

# 1. STRUCTURAL RELATIONS: HOMOLOGATION

## SUMMARY

A structure is composed of at least two elements, known as terms, linked to each other by at least one relation. By formulating a typology of relations we can predict various kinds of structures. Distinctions can be drawn between comparative relations (identity, similarity, alterity, opposition, homologation), presential relations (presupposition, mutual exclusion, etc.) and others. Out of the many simple structures used to characterize the role of signifiers (elements of expression) and/or signifieds (content) in a semiotic act, we have chosen to focus on homologation. Homologation is the relation between (at least) two pairs of opposite elements, such that for two oppositions A/B and C/D, one can say that A is to B as C is to D. For example, in a given text, life (A) is to death (B) as positive (C) is to negative (D).

## 1. THEORY

### 1.1 STRUCTURE DEFINED

Let us posit that any signifying unit<sup>1</sup> may be analyzed in terms of structure, and that any structure may be broken down into terms (or *relata* – *relatum* in the singular) linked by at least one relation. By definition, the inventory of terms that can invest a structure is *a priori* infinite, whereas the inventory of relations is limited, although not closed (since relations may vary depending on the analytical objectives and the classes of objects being analyzed).

We will say that the minimal structure is composed of two terms linked by one relation (one relation that we are describing, anyway). Thus, fire / water is a minimal structure (of the signified) in "firewater", whose terms are related by opposition. In "fire is luminous water", the oppositional relation is accompanied by a comparative relation (a metaphor).

NOTE: OTHER POSSIBLE DEFINITIONS OF THE MINIMAL STRUCTURE

Our definition of the minimal structure can be expanded to include cases in which the relation is between a term and itself (a reflexive relation).

Hjelmslev (\*) has a more restrictive definition of the minimal structure than we do; he views a structure as "an autonomous entity of internal dependencies", that is, a relation between relations. By this definition, the minimal structure would entail two relations linked by a third relation, and would customarily involve four elements. A homology between two oppositions is in fact a minimal structure of this kind. However, other kinds of minimal structures are possible. Suppose that  $r$  = a relation and  $R$  = a relation between relations. A minimal structure could include only two elements, linked either by two different relations:  $A r_1 B R A r_2 B$ , in which one of the terms refers to itself (a reflexive relation), or linked by a single relation:  $A r A, R A r B$ . In theory, a structure could even comprise just one term, linked to itself by two different relations:  $A r_1 A R A r_2 A$ .

### 1.2 STRUCTURES COMPOSED OF SIGNIFIERS, SIGNIFIEDS AND SIGNS

Considering the signifier/signified opposition (or expression/content) contained in any sign, there are three basic kinds of structural analysis one can perform, depending on whether the structure includes (1) only the signifier (e.g., an analysis limited to the versification of a poem), (2) only the signified (e.g., a traditional thematic analysis), or (3) both the signifier and the signified (e.g., an analysis of the relations between the sounds and the meanings of the words used for rhyming in a poem). In the sample analysis at the end of this chapter, we will address all three kinds of structures.

### 1.3 A TYPOLOGY OF RELATIONS

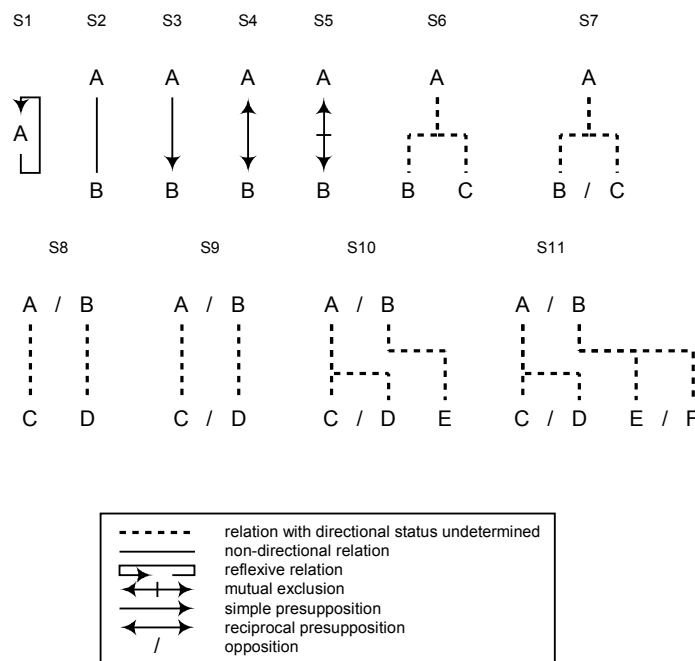
By formulating a typology of relations, we can predict various kinds of structures. A relation may be characterized according to numerous criteria. We will distinguish somewhat arbitrarily between what we will call "formal criteria" (reflexive/transitive, directional/non-directional, monadic/polyadic relations, and others) and what we will call "semantic criteria" (comparative relations (identity, similarity, alterity, opposition, homologation), presential relations (presupposition, mutual exclusion, etc.) and others).

