7. THE CANONICAL NARRATIVE SCHEMA

SUMMARY

The canonical narrative schema (CNS), a tool used in Greimasian semiotics, can be used to describe an action as a structure consisting of five components. (1) The action component can be broken down into two components itself: (2) competence, which includes the conditions that are necessary in order to accomplish the action (wanting-to-do, having-to-do, knowing-how-to-do, and being-able-to-do) and (3) performance, the actual accomplishment of the action, made possible by the acquisition of competence. (4) Manipulation is the component that deals specifically with wanting-to-do and having-to-do. (5) The last component, sanction, has to do with evaluating whether the action was in fact accomplished, and the corresponding retribution (reward or punishment) that the performing subject has incurred. Here is an example of an action based on the CNS: The King asks (manipulation: having-to-do) the Prince to rescue the Princess (action). The Prince trains for combat (competence: knowing-how-to-do and being-able-to-do) and then rescues the Princess (performance). The King then grants him half of his kingdom and the hand of the Princess (sanction: positive retribution (reward)).

1. THEORY

1.1 OVERVIEW

In order to study the canonical narrative schema in detail, we must first present it in summary[1]. The canonical narrative schema (CNS) uses logical, temporal and semantic criteria to arrange the elements of an action (which may or may not be represented as narrative programs (NPs)) into a structure consisting of five components: (1) The action, which is broken down into two components itself: (2) competence (which includes the necessary prerequisites of the action: wanting-to-do, having-to-do, knowing-how-to-do, and being-able-to-do) and (3) performance (which is the actual realization of the action); (4) manipulation (the component concerned specifically with wanting-to-do and having-to-do); and (5) sanction (which includes evaluating the action and assigning the retribution it entails (reward or punishment). As a group, the components of the CNS constitute what might be called a comprehensive action; however, each individual component can itself be seen as an action (or an array of actions) and is amenable as such to description using the CNS. The CNS is "canonical" in that it adequately accounts for the general organization of action of a large number and variety of semiotic acts on various scales (as far as texts go, anything from a paragraph to a monumental work).

Above we mentioned logical, temporal and semantic organization. A few details are in order. The components are linked together by presuppositional relations. For example, the sanction (the presupposing term) presupposes the action (the presupposed term). (Later we will address these relations in more detail.) These presuppositions generally form the basis for relations of temporal succession (with the presupposed term being temporally anterior to the presupposing term)[2]. Finally, each component is an actional phase, and so each of its elements is assigned a specific semantic label (an element of manipulation, an element of sanction, etc.).

NOTE: TYPOLOGIZING SEMIOTIC ACTS WITH THE CNS

As is the case with other analytical tools (such as the actantial model and Jakobson's model of the functions of language), it is possible to produce typologies using the CNS, by distinguishing classes of semiotic units (texts, for example) either in terms of which element of the model is emphasized, or in terms of the particular hierarchical configuration between the constituent elements. Courtés (1991, pp. 101-102) proposes a typology based on the component of the CNS that is emphasized: "We should point out that all the components of the CNS are not necessarily used in a given discourse. On a broader level, moreover, this model could provide the basis for a typology of discourse: for example, one can see that while legal discourse in criminal cases is clearly focused on sanction, theological discourse would appear to lean in the opposite direction, toward manipulation; and adventure stories deal primarily with performance. To be sure, in these cases, one or another of the model's constituent elements is emphasized, but the other components are at least implicit. Thus, the penal code, which deals with sanction, can only operate in light of the actions that may be considered as evidence; and similarly, although theological discourse on redemption [...] emphasizes divine manipulation (particularly through the mechanism of "grace"), it is also partly oriented toward the Christian subject's action (his "conversion", in this case), and his sanction (as illustrated in [St. Thomas Aquinas'] treatise on "the last end", for example)." We would add that the bildungsroman is a genre that employs the component of competence to great advantage.

Since we will often refer to NPs, we will quickly summarize what they are. (See the corresponding chapter for more details). The narrative program is an abstract formula used to represent an action. The short formula of

[1] For this chapter, we shall draw liberally, but not strictly, from an excellent summary of Greimasian semiotics by Courtés (1991, pp. 98-136).
[2] For a more in-depth analysis of the interactions between temporal relations and presential relations, including presupposition, see the chapters on structural relations and the narrative program.

the conjunctive narrative program is: NP = F {S1 → (S2 n O)} and that of the disjunctive narrative program is: NP = F {S1 → (S2 u O)}. S1 is the subject of doing; S2 is the subject of state; O is the object; n is the conjunction (with the object) and u the disjunction (lacking the object) between the subject of state and the object. For example, in the fable "The Crow and the Fox", we have the following (conjunctive) narrative program: NP = F {Fox → (Fox n Cheese)}. In its simplest notation, the narrative program is written as follows: S1 → S2 n O, for example Fox → Fox n Cheese.

