

A literary semiotic approach to Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Black Cat'

[Edgar Allan Poe'nin 'Kara Kedi' öyküsüne göstergebilimsel bir yaklaşım]

[Une approche sémiotique littéraire du « Chat Noir d'Edgar Allan Poe »]

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Abstract

The study primarily aims to analyze one of Edgar Allan Poe's well-known horror stories, "The Black Cat," within the framework of literary semiotics. It is believed in the study that literary semiotics as a method of analysis is comprehensive enough to reveal as many fine details of the story as possible. Besides, it will provide a better understanding of the generation of the story and Poe's authorial characteristics. The analysis is composed of three steps, each of which will indicate the implementation of the semiotic method on three postulated meaning levels of a narrative. The first area of investigation is the discursive level. In this level, the actors and actorial thematic roles, space, and lastly, time have been analyzed as formative elements of the narrative. The narrative level analysis is the second phase of examination through which the formulation of narrated events has been made with the help of text segmentation. Lastly, the deep-level analysis comprises the actors' transitions in the storyline from beginning to end. The findings gathered from the three-step semiotic analysis can be suggested to reveal that transformations from the beginning to the end of the story regarding characters, space, and time have taken place from good to evil, life to death, or bright to dark, which further highlights the means used by Poe for achieving the creation of a sense of horror.

Keywords: Literary semiotics, Edgar Allan Poe, The Black Cat, narrative analysis, Greimas**Özet**

Çalışma öncelikle Edgar Allan Poe'nun ünlü korku öykülerinden "Kara Kedi" adlı anlatısını yazınsal göstergebilim çerçevesinde incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma açısından yazınsal göstergebilimin bir çözümleme yöntemi olarak hikâyenin olabildiğince çok ince detayını ortaya çıkaracak kadar kapsamlı olduğuna inanılmaktadır. Ayrıca bu yöntem, hikâyenin yapılandırılmasını ve Poe'nun yazarlık özelliklerinin daha iyi anlaşılmasını sağlayacaktır. Çözümleme, göstergebilimsel yöntemin varsayılan üç anlam katmanına uygulanmasını gösteren üç adımdan oluşmaktadır. İlk inceleme alanı söylem düzeyidir. Bu düzeyde anlatının kurucu unsurlarından aktörler, aktörlerin tematik rolleri, uzam ve son olarak zaman olgusu çözümlenmiştir. İkinci aşamada anlatı düzeyi çözümlemesi yer almaktadır ve metin kesitlere ayrılarak anlatılan olayların formülasyonu ortaya konulmuştur. Son olarak derin düzey çözümlemesi, oyuncuların olay örgüsünün başından sonuna kadar geçirdiği dönüşümleri içermektedir. Üç aşamalı göstergebilimsel analizden elde edilen bulgular, baştan sona kadar anlatıda karakterler, uzam ve zaman ile ilgili dönüşümlerin iyiden kötüye, yaşamdan ölüme veya aydınlıktan

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karanlığa doğru gerçekleştiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu durum ise Poe'nun bir korku duygusu yaratmayı başarmak için kullandığı araçlara ışık tutmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yazımsal göstergebilim, Edgar Allan Poe, Kara Kedi, anlatı çözümlemesi, Greimas

Résumé

L'étude vise principalement à analyser dans le cadre de la sémiotique littéraire, l'une des histoires d'horreur bien connues d'Edgar Allan Poe, "Le Chat Noir". On pense dans l'étude que la sémiotique littéraire en tant que méthode d'analyse est suffisamment complète pour révéler comme autant de détails fins de l'histoire que possible. En outre, cela permettra de mieux comprendre la génération de l'histoire et les caractéristiques auctoriales de Poe. L'analyse est composée de trois étapes, dont chacune indiquera la mise en œuvre de la méthode sémiotique sur trois postulats. Niveaux de sens d'un récit. Le premier domaine d'investigation est le niveau discursif. Dans ce niveau, les acteurs et les rôles thématiques actoriels, l'espace, et enfin le temps ont été analysés comme des éléments formatifs du récit. L'analyse du niveau narratif est la deuxième phase d'examen par laquelle la formulation des événements narrés a été faite à l'aide de la segmentation du texte. Enfin, l'analyse en profondeur comprend les transitions des acteurs dans le scénario du début à la fin. Les résultats recueillis à partir de l'analyse sémiotique en trois étapes peuvent être suggérés pour révéler que les transformations du début à la fin de l'histoire concernant les personnages, l'espace et le temps ont eu lieu du bien au mal, de la vie à la mort, ou du clair au sombre, ce qui met davantage en évidence les moyens utilisés par Poe pour parvenir à créer un sentiment d'horreur.

Mots-clés : Sémiotique littéraire, Edgar Allan Poe, Le Chat noir, analyse narrative, Greimas

1. Introduction

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1843) is one of the most influential “masters of gothic horror tale” (Benjamin, 2004, p. 72). Accordingly, this study primarily aims at a semiotic analysis of one of his horror stories, “The Black Cat,” first published on August 19th, 1843, in the Philadelphia edition of a newspaper called the *United States Saturday Post* (Shmoop Editorial Team, 2021). In the study, the literary semiotic approach, which had continually been improved by Algirdas Julien Greimas (1966; 1982; 1988), is used for the analysis. It is believed that opting for this methodology, “on whose heart narratology lies” (Budniakiewicz, 1992, p. 6), is appropriate for presenting a detailed analysis of the story in question as a narrative. Besides, the formative elements of the story are believed to be more precisely highlighted via the semiotic approach. A three-step way of analysis will be followed in the study. These are the analysis of discursive, narrative, and deep-abstract levels of meaning, which are postulated to be prevalent in a narrative. Examining the formative elements of a narrative are subsumed at the discursive level, shortly, the actors, time, space, and their interrelations. The plot organization will be analyzed at the narrative level, considering the story's sequential stages and actantial distribution. Lastly, the deep-abstract level analysis considers the overall representation of significant transformations in the narrative and gives a clear insight into signification and comprehensive information on the story.

2. Analysis

2.1 Discursive Level

The discursive level is the most concrete of the three meaning layers that help the discourse articulate. As Greimas and Courtes stated, “discoursivization of semiotic and narrative structures can be defined, from the syntactic point of view, as a set of three types of procedures: actorialization, temporalization, and spatialization” (1982, p. 274). With this in mind, the thematic roles of actors in the text will be elucidated for the actorialization process. Then, the time and space the discourse is founded on will be examined. Besides, essential isotopies of (grouping the words according to a common denominator) actors, time, and space will be illustrated to find out dominating themes in the text in the discursive level analysis. The last step will be to analyze the enunciative strategies employed and observe the prevalent oppositions in the story.

2.1.1 Actors and thematic roles in the story

Semiotics prefers to use the word “actor” (p. 7) instead of character as it is more inclusive in that both inanimate and nonhuman entities may have roles in the narrative. In “The Black Cat,” the actors are the narrator, the narrator’s wife, Pluto, the second black cat, and the police officers. Table 2.1 shows the repetition number of actors in their actual names and other addresses used by the narrator.

Actors	Amount of Repetition Page 3-4-5-6-7-8	Amount of Repetition Page 9-10-11-12-13-14	Total Amount of Repetition	Ratio
Narrator				
I →	14x (p.3) 12x (p.4)	12x (p.9) 14x (p.10) 12x (p.11) 14x (p.12) 12x (p.13) 8x (p.14)	182	67,4%
me →	14x (p.5) 11x(p.6) 10x(p.7) 12x(p.8) 3x(p.3) 3x(p.4) 3x(p.5) 3x(p.6) 1x(p.7) 3x(p.8)	6x(p.9) 4x(p.10) 6x(p.11) 2x(p.13) 3x(p.14)		
The narrator’s wife				
(my) wife →	3x (p.4) 1x(p.6) 1x(p.8)	1x(p.9) 1x(p.10) 2x(p.11) 1x(p.14)	17	6,3%
She →	2x (p.4)	2x(p.11)		
her →	1x(p.4)	2x(p.11)		
Pluto				
He	2x(p.4) 2x(p.5) 2x(p.8)	1x (p.9)	25	9.2%
Him	1x(p.4) 3x(p.5)			
(Poor) beast	1x(p.8)			
The cat	1x(p.5)	1x(p.10)		
A creature	1x(p.5) 1x(p.7)			
It	1x(p.8)			
The victim of my cruelty	1x(p.5)			
The animal	7x(p.6) 1x(p.7) 1x(p.8)			
The second cat				
Black object	1x(p.8)		37	13.7%
It	9x(p.8)	10x (p.9) 2x (p.12)		
Him	1x(p.8)	1x(p.13)		
he	1x(p.8)	1x(p.9)		
This cat	1x(p.8)	1x(p.11) 1x(p.12)		
The animal	1x(p.8)	1x(p.9) 1x(p.13)		
The creature		1x(p.9) 1x(p.10)		
The beast		1x(p.12) 1x(p.13)		
My tormentor		1x(p.13)		
Police officers				
They →		3x(p.13)	9	3,3%
They →		2x(p.13)		
Them →		1x(p.13)		
The gentlemen →		2x(p.13) 1x(p.14)		
You →		1x(p.13)		
Total			270	99%

Table 2.1: Actors and frequency of actors in the story

Table 2.1 illustrates the actors and their frequency of repetition in the story. In other words, this is the list of words, the isotopy of the actors in the narrative, and it is an essential proof to depict any roles,

whether primary or secondary. The story has five prominent actors: the narrator, the narrator's wife, Pluto (the black cat), the second black cat, and the police officers. As shown in Table 2.1, the narrator is the most frequently-repeated actor. The total repetition of the narrator is about 67%, which gives us mounting evidence indicating that the narrator is right in the middle of what is narrated in the story.