<sup>1</sup> Except for signifying units that are considered impossible to break down, either *de facto* or from a purely methodological standpoint.

The following diagram illustrates a few possible structures. They were produced by combining some formal criteria (direction, the number of elements linked together) and some semantic criteria (opposition, presupposition) that allow us to characterize the relations.

In order to increase the representational capabilities of our diagram, for the structures that include three terms or more (from S6 to S11), we have chosen to leave the directional status of the relations undetermined (as indicated by the dotted lines). We could give a profusion of specifications for these undetermined relations, such as non-directional, unidirectional, and so forth. We could have a structure S6a, for example, in which B and C are linked to A by simple presupposition (unidirectional, therefore). Likewise, we could derive numerous other structures from the ones given here by adding terms or by adding semantic relations. For instance, if we add a relation of opposition between D and E in structure 10, we obtain a new structure, in which an opposition between two terms is linked to an opposition between three terms<sup>2</sup>.

*Diagram of some possible structures*



### 1.3.1 FORMAL TYPOLOGIES

#### 1.3.1 MONADIC / POLYADIC RELATIONS

Depending on the number of terms linked together, we refer to a relation as monadic (S1) or polyadic (S2, S3, S4 and S5 are dyadic; S6 and S7 are triadic; S8 and S9 are tetradic, S10 is pentadic, and so on).

##### 1.3.1.2 REFLEXIVE / TRANSITIVE RELATIONS

A relation is said to be reflexive if it links a term to itself (S1). It is said to be transitive if it links a term to another term (S2).

To take a grammatical example, in "She dressed herself", "dressed" is a reflexive verb, in that the action of dressing starts with "she" and comes back to her, so to speak; conversely, in "She dressed her daughter", "dressed" is a transitive verb, since the action starts with "she" and crosses over to "her daughter", ending there. The poetic function – one of the functions of language as defined by Jakobson – consists of a reflexive relation in which the message refers to itself. All relations whose names use the prefix "self-" are reflexive (self-definition, self-representation, self-reference, etc.).

NOTE: REFLEXIVE / TRANSITIVE RELATIONS AND MONADIC / POLYADIC RELATIONS

A monadic relation is necessarily reflexive (a single element is linked to itself); a polyadic relation is necessarily transitive.

<sup>2</sup> Oppositions are not always dyadic, and one sometimes finds triadic and tetradic oppositions; for instance, in French Canadian rural legend, the three following spaces form a triadic opposition: forest / countryside / city.

### 1.3.1.3 NON-DIRECTIONAL / DIRECTIONAL RELATIONS

A relation is said to be non-directional when it is established either by the facts or through methodological reduction (simplification) that it is not directed toward any of the terms involved (S2 and S6). A relation is said to be directional when it is said to link one or more source terms to one or more target terms. It is said to be unidirectional, or asymmetrical, if it links one or more source terms to one or more target terms, but not the reverse (S3, for instance); if the reverse is also true, then it is a bidirectional, symmetrical or reciprocal relation (S4 and S5).

### 1.3.2 SEMANTIC TYPOLOGIES

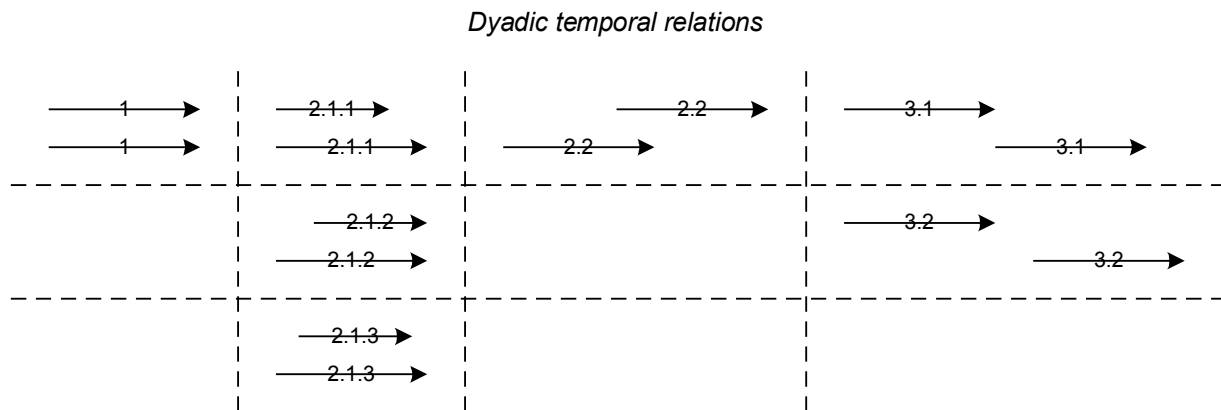
We propose a methodological distinction between four basic kinds of semantic relations: (1) comparative relations, such as identity, similarity, simple alterity, oppositional alterity and homologation; (2) temporal relations, such as simultaneity and succession; (3) presential relations, such as simple presupposition, reciprocal presupposition and mutual exclusion; (4) inclusive relations, such as set relations (between a class and an element of it), mereological relations (between a whole and its parts), and type-token relations (between elements considered as types and/or tokens); and (5) other semantic relations.