NOTE: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CNS AND THE ACTANTIAL MODEL

The canonical narrative schema, proposed by Greimas, takes the theoretical place of the actantial model, also developed by Greimas. Let us look at the primary differences between them.

1. The actantial model revolves around a subject and an object. If we place this pair in a NP, we observe firstly, that the subject and the object are implicitly linked by a junction (with a slightly suspect predilection for conjunction: most analyses do in fact describe a subject that wants to be conjoined to an object, rather than one that wants to be disjoined[3]); and secondly, that this triad corresponds to the second state of a NP. As for the CNS, it centers explicitly on a NP.

2. As compared with the actantial model, a pair of actants has been dropped: the helper/opponent pair. The helping and hindering elements are integrated within competence, and if they are considered explicitly as actants, it would only be in the context of a NP, which is composed solely of subject and object actants. Thus, the object of a NP of competence is an element of the competence: for instance, the acquisition of knowing-how-to-do. A helper is therefore a subject of doing in a narrative program of maintenance or acquisition of competence (for example, when the magician enables the Prince to take possession of the magic sword, he grants him being-able-to-do); an opponent is a subject of doing in a narrative program dealing with loss or non-acquisition of competence.

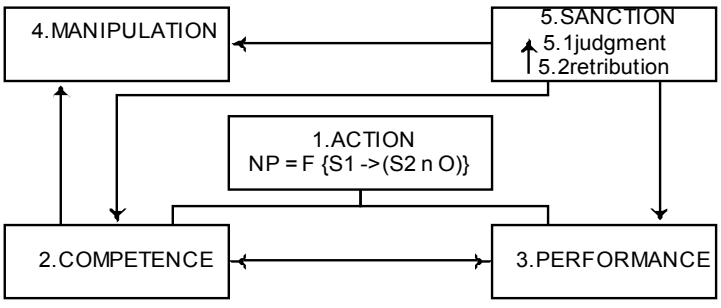
3. Two kinds of senders are distinguished in the CNS: the sender-manipulator (of the manipulation component) and the sender-judge (of the sanction component). The receiver, known as the receiver-subject, corresponds to the subject of doing (S1) of the model's central NP, where it is depicted in its relationship with one of the two senders.

Some methodological considerations: As is the case with other analytical tools (e.g., the actantial model, a narrative array, or the functions of language), one can give equal attention to each constituent element of the model, or one can choose one or more elements as the focus. In the latter case, secondary constituent elements should usually be analyzed at least briefly. As with the actantial model, one must first situate the central element (the action) by careful selection, since all of the other elements depend on this central element. Once the action has been selected, one should make sure that the manipulation, sanction and competence being described actually do apply to this NP, and not some other NP in the same story. Consider the narrative sequence : NP1: Thief n Stethoscope, NP2: Thief n Contents of Safe, NP3: Thief n Prison. If one situates NP1 at the center of the schema, one cannot have NP3 as the sanction, since the latter is the sanction for NP2, and not NP1.

1.2 VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS

As with all analytical tools that have a specific visual representation (the actantial model, the semiotic square, etc.), one must distinguish between the CNS as a conceptual structure and the CNS as a visual representation of the structure. The following diagram is a possible visual representation of the CNS (a slight modification of the representation in Courtés 1991, p. 100). The arrows indicate presuppositional relations between components; thus, the sanction presupposes the action, but the action does not presuppose the sanction. For instance, a reward presupposes the accomplishment of some deserving deed, but a deserving deed might not ever be rewarded (even if there was an explicit agreement that it would be).

Representation of the canonical narrative schema



NOTE: TIME AND THE CNS

We will specify the various presuppositional relations between components as we proceed, but at this point, let us review a few logical (presential, to be specific) and temporal principles. As one would expect, a presupposing element is optional relative to its presupposed element(s). This is the case, for example, with the sanction (presupposing) as opposed to the action (presupposed). A presupposed element, which is logically anterior, is usually temporally anterior, but not always.

[3] As Fontanille observes (2003, p. 124), "the model of the quest [the actantial model] neglects narrative situations that place subjects in the presence of objects of negative value, or repulsive or horrifying objects."

We must interject some remarks about time. First of all, there is a distinction between real time (that of reality) and thematized time (which is a representation of real time in a semiotic act, such as a text); secondly, note that succession and simultaneity are relative to the duration of the standard time unit. For example, wanting to blink one's eyes and doing it are successive in real time and from a neurological standpoint (in that the electrical signal takes a certain amount of time to go from the brain to the muscles, and it takes a certain amount of time to perform the blinking). However, they are usually considered as simultaneous in the reality of everyday life, and in time as represented in semiotic acts (unless, for instance, a novel has a neurologist in it who keeps track of fractions of seconds); time is rarely represented in semiotic productions as it is in science.