Additionally, the repetition of subjective and objective pronouns "I-me" is 182 times which is relatively high concerning the other actors in the story. The other actors are the narrator's wife, Pluto, the second black cat, and the police officers. Below are the personal characteristics of the actors in the story.

The Narrator

The nameless narrator in "The Black Cat" wants to tell his own story to the reader. He recounts the story from the jail and is waiting for his capital punishment, "but tomorrow I die, and to-day I would unburden my soul" (Poe, 2021, p. 3). Before asserting reasons for his detention, the narrator defends himself for not being mad, "yet, mad am I not" (p. 3). Some further information on him can be seen in his declarations. For instance, he is an early married man who is happy for his marriage: "I married early, and was happy to find in my wife a disposition not uncongenial with my own" (p. 4). However hard it is to believe that the narrator was once a charming and kind person in his infancy, we gradually see his significant transformation from good to evil throughout the story.

He was once a very kind person who loved animals and was indulged by his parents with various animals. Then as a young man, he married his wife, who loved caring for animals. They had many pets together, including a sagacious big black cat, Pluto. However, gradually, his manner changes against his wife and his pets. What causes this change, according to the narrator, is alcohol, and he terms this as "fiend intemperance" (p. 4). He starts to be abusive to his wife, pets, and, of course, Pluto. In the story, there is no clue that his marriage life causes the narrator's deterioration, but it is clear that he starts drinking right after he gets married. His misconduct against his wife and animals leads to his first severe cruelty. One day, the narrator cuts Pluto's eyes when it bites his hand. The narrator suddenly grabs Pluto and blinds the poor animal at once. However regretful the narrator is for his crime, a bottle of wine is enough to forget all his cruelty. Although the narrator grieves Pluto for some time, he states his mental position as "this feeling soon gave place to irritation" (p. 5). Afterward, this irritation causes a "spirit of perverseness" (p. 5), as the narrator defines it. He kills Pluto by hanging it for no reason, making the narrator a murderer. The narrator's murder of his favorite pet explains how and why he tries to kill the second black. Killing is a usual event for a perverse man anymore. However, his wife prevents him from killing the second black cat; instead, she gives her life to protect it. To conceal his wife's body, the narrator buries her into the cellar wall. However, at the time of the police officer's investigation, the second black cat cries inside the wall, and the narrator gets arrested and sentenced to death as an insane murderer.

The Narrator's Wife

The readers see everything through the narrator's perspective; thus, information on his wife is given as much as he does. Many of her physical and sentimental characteristics are unknown in the story. For instance, the narrator's wife is nameless, and questions like how old she is, where she is from, or when she got married have remained unanswered. However, the narrator says that he is satisfied with his marriage as his wife is congenial and also a kind and loyal person who loves animals. Additionally, though it is a joke, he says his wife regards "all the black cats are witches in disguise" (p. 4), making the reader think his wife has supernatural beliefs. There is other supporting evidence for this situation. For instance, she indicates the similarity of the white shape on the second cat's chest to the gallows. Another thing for the narrator's wife is her commitment to keeping and loving the animals. Although the narrator transforms into an abuser and killer, she still loves the animals and gives her life to save the second black cat from the narrator's cruelty. Another characteristic of hers is being quite patient. It can be seen in the story that she persists against the narrator's abusive manner, but she does not get divorced. We do not know the reason for her endurance to his ill-disposed husband. It may be due to

her love. These facts, however, show her patience against such abusive manners, and she remains a loving and giving actor until the narrator murders her.

Pluto

Pluto is the most loved animal of the narrator’s family. According to the narrator, it has an essential role in being responsible for all that causes the narrator’s current state. The narrator defines Pluto as a completely black, lovely “and sagacious animal to an astonishing degree” (p. 4). The animal is quite loyal to the narrator, following him wherever he goes. However, it is abused, and its eye is cut, then hung by its owner. That Pluto is an intelligent animal can be seen when it faces the terrible conduct of the narrator and prefers to stay far from him. However, it is not enough for Pluto to be freed of his owner’s cruelty, who considers Pluto responsible for anything wrong in his life.

The Second Black Cat

The second black cat is precisely like Pluto in physical appearance. It is big, black, and one-eyed. The only difference between Pluto and the second black is the white spot on its chest which will later take the shape of gallows in the eyes of the narrator and his wife. This shape reminds the narrator of what he has done to Pluto. Although the second black cat is very loyal and friendly to the narrator, as is Pluto, the white spot on the cat will provoke the offense of the narrator.

The Police Officers

The police officers show up at the final stage of the story. There is no information on their characteristics as they are generic actors. However, they are elaborate in their jobs and are in the narrator’s house for the second time. In the story, it is not stated who calls the police, but we infer from the passage that they search the cellar three or four times, which may also show that they mostly suspect the narrator of the loss of his wife. At the final point, as soon as they hear the sound from the cellar wall and see the woman’s corpse, they arrest the narrator. Below is Table 2.2, which involves the thematic roles of actors in “The Black Cat.”

Actors	Thematic Roles
The Narrator	A paranoid, murderer, mentally and physically ill, unreliable, insane
The Narrator’s Wife	Superstitious, giving, loyal, loving, patient, loving animals, heroic
Pluto	Loyal to its owner, big, black, sagacious
The Second Black Cat	Looks quite like Pluto, black, having a white spot, one-eyed, sagacious, loyal
The Police Officers	Possibly twelve people, skilled

Table 2.2: Actors and thematic roles

Table 2.2 illustrates the actors’ thematic roles and personal qualities through which they are animated in the story. These thematic roles are links between the natural world and the actors in the story strengthening the sense of reality in a narrative (Martin & Ringham, 2000; Rifat, 2014). Therefore, it is essential to illustrate them at the discursive level of semiotic analysis.

Another way of grouping the actors in a narrative is to present them in binary oppositions (Kalelioğlu, 2018; Rifat, 2014). Accordingly, the actors in the story can be gathered as follows; *wishing to murder/wished to be murdered - murdering/murdered - interrogating/interrogated - arresting/arrested - injuring/injured*.

These binary oppositions can be used to categorize the actors in the narrative as shown in the below table;

The Narrator	Pluto	The Narrator’s Wife	The Second Black Cat	The Policemen
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injuring	injured		
murdering	murdered	murdered	
wishing to murder			wished to be murdered
interrogated			interrogating
arrested			arresting

Table 2.3: Grouping of the actors in the story in binary oppositions

Except for categorizing the actors, this type of grouping may provide the reader with a contrastive way of evaluating the relations between the actors. For instance, in Table 2.3, one can easily see the contrastive relation between the narrator and Pluto. While the narrator is the one *injuring*, Pluto is *injured* by *the narrator*. One other is that the narrator is *arrested*, while the police officers are the *arresting* actor in the story. Additionally, grouping actors in binary oppositions can give the reader an idea about the actors' actions in the story, which is essential to a better understanding of the shaping of events.

2.1.2 *The use of space in the story*

There are two main settings: the prison cell and the narrator's two houses. It is possible to make a primary distinction between spaces as "story space," where the actions occur, and "discourse space," where the narration of the events takes place (Jahn, 2017, N6.3). The prison cell is the discourse space; the narrator's houses are the story spaces. Only a short description of spaces is given in the story, possibly because the narrator needs more time to do this as he will be sent to the gallows the following day. However, the spatialization process formed by the author's declarations can be organized as follows.

The Prison Cell

This place is where the narrator calls out to the reader. The narrator tells the story in a prison cell. The exact place of the prison is unknown in the story. However, it is clear that he recounts the story in a place of confinement, giving readers an idea of understanding his physiological state and what kind of action he has taken to be in a cell like this.

The Narrator's Houses

The narrator's house is where nearly everything in the story occurs. At the story's beginning part, the narrator asserts that he will tell some "household events" (Poe, 2021, p. 3). The narrator has two different houses in the story. The former is where the narrator once lived as a wealthy man, and together with his wife, they have pets, including their favorite one, Pluto, and a servant. This house burns right after the narrator kills Pluto. Only the bedroom wall stands after the fire where a cat figure is. In the second house, the narrator kills his wife and buries her in the cellar wall. We can see the transition from a more confining place to a less confining one here. The cellar of the second house is, at the same time, the grave of the narrator's wife.

Only a short description is given in both settings; however, attention is drawn to the walls of both houses. For instance, it is the first house's bedroom wall on which all the neighbors together see the figure of a big cat. In the second house, the cellar wall is where the narrator buries his wife after killing her, and lastly, when the policemen come to search the premises, it is the wall through which the police hear the cry of a cat. Below is the isotopy of the house in "The Black Cat."

House	household	cellar	wall(s)	garden	Home	floor	window	chamber	bed	compartment	chair	Total Frequency of Repetition
12	2	7	16	2	3	2	1	1	2	1	1	41

Table 2.4: Isotopy of house in the story

As in Table 2.4, the spatialization in the narrative is formed mainly in the setting of a house. In this kind of setting, the word “wall” and “cellar” are the most repeated words in “houses.”

House	The Cellar
Surrounding	Surrounded

Table 2.5: Categorization of space in the story in binary opposition

In the story, the space of the narrated story can be considered in binary oppositions of *surrounding* and *surrounded*. Whereas the house is the surrounding place, the cellar is surrounded. It is observable in the story that the space shift from house to cellar evokes gradually worsening and frightening incidents. It may also be a transition from a larger space to a smaller, darker, and more descended one.

2.1.3 Enunciative components and use of time in the story

Enunciative Strategies

Enunciative strategies indicate the narration strategies used by the author. In “The Black Cat,” Edgar Allan Poe fixes the narrator as a central actor. Such a kind of narration is performed in first-person diegetic form, which is apparent in the frequent use of “I – me” pronouns in the flow of the narration. The narrator in the story is unreliable, so the readers cannot know how much of what he says is true. As a narration technique, Poe arouses a sense of suspense in the story using an unreliable narrator with first-person narration. For instance, in the opening paragraph, the narrator creates suspense which leads the reader not to believe him, “for the most wild yet most homely narrative which I am about to pen, I neither expect nor solicit belief. Mad indeed would I be to expect it...” (p. 3). The narrator’s unreliability can be seen from the beginning to the end of the story, observing the narrator’s transformation from sanity to insanity. It is evident that he thinks the alcohol and black cats are responsible for anything wrong in his life.

