

An Analysis of Greimas's Actantial Model in Siavash Kasraei's Epic Poem "Arash the Archer"

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Article Info (181-201)	ABSTRACT
Article type: Research Article	One of the important achievements of structuralism in the field of literature is issues related to narratology, and researchers try to determine the relationship between actors and characters. Vladimir Propp, the Russian formalist, created a turning point in the analysis and study of narratology. According to him, the character has no existence apart from the text and is only a part of the technical structure that must be subject to predetermined events. Garmas, one of the semantic theorists, presented the activism model with the aim of showing the role of characters and the relationship between action and character: an actor is someone or something that performs an action. The actor plays the role of the characters in the narrative. However, it has two differences with characters: first, several characters can play the role of a single actor. Second, the actors play a role in the deep structure of the narrative, but the characters play a role in the superstructure of the narrative. This article, in a descriptive-analytical way, analyzed the narrative-oriented epic of Arash, composed by Siavash Kasraei with the narrative-oriented theory of Garmas, and it was determined that all six actors of Garmas model are present in this poem. As Garmas considers contrast as the most fundamental framework in which the human mind gives structure to the world and understands its meaning, and to understand the structure of the text, one must first understand contrasts. In the legend of Arash, we are also dealing with the confrontation between Iran and Turan, which is the basis of Kasra's narration of Arash's epic, which is expressed in three double actors in opposition to each other.
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Introduction

Structuralism has significantly advanced the field of literary studies, particularly through narratology, by examining the relationships between characters and their functions within a text. While Vladimir Propp focused on the formal functions of characters, Algirdas Julien Greimas shifted the focus toward semiotics and the “actantial model,” emphasizing the roles (actants) that drive the narrative’s meaning. Unlike traditional character analysis, Greimas distinguishes between “characters” (surface level) and “actants” (deep structure), where an actant can be a person, an object, or even an abstract concept. Siavash Kasraei’s epic poem *Arash the Archer* is a modern reimagining of an ancient Iranian myth, characterized by its intense heroic and narrative qualities. This study seeks to apply Greimas’s structuralist framework to Kasraei’s work to uncover the underlying narrative mechanics and the symbolic oppositions that shape the epic.

Method

This research employs a descriptive-analytical methodology based on a library-based approach. The study utilizes the semiotic theory of A.J. Greimas, specifically the Actantial Model, to deconstruct the narrative structure of Kasraei’s poem. The analysis focuses on identifying the six actantial roles—Subject, Object, Sender, Receiver, Helper, and Opponent—and how they manifest through the fundamental binary oppositions (e.g., Iran vs. Turan, freedom vs. oppression) that constitute the core of the epic.

Results

The analysis demonstrates that the poem strictly adheres to the Greimassian actantial structure, manifesting all six roles through a complex interplay of human and abstract elements:

- **The Subject (Hero):** Arash is the central actant, a heroic figure who accepts the sacrificial mission to establish the borders of Iran.

- **The Object (Goal):** The liberation of the Iranian people and the determination of the national borders (the Oxus River) to end the era of oppression.
- **The Sender (Motivation):** The collective suffering, despair, and will of the Iranian people (the cries of mothers, the gazes of children) serve as the driving force that compels Arash to act.
- **The Receiver (Beneficiary):** The entire Iranian nation, which gains freedom and a defined territory from the successful mission.
- **The Helper (Supporter):** Interestingly, helpers in this epic extend beyond humans to include abstract spiritual forces (the power of love and loyalty), the prayers of mothers, and even elements of nature (the wind, the sun, and the mountains) that assist Arash in his feat.
- **The Opponent (Conflict):** The Turanian army and the predatory forces of the enemy, who represent the “non-Iranian” (Aniranim) and seek to humiliate the nation through unfair conditions.

The study also highlights that the narrative is built upon the fundamental binary opposition of Iran vs. Turan, mirroring the eternal cosmic struggle between good (Ahura) and evil (Ahriman).

Conclusion

The research concludes that Siavash Kasraei's *Arash the Archer* is a highly structured narrative that perfectly aligns with the Greimassian actantial model. The poem's effectiveness lies in its ability to transform individual struggle into a collective mythological event where abstract motivations (the will of a people) become concrete actants. By using Greimas's framework, the study reveals that the epic is not merely a story of a single hero, but a complex semiotic system where the hero, the people, and nature are interconnected through a shared mission of national survival and liberation.