To return to temporal relations between components, we have an example of temporal simultaneity between components related by presupposition: in the case of a character blinking his eyes, wanting-to (competence) and doing are perfectly simultaneous (with some exceptions). The following is an example of inversion between temporal arrangement and logical (presential) arrangement: if full compensation for a service is payable in advance, then the retribution phase of the sanction precedes the action at least partially. (This does not exclude the possibility of cognitive retribution (recognition) or pragmatic retribution in the form of an unanticipated bonus (a tip) could follow the action.)

The duration of represented time associated with a component can vary from zero to infinity. The duration would theoretically be infinite in some stories, for instance, where an action waiting to be accomplished depends on competence whose acquisition keeps being delayed. It would be counted as zero in a case of immediate performance, as in pushing a detonator to make a bomb explode or blinking one's eyes. It would also be zero in a case where wanting-to-do is already present as soon as the particular action presents itself to be accomplished, if the other elements of competence are "always already there", as in raising one's arm.

1.3 MANIPULATION

1.3.1 POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE MANIPULATION

Manipulation (a term that has no pejorative connotation in semiotics) is the component of the CNS that has to do with changes in wanting-to-do and/or having-to-do. Positive manipulation (a term with no meliorative connotations) aims to produce or increase these elements, or to maintain them if they are already at adequate levels; negative manipulation (a term with no pejorative connotations) aims to eliminate or decrease them, or to maintain them at inadequate levels. The purpose of positive manipulation is causing-to-do; the purpose of negative manipulation is causing-not-to-do. Manipulation (positive) is equivalent to causing-to-do (written as D → D[4]).

1.3.2 THE SENDER-MANIPULATOR AND RECEIVER-SUBJECT

The sender-manipulator directs his/her manipulation towards the receiver-subject, that is, the subject who is supposed to accomplish or not accomplish the action. In the NP representing this action, the receiver-subject corresponds to the subject of doing, abbreviated as S1. Positive manipulation is represented thusly in a NP: NP = F1 [S1 → F2 {S2 → (S3 n O)}]; This formula differs from that of the standard narrative program (there is an additional subject, and S1 and S2 have become S2 and S3, respectively); here S1 represents the sender-manipulator, and S2 the receiver-subject.

1.3.3 MANIPULATION AND THE CONTRACT

By means of the explicit or implicit contract it establishes between the sender-manipulator and the receiver-subject, manipulation draws the action to be accomplished or not accomplished into the realm of possibility, along with the positive or negative retribution that will ensue if the contract is fulfilled or not fulfilled.

NOTE: MANIPULATION AND ANTI-MANIPULATION

We propose a typology of manipulation based on the kind of retribution the contract entails, using the following criteria: (1) whether the object of retribution is pragmatic/cognitive (that is, concrete/abstract, a matter of perception/understanding) and (2) whether it is negative/positive; (3) whether the relationship between this object and the receiver-subject is conjunctive/disjunctive. One must take care to distinguish between positive/negative retribution and a positive/negative object of retribution; for instance, a negative object may well be part of a positive retribution: removing (disjunction) a thorn (a negative pragmatic object) from someone's foot may be a reward (positive pragmatic retribution). For more details, see the section in this chapter on sanction. Courtés proposes the following typology (1991, p. 111): In the pragmatic domain, manipulation plays on temptation and/or intimidation (such as promising a money reward and/or threatening to beat someone). In the cognitive domain, manipulation plays on seduction or (and/or?) provocation (e.g., words of encouragement, like "I'm sure you can do it" or a challenge such as "You certainly aren't capable of doing that").

From the standpoint of manipulation, a polemical structure sets a sender-manipulator in opposition with an anti-sender-manipulator, both directed toward a receiver-subject alone, or a receiver-subject and an anti-receiver-subject. Take the case of two opposing armies, each one commanded by a general. The general of the first army (the sender-

[4] In this symbolic notation, and in the other notations associated with each component, the arrow indicates that the relation is not symmetrical (D → B is not the same thing as B → D); it indicates the direction of the relation, with the first term governing or determining the second. We shall give a meaningful example: chocolate (C) milk (M) would be written as M → C, and milk chocolate would be C → M; the first term dominates the second; the second one only modulates the first. For more on the subject of direction, or governance, see Bertrand (2000, p. 152).

manipulator) uses positive manipulation (encouragement, the prospect of earning medals, threats, etc.) to induce his soldiers (the receiver-subjects) to advance (or at least not retreat) and he uses negative manipulation (threats, explosions, etc.) to induce the enemy not to advance (or even to retreat). The general of the second army (the anti-sender-manipulator) directs positive manipulation toward his soldiers (the anti-receiver-subjects or receiver-anti-subjects) aimed at the same action (to advance or at least not retreat).