Besides, the narration is objective not just because the narrator is the central actor in what happens but also because he tells the reader what he thinks and does. The subject pronouns “I – me” are the most used, and simple past tense in the story is relevant evidence for the reader to see what happens more closely through the narrator’s experience.

Regarding the comparison of tenses in the story, the simple past is the most frequently used one. It is possible to assert that the narrator tells a story from his own life. The structures of sentences are sometimes short and sometimes long. Long sentences form the descriptive parts of the narrator’s sentiments in the story, but the other sentences involving the flow of events are brief and more comprehensible. Especially in the narration of the narrator’s murdering Pluto, repetitions are used to heighten the drama. These repetitions also serve for the reader to approach the true thoughts of the narrator, “hung it to the limb of a tree” (p. 6) – “hung it with the tears streaming from my eyes” (p. 6) – “hung it because I knew that it had loved me” (p. 6). To sum up, the narration characteristics in the story can be shown in the table below.

Criteria	Typology of Narrator in “The Black Cat”
Mode of representation	explicit
Diegetic status	first-person, diegetic
Evaluative position	objective

Ability	limited knowledge
Access to characters' consciousnesses	not expressed
Reliability	unreliable
Tense	mainly simple past and past perfect

Table 2.6: Narrator qualities as the speaker in the story

This categorization helps us see the narrator's particular position and features in the story. This table is an adaptation of Schmid's (2010, p. 66-67) categorization of the narrator, and thanks to this, the structure of narrative techniques can be understood better.

The use of time in the story

Under this heading, the analysis will mainly focus on the story's time formation, defined as "temporalization" (Greimas & Courtes, 1982, p. 354). Temporalization is one of the essential elements in a narrative, like actorialization and spatialization. For time formation, the relationship between "story time" ("the fictional time taken up by an action") and "discourse time" ("the time it takes an average reader to read a passage") (Jahn, 2017, N5.2.2.) will be revealed considering the successive structure of events and the time spent for their narration. Doing this will help us find out the duration of the narrative discourse.

The relations between story time and discourse time can be called "discrepancies," resulting in different time use in the story. These are "summary" (speed up in discourse time), "slow down" (stretching of discourse time), "ellipsis" (reduction of some events), "pause," and "scene" (Fludernik, 2009, pp. 32-35).

The discourse time of the story is a total of twelve pages, starting from the 3rd page to the ending 14th page in the recourse book. What is involved in twelve pages is the narration of a slice of the narrator's life, starting from his childhood to the changes in his life after marriage and prison. The total amount of words is to be used as a reflector to depict the discourse time ratio for the narration of successive events. "The Black Cat" is composed of 3918 words, and this will help us better compare the narrated events concerning words spent for their narration.

The story starts with the narrator's informing the reader that he is writing those lines from prison and will be executed the next day. He asserts that he wants to explain the reasons for being in prison and introduces himself as sane. This opening paragraph is 169 words, equivalent to 4.3% of discourse time.

The sequence of narrated events in the story	Page number	Amount of words	Time covered	Correlation to total discourse time
1	3	169	unknown	4.3%

Table 2.7: Temporal correlation between discourse and story time in 1st narrated event

Subsequently, the narrator recounts his peaceful and mild childhood and how much he loved the animals. Although this narrated period of his life, until he is married, comprises at least fifteen years, the discourse time spent for this period is only 159 words, which shows there is a summary or an accelerated narration. The correlation of the narrator's childhood discourse time is 4% in the total narrative.

The sequence of narrated events in the story	Page number	Amount of words	Time covered	Correlation to total discourse time
2	3-4	159	Narrator's childhood, possibly 10-15 years	4%

Table 2.8: Temporal correlation between discourse and story time in 2nd narrated event

The third part of the narration subsumes the narrator’s marriage, his wife’s characteristics, and the introduction of their favorite pet, Pluto. Here, the narrator recounts his friendship with Pluto, and he says their friendship has lasted several years until he undergoes a remarkable transformation owing to the alcohol (Poe, 2021, p. 4). It can also be seen that there is a summary in discourse time. The discourse time is 172 words, whereas the narrated story time is “several years.” The narration of this period starts with his marriage and lasts till his alcohol habit. The ratio of discourse time to the whole narrative is 4.3%.

The sequence of narrated events in the story	Page number	Amount of words	Time covered	Correlation to total discourse time
3	4	172	Several years after marriage	4.3%

Table 2.9: Temporal correlation between discourse and story time in 3rd narrated event

The fourth narrated event in the story is the narrator’s alteration from good to evil. This part starts on the 4th page with the statement, “our friendship lasted, in this manner, for several years,” and finishes with the statement, “even Pluto began to experience the effects of my ill temper” (p. 5). Now, the narrator’s transition to a bad-tempered man against his wife, pets, and lastly, Pluto is narrated. According to the narrator, this is because of alcohol. He starts maltreating and giving violence to her wife and pets at home. The narration lasts 167 words, equivalent to 4.2% of the total discourse time. The exact length of time for the narrator’s transformation is unknown. However, it is known that the story time covers several years passing after marriage, which may be in 12-24 months or two years.

The sequence of narrated events in the story	Page number	Amount of words	Time covered	Correlation to total discourse time
4	4-5	167	Several years have passed after the marriage	4.2%

Table 2.10: Temporal correlation between discourse and story time in 4th narrated event

The narrator keeps recounting a more specific and shorter story time but in a longer discourse time. In this part of the narration, the readers witness the first cruelty of the narrator. He catches Pluto and cuts one of its eyes as it bites the narrator’s hand. The narration starts with the statement, “one night, returning home, much intoxicated, from one of my haunts about town...” (p. 5), and it finishes with, “I again plunged into excess and soon drowned in wine all memory of the deed” (p. 5). The story time comprises one night and the following morning, narrated in 182 words, and this shows us that there is a slowdown in narration, stretching discourse time.

The sequence of narrated events in the story	Page number	Amount of words	Time covered	Correlation to total discourse time
5	5	182	One night and the following morning	4.6%

Table 2.11: Temporal correlation between discourse and story time in 5th narrated event

The narrator continues telling the incidents after cutting one of Pluto’s eyes. This part starts with, “in the meantime, the cat slowly recovered. The socket of the lost eye presented...” (p. 5). It finishes with “the lime of which, with the flames, and the ammonia from the carcass, had then accomplished the portraiture as I saw it” (p. 7). The narrator defines the beginning of narrated story time by saying, “in the meantime, the cat slowly recovered...” (p. 5), which means it is not an exact time covered, but it may be guessed that three or four months or more have passed after the cat’s injury. Because for an

injury in the eye to recover, such a time is needed. It is also clear that there is an accelerated narration or summary as what the narrator, his wife, or Pluto did in such recovery time is absent from the narration. So, this part of the narration comprises what happens after Pluto recovers. The narrator says Pluto's recovered socket eye irritates the narrator (p. 5), and he unavoidably wants to kill Pluto just because he should not do it (p. 6). The narration of the murder of Pluto starts on one indefinite day. The narrator recounts with what feelings he hangs Pluto, and on the night of the murder, he keeps telling how they awake when a fire arises in the house. "On the day succeeding the fire" (p. 7) indicates that the narration continues for the following day of the murder, in which the narrator sees the figure of a hung cat on the compartment wall. The narration of two days is on the scene here, and it is a total of 758 words, equivalent to 19.3% of total discourse time. An evident slowdown is prevalent in the narration of two days comprising the murder of Pluto and what happens afterward.

The sequence of narrated events in the story	Page number	Amount of words	Time covered	Correlation to total discourse time
6	5-7	758	Two daytime and a nighttime	19.3%

Table 2.12: Temporal correlation between discourse and story time in 6th narrated event

After the narration of Pluto's murder, the fire, and the narrator saw the figure of a cat on the vertical wall of the fired house, the narrator recounts his deep impressions of the apparition. The narrated time comprises the narrator's attempts to get rid of the deep impression for his crime and his desire to pet another cat for regretting what he has done to Pluto is as "for months" (p. 8). There is not a clear expression of the time. From the expression "for months," we may infer that this period lasts for 6-7 months or 11-12, one year or more. What is clear here is that a long time after killing Pluto has passed, and the narrator summarizes this period. Below is Table 2.13, which illustrates the details of this phase.

The sequence of narrated events in the story	Page number	Amount of words	Time covered	Correlation to total discourse time
7	7-8	109	For months after killing Pluto	2.7%

Table 2.13: Temporal correlation between discourse and story time in the 7th narrated event

The following narration comprises the story time of "one night" (p. 8) when the narrator says he has found another black cat similar to Pluto. In this part, the narrator's "attention was suddenly drawn to some black object"; this is the second black. The narrator recounts how he sees and brings it home and how his wife reacts to this new cat. What happens that night is narrated in 251 words, equivalent to 6.4% of the total discourse time in the story.

The sequence of narrated events in the story	Page number	Amount of words	Time covered	Correlation to total discourse time
8	8	251	One night time	6.4%

Table 2.14: Temporal correlation between discourse and story time in 8th narrated event

After bringing the second black cat home, the narrator tells how he feels about it. However, his feelings undergo a negative transformation in time. He starts hating the second black animal too. This period of the story covers the time between the following morning of the cat's arrival, on which the narrator realizes the cat has only one eye like Pluto, and the attempts of the narrator not to abuse the cat. This period may be 3 or 4 weeks or 1 or 2 months as the narrator asserts, "I did not, for some weeks, strike, or otherwise violently ill use it" (p. 9). The narrator mainly expresses his deep feelings about the cat,

for which we can say there is a slowdown or pause in narration. This part mainly covers descriptive sentences, one of the longest in discourse time.

