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From Semantics to Semiotics

Re-interpretation of "Shooting an Elephant" and loss of identity of the West in the narrative

> "I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys." George Orwell

Abstract: The aim of this study is to analyze the semantic organization of the text "Shooting an Elephant." The research is carried out with a multidisciplinary perspective using semantic and semiotic data. The theory of semantics is used to examine the words which predominately form the meaning universe of the text. The analysis is fulfilled within the scope of meaning relations as denotation/connotation and synonymy/antonymy in the lexical field. Then the transsentential signs which have a critical role in the construction of the semantic universe of the text are interpreted in the sense of semiotics. The production process of the descriptive, narrative, and thematic meaning layers is revealed throughout the study. Besides bringing the semantic universe of the narrative with its constructive components to light over the course of the study, the impressive dominance of particular signs and their contribution to the narrative are discussed to reveal the loss of identity of the West.

Keywords: George Orwell; lexicology; literary semiotics; "Shooting an Elephant"

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1 On the functionality of semantics and semiotics

Two of the most critical cognitive activities at the exact center of human life are understanding and explaining. These facilities are the most significant requirements of both accurate signification and communication. The act of signification is an exertion to establish an intimate relationship between

linguistic/nonlinguistic signs produced by societies and the authentic equivalences of these signs in the real world. In that case, there is artificiality on one side and reality on the other side; the artificial representations are the equivalents of the real objects, facts, and events. The comprehension and transmission of that relationship established between the real and unreal representation is closely connected to the culture of societies that generate signs and to the perception of the members of these societies. It is a must to know the characteristics of culture, lifestyle, and social structure of a society to have a correct and valid signification between the representer (sign) and the represented (real). Otherwise, there is a high probability for conflictions.

A sign originates from the interaction of two planes, "but correlated" (Chandler 2004: 23) with each other as "signifier (sound) and signified (thought)" (Saussure 1959: 67). There is an intimate relation between sound and thought. Saussure calls the process of interpretation "signification." What is signified is explicitly based on the connection between the stated parts (signifier/signified) of a sign. Signification is used as the act of signifying practice and is then interpreted either as the union of the signifier or the signified that forms the sign itself (Greimas and Courtés 1982: 299). Signs, which are indispensable elements of meaning production with regards to their functions, are classified as linguistic and nonlinguistic signs. It is necessary for signs to come together in certain systems for the production of meaning at every stage (word, phrase, sentence, etc.). The role of both types of signs cannot be ignored in the generation of systems formed in different fields of daily life, art, and science.

It is possible to refer to various approaches for meaning analysis, which are generally divided into two. The first one is the study of natural languages at various levels in the field of linguistics—a discipline that observes, explains, and generalizes the features of language. The analysis object of linguistics is the language itself (Kıran and Kıran 2013: 69), which is the most significant feature of linguistics. "Signs are codes conveying messages among members of a community; we use signs to share experiences. Language is the prototypical sign system and thus provides the basis for studying most if not all other sign systems, such as those comprising architecture, film, music, and painting, to name a few prominent examples" (Oakley 2009: 78). However, linguistic studies remain within the boundaries of language and cannot go beyond the sentence. This situation urges the need for different disciplines closely related to the study fields of transsentential structures including semiotics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis.

Semantics has subbranches such as syntagmatic, diachronic, grammatical, componential, and lexical semantics. It is the study of meaning including a set

of tools: "knowledge encoded in the vocabulary of the language and in its patterns for building more elaborate meanings, up to the level of sentence meanings" (Griffiths 2006: 1). It is possible to profit from semantics and its subfields in lexical or sentence level studies. The studies to be performed at both levels can be accepted as substructure study for subsequent transsentential analysis. Hereby, this study will be performed in the framework of lexicology which is one of the subbranches of semantics. Lexicology deals with the meanings of words in the sentence (Cruse 2006: 2). The study of word meaning benefits the advancement of transsentential studies. Therefore, it is possible to observe a close link between the studies of semantics and of semiotics.

Language is a communication tool, and word, sentence, and utterance in semantics are important elements of it (Cobley 2005: 5). These elements are produced to convey a specific message. Saussure's paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes have a vital role in the process of generating messages. A person who wants to produce a message must first select the necessary signs among others in the paradigmatic axis, and then the selected terms may freely combine with other terms to form another sign (Thibault 1997: 234). The content of the message should also be taken into consideration in choosing appropriate terms to produce the message. However, "the notion of syntagm applies not only to words but to groups of words, to complex units of all lengths and types (compounds, derivatives, phrases, whole sentences)" (Saussure 1959: 124). The selected words in the paradigmatic axis are combined to create a meaningful message in the syntagmatic axis. In this process, the structural features of language in which the message is intended to be created should be considered for the correct expression as well. Otherwise, the errors on both the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes will adversely affect the meaning of the message to be conveyed that prevents communication between the sender and the receiver. So, every element of language and every stage in the use of these elements are vital.