By applying logical negation (represented by the logical negation symbol (¬)), we obtain four kinds of manipulation: (1) cd (causing-to-do: inducing), (2) c¬d (causing-not-to-do: preventing), (3) ¬cd (not-causing-to-do: not-inducing), (3) ¬c¬d (not-causing-not-to-do: leaving be)[5].

1.4 ACTION

The action is the central component (conceptually and visually) of the CNS. This action is generally represented by a narrative program. The action component is broken down into two components itself: competence and performance. Action (or more accurately, performance) presupposes manipulation. If there is action, then there had to be manipulation, but manipulation, even when successful, does not necessarily lead to action; for instance, being-able-to-do could be insufficient. Action corresponds to causing-to-be (written as D → B, where doing governs being).

NOTE: THE CNS AND NARRATIVE PROGRAMS

The theory states that in order to include a NP in the canonical narrative schema, the NP must be one of performance, that is, a reflexive action, where S1 = S2 (for instance, washing oneself), as opposed to a transitive action, where S1 ≠ S2 (for instance, washing someone else). In analytical practice, we are not sure that this principle is necessary. Actantial syncretism (where two actants reside in the same actor) is found not just in action; there are also cases of self-manipulation, self-sanction, and self-qualification (competence).

The other components of the CNS may each be described using a NP. We will use the following action: a knight rescues the princess from the witch who has her imprisoned. The following are some narrative programs illustrating the five components of the CNS: NP1: King → Knight n Mission (manipulation); NP2: Fairy → Knight n Magic Sword (the modality of being-able-to-do, part of competence); NP3: Knight → Knight n Death of witch (being-able-to-do); NP4: Knight → Princess n Freedom (the action at the center of the CNS); NP5: King → Knight n Reward (sanction). And we shall add some additional flexibility: the action component does not necessarily have to be represented by a narrative program.

1.5 COMPETENCE

Competence (a term with no meliorative connotation in semiotics) is the component of the CNS that has to do with changes (creation, maintenance, increase, decrease, loss) in the prerequisite elements needed for performance (accomplishing the action). There are four different modalities involved in competence: two that are also factors of manipulation – wanting-to-do (abbreviated as *wd*) and having-to-do (abbreviated *hd*) –, and two others – knowing-how-to-do[6] (*kd*) and being-able-to-do (*ad*)[7]. Competence is the being-of-doing, the being necessary for doing (notated B → D).

When discussing competence or one of its modalities, we say it is positive (with no meliorative connotation) when it is sufficient to lead to performance; otherwise we call it negative (with no pejorative connotation); or we can speak in terms of competence (in the absolute sense) and anti-competence. Negative competence or a negative modality of competence has a minus sign in its notation (e.g., *-wd* signifies negative wanting-to-do). In order to have performance, competence must be positive, that is: (1) knowing-how-to-do and being-able-to-do must both be positive, and (2) wanting-to-do and/or having-to-do must be positive (positive wanting-to-do can compensate for negative having-to-do and vice versa)[8].

NOTE: NEGATION AND THE MODALITIES

By applying logical negation (indicated by a logical negation symbol (¬)), we obtain four combinations between doing (abbreviated *d*) and the modalities of wanting, having-to, knowing-how, and being-able (abbreviated *w, h, k* and *a*,

[5] These are the four metaterms of a Klein 4-Group (see the chapter on the veridictory square). We have modified three of the four lexical labels proposed by Courtés (1991) for these metaterms, which are: (1) intervention, (2) hindrance, (3) non-intervention, (4) leaving be. The lexical items used to represent logical categories are often approximate, and one should not interpret the lexical item as an exact description of the category.

[6] Courtés (1991, p. 104) invites us to distinguish between semantic competence and knowing-how-to-do, which includes semantic competence, but goes beyond it. It is one thing to know the recipe for mayonnaise (semantic competence); it is quite another to be able to make it (knowing-how-to-do).

[7] As Courtés notes (1991, p. 104), it is possible to have modalities of competence formed from elements other than wanting, having-to, being-able and knowing-how. We should also note that just as doing can be governed by wanting, having-to, being-able and knowing-how, so can being (see Courtés, 1991, pp. 107-109). Furthermore, it may be possible to define competence as the component that concerns changes in knowing-how-to-do and being-able-to-do, which would effectively eliminate the overlap between competence and manipulation. In this case, we would have to redefine the competence component, since it would no longer involve all of the prerequisite conditions for performance.