#### 1.3.2.1 TEMPORAL RELATIONS

Simultaneity (or concomitance) is the relation between terms associated with the same initial and final temporal positions, and thus with the same temporal range (duration). We can distinguish between (1) strict simultaneity (as in our definition) and the following kinds of (2) partial simultaneity: (2.1) inclusive simultaneity (in which the first time period is entirely contained within the second, and is exceeded by it); (2.1.1) inclusive simultaneity in which the initial positions coincide; (2.1.2) inclusive simultaneity in which the final positions coincide; (2.1.3) inclusive simultaneity in which the initial and final positions do not coincide; (2.2) simultaneity-succession (partial simultaneity and succession) (see 4).

Succession is the relation between terms in which the final temporal position of one term precedes the initial position of the other term. (3.1) Immediate succession implies that the initial position of the second term comes immediately after the final position of the first term; otherwise succession is said to be (3.1) mediate or delayed. We can also distinguish between (3) strict succession (addressed by the preceding definitions) and (4) simultaneity-succession, a form of partial simultaneity and succession (see 2.2).

The following diagram illustrates the main dyadic temporal relations.



#### 1.3.2.2 PRESENTIAL RELATIONS

Presupposition is a relation in which the presence of one term (called the "presupposing term") implies the presence of another term (called the "presupposed term"). This type of relation can be described as "both ... and ..." (both one term and the other term). Simple presupposition (or unilateral dependence) is a unidirectional relation (A presupposes B, but not the reverse); for example, the presence of a wolf presupposes the presence of a mammal (since the wolf is a mammal), but the presence of a mammal does not presuppose the presence of a wolf (since the mammal could be a dog, for instance). Reciprocal presupposition (or interdependence) is a bidirectional relation (A presupposes B and B presupposes A); for example, the back side of a sheet of paper presupposes the front, and vice versa. We can represent simple presupposition by an arrow (A presupposes B would be written as:  $A \rightarrow B$ , or  $B \leftarrow A$ ) and reciprocal presupposition by an arrow with two heads ( $A \leftrightarrow B$ ).

Mutual exclusion is the relation between two elements that cannot be present together. This type of relation can be described as "either ... or ..." (either one term or the other term). For example, a single element cannot be

alive and dead at the same time in reality (which does not necessarily apply in a semiotic act, such as a fantasy story)<sup>3</sup>. We can represent mutual exclusion by using two arrows pointing toward each other ( $(A \rightarrow \leftarrow B)$ ) or two arrows separated by a line ( $A \leftarrow | \rightarrow B$ ).

If we consider the presence of the terms from an incremental and quantitative standpoint, we can see two kinds of correlation between terms. The correlation is said to be converse, or direct, if (1) an increase in one of the two terms is accompanied by an increase in the other and (2) a decrease in one term leads to a decrease in the other. This type of correlation can be described as "the more... the more..." or "the less... the less...". The correlation is said to be inverse if an increase in one of the two terms is accompanied by a decrease in the other, and vice versa. This can be described as "the more... the less..." or "the less... the more...". Converse and inverse correlation can be compared to reciprocal presupposition and mutual exclusion, respectively. For more details, see the chapter on the tensive model.

#### NOTE: TEMPORAL RELATIONS AND OTHER SEMANTIC RELATIONS

What are the connections between temporal relations and other semantic relations? A non-temporal semantic relation may or may not be accompanied by a temporal relation. For example, "wolf" presupposes "mammal", since the wolf is necessarily a mammal (but not the reverse: a mammal is not necessarily a wolf), but no particular temporal relation need be established between the two terms. However, a bank robbery necessarily presupposes a previous stage, even reduced to the simplest terms, such as coming up with a plan (but the reverse does not hold: coming up with a plan does not necessarily imply that it will be carried out). This illustrates our view that presupposition is not correlated *a priori* with a temporal relation, despite the presence of the prefix "pre-"; however, in order to avoid violent semantic shocks, we can use "implication" when the presupposed element is temporally posterior (this is why we have said that coming up with a plan does not necessarily *imply* carrying it out).

### 1.3.2.3 COMPARATIVE RELATIONS

Identity is the relation between terms that have exactly the same characteristics. Alterity is a relation whose minimal condition is the presence in one of the compared terms of one characteristic that the other term does not have.

