗНАЧЕННЯ

У статті детально розглянуто тему маніфестації значення та позначення, здійсненого актом інтерпретації, що зводиться до пошуку організаційних принципів тексту та правил поєднання. Мова наративу — це набір генераційних і трансформаційних миттєвостей, що маскують текстовий зміст та ініціюють інтерпретацію як таку. У статті обговорюються рівні опису, які допомагають висвітлити поняття зміни, або різниці в ступенях, як результату одночасно штучної операції переписування тексту на різних методологічних засадах і реальної динаміки, обґрунтованої очевидними шарами сюжету. Елементарні одиниці артикуляції сенсу, охоплені цією статтею, передбачають діапазон від розподільних та інтеграційних наративних одиниць Ролана Барта до глибинних і поверхневих структур Альгірдаса Жульєна Греймаса з особливим наголосом на наративних програмах і наративному аналізі, що є тут головним предметом уваги. Зрештою, аналітичні інструменти, розроблені Греймасом, ефективно адаптовані для інтерпретації оповідання Едгара Алана По «Вільям Вілсон». Саме оповідання інтерпретується через наративну формалізацію, яка полягає в тому, щоб говорити про трансформації сюжету в термінах висловлювань станів і висловлювань дії. У рамках наративних структур, які виникають на шляху до формалізації «Вільяма Вілсона», невеликі зміни в наративних траєкторіях здаються такими, що перебувають поза фокусом та не підлягають прочитанню. На відміну від цього, бачення Бартом того, про що йдеться в тексті, дає читачеві змогу бути причетним до більш вільної текстової інтерпретації, отримати більш різноманітний, деталізований досвід у схопленні найменшого руху та смакуванні кожного нюансу загального сценічного тла. Ця стаття послуговується структурним наративним аналізом, викладеним у наративній граматиці Греймаса, що досягає кульмінації в особливому різновиді строгого наративного абсолютизму. Крім того, стаття дає ключ до кількох альтернативних цікавих поглядів, представлених Бартом.

**Ключові слова:** наративні одиниці, наративні вирази, ступені опису, каталізатори, функції, Греймас.