The role of semiotics becomes more of an issue in the analysis of transsentential structures. While natural language structures can be analyzed in semantics, transsentential structures are analyzed in semiotics. The significant point in semiotics is the relationship of both linguistic and nonlinguistic concepts and their equivalences in the real world, whereas in semantics, the form of the words and their relations with each other in the sentence is important. In this case, the semantic link and the explanation of it in different ways at the sentence level form the working field of semantics (Guiraud 1999: 16). The fact that linguistics examines the structures of natural languages requires the study of semiotics to move beyond the structures. Therefore,

Saussure pointed out semiology as a subsequent science in the study of socio-cultural phenomena constructed with nonlinguistic signs, and he stated that linguistics, which can benefit from the data of semiology, is a sub-branch of that new science (Saussure 1959: 16). Semiotics is a discipline which has the ability to move beyond the structures of natural languages.

The development of semiotics can be divided into three periods. The first period was in the 19th century when Saussure and Peirce were the leading figures. The second period was the structuralist era in 1960s, and the third period has been since 1970 until today. Some of the most significant figures for Tarasti are Barthes, Foucault, Kristeva, and Derrida. There are also other leading figures such as Eco, Lotman, and Greimas that Tarasti cannot outrightly locate in one of the stated periods (Tarasti 2017: 33–34). Tarasti's list can be extended by adding the name of a famous Turkish semiotician, Tahsin Yücel, who worked with Greimas for many years. Greimas started to work with Yücel in the Literature Department of Istanbul University and shared his semiotic perspective with Yücel. Greimas' ideas influenced Yücel, and they worked together in the field of semiotics (Kalelioğlu 2018a: 43). Greimas mentions the most critical work of Yücel—a doctoral study in semiotics performed under Greimas' supervision, *L'Imaginaire de Bernasos* (1969) in some of his studies. Greimas, who developed his own semiotic theory and managed to keep his environment under the roof of the Paris Semiotics School, has a critical place among other semioticians. The theory proposed by Greimas still maintains its competence and is used by a wide range of researchers around the world.

The theory of semiotics is based on elementary disciplines such as cultural anthropology, linguistics, and epistemology (Floch 1985: 45), which shows that semiotics cannot be isolated from other disciplines (Kalelioğlu 2018a: 4). It is accepted as a metalanguage which tends to reveal the ways of the use of signs and the functions of the used signs in all domains of human intellectual and aesthetic generations (Danesi 2017: 61). Semiotic theory, which traces the effects of the stated fields and is able to offer new methodological suggestions, has the quality of being a metascience. So, semiotics does not tend toward concrete realities, but rather toward abstract contents, elementary semantic apparatus, and systems of significations, and the theory covers natural languages as a specific signification system.

Many disciplines that are formed with meaningful sequences of signs are necessarily within the semiotics area of interest. One of them is linguistics. It is possible to observe a natural link between semiotics and linguistics, as both play an important role in the analysis of natural languages. The superiority of semiotics to linguistics is the result of its ability to examine transsentential signs. This study benefits from the features of both approaches. First, the

chosen narrative is analyzed at the lexical level. Then it is studied within literary semiotics to be able to move beyond the linguistic concepts and their meanings. In other words, from semantics to semiotics an interdisciplinary approach is applied throughout the study.

2 George Orwell and "Shooting an Elephant"

It is possible to see the effects of world-renowned authors and of their qualified works in every period. George Orwell is one of the universal authors imprinted on readers' minds. His real name was Eric Arthur Blair and he was born in 1903 in the city of Motihari in Bengal. A descendant of a wealthy English family, Orwell served for the British Empire just as his father did. At that time, the Empire with its colonialist mindset had colonized India, and Orwell worked under the imperialist power as a police officer for a few years. He stopped working for the Empire when he witnessed the relentless oppression by the colonial order and its brutal practices over Indian society.

Orwell was a writer who closely observed social injustice at all levels of social classes in Burma that emerged from the colonialist and expansionist attitude of Britain. It was the era of destruction and exploitation not only to promulgate European culture but also to reach the sources of raw materials for the European industry, which bothered Orwell deeply. Therefore, it is possible to see the destructive effects of dictatorship regimes on societies in many of Orwell's works.

Orwell's most significant novels are *Burmese Days* (1934), *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story* (1945), and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), which display the negative impacts of the colonialist and fascist order of imperialism away from democracy and ethics. He also wrote many essays, letters, and biographic stories which express his observations, experiences, feelings, and thoughts throughout his life. Among those, there are also critical essays that impress readers just as much as his novels.

One of them is "Shooting an Elephant," selected as the research object of this study. The narrative is more than a fiction, reflecting a real part of Orwell's life. Orwell tries to express in the narrative how the oppressive British dictate influences not only Indian community but also the British officers in the service of the Empire. He reveals how the colonial administration puts pressure on its civil servants and what kind of a change in thought and behavior rises to the surface as a result of that relentless pressure damaging the image and identity of the West.