#### NOTE: IDENTITY AND TRANSFORMATION

There is a distinction to be made between ipsative identity, an element's self-identity (an element is identical to itself) and ordinary identity (an element is identical to another element that has exactly the same properties).

Transformation is the process by which a relation other than identity becomes established between what a term was and what it has become. The term also designates the result of this process. Transformation may be represented by an apostrophe, where *O'* indicates the transformation of an object *O*, for instance.

Similarity is a relation of partial identity between two terms, whose minimal condition is that they have at least one property in common and at least one property that is different. A distinction can be made between inclusive similarity (where one of the terms has all of the characteristics of another, with at least one characteristic more) and non-inclusive similarity<sup>4</sup>.

Identity and alterity can be considered as categorial or incremental. "Comparability" is the name we will give to a relation of partial identity/alterity. "Similarity" is the term we will use for the sub-species of comparability in which identity prevails over alterity, and the other sub-species of comparability, in which alterity prevails over identity, we will call "dissimilarity". The sub-species of comparability in which identity and alterity are equal remains to be named.

Opposition is a relation between terms that are more or less incompatible (in this respect it has some ties to mutual exclusion). We can distinguish two kinds of opposition: contrariety (e.g., true / false, life / death, rich / poor) and contradiction (e.g., true / not-true, life / not-life, rich / not-rich). Depending on the point of view, opposition may be considered as: (1) a comparative relation on the same level as the others, (2) a sub-species of alterity, or (3) a sub-species of comparability. To clarify the third point of view, elements that are set in opposition are comparable: day and night can be opposed because both are times of day (a shared property). A forward slash represents a relation of opposition between terms, such as life / death.

In semiotics, when two terms of an opposition are co-present in a single semiotic act, or co-present within close context, to be more restrictive, it is termed a "contrast". For example, there is no contrast in "I'm drinking water"; there is in "They're as compatible as oil and water". For a more in-depth analysis of the notion of opposition, refer to the chapter on the semiotic square.

<sup>3</sup> Alternation is a relation of mutual exclusion in which one of the two terms must necessarily be present (the absence of both terms is excluded); the two terms are said to be "alternating". Thus, in a realist text, if a creature cannot be alive and dead at the same time, it *must* be one or the other.

<sup>4</sup> Comparative relations, as we have seen in the definitions given, have a parallel with mereological relations.

We will treat homologation as a complex form of comparative relation. As we will see later, it involves relations of similarity and opposition.

NOTE: COMPARATIVE RELATIONS AND RELATIONS OF COMPARISON

We must distinguish comparative relations from the metaphorical comparison that can be created within a semiotic act between a comparing term and a compared term. For instance, in Baudelaire's poem "The Albatross", a metaphorical comparison is created between the poet (compared) and an albatross (comparing).

### 1.3.2.4 RELATIONS OF INCLUSIVENESS

Decomposition is a mereological relation (that is, it concerns whole-part relations), specific to an element and its constituent parts: for example, the relation between a word and the letters that compose it or between a signified (such as the meaning of a word) and the semes that compose it (its semantic features).

Classification is a set relation, specifically between a class (a set) and an element indexed by it (an element of the class)<sup>5</sup>. The element can represent a class itself: for example, the class //words// contains the class //verbs// (a class within a class) and the latter contains the verb "to like" (an element of a class). Double forward slashes can be used to represent a class (//class//).

A type-token relation is what we have between two elements if one of them is defined as a type and the other as a token of the type. For example, if a wolf is standing in front of me, this particular wolf is a token of the abstract type, "wolf"; if I am reading a poem, this particular text is a token of the type, "poem". Type-token relations are linked to classification, in that one can relate a given class to a type, of which the classified element is a token. A token may thus be considered as a representative of a given class. For example, a particular word ("banana") is a token of the type representing the class of words to which it belongs ("noun").

### 1.3.2.5 OTHER SEMANTIC RELATIONS

We should mention a few other possible semantic relations, including (1) spatial relations (some of which resemble temporal relations: for example, juxtaposition is similar to immediate succession), (2) case relations, which are used in semantic graphs (see the corresponding chapter), and what we will call (3) systemic relations (symbolic, semi-symbolic and semiotic relations; see the chapter on figurative, thematic and axiological analysis).

## 1.4 CATEGORIAL / INCREMENTAL RELATIONS

Some relations are categorial: they either are or are not, with no possible intermediate position. For instance, in theory, two terms are either opposite or they are not; there is no possible intermediate position. Other relations may be considered from either a categorial or an incremental perspective. From a categorial standpoint, for example, there is a relation of mutual exclusion between two terms if and only if each time one of the terms appears, the other term is absent and vice versa; from an incremental standpoint, there is mutual exclusion if this situation applies nearly always, usually or most of the time (the mathematical limit being half of the cases plus one). However, homologation does not fit within an incremental perspective, because one of the elements of the opposition sometimes appears without its counterpart from the other opposition in the homology. Moreover, quantitative considerations are not the only ones, and in order to determine whether a relation is active or not, one must consider the quality, or significance, of the elements that express it.