The sequence of narrated events in the story	Page number	Amount of words	Time covered	Correlation to total discourse time
9	9-10-11	735	For some weeks	19%

Table 2.15: Temporal correlation between discourse and story time in 9th narrated event

After recounting the relationship between the second black cat and himself, comprising some weeks, the narrator starts telling how he tried to kill the second black cat, how he killed his wife, and how he buried her into the wall. What is recorded at this moment covers one day of story time; for discourse time, it is presented in a total of 653 words. The ratio is equivalent to 16.6% of total discourse time, from which we may deduce that there is a detailed narration of events with a slowdown in narration.

The sequence of narrated events in the story	Page number	Amount of words	Time covered	Correlation to total discourse time
10	11-12-13	653	One day	16.6%

Table 2.16: Temporal correlation between discourse and story time in the 10th narrated event

After burying his wife, the narrator is happy about his triumph. The next is the narration of the second and the third day. The narrator uses a summary for the narration of the two-day time. He asserts that he still looks for the second black cat, but it is not around.

The sequence of narrated events in the story	Page number	Amount of words	Time covered	Correlation to total discourse time
11	13	85	The 2 nd and 3 rd days after burying his wife	2.1%

Table 2.17: Temporal correlation between discourse and story time in 11th narrated event

The fourth day after the murder of the narrator’s wife is recounted in the last part. The narrator seems happy as the second black cat is not around. The policemen have come home to search for the narrator’s wife. They elaborately search the house. They even look for her in the cellar three times; however, the police cannot find her. When they are about to leave the house, the narrator hits the wall where he buried his wife. A sound like a child’s cry is heard through the wall, which draws the attention of the police, indicating the ending point in the story. The narrator is caught after the police discover his wife’s corpse and the second black cat. This is another extended part of the story in which slow down and pauses in narration are prevalent. The narration of this part of the story is equivalent to 12% of the total discourse time.

The sequence of narrated events in the story	Page number	Amount of words	Time covered	Correlation to total discourse time
12	13-14	475	The 4 th day after the murder of the narrator's wife	12%

Table 2.18: Temporal correlation between discourse and story time in the 12th narrated event

As evident in the tables above, the correlation between discourse and story time in “The Black Cat” shows density in the narration parts of the physiological states of the narrator and descriptive statements

for his feelings. While extended periods of story time, such as the childhood and marriage life of the narrator, are narrated in relatively short discourse time, the narrated story time covers one day or night time in which the narrator’s murder of Pluto and his wife, or the arrival of police officers to the house takes place in longer discourse time.

The author’s preferences of time expressions are essential to check according to the number of repetitions in the text. These time expressions are essential for depicting links between successive events in the story (Martin & Ringham, 2000).

Page 3	tomorrow	today	from my infancy					
Page 4	I married early	just now	“at length”	for several years	day by day			
Page 5	now	one night	When the reason returned with the morning	When I had slept off	In the meantime, the cat slowly recovered	no longer appeared to suffer	which had once so loved me	this feeling soon gave place...
Page 6	One morning	On the night of the day						
Page 7	On the day succeeding the fire	When I first beheld	at length	Upon the alarm of fire	immediately	had then accomplished	For months	
Page 8	now	One night as I sat	suddenly sooner occasionally	Upon touching him	when I prepared to go home	Immediatelyx2	Thenx2	At oncex2
Page 9	soon	By slow degrees	For some weeks	Gradually very gradually	on the morning after I brought it home	Whenever I sat	At such times	At once
Page 10	More than once	By slow degrees	which for a long time my reason struggled	At length nowx3	By day nor by night	During the former		
Page 11	now	One day	Forthwith	By day or by night	At one period	Finally		
Page 12	lately	As before	Having procured mortar	When I had finished	My next step	At length	At the moment	
Page 13	During the night	For one night	The second and the third day passed	Once again, I breathed..	had fled the premises for ever	Upon the fourth day of	At length, for the third or fourth time,	As the party ascended the steps
Page 14	No sooner had the reverberation of my blows sunk into silence,	For one instant						

Table 2.19: Temporal Expression Used in Text

Table 2.19 illustrates the temporal expressions used by the author in the text. They are the isotopy of time, essential for the sense of reality in the narrative (Martin & Ringham, 2000).

To be more comprehensible, we can suggest that positing the events concerning their occurring time in the story may help us see their exact places. To do this, considering the main one, a triadic distinction amongst the time of events may help (Günay, 2018; Kalelioğlu, 2018).

Pre-murder	The murder of the Narrator's Wife	Post-murder
-Narrator's childhood (p. 4) -Narrator's marriage and domestic life (p. 4) -Narrator's transformation and alcohol habit (p. 4-5) -Narrator cuts one of Pluto's eyes (p.5) -Narrator's killing Pluto (p. 5-6) -Fire in the narrator's house (p.6) -Narrator's finding and bringing the second black cat (p.8-9) -Narrator's irritation with the second black cat (p.9-10-11)	-Narrator tries to kill the second black cat, but he fails. He kills his wife in an instant (p.11).	-Narrator hides the body of his wife (p. 11-12) -The policemen come home and search for the woman on the fourth day after the murder (p. 13) -The policemen find out the crime thanks to the voice of the second black cat (p.14)

Table 2.20: Temporal Arrangement of Events in the Story

Table 2.20 is shaped by taking into consideration of the main event. In the story, the main event is the one that causes the narrator's get arrested. The narrator is in jail not because of killing Pluto but because of murdering his wife. Although he did not intend to kill his wife, he did it instantly and tried hard to hide the body. However, he is caught by the police. Therefore, the arrangement of events is performed, taking the murder of the narrator's wife to the center.

2.1.4 Interrelations of actor - time-space in the story

The main aim of this part is to show the identified relations among three formative elements in "The Black Cat." These formative elements are actor, time, and space in a narrative (see tables 2.3, 2.5, 2.20). Accordingly, doing this will give the reader a better insight into the text.

Actor ↓	Time					Space ↓ House
	Pre-murder		Murder	Post-murder		
The Narrator →	<i>injuring</i>	<i>murdering</i>	<i>murdering</i>	<i>interrogated</i>	<i>arrested</i>	
Pluto →	<i>injured</i>	<i>murdered</i>	x	x		
The second black cat →	x		<i>wished to be murdered</i>	x	x	
Narrator's wife →	x	<i>murdered</i>	x			
The policemen →	x	x	<i>interrogating</i>	<i>arresting</i>		

Table 2.21: Interrelations of Actor-Time-Space in the Story

In Table 2.21, the main focus is combining three formative elements in the story. The distribution of states of actors in both specific time and space in the story is illustrated. Before murdering his wife, the narrator is in a position of *injuring*, whereas Pluto is *injured*. In the analysis, these binary oppositions have been used for identifying actors. What has been built is just placing actorial positions into the predefined specific time and space in the narrative. We can also conceive it as the summary of the story in order to see the relations among formative elements.

3.2.1.5 *Oppositions in the story*

For this part, the main oppositions observed in the story are to be revealed. It should be remembered that semiotics postulates that meaning arises from oppositions (Martin & Ringham, 2000). Also, these oppositions are the links between the deep level and surface level of a narrative. Accordingly, the main oppositions in “The Black Cat” are;

Sanity	vs.	Insanity
Life	vs.	Death
Wealthy	vs.	Poverty

At the same time, these oppositions indicate significant transformations in the story. For instance, the narrator looks normal and sane at the beginning of the story. However, he loses his mental health owing to his alcohol habits day by day. The narrator gradually transforms into a mad person who is maltreating his wife and pets at home and changes the position of other actors in the story. The narrator’s getting insane is the main reason for murdering Pluto and his wife and the fire in the house, which causes the narrator’s poverty.

Sanity vs. Insanity

The opposition, sanity – insanity, shows excellent parallelism with other stories of Poe, such as “The Tell-Tale Heart.” The unnamed narrator starts recounting the story in quite a usual manner. He asserts that he is not mad (Poe, 2021, p. 3); he then tells about his childhood and the first years of his married life, which seems normal. However, the narrator becomes an alcohol addict who abuses his pets and wife at home as the narrative continues. Then, his instant anger causes injuring and killing of Pluto. The narrator seems unable to distinguish between good and evil, which can be interpreted as insane. Lastly, killing and burying his wife is the ending point for the reader to regard him as insane.

Life vs. Death

Life and death in the story are another opposition strongly related to the narrator’s transition from sanity to insanity. As the narrator’s mental state goes terrible, his manners toward his wife and pets deteriorate in the same direction. He cuts one of Pluto’s eyes and then kills it. He attempts to kill the second black cat, but he cannot. Instead, he kills his wife. Nearly all actors in the story confront death at the narrator’s hand. At the end of the story, the narrator, arrested by the police officers, is in the same position as his victims, Pluto and his wife. He will be killed tomorrow because of his murders, making the text’s transition from life to death clear.

Wealthy vs. Poverty

On the night of killing Pluto, a fire breaks out in the narrator’s house; the narrator says, “It was with great difficulty that my wife, a servant, and myself, made our escape from the conflagration.” They could achieve saving nothing but themselves and their servant. The narrator’s house was probably lovely with a servant, showing he was wealthy. After the fire, the narrator and his wife move to another old house and are subject to poverty. It can be seen in the narrator’s statements, “one day she accompanied me, upon some household errand, into the cellar of the old building which our poverty compelled us to inhabit.”