[8] Some modalities of competence may be linked by converse (direct) or inverse correlation, as seen in utterances like "if you really want to, you can do it" or "the harder I try, the worse I do" or the typical modal formula of "inhibition through interaction" (Fontanille, 2003, p. 228): "the more you push me, the more incompetent I get".

respectively)[9]. Combinations like *x*¬d are expressed as: *x* not-to-do (such as w¬d, wanting not-to-do) and combinations like ¬*x*¬d are expressed as: not-*x* not-to-do (such as ¬w¬d, not-wanting not-to-do). In parentheses we have identified some possible lexical labels (possible names) for the logical categories.

1. wd, w¬d, ¬wd, ¬w¬d
2. hd (required), h¬d (prohibited), ¬hd (optional), ¬h¬d (allowed)
3. kd, k¬d, ¬kd, ¬k¬d
4. ad (freedom), a¬d (independence), ¬ad (powerlessness), ¬a¬d (obedience)

The shift from negative competence to positive competence is a movement from the nonexistence of an action to its potentiality (ontological status: "possible"), whereas performance entails moving from the possibility of an action to its realization (ontological status: "real").

NOTE: VIRTUALIZATION / ACTUALIZATION / REALIZATION

In actual Greimasian terminology, when wanting-to-do and/or having-to-do are positive, it is termed "virtualization" (in the sense of the possibility of an action); when knowing-how-to-do and being-able-to-do are positive, it is known as "actualization"; when performance occurs, it is called "realization". This helps to explain the notion that, even in the competence phase, action presupposes manipulation: virtualization is the first of the three successive phases. The following table (Courtés, 1991, p. 106) shows the relations between the components and the modalities involved in virtualization, actualization and realization (the arrows indicate the presuppositional relations that exist between the modalities).

The modalities of virtualization, actualization and realization in the canonical narrative schema

competence		competence		performance
modalities of virtualization	←	modalities of actualization	←	modalities of realization
wanting-to-do having-to-do		knowing-how-to-do being-able-to-do		being doing
(inauguration of the subject)		(qualification of the subject)		(realization of the subject)

For our purposes, the essential point, especially from the standpoint of application, lies in the distinction between realized and unrealized. Since we are assigning other meanings to the terms "actualization" and "virtualization" than those used in Greimasian semiotics (cf. our discussion of actualized and virtualized semes), we will opt for the term "possible" (or "possibility") to describe an action in the competence phase. For more details on the way Greimasian semiotics defines virtualization, actualization and realization, see the chapter on narrative programs.

Despite what Courtés claims, it appears that all positive competence leads without fail to performance; if not, then competence was not completely or truly positive. For instance, someone starts to lift his arm, but a meteorite kills him. By appearances, he had competence, as in the general competence required to raise his arm, but it was not true competence suitable for that specific action in those specific circumstances. Considered in this light, it follows that the relation between competence and performance is more accurately a relation of reciprocal presupposition: If there is (positive) competence, there will necessarily be performance; if there is performance, then there was necessarily (positive) competence.

1.6 PERFORMANCE

Performance is the component of the CNS that concerns the action's realization (in the strict sense), made possible by positive competence. Performance presupposes competence (and manipulation, naturally, since it involves wanting-to-do and having-to-do, just as competence does): If there is performance, then competence was necessarily positive. As we have seen, in this context presupposition can be considered reciprocal: when competence is truly and fully positive, realization of the action necessarily follows. Performance corresponds to causing-to-be (written as D → B, where doing governs being).

Performance – and consequently competence – can be categorial and/or incremental. For example, going off a cliff is generally seen as a categorial action: one either succeeds or one doesn't. (A half-success or near-success is still a failure, and painful). An election is an example of performance that is both categorial and incremental: victory is realized first by obtaining at least 50% of the ballots cast plus one; but the incremental dimension should not be ignored: The intensity of the victory increases the closer one comes to obtaining 100% of the votes cast (some dictators have understood this quite well).

1.7 SANCTION

As the final component of the CNS, sanction includes the epistemic judgment (evaluation) of performance and the accompanying retribution that the performing subject has incurred. The sender-judge directs his sanction toward the receiver-subject, that is, the subject who was supposed to accomplish or not accomplish the action (the subject of doing, S1 in the NP). Epistemic judgment determines whether performance conforms to the implicit or explicit contract that was made during the manipulation stage. One must answer questions like the

[9] By doing this, we are producing Klein 4-Groups (see the chapter on the veridictory square).

following: Was the action realized, and properly so? Is the presumed receiver-subject the right one, an impostor, or a case of mistaken identity? Retribution is the next stage. It can be categorial or incremental, positive (reward) or negative (punishment), and pragmatic (a gift of gold, for instance) or cognitive (recognition, for example). Retribution presupposes epistemic judgment (but not the reverse, since the sender-judge could die before giving the promised reward, for instance). Sanction presupposes action (or more accurately, performance that took place or should have taken place), but the action does not necessarily presuppose a sanction (as would be the case if the sender-judge died before passing his epistemic judgment, to take our previous example). Sanction corresponds to the being-of-being (written as B → B)[10].