## 1.5 RELATIONS, OBSERVING SUBJECTS AND TIME

As with all analytical tools, for each kind of relation one can (and sometimes must) specify for which observing subject the relation is valid and in which time interval it is valid. A particular character may consider certain values as homologous, and then change his mind, for instance.

## 1.6 THE STRUCTURE OF HOMOLOGATION

Another chapter of this book could rightfully have fit into this chapter on structures: the chapter on the semiotic square (which concerns a relation of opposition). Instead, we have chosen to devote a separate chapter to the

<sup>5</sup> Zilberberg (2000) uses the following two elementary operations: blending and sorting. For example, one could say that purity is the result of a "sorting process, following a principle of exclusion" and impurity is the result of a process of "blending, following a principle of inclusion and mixing" (Fontanille, 2003, p. 253). Let us make a few comparisons between decomposition [breaking something down] and classification. Although putting something together (the reverse of breaking it down) and blending it can be considered as synonymous, breaking something down does not necessarily imply sorting (one can break a computer down into its components without necessarily sorting them). Moreover, although sorting is done according to a classification, a classification may involve only one element to be classified, whereas sorting implies at least two elements.

semiotic square, and in this chapter, we will examine homologation in more detail. To see other analyses with homologation, consult the chapter on figurative, thematic and axiological analysis.

### 1.6.1 HOMOLOGATION DEFINED

Homologation is a relation between (at least) two pairs of opposite elements, such that for two oppositions A/B and C/D, one can say that (usually or always) A is to B as C is to D<sup>6</sup>. The formal notation of a homology is written in the following manner: A : B :: C : D. For example, in our culture, white : black :: life : death :: positive : negative (white is to black as life is to death, as positive is to negative).

### 1.6.2 THE CONSTITUENT RELATIONS OF HOMOLOGATION

We shall say that a relation of similarity is established between the terms of one opposition of a homology and the corresponding terms of the other opposition (between A and C and between B and D) – just as it is between the two oppositions themselves.

In addition, there is a relation of simple or reciprocal presupposition between these corresponding terms. For example, there is a relation of simple presupposition if each time the theme of life comes up, it is put in a positive light, but that other things besides life are associated with a positive value. (In other words, life necessarily presupposes a positive value, but a positive value does not necessarily presuppose life).

#### NOTE: SOME DIFFICULTIES WITH ANALYSES USING HOMOLOGATION

When identifying a homologized structure, there are some common pitfalls to avoid:

1. Separating the terms of a single opposition (as in high / life :: low / death, instead of high / low :: life / death).
2. Inverting the relations between terms (such as positive / negative :: death / life instead of positive / negative :: life / death).
3. Using an opposition that is questionable, either in its formulation or in and of itself. For example, the pairs gain / loss or excess / lack would be preferable to a less precise opposition such as profusion / loss. Likewise, one should choose an opposition like high / low over an "opposition" like cave / moon (except in a special case), which is one expression of high / low. (Be careful not to confuse the elements being classified (moon and cave) with the criteria of classification (high and low).)
4. Bringing oppositions together with no evidence that there is homologation; or concluding that an opposition Z is homologized with an opposition X just because Z is homologized with Y and Y is homologized with X.

<sup>6</sup> According to Greimas and Courtés (1982, p. 144), the relation between A and B on the one hand, and between C and D on the other, "is identical and can be recognized as one of the elementary logical relations (contradiction, contrariety, complementarity)". It is at least clear that homologation has as its basis a relation of similarity between the corresponding terms of each opposition and between the oppositions themselves. According to Rastier (1997, p. 38): "Matrices of homologation play an eminent role in the methodology of the social sciences (in Dumézil and Lévi-Strauss, for example): they found in fact qualitative analogical reasoning". We should add that quantitative analogical reasoning is most rigorously manifested in the rule of three (for example, 10 is to 100 as 100 is to 1000).

## 2. APPLICATION: "PATTERN POEM WITH AN ELUSIVE INTRUDER" BY REINHARD DÖHL

\* \* \*

"Pattern Poem with an Elusive Intruder"  
Reinhard Döhl (1982 [1965])

Apfel Apfel Apfel Apte  
Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel A  
Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfe  
Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel Apf  
Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel A  
Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel A  
Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel /  
Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel Apf  
Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel Wurm Ap  
Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel /  
Apfel Apfel Apfel Apfel  
Apfel Apfel Apfel A  
Apfel Apfel A

\* \* \*

"Pattern Poem with an Elusive Intruder" by Reinhard Döhl (1982 [1965]), a seemingly innocuous work, tells the tale of a drama, we might say, in which an apple ("*Apfel*" in German) is eaten away by a worm ("*Wurm*" in German). Even in an object of concrete poetry this simple, we can identify quite a few oppositions between signifiers and signifieds<sup>7</sup>.