2.2 *Narrative level*

The narrative level is a more abstract level than the discursive one. In this part of the analysis, the actors and the events “transform into abstract objects” (Kiran, 2004, p. 58) and are examined under the perspective of “actants” (Greimas & Courtes, 1982, p. 5) and “transformations” (pp. 348-359). Greimassian semiotics postulates that it is possible and necessary to reveal the narrative grammar or syntax in narrative analysis, which is generalizable to all kinds of narrative discourses. Thus, narrative analysis can be called the activity of narration of narrative. Two tools will be used to analyze actants'

positions in the narrative's grammar. The former is the *actantial schema*, which is used to present the distributional functions and "structural relations" (Hawkes, 2004, p. 72) of actants that "can be thought of as that which accomplishes or undergoes an act" (Greimas & Courtes, 1982, p. 5). The latter is the *canonical narrative schema*, through which the sequences and transformational phases of events that an actant undergoes throughout the narrative are observed. Greimas and Courtes note (1982, p. 204) that this schema "serves as a point of departure for understanding the organizing principles of all narrative discourses." Besides, it depicts "logical, temporal and semantic criteria to arrange the elements of an action" (Hebert, 2020, p. 107). One of the most apparent advantages of actantial and canonical narrative schemas is that they can be applied to any individual events or phases whose consequences transform actants and the whole narrative.

2.2.1 Segmentation of text

Segmentation is the first step for the narrative level analysis. Doing this will also facilitate "the analysis but the depiction of the developmental phases of events in a narrative" (Günay, 2013, p. 177). Making an elaborate separation of text into reading units may be performed considering the episodic or hierarchic articulation of events, which applies to the analysis of "The Black Cat."

The first segment is the introduction segment covering the story's first paragraph. It begins with the statement, "For the most wild yet most homely narrative which I am about to pen, I neither expect nor solicit belief" (Poe, 2021, p.3). It finishes with "...in the circumstances I detail with awe, nothing more than an ordinary succession of very natural causes and effects" (p. 3).

The second segment covers narrating the narrator's childhood and married life. In this part, the narrator introduces the other two actors. They are his wife and their favorite pet, Pluto. This segment starts with the statement, "From my infancy, I was noted for the docility and humanity of my disposition" (p. 3) and finishes with, "It was even with difficulty that I could prevent him from following me through the streets" (p. 4).

The third segment covers the transformation of two main actors in the story: the narrator and Pluto. This part starts with the statement, "our friendship lasted, in this manner, for several years, during which my general temperament and character— through the instrumentality of the Fiend Intemperance..." (p. 4). It finishes with "again plunged into excess, and soon drowned in wine all memory of the deed" (p. 5).

The fourth segment narrates Pluto's death, the narrator's deep feelings, and the house's fire. It starts with the statement, "in the meantime, the cat slowly recovered" (p. 5). It finishes with "the lime of which, with the flames, and the *ammonia* from the carcass, had then accomplished the portraiture as I saw it" (p. 7).

The fifth segment covers the narrator's finding a new cat and how he brings it home. It starts with "Although I thus readily accounted to my reason, if not altogether to my conscience, for the startling fact just detailed, it did not the less fail to make a deep impression upon my fancy" (p. 7), and this part finishes with "when it reached the house it domesticated itself at once, and became immediately a great favorite with my wife" (p. 8).

The sixth segment covers the narration of the change in the narrator's feelings against the second black cat. Though the narrator and his wife like the cat, the narrator irritates the animal. This segment also covers how the narrator kills his wife instead of the second black cat. It starts with "for my own part, I soon found a dislike to it arising within me" (p. 9). It finishes with "she fell dead upon the spot without a groan" (p. 11).

The seventh segment involves the narrator hiding his wife's body after killing her. This part starts with "hideous murder accomplished, I set myself forthwith, and with entire deliberation, to the task of concealing the body" (p. 11), and finishes with "I looked around triumphantly, and said to myself: "Here at least, then, my labor has not been in vain" (p. 12).

The eighth segment covers the narration of the last part of the story. The policemen come home to search the premises for the loss of the narrator's wife, and the narrator gets caught. This segment starts with, "my next step was to look for the beast which had been the cause of so much wretchedness" (p. 12). And finishes with, "I had walled the monster up within the tomb" (p. 14).

2.2.2 Analysis of segments

Segment 1: Introduction (p. 3)

Segment 1 is the introductory segment where the narrator introduces himself as someone in prison. Also, he declares his intention to tell the reader the reasons for being in jail. The narrator will be sentenced to maximum punishment the following day. It is understood from the beginning that the narrator wishes to recount his own life; therefore, he is to be depicted as subject 1 (S₁) in the analysis. He says that he is not mad. However, he does not expect the reader to believe what he will tell, which seems contradictory. In order to reveal what had happened in the narrative, we should move on to the next segment.

Segment 2: Childhood and married life of the narrator (pp. 3-4)

S₁, in this part, starts telling the story of his childhood. He says, "I was noted for the docility and humanity of my disposition" (p. 3), and he loved animals very much. S₁ keeps the quality of loving animals in his manhood, either. Then, he marries early to a woman fond of animals. This part is the introduction of his wife participating in the narrative. The second actant, subject 2 (S₂), is the narrator's wife. S₁ and S₂ have many pets at home, one of which is a cat. S₁ continues telling about his domestic life and his relationship with his cat. The cat's name is Pluto, and S₁'s best friend does not stop following his owner outside. S₁ introduces the cat as a "large and beautiful animal, entirely black, and sagacious to an astonishing degree" (p. 4). Pluto is the third actant in the narrative, so it is subject 3 (S₃). This segment has a preparative function. For now, the narrator's life seems quite normal, and we should wait to see the changing relations between the actants. Up till now, three actants in the story have been revealed. They are; **Subject 1:** The narrator, **Subject 2:** The narrator's wife, and **Subject 3:** Pluto.

Segment 3: The narrator's transformation (p. 4-5)

After summarizing his childhood and marriage life, S₁ starts telling about the changes in his life. He asserts that his relationship with S₃ was maintained this way for several years (p. 4). However, there is a "radical alteration" (p. 4) in S₁'s life, which makes his way of thinking and behaviors worse; "...my general temperament and character— through the instrumentality of the Fiend Intemperance—had (I blush to confess it) experienced a radical alteration for the worse" (p. 4).

S₁ admits that the main reason for his alteration, which he defines as "fiend intemperance," is alcohol addiction (p. 5). According to him, Fiend intemperance means being "moody, more irritable, more regardless of feelings of others day by day" (p. 4). S₁ starts maltreating the other pets at home, uses foul language to S₂, and, even at length, offers violence to her. S₁ tries remaining still against S₃ as it is his favorite pet. However, the disease grows, and S₃ starts experiencing violence like other pets and S₂ (p. 5). These incidents show S₁'s transformation due to alcohol and can be illustrated in semiotic terms as follows:

Np: [S₁ (Alcohol) → (S₂ (The narrator) U O (Goodness))] Alcohol has taken goodness from the narrator.

Np: Narrative program

S₁: Subject of doing

S₂: Subject of state

O: The object

[]: Utterance of doing

(): Utterance of state

→: Function of doing or transformation ∩: Conjunction / U: Disjunction

The narrator's depiction as S_2 can be confusing when considering that he was priorly coined as S_1 in general analysis of the story. However, the illustration above is just a way of formalization the transformation of the narrator. So, it applies only to this type of illustration that the narrator or other actants are defined differently from their former representations.

S_1 's transformation is from good to bad, and alcohol addiction is the main reason for this change. S_1 abuses S_3 at length and seizes it one night with the delusion that S_3 avoids the presence of S_1 (p. 5). S_3 inflicts a slight wound on S_1 's hand with fear, and after that, S_1 cuts one of S_3 's eyes with a penknife from his pocket. This incident clearly shows S_1 's transformation, which can be seen in the quotation; "My original soul seemed, at once, to take its flight from my body; and a more than fiendish malevolence, ginnurtured, thrilled every fibre of my frame" (p. 5)

S_1 is entirely a different person anymore. He has changed into a pervert to cut his favorite pet's eye. S_3 is poorly wounded. It loses one of its eyes. It is another transformation in the narrative, which can be illustrated as follows;

Np: $[S_1 \text{ (the narrator)} \rightarrow (S_2 \text{ (Pluto)} \cup O \text{ (one of its eyes)})]$ The narrator blinded Pluto.

Without one of its eyes, S_3 is an abused and violated animal. This fact shows that S_1 can do anything wrong to anybody. His easy manners maintain after injuring S_3 ; he says that with the help of alcohol, he can forget what has happened the following morning.

Segment 4: Death of Pluto and the fire in the house (p. 5-7)

This part starts with the statement, "in the meantime, the cat slowly recovered" (p. 5), which indicates that the necessary time for S_3 to heal has passed with no traces showing S_3 is suffering. First, S_1 asserts he has "grieved for this evident dislike on the part of the animal" (p. 5); however, this feeling soon irritates S_1 . This type of sentiment gradually directs S_1 to an "irrevocable overthrow," which is a "spirit of perverseness" (p. 5). He defines it as doing something just because it is forbidden, which can be seen in the below quotation as follows;

Who has not, a hundred times, found himself committing a vile or stupid action for no other reason than because he knows he should *not*? Have we not a perpetual inclination, in the teeth of our best judgment, to violate that which is *Law* merely because we understand it to be such? (p. 6).

It is evident that S_1 is in another phase of his transformation. He has had a worse manner than before, and it is the transition from fiend intemperance to the spirit of perverseness. This transformation can be shown in semiotic terms as follows;

Np: $[S_1 \text{ (fiend intemperance)} \rightarrow (S_2 \text{ (the narrator)} \cap O \text{ (spirit of perverseness)})]$ Fiend intemperance transformed the narrator into someone having the spirit of perverseness.