NOTE: PRAGMATIC AND COGNITIVE SANCTIONS

Courtés talks about pragmatic and cognitive sanctions in cases where the epistemic judgment addresses the action and the subject who realized the action, respectively. Pragmatic and cognitive sanctions should not be confused with pragmatic and cognitive retribution, described above.

NOTE: VERIDICTORY STATUS

There are various ways in which veridictory status is factored into Greimasian narrative analysis (in the actantial model, the narrative program, the canonical narrative schema, etc.). In the CNS, it is especially relevant in the sanction component (in evaluating the reality and quality of performance, and the reality of the subject involved in the performance), but it can also apply to the manipulation component (e.g., the manipulator offers a false contract), and the competence component (e.g., the subject mistakenly believes that he has the necessary competence).

If we map out positive retribution (PR) / negative retribution (NR) onto a semiotic square (see the chapter on this subject), we obtain four simple terms (PR/NR ¬PR/¬NR, where ¬ indicates logical negation)[11]. Each of these terms can be marked with a thymic value (euphoria/dysphoria – see the chapter on this subject) attributed to the object of retribution and the possible modes of junction between the receiver-subject and the object of retribution. For example, if we combine two thymic values (euphoria/dysphoria in this case) and four junctions (conjunction/disjunction and non-conjunction/non-disjunction), we obtain eight kinds of retribution (or sixteen, if we add in the distinction between pragmatic/cognitive objects of retribution). In the typology we are outlining, S is the receiver-subject, who receives the retribution; n is the conjunction (with the object); u is the disjunction (without the object); ¬n is non-conjunction (not with the object); ¬u is non-disjunction (not without the object); O+ is a euphoric object of retribution (the carrot); 0- is a dysphoric object of retribution (the stick, or beating). Each of these possibilities can be illustrated with a short sentence of manipulation.

Types of positive retribution (reward):

1. Type 1 PR: S n O+: If you do X, I will give you a carrot.
2. Type 1 ¬NR: S u O-: If you do X, I will stop beating you.
3. Type 2 ¬NR: S ¬n O-: If you do X, I won't beat you.
4. Type 2 PR: S ¬u O+: If you do X, I won't take away your carrot.

Types of negative retribution (punishment):

5. Type 1 NR: S n O-: If you do X, I will beat you.
6. Type 1 ¬PR : S u O+: If you do X, I will take away your carrot.
7. Type 2 ¬PR: S ¬n O+: If you do X, I won't give you a carrot.
8. Type 2 NR: S ¬u O-: If you do X, I won't stop beating you.

2. APPLICATION: "THE CROW AND THE FOX" BY JEAN DE LA FONTAINE

* * *

"The Crow and the Fox"
Jean de La Fontaine (1988, p. ??)

At the top of a tree perched Master Crow;
In his beak he was holding a cheese.
Drawn by the smell, Master Fox spoke, below.
The words, more or less, were these:
Hey, now, Sir Crow! Good day, good day!

[10] Here we can see that there are limits to the combinatorial antics of which semiotics is so fond. The equivalence between sanction and the being-of-being appears to be quite partial. It seems to relate only to the epistemic judgment, where the being of being is evaluated (the second "being" is understood as the action's being (was it realized and properly so?) and the subject of the action's being (is the subject who he claims to be?), thereby pushing the retribution part of the sanction into the shadows.

[11] Metaterms or compound terms are possible too, of course (see the chapter on the semiotic square): for instance, the positive deixis (PR + ¬NR), if interpreted in terms of reinforcement, would be manifested as 1 + 2 in our typology of retribution.

How very handsome you do look, how grandly distingué!
No lie, if those songs you sing
Match the plumage of your wing,
You're the phoenix of these woods, our choice."
Hearing this, the Crow was all rapture and wonder.
To show off his handsome voice,
He opened beak wide and let go of his plunder.
The Fox snapped it up and then said, "My Good Sir,
Learn that each flatterer
Lives at the cost of those who heed.
This lesson is well worth the cheese, indeed."
The Crow, ashamed and sick,
Swore, a bit late, not to fall again for that trick.

* * *

In La Fontaine's "The Crow and the Fox", we will discuss the action wherein the crow (C) sings at the fox's (F) urging. Here is a simplified CNS that describes this action.