The following symbols will be used: Elements belonging to the plane of signifiers are indicated in italics; for elements belonging to the plane of signifieds, the signifieds themselves are in single quotation marks and their semes (semantic features) are set off by forward slashes; the regular quotation marks indicate a sign (an element made up of a signifier and a signified), such as "*Wurm*" (the italics simply indicate that the word comes from a foreign language, German in this case). An asterisk indicates that the term in question is the only one of the pair present in the work. An opposition with no asterisk indicates that both terms are co-present in the work; the opposition then creates what is known in semiotics as a "contrast"<sup>8</sup>.

NOTE: DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN VISUAL SIGNIFIERS AND SIGNIFIEDS

The distinction between signifiers and signifieds seems to be more subtle for visual elements than textual ones. Does the background / shape rapport relate to the signifiers or the signifieds (since it concerns a certain meaning effect)? For the strictly visual elements, we will use a "natural" division between visual signifiers and signifieds, and not anticipate what would result from a more in-depth classification. This problem will be addressed in the chapter on semic analysis.

The following table presents a few of the oppositions between visual signifiers.

*Some oppositions between signifiers in "Pattern Poem with an Elusive Intruder"*

N°	Term 1	Term 2	Remarks
01	<i>single word</i>	<i>repeated word</i>	The word " <i>Wurm</i> " is not repeated.
02	<i>encompassed</i>	<i>encompassing</i>	" <i>Wurm</i> " is encompassed by what surrounds it: the words " <i>Apfel</i> " and the shape they form.
03	<i>uppercase</i>	<i>lowercase</i>	The opposition lowercase / uppercase has semantic correlations, of course, but here we are focusing only on the visual dimension of this opposition.
04	<i>black</i>	<i>white</i>	
05	<i>color</i>	<i>white</i>	Black and white, as shades rather than colors, are in opposition with green, both separately and together.
06	<i>continuous</i>	<i>discontinuous</i>	This work exhibits several tensions between continuity and discontinuity. For instance, the expected discontinuity between words – there should be a space between the words; the capital letters indicate this as well – is in opposition with the continuity between the words as they actually are in the picture. Because of the contact between <i>p-f</i> from one line to the next, we also have a disruption of the normal discontinuity between the letters of a printed text, both in general and in this work (except for the contact just mentioned); the opposition <i>continuous / discontinuous</i> takes shape as <i>letters touching / letters not touching</i> . If one is strongly inclined to expect completeness, the opposition <i>continuous / discontinuous</i> takes the form <i>complete / incomplete</i> ; the letters at the edge of the apple are incomplete.
07	<i>straight</i>	<i>curved</i>	The letters are formed from straight and curved segments. The shape of the apple is curved (strictly speaking, there is no continuous curved line: the poem's round shape is created by looking at it according to Gestalt principles).
08	<i>concave</i>	<i>convex</i>	The letters have concave and convex shapes. The shape of the apple is convex except for the upper right part, which is concave, making it easy to recognize the iconic apple.
09	<i>column</i>	<i>row</i>	In addition to the usual horizontal, linear structure of a text, there is a signifying vertical structure (vertically organized diagrams of this type are generally non-signifying in non-concrete poetry; even more so in prose). Rather than superposing the words precisely, the artist chose to offset the words from one line to the next: one letter to the left in the lower line, then one letter to the right in the line below that. This zigzag structure creates dynamic effects that are undoubtedly more significant than if he had simply superposed the words. It helps to make the " <i>Wurm</i> " less obvious.
10	<i>background</i>	<i>shape</i>	The relation between background / shape is complex in this work. On the one hand, the words can be interpreted as shapes set onto a white background (background 1). On the other hand, these shapes and this background can be seen as another background (background 2) over which a cut-out white shape is laid; this cut-out shape is what gives the outline of the apple. But in reality, all of the above is a two-dimensional shape, with no actual relation possible between background / shape.

What are the homologies that can be established between these oppositions<sup>9</sup>? We find two separate groups of homologies.

<sup>7</sup> The reproduction of the poem in *An Anthology of Concrete Poetry* (Döhl, 1967, [p. 83]) is in black and white; the one on the cover of *Rhétorique générale* (Groupe µ, 1982) is black, green and white, and is titled "*Dessin-poème avec élément insaisissable*". We have selected this version, and substituted the English title.

<sup>8</sup> In this analysis, there are no homologies established using oppositions that are not contrasts. However, it seems plausible that there may be homologies using two oppositions that are not contrasts. For example, a painting using only black and red indirectly suggests the complementary visual elements, which are white and green; neither of the oppositions (black / white and red / green) has both of its terms realized together in the painting.