This evolvement directs the reader into thinking that S_1 is preparing for something as cruel as what he has done to S_3 . He discloses the idea as a "final and irrevocable overthrow" (p. 5), defining his ongoing transformation. The desire for a final overthrow stated by S_1 can be accepted as the beginning of another narrative program. S_1 wants to do something cruel to vex his soul because it is non-good. Accordingly, his true aim, which is to complete the loose end of S_3 , is defined as,

It was this unfathomable longing of the soul *to vex itself*—to offer violence to its own nature—to do wrong for the wrong's sake only— that urged me to continue and finally to consummate the injury I had inflicted upon the unoffending brute (p. 6)

After asserting his tendency, S_1 says that he hung S_3 "on a limb of a tree" (p. 6). S_1 's narrative program is finished with success for himself; at the same time, this shows the death of one of the actants in the narrative, which is the transformation of S_3 from life to death. The murder can be symbolized as follows;

Np: $[S_1 \text{ (the narrator)} \rightarrow (S_2 \text{ (Pluto)} \cup O \text{ (life)})]$ The narrator took Pluto's life.

After killing S_3 , S_1 says that he has done this action just because it is false, which is "the spirit of perverseness," according to him.

On the night of killing S₃, a critical incident involving significant changes happens in S₁'s life. There becomes a fire in S₁'s house. S₁ and his wife S₂ hardly save their lives from fire with their servant. S₁ loses all his wealth in that fire. He summarizes this incident: "My entire worldly wealth was swallowed up, and I resigned myself thenceforward to despair" (p.6). S₁ will spend the rest of his life in poverty from now on. This transformation is another one for S₁. After the fire, he switches from a wealthy life to a poor one. This transformation can be illustrated as follows;

Np: [S₁ (the fire) → (S₂ (the narrator) U O (wealth))] The fire took the narrator's wealth.

"On the day succeeding the fire" (p.7), S₁ goes to see the ruins of his house and sees a crowd near the last standing compartment. When he reaches there, he understands the people are looking at a gigantic cat figure hung with rope over its neck. He remembers his cruelty to S₃. However, he estimates that someone seeing the hung cat had cut it and thrown it from S₁'s chamber, and then with the help of ammonia from the carcass and pressure of other walls, this figure emerged. This incident also shows that S₁ confesses what kind of action he has done to S₃. He defines his action as "cruelty, atrocity" (p.7).

Segment 5: Finding a new cat (pp. 7-8)

S₁ is significantly impressed by the figure cat with a rope over its neck. Though many days have passed since then, he cannot stop thinking about the cat, "for months I could not rid myself of the phantasm of the cat" (p. 7-8). S₁ has different feelings, which he finds difficult to define as remorse. Afterward, he says that he regrets the loss of Pluto (S₃) and wants to have another similar one. This can be seen below;

I went so far as to regret the loss of the animal, and to look about me, among the vile haunts which I now habitually frequented, for another pet of the same species, and of somewhat similar appearance, with which to supply its place (p. 8).

This declaration above can be taken as the initiation of another narrative program. S₁ is searching for another cat similar to S₃. Indeed, it does not take long for S₁ to find a black cat sitting in a den in a half-stupefied position. This also means that another actant participates in a narrative. This cat is quite similar to S₃ in its size and color. This is the second black cat, and in terms of its narrative act, we can call it subject 4 (S₄). **Subject 4:** The second black cat.

This new narrative program is completed successfully and shows another transformation of S₁ as he gains what he seeks. This can be depicted in semiotic terms as follows;

Np: [S₁ (the narrator) → (S₂ (the narrator) ∩ O (the second black cat))] The narrator found a new black cat.

Segment 6: An attempt to kill the second black cat (pp. 9-11)

This segment is the most extended one in the story, in which the sentimental transformations and physiological state of S₁ against S₄ are narrated. Besides, this segment involves initiating successive events resulting in S₁'s being sent to jail. Right after S₁ brings S₄ home, he starts disliking S₄, "I soon found a dislike to it arising within me" (p. 9). However, it is just the reverse of his attempts to find a new animal as having remorse for the S₃. The dislike then turned into annoyance and disgust on the side of S₁ due to S₄'s fondness for S₁. Afterward, we can see the next sentimental transition of S₁. His disgust and annoyance turn to hatred against S₄, "by slow degrees, these feelings of disgust and annoyance rose into the bitterness of hatred" (p. 9). According to S₁, what added to his hatred is S₄'s being a one-eyed cat, just like S₃, which reminds S₁ of his previous cruelty. However, this similarity between the two cats makes S₂ closer to S₄ in her humanity of feelings. With this in mind, right after S₁ brings S₄ home, he starts to hate it gradually, contrary to S₂. This transformation can be illustrated as follows;

Np: [S₁ (the second cat) → (S₂ (the narrator) ∩ O (hatred))] The second black cat gave the narrator hatred.

S₁'s hatred against S₄ increases daily when S₄ mainly follows S₁'s footsteps wherever he goes, "it followed my footsteps with pertinacity" (p. 9). This disturbance directs S₁ to find a way to get rid of S₄, even if he would have to kill it. This can be seen in S₁'s statement as follows;

If I arose to walk, it would get between my feet and thus nearly throw me down, or, fastening its long and sharp claws in my dress, clamber, in this manner, to my breast. At such times, although I longed to destroy it with a

blow, I was yet withheld from so doing, partly by a memory of my former crime, but chiefly—let me confess it at once—by absolute *dread* of the beast (p. 9).

This statement can be taken as another initiation of a new narrative program. This narrative program covers S₁'s attempt to eliminate S₄ because of his hatred of S₄. However, another thing emerges as an obstacle to S₁ being free of S₄. This is the fear against S₄. S₁ confesses that the extent of this fear is not physical but mental, mainly resulting from the white spot on S₄'s breast. That spot starts changing into an image of the gallows reminding S₁ of the death of S₄. However, it can be said that S₁ is fully ready to kill S₄, as he could do the same to S₃. The following statement shows this fact;

It was now the representation of an object that I shudder to name—and for this, above all, I loathed, and dreaded, and would have rid myself of the monster *had I dared*—it was now, I say, the image of a hideous—of a ghastly thing—of the GALLOWS! — oh, the mournful and terrible engine of horror and of Crime—of Agony and of Death! (p. 10).

This mindset means complete torment for S₁. He cannot even stop thinking about S₄ in his sleep. This brings a vast deal of disturbance to S₁ and causes S₁ to show sudden outbursts without any idea of good in mind. One day, S₁ and S₂ go down to the cellar of their old house for some household errand. S₄ follows S₁ as always, and S₁ is about to fall down the stairs because of it. In an instant, S₁ gets so angry that he moves to kill it with the axe in his hand. However, S₂ grabs S₁'s hand, and S₄ can flee from the fatal strike by this opportunity. S₁ hits S₂ with the axe and kills her with demonical rage. This is the end of his trial to kill S₄, and S₂'s interference causes the failure of this attempt. S₁ kills S₂ instead of S₄. This also shows the transformation of another actant in the narrative. This can be illustrated as follows;

Np: [S₁ (the narrator) → (S₂ (the narrator's wife) U O (life))] The narrator took his wife's life.

Segment 7: Concealment of the body (pp. 11- 12)

S₁ is alert to hide the body of his wife. At first, he does not intend to kill her, but he angrily hits the axe into her brain. He has to get rid of the corpse as soon as possible, "this hideous murder accomplished, I set myself forthwith, and with entire deliberation, to the task of concealing the body" (p. 11). Considering that S₁ is in the urge to find a way to hide the body, we can say that the above statement gives us the declaration of a new narrative program. At first, he thinks of many ways to deal with the body. One of them is to remove the body from the house, but he does not want to risk being observed by neighbors. The next idea is to cut the body into small pieces and destroy them in the fire. Then, he thinks of burying the body deep down in the cellar or making a package where he will put the body, as if merchandise, to send it with a porter with standard arrangements. However, he puts these ideas aside and decides to wall the body up. For such a purpose, the cellar was suitable. He thinks he can insert the corpse displacing the bricks "so that no one could detect anything suspicious" (p. 12). He achieves placing the body in the wall and "prepares a plaster which could not be distinguished from the old" (p. 12).

Np: [S₁ (the narrator) → (S₂ (the narrator) ∩ O (solution))] The narrator finds a solution to hide the body.

Segment 8: The second black cat shows up (pp. 12-14)

After dealing with the corpse, S₁ starts looking for S₄ determinedly to complete his unfinished task of killing it. However, he cannot find S₄ anywhere. He thinks that this is because S₄ is frightened by his terror. Although S₁ has murdered his wife (S₂), he sleeps well on the same night as his "tormentor" (p. 13) does not appear. It is a temporary state because S₁ cannot stop thinking about S₄. Besides, that S₁ keeps looking for S₄ to kill it soon after killing S₂ shows the continuation of the narrative program of S₁ to kill S₄. Though the second and the third day have passed, S₄ does not show up, which makes S₁ relieved for some more time. On the fourth day, unexpectedly, "a party of police" (p. 13) comes to the house to search for the premises. This is the participation of a new actant in the narrative. As all policemen act the same way, it would not be wrong to name subject 5 (S₅) though they are more than one person.

Subject 5: The policemen

The reason for S₅ showing up has yet to be discovered. However, the loss of S₁'s wife could have been noticed by someone and reported to the police center. No matter why, S₅ is in the house, which is the starting point of another micro-narrative program. This narrative program is mutual as S₁ and S₅ react to each other's missions. S₁ has to hide the crime, while S₅ should find out if there is a crime.

S₅ starts searching the house meticulously and asks S₁ to accompany them while searching. S₅ goes down the cellar three or four times, and as S₁ states, "they left no nook or corner unexplored" (p. 13). However, S₅ cannot find anything extraordinary and prepares to leave home. S₁ thinks that S₅ is satisfied and ultimately believes in his guiltlessness. He wants to mock S₅ in a triumph manner and says;

Gentlemen, I said at last, as the party ascended the steps, I delight to have allayed your suspicions. I wish you all health and a little more courtesy. By the bye, gentlemen, this—this is a very well-constructed house (in the rabid desire to say something easily, I scarcely knew what I uttered at all) —"I may say an *excellently* well-constructed house. These walls—are you going, gentlemen?—these walls are solidly put together (pp. 13-14).