A canonical narrative schema in "The Crow and the Fox"

<table>
<tr>
<td>MANIPULATION

• F → (C → C n Sing)
This NP corresponds to:
• F → C n wanting-to-do
This NP presupposes:
• F → C n Possibility of positive retribution

(Cognitive) retribution of false contract
• F → C n Glory</td>
<td>ACTION

C → C n Sing</td>
<td>SANCTION

Epistemic judgment
• F → Action n Positive judgment
(The action is judged as being properly realized.)

Retribution

The true contract's pragmatic retribution
• F → C u Cheese (dispossession)

The true contract's cognitive retribution
• F → C n Humiliation
• F → C n Lesson (ironic retribution)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPETENCE

• F → C n Wanting-to-do
• C → C n Knowing-how-to-do (action already realized)
• C → C n Being-able-to-do (action already realized)</td>
<td></td>
<td>PERFORMANCE

• C → C n Sing (action realized)</td>
</tr>
</table>

A few explanatory details are in order.

During the manipulation stage, the fox, in the role of sender-manipulator, chooses seduction over intimidation for the occasion. He implicitly offers two contracts, the real one and the false one. The crow believes that in return for singing, he will receive positive cognitive retribution in the form of glory from showing off his beautiful voice. Keeping the cheese does not even enter into the false contract, since singing and keeping the cheese are not mutually exclusive from the crow's perspective, or at least he forgets their incompatibility momentarily under the influence of the fox's flattery. The real, implicit contract is the following: If he sings, the crow will receive negative retribution, both pragmatic (the loss of his cheese) and cognitive (humiliation).

> NOTE: ANTI-MANIPULATION
>
> The Fox is also an anti-manipulator in some ways. The fox has laid a trap, and if the crow does not fall into it, his retribution will be to keep the cheese and receive what we call glory in this model – the glory of outsmarting the fox and making a show of clairvoyance. This hypothesis is no more than the symmetrical counterpart of what happens in reality, which gives it substance: the fox obtains glory as the cognitive retribution for carrying off his action (whether the action is strictly his manipulation or his obtaining the cheese). Besides glory, the fox receives the cheese as retribution, and no doubt a sort of sadistic pleasure at the poor crow's expense (a bit like the cruel ant at the expense of the ill-fated cicada).

The fox concedes that the crow is beautiful at the outset, but says he wants to hear a voice that he assumes is beautiful ("No lie, if those songs you sing / Match the plumage of your wing..."). The fox's intellectual superiority is emphasized by the hyperbole of his flattery, which reveals the crow's gullibility and vanity – a crow is neither a peacock nor a nightingale. However, we should point out that the stupidity attributed to the crow is undeserved, for in reality, the crows are very intelligent animals (for example, it has been demonstrated that they can count to four).

During the sanction stage, the fox becomes the judge-manipulator. The epistemic judgment does not present any problems: The action was indeed realized according to the contract (the real one as well as the false one). However, for the retribution, the fox dispenses with pretense and grants the retribution provided by the real contract, to which the crow was an unwitting and unconscious party. He cynically idealizes the crow's loss as an exchange: After all, didn't the crow receive a lesson for his cheese? It is a very unequal exchange, in which a pragmatic object that is a basic necessity is exchanged for a cognitive object that is supposedly unique and not to be shared, although the fox does not deprive himself in giving it – he retains the lesson and, more importantly, the intelligence and the ruse of which the lesson is simply a manifestation.