<sup>9</sup> We would emphasize that our question does not exclude the possibility that a particular opposition might be homologous with one or more (other) oppositions that are not in the painting, and that oppositions outside the painting may form homologies with each other.



The first group:

<i>single word</i>	<i>repeated word</i>
<i>encompassed</i>	<i>encompassing</i>
<i>green</i>	<i>black</i>

The second group:

<i>white</i>	<i>black</i>
<i>background (1)</i>	<i>shape</i>
	<i>(2)</i>

Some explanations follow: The single word is green and encompassed; the repeated word is black and encompassing. However, everything that is encompassing is not a repeated word, since the shape of the apple encompasses all the words, for example, and groups of letters that don't make a word encompass graphic phemes (visual features that make up letters), a letter or a group of letters.

As we have already mentioned, there are two distinct backgrounds in this work: (1) the white background, onto which the letters seem to be "set" and (2) the background composed of the white background and the letters, onto which a circular white cut-out shape seems to be set. The opposition *background 1 / shape 1* is homologous to the opposition *white / black* (this is a subtle homology, since the shape is also made of a little color). We can establish a homology between *background 2 / shape 2* and *black / white* to a certain degree by establishing a quantitative and/or qualitative prominence of black over white in background 2.

The opposition *uppercase / lowercase* cannot be homologized to any other opposition in the painting, except possibly *straight / curved*, in an attenuated mode. The capital letters are made up entirely of straight lines; however, the lowercase letters are made either entirely of straight lines (the *l*) or of curved and straight lines. To actually establish homologation would require demonstrating that the curved lines predominate in some way (quantitatively or qualitatively).

The opposition *continuous / discontinuous*, a very general one, does not lend itself to establishing specific homologies; it has to be made more specific in order to do this: *Letters touching / letters not touching* is in fact homologous to *repeated word / single word*.

The rows and columns mentioned in our table correspond to patterns of relatively straight lines (the zigzag figure set into the columns derive from this kind of pattern). There is therefore no homology in this respect between *column / row* and *straight / curved*.

Our second table summarizes some oppositions between signifieds in the painting.

*Some oppositions between signifieds in "Pattern Poem with an Elusive Intruder"*

N°	Term 1	Term 2	Remarks
01	/apple/	/worm/	'Apple' and 'worm' are signifieds that are doubly present, first as linguistic content, next as iconic content (reinforced by the redundancy); in contrast with the apple, because of its long shape, the iconic signifier <i>worm</i> has as a substrate the graphic linguistic signifier itself. /Apple/ and /worm/ are semes representing the content of the signifieds with the same names.
02	*/perception/	/understanding/	In order to avoid confusing the opposition in art between abstract / concrete with the use of "concrete" in the label "concrete poetry", we are using the terms perception (concrete) / understanding (abstract). 'Worm' and 'apple' are elements that can be perceived, as opposed to elements such as glory and freedom, that can be understood.
03	*/animate/	/inanimate/	'Worm' and 'apple' are animate, that is, they belong to the kingdom of living creatures.
04	*/alive/	/dead/	'Worm' and 'apple' are animate beings that are "currently" alive, but destined to die. The worm emphasizes the inevitable "death" of the apple, whereas he himself, by feeding, is associated with a process of growth. Moreover, insofar as the apple and the worm are universal symbols of life and death, respectively, the semes /life/ and /death/ can be associated with them.
05	/animal/	/plant/	
06	/eater/	/food/ <sup>10</sup>	
07	/positive/	/negative/	Negative / positive value depends on the observer. For a human observer like the one this work postulates, the worm is negative and the apple positive. For one thing, the apple is a food for humans (but not the worm, except occasionally) and the worm threatens this food. Not only is it destructive, in contrast to the benign apple, but it attacks a product intended for humans. The association apple-worm cannot help but remind us of the association apple-serpent, which can only overdetermine the negative value of the worm.

The homologies between the semic oppositions in the table appear as follows:

<sup>10</sup> Or we could use the terms "host" and "parasite".

/apple/ /worm/  
 /animal/ /plant/  
 /eater/ /food/  
 /positive/ /negative/

NOTE: STRUCTURES OTHER THAN HOMOLOGATION

There are structural relations other than homology that can be established between certain elements in our tables. For instance, the oppositions *straight / curved* and *concave / convex curve*, while they don't form a homology, are related (the second opposition can be applied to the second term of the first opposition). The same goes for the oppositions /apple/ vs. /worm/ and /animate/ vs. /inanimate/: apple and worm are both animate. In our diagram, these structures correspond to a variation of S10, with term E deleted.