After saying those words to S₅, S₁ hits heavily with a cane to the wall where the corpse is buried. At that time, a cry emerges through the wall like a "sobbing of a child" (p. 14). All of them, with awe and astonishment, remain motionless. After that, S₅ heads to the wall through which the sound is coming and removes bricks. S₂'s bloody corpse falls in front of S₅. On the head of the body, S₄ is standing. It is unclear how the animal got into the wall with the body together. S₁ is caught and sent to jail with maximum punishment.

Np: [S₁ (the policemen) → (S₂ (the policemen) ∩ O (the narrator))] The policemen arrest the narrator.

2.2.3 The articulation of narrative programs and the narrative trajectory in the story

Here, the aim is to illustrate the articulation of elucidated narrative programs constituting the story. As suggested by Hebert (2020, p. 94), the narrative program (NP) is "an abstract formula used to represent an action." The state change of the actants, which are the movements that bring about transformations, can be called micro-narratives that compose the story, which is the macro narrative. In a narrative, there may be more than one event narrated, and a semiotician may prefer to use semiotic tools such as actantial and canonical narrative schemas to depict the structure of each of the narrative programs. This can sometimes be confusing, and thus, it is beneficial to show the succession of micro-narratives in the story and their roles in forming the basic narrative structure. Below is the figure depicting a succession of narrative programs.

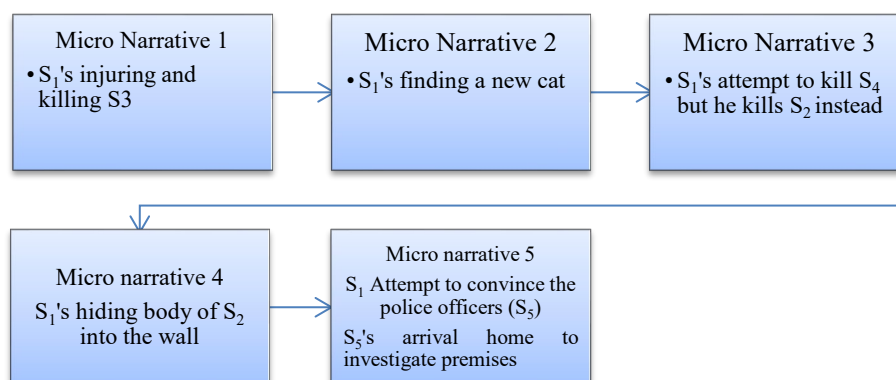


Figure 2.1: The order of narrative programs in the story

When we look at the order of narrative programs in the story, the first thing narrated is the transformation of S₁ to an alcohol addict, then his injuring and killing of his favorite pet S₃. This is a preparative micro-narrative, which involves S₁'s killing S₃. After this event, S₁ longs for the animal and decides to have another pet similar to the former. He finds a black cat resembling much S₃, which is another micro-narrative. However, S₁'s ideas about the animal change, and he starts hating the cat and decides to get rid of it. S₁ attempts to kill the second black cat but fails and kills S₂ instead. The narrative

program fails, whose results will bring about other micro-narratives. Afterward, S₁ has to hide the corpse as quickly as possible. He manages to hide the body in the cellar wall, which is another micro-narrative. Lastly, S₅'s (the policemen) arrival occurs, and another micro-narrative program initiates. This is, as stated, a reciprocal micro-narrative as it involves both S₁'s attempt to hide the crime and S₅'s trial to find out if there is something wrong with S₂. In the end, the police find the body with S₄'s help, who has hidden in the wall where S₁ buried the corpse.

It is possible to observe structural relations between actants of the main narrative.

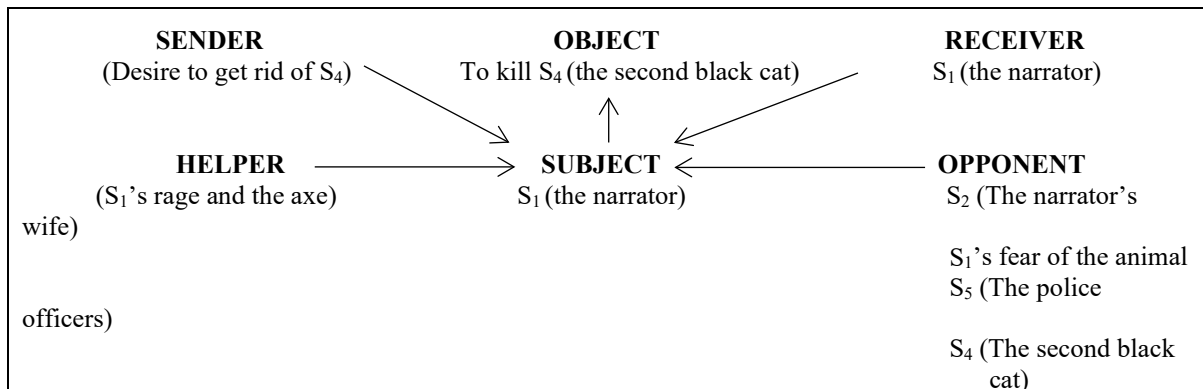


Figure 2.2: Actantial schema of S₁'s attempt to kill the second Black Cat

The figure above illustrates the actantial schema of S₁'s attempt to kill S₄. In this schema, the desire to get rid of S₄ is the sender, which directs S₁ to kill S₄. S₁ is the subject heading to his object (S₄); at the same time, he is the receiver who will benefit from the achievement. In the quest, the instant rage of S₁ acts as a helper as it helps him forget about his fear of S₄. Also, the axe in his hand is another helper to kill S₄. However, there is more than one opponent in the narrative. The first is S₁'s fear of the animal. Nevertheless, arguably, he overcomes his fear with his rage. S₂, who loves the animal, is the second of the opponents who prevents his husband's attack by holding his hand at the time of the blow, which helps S₄ flee. S₄ is a natural opponent against S₁ as every living wants to protect his life instinctively. S₅ is the last one. They put an end to the perverse actions of S₁ and arrest him after seeing the corpse with the help of S₄.

Below is the canonical narrative schema depicting the graduation of actions originating from the ongoing transformation of S₁.

Contract (Manipulation)	Qualifying Test (Competence)	Decisive Test (Performance)	Glorifying Test (Sanction)
S ₁ feels dislike against S ₄ (p. 9). S ₁ wants to get rid of S ₄ (p. 9).	S ₁ becomes competent by abusing S ₃ , his wife, and other pets, then killing S ₃ . -S ₁ is angry and has an axe in his hand (p. 11).	S ₂ 's interference fails S ₁ 's attack. S ₅ arrests S ₁ due to S ₄ .	The outcome of the narrative program is declared. "Upon its head, with red extended mouth and solitary eye of fire, sat the hideous beast whose craft had seduced me into murder, and whose informing voice had consigned me to the hangman" (p. 14).
Modality			
Convincing/directing of S ₄ Wanting-to-do Having-to-do	Being-able-to-to Wanting-to-do Knowing-how-to-do Having-to-do	-----	Knowing about the action/subject

Table 2.22: Canonical narrative schema of S₁'s attempt to kill S₄

The Contract - Manipulation: The contract is between the sender and the quest subject. The sender is S₁'s desire to get rid of the second black cat because he is uncomfortable and feels disturbed by S₄'s presence.

The Qualifying Test - Competence: S₁ should gain the necessary competence to kill S₄. The biggest obstacle in front of S₁ is his fear of S₄. The primary source of S₁'s fear is the cat's being one-eyed like S₃ and the white spot similar to gallows on the animal's breast. When hitting the animal with the axe, S₁ forgets about this childish fear and gains the courage to do the action. Besides, S₁ can be said to have been inclined to kill an animal by his previous actions of abusing and killing his previous pet (see part 2.2.2, segments three and four).

The Decisive Test – Performance: This stage in the narrative is where the subject of the quest has performed the action. S₁, with all his qualifications, manages to hit S₄ with an axe, but he cannot do it. Because his wife (S₂) blocks his hand, and S₁ misses the target, "But this blow was arrested by the hand of my wife" (p. 11). This movement causes the death of S₂ instead of S₄, but it hinders at least the first phase of S₁'s narrative program (See part 2.2.2, segment six). S₁ keeps looking for the animal while trying to find a way to conceal the corpse. Nevertheless, his hopes fade after being caught by the S₅, which means his plan to kill S₄ is aborted (see part 2.2.2, segment eight).

Glorifying Test – Sanction: We learn the outcome in this stage. The declaration depicting the outcome of S₁'s trajectory (see part 2.2.2, segment eight), "upon its head, with red extended mouth and solitary eye of fire, sat the hideous beast whose craft had seduced me into murder, and whose informing voice had consigned me to the hangman" (p. 14).

2.3 Deep-abstract level

The deep level of narrative may also be called the thematic level in which the inner relational values of text can be depicted. The semiotic square, developed by Greimas, is used to indicate the "elementary structure of meaning" (Greimas, 1989). Semiotics postulates that meaning arises from oppositions, and thus, the logic of composing such a square is mainly based on oppositions. There are two other meaning relations between the elements of semiotic square other than oppositions. They are contradictions and implications, which means the entities on each corner should be placed considering this fact. For instance, an oppositional relation should be observed in the entities between **A1** and **A2** points. There is a relation of contradiction between **A1** and $\bar{\mathbf{A1}}$ points. And lastly, **A2** and $\bar{\mathbf{A1}}$ points are in the relation of implication. The arrows in the figure below indicate the possible routes for transitions in the narrative. The transitions can be identified as the transformations of actors. From the beginning to the end of the story, these transformations can be depicted using multiple semiotic squares, depending mainly on the researcher's purpose. Besides, following the transformations will make it possible to narrativize the semiotic square, as Ricoeur (1985) suggested.