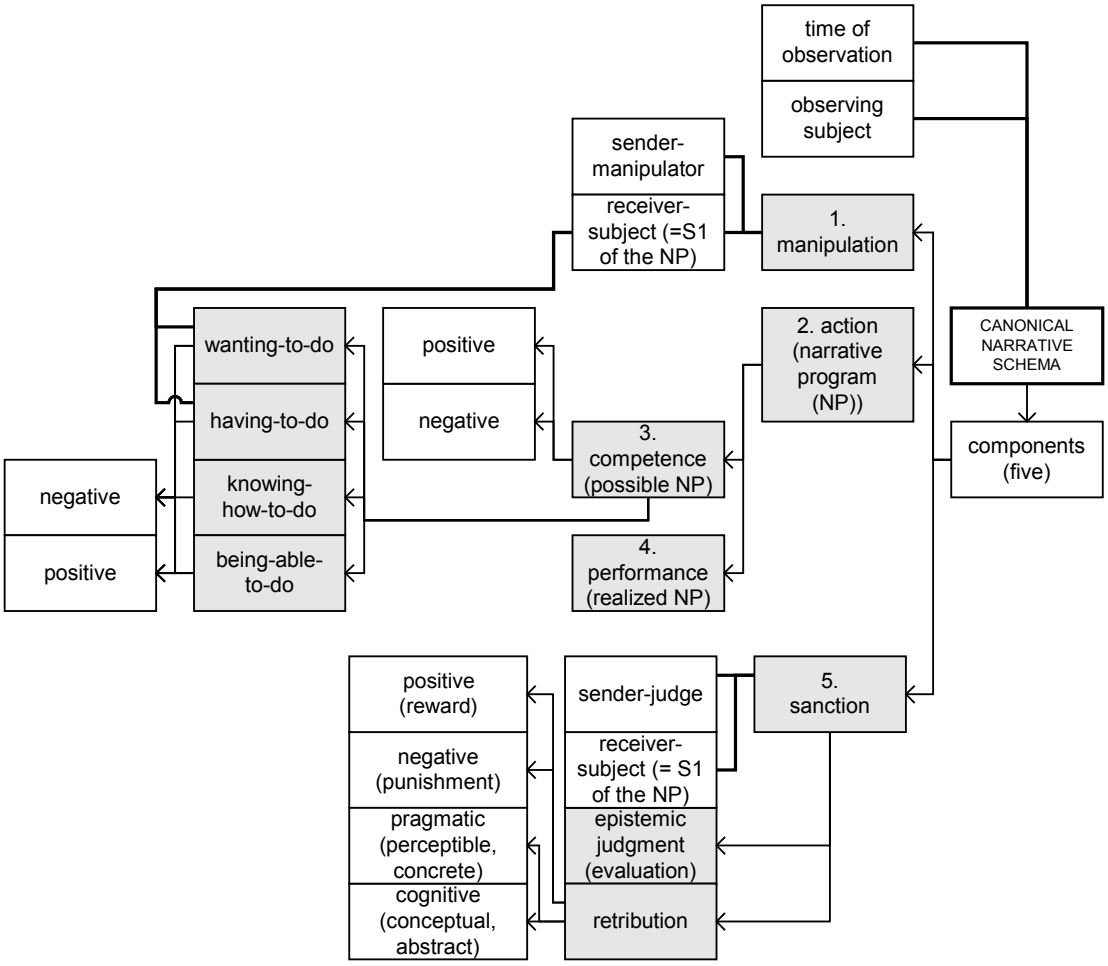
NOTE: CLOSED VALUE SYSTEMS AND PARTICIPATIVE COMMUNICATION

Technically, we use the term "closed value system" to describe the kind of situation in which one loses what one gives, and "participative communication" for cases in which one keeps the object, despite giving it away. According to Greimas and Fontanille (1993, p. 134): "If we now consider the status of objects, we see that nothing is solved by our calling them "participative" or "non-participative". We have already noted that it is not appropriate to speak of a participative character for objects of value as such. On the one hand, land can be parceled off or it can be held in common; on the other, knowledge can be jealously kept to oneself. The participative character of objects is nothing other than the meaning effect of the consensus reached by subjects in their regard with a view to the constitution of a participative totality. All you need is for one of these subjects to refuse to agree (refuse to share) and his object will become considered "non-participative" and he will be seen as "exclusive". Individuals can assign status in this matter. One can be jealous of one's wife, of one's prestige or discoveries, but cultures also can show this jealousy – they decree that goods or women are to be held in common, or that knowledge is the exclusive right of clerks and sorcerers." In our opinion, we must first disassociate problems concerning the participative/non-participative status of an object from its actual status as shared/not-shared; secondly, we must take into account the assumptive and reference veridictory perspectives (e.g., a certain character may mistakenly believe that an object is non-participative).

One of La Fontaine's consistent oppositions has cropped up here: the opposition between what is useful or essential and what is futile. In this poem it is manifested in the oppositions intelligence/beauty or voice, intellectual superiority/physical superiority (the crow can fly, and he is perched at the top of a tree), and eating/singing. In "The Cicada and the Ant", we find the opposition work/pleasure, with pleasure manifested as singing again, but also as dancing, in the ant's famous cynical reply. In "The Stag Seeing Himself in a Spring" (La Fontaine, p. 259), we find the following lines: "We make much of beauty, it's the useful we do mistreat / Yet beauty often leads us to our loss."

3. SUMMARY DIAGRAM

Summary diagram of the canonical narrative schema



LEGEND
1. Vertical arrows: components (for ex., a canonical narrative schema is broken down into five components)
2. Horizontal arrows: classification (for ex., retribution is classified as (a) either positive or negative and (b) either pragmatic or cognitive)
3. Bold-face link with no arrow: other relation
The results of the analysis depend on the time of observation and the observer whose point of view is being reported.