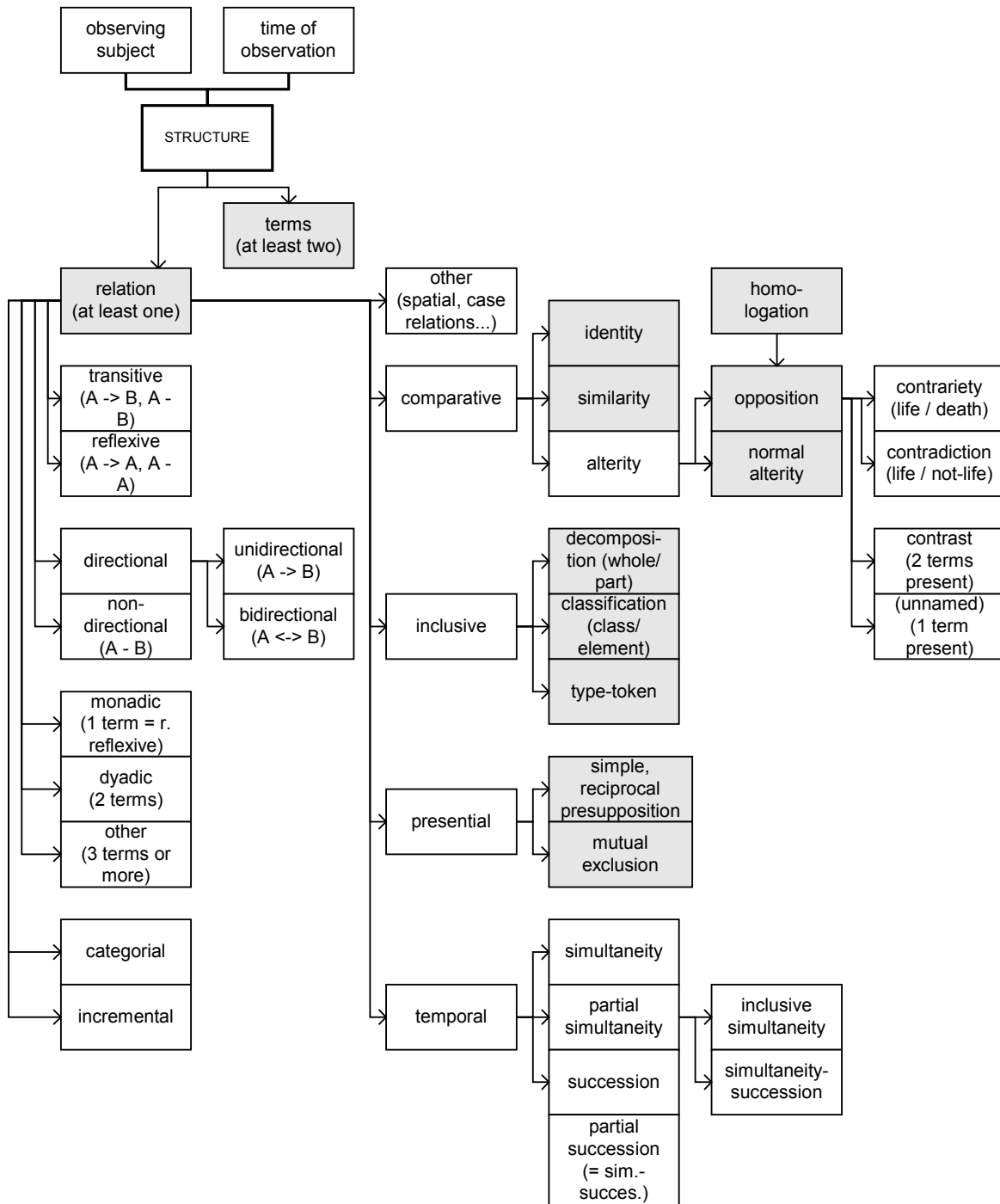
Our last table shows the homologies between an opposition of signifiers and an opposition of signifieds. These homologies are known as semi-symbolic relations (see the chapter on figurative, thematic and axiological analysis).

*Some homologies between oppositions of signifiers and oppositions of signifieds in "Pattern Poem with an Elusive Intruder"*

N°	Term 1	Term 2
01	<i>single word</i>	<i>repeated word</i>
02	<i>encompassed</i>	<i>encompassing</i>
03	<i>green</i>	<i>black</i>
04	/apple/	/worm/
05	/animal/	/plant/
06	/eater/	/food/
07	/positive/	/negative/

### 3. SUMMARY DIAGRAM

Summary diagram of structural relations



**LEGEND**

1. Vertical arrows: components (for ex., a homology is composed of oppositions)
2. Horizontal arrows: classification (for ex., a relation is classified as (a) directional or nondirectional and (b) categorical or incremental, and so on)
3. Bold-face link with no arrow: other relation

The results of the analysis depend on the time and the observer whose point of view is being reported.