In the story, the narrator is the leading actor, and he transits from sanity to insanity, good to evil, wealth to poverty, and lastly, life to death (see part 3.2.1.5). The transformations of the narrator affect all the changing states of the other actors in the story. Thus, in one semiotic square, it is possible to depict the trajectories of all actors.

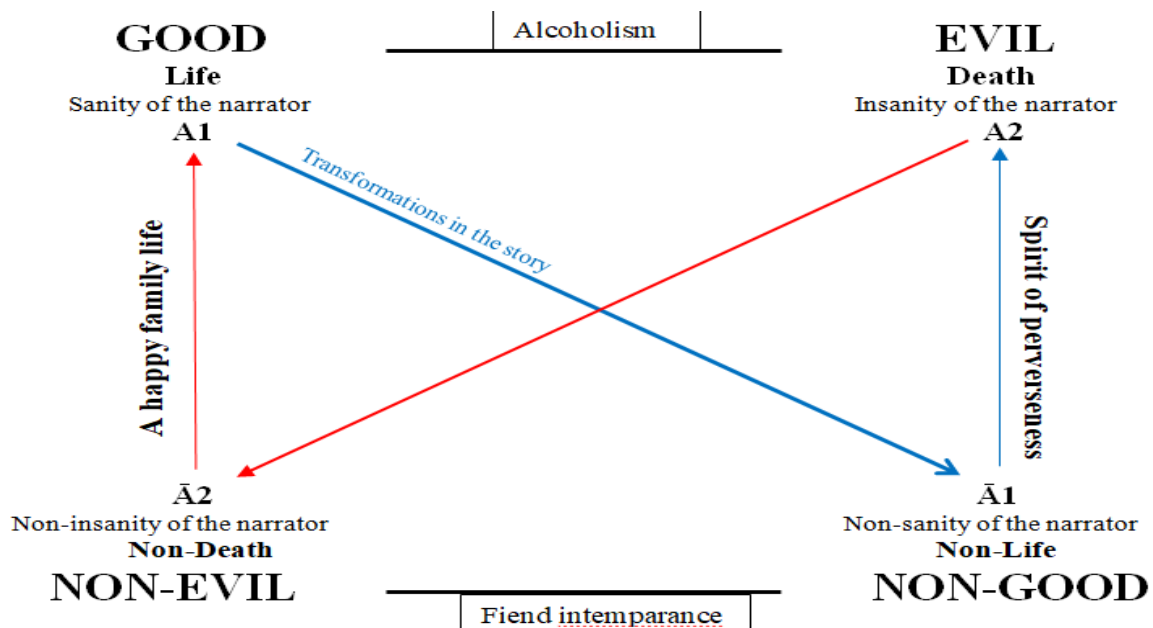


Figure 2.3: Semiotic square of all transformation in the story

A1 line indicates the initial position of the narrator, the narrator's wife, and their favorite pet Pluto. Three entities can be used to define their actual states. In this part, the narrator seems sane and relatively normal; he lives quite peacefully with his wife and Pluto, who are not abused far from the torment of the narrator. This position comprises the value of *life*, and *life* takes place under the umbrella value of *GOOD*. As the story continues, however, it can be observed that there is a change in their positions. As readers, we observe that the narrator gets addicted to alcohol, after which he starts abusing his wife and other pets at home, and lastly, injures Pluto by blinding it. This position is illustrated on **A1** point, and it shows the *non-sanity* state of the narrator. The narrator's deterioration significantly affects the states of the narrator's wife and Pluto, which means a *non-life* and a *NON-GOOD* state for them.

Additionally, we should say that The narrator murders Pluto in this part. The next step is to follow the blue line, which illustrates the ending point of the story. This is depicted on **A2** point, the last phase of all actors' transformations, the narrator, his wife, and the second black cat. On **A2** point, the narrator transforms into a furious man who has easily killed Pluto after tormenting it, preparing him for other murders. Subsequently, the narrator wants to kill the second black cat as he fears it. However, he misses the axe blow due to his wife's interference and kills his wife in an instant burst out of anger. As stated, this incident shows the narrator's madness, which is marked as the *insanity of the narrator* on **A2** point. Therefore, death is the ending state for the narrator's wife too.

Additionally, **A2** point shows the ending of the narrator's trajectory because the narrator, burying his wife in the cellar wall after killing her, has been caught up by the police thanks to the screams of the second black cat inside the wall. Getting arrested also means *death* for the narrator because he will be hung the next day due to his crimes. All of these incidents at the end of the story can be evaluated under the umbrella term *EVIL*, which is the opposite side of the term *GOOD*, constituting text values of the semiotic square.

3. Conclusion

As suggested in the introduction part, the primary aim of this study is to analyze "The Black Cat" in the frame of semiotics. It is possible to suggest that the semiotic approach employed in the study is of structuralist characteristics and considers as many parameters for analysis as possible. Doing so aims to fully understand and explain a literary piece within its limits as a self-contained autonomous unit. In this way, it is possible to evaluate the semiotic analysis as an attempt to reveal the constructive structures utilized by Poe to heighten the sense of horror in his short story. The analysis has been performed on three semantic layers: discursive, narrative, and deep. It is possible to illustrate those findings in the form of a diagram as follows:

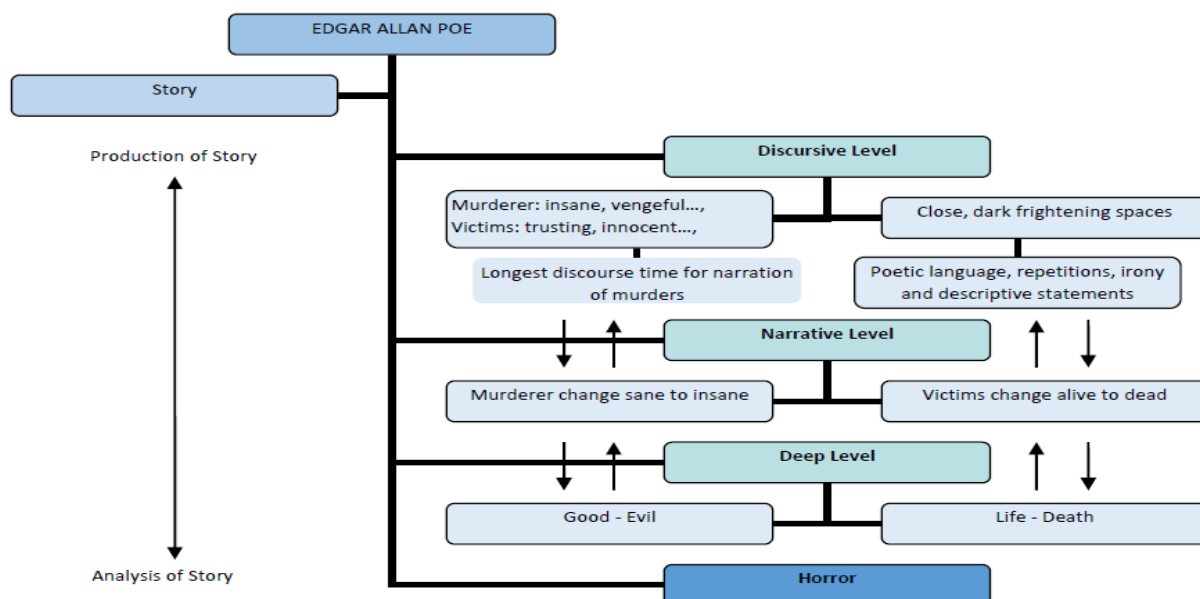


Figure 3.1: The findings in the analysis

Figure 3.1 illustrates the route map of the analysis from the surface to the abstract levels. The findings can be seen for each semantic layer in the diagram. For discursive level analysis, it is evident that Poe creates a prominent actor as the narrator who is a villain, paranoid, insane, angry, deceptive, and unreliable person (see Table 2.2). The victims, his wife, his favorite pet Pluto, and the second black cat are all so trusting and naive that they believe the narrator and are entirely unaware of the narrator's ideations to harm them. For space, we can say that Poe chooses closed, dark, small spaces like the house and its cellar where he could easily attempt to kill the second black cat or conceal his wife's body. Most of the narration (discourse time) in the story is spent on the narrator's murders, mental state, and feelings (see tables 2.12, 2.15, 2.16). Also, most of the description is believed to be on the narrator's mental state and provides the reader with the details of his psychology. For the enunciative strategies, it is determined that the use of poetic language and the increasing number of repetitions heightening the drama is prevalent (see part 2.1.3).

At the narrative level analysis, the narrator's and other actants' positive and negative transformations have been highlighted (For instance, the transition of the narrator's wife and Pluto from life to death). Besides, it is suggested that this results from the narrator's mental deterioration from sane to insane. Additionally, the narrator's general narrative trajectory, articulated by narrative programs, has been revealed using canonical narrative schemas. In order to identify the structural relations between the actants within the narrator's trajectory, actantial schema has been utilized. Categorizing actors according to their positions in the storyline at the discursive level analysis can be considered the link between transformations of actants at the narrative level (see table 2.3).

The deep-level analysis has been performed to visualize the general trajectory of the narrative. This is the thematic level in which we may reduce the signification of the story "The Black Cat" into umbrella oppositions that can comprise actors' transitions from one state to another throughout the storyline. The opposition of Good/Evil has been selected to define actors' transformations. Then, life/Death and Sane/Insane oppositions have been placed beneath the umbrella opposition, which is thought to be fit for the whole narrative depiction. The subheading of "oppositions in the story" at the discursive level analysis (see part 3.2.1.5) and the determined transformations of actors at the narrative level analysis have been utilized for more precisely deciding the oppositions at the deep level analysis, which serves as a link between the three levels of semiotic analysis.

Acknowledgment

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