3 Analysis

3.1 Semantics

Lexicology is used to support this study of the meanings of words chosen from the narrative. Lexicology, which has a close relationship with semantics, covers the study of lexis. The aim is to analyze the meanings of words in different ways. A lexical item is considered to be the most basic unit contributing to the formation of meaning within the system. The departure point is the chosen words *elephant* and *shooting*, which are two of the elementary words occurring in the title of "Shooting an Elephant." These words are analyzed primarily in terms of semantic relation. Then the use of words in the narrative is examined. In this way, the relationship between the words, *elephant* and *shooting* in the title of the narrative and the other words supporting these two words will be studied. The determined words will be handled pursuant to denotation/connotation and synonymy/antonymy to reach comprehensible results.

3.1.1 Denotation/Connotation

The lexical meaning of the word *elephant* in the title of the narrative is seen as "a very large, grey animal with big ears and a very long nose."[1] There is a direct relationship between the sign and the object that represent the denotative meaning of the word. Accordingly, the denotative meaning represents the relation between the linguistic sign and its referent (Günay 2007: 69). Denotation of words, as in the *elephant*, predicates the elementary meaning accepted by the majority of society.

> Early one morning the sub-inspector at a police station the other end of the town rang me up on the phone and said that an *elephant* was ravaging the bazaar. (Par. 3)[2]

The word *elephant* is used in the dictionary meaning in the quotation.

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1 https://dictionary.cambridge.org/
2 The quotations are taken from the story "Shooting An Elephant," with the paragraph number indicated in brackets.

The connotative meaning of the word *elephant* is also vital with regard to the narrative. Each society produces its own set of signs according to its values, which expresses an idiosyncratic semantic field. Hereunder, there is no rule that the meaning of a sign must be the same in every society, which can be observed in the associative field of meaning. The connotative meaning of a word can be evaluated in the associative field. The meaning of any word varies from society to society, from culture to culture, and from individual to individual in relation to experiences. For instance, the connotative meaning of the word *elephant* may change from community to community. On the one hand, it may connote /luck/, /strength/, /mercy/, /value/, and /respect/. On the other hand, the same word may connote /power/, /intelligence/, /family tie/, and /battle/.

Some of the stated connotations above are seen in the narrative. These can be evaluated in two groups as affirmative and negative. Affirmative connotations are /tame/, /precious/, /peaceful/, /industrious/, /harmless/, and /strong/:

> He was tearing up bunches of grass, beating them against his knees to clean them and *stuffing them into his mouth.* (Par. 5)

> I had *halted on the road*. As soon as I saw the elephant I knew with *perfect* certainty that I *ought not to shoot him*. It is *a serious matter* to shoot *a working elephant* — it is comparable to destroying a huge and *costly piece of machinery* — and *obviously one ought not to do it* if it can possibly be avoided. And at that distance, *peacefully eating*, the elephant looked *no more dangerous* than a cow. (Par. 6)

> *Alive*, the elephant was worth at least *a hundred pounds*. He *took no notice* of you if you left him alone. (Par. 8)

> He was *dying*, very slowly and *in great agony*, but in some world remote from me where not even a bullet could damage him further. (Par. 12)

> An elephant was *worth* more than any damn Coringhee coolie. (Par. 14)

Negative connotations are /rampant/, /killer/, /offensive/, /unrestrained power/, /harmful/, /monster/, /worthless/, /weak/ and /dead/:

> It had been *chained up*. The Burmese population had no weapons and was quite helpless against it. It had already *destroyed* somebody's bamboo hut, *killed* a cow and *raided* some fruit-stalls and *devoured* the stock; also it had *met* the municipal rubbish van and, when the driver jumped out and took to his heels, had *turned the van over* and *inflicted violences* upon it. (Par. 3)

> The people said that the elephant had come suddenly *upon him round the corner* of the hut, *caught* him with its trunk, put its *foot on his back* and *ground him into the earth*. (Par. 4)

Dead, he would only *be worth* the value of his tusks, five pounds (Par. 8). He was *dying*, very slowly and *in great agony*. (Par. 12)

Associative features of the word *elephant* are specified with the selected words by the author in the flow of the narrative. All those words show positive and negative situations in regard to the elephant.

As for the word *shooting*, there are many dictionary meanings. Foremost among them are 'hit someone or something,' 'harm,' 'damage,' 'hurt,' 'batter something down,' 'beat,' 'stab,' and 'kill.' Moreover, the word *shooting* is a performative word in contrast to the previous objective word *elephant*. In that sense, when they are used side by side as *shooting* and *elephant*, as in the title of the narrative, it necessarily evokes negativity in this context. It represents the combination of an act and a living creature. No matter which living creature it is, whether an elephant, a bird, or a person, when it is joined with the act of shooting, the result will be negative under any circumstances.

Here are some examples that can be associated directly or indirectly with the word *shooting*.

They had seen the rifle and were all shouting excitedly that I was going to *shoot* the elephant. I had no intention of *shooting* the elephant. He was *tearing up* bunches of grass, *beating* them against his knees to clean them and stuffing them into his mouth. (Par. 5)

I realized that I should have to *shoot* the elephant after all. (Par. 7)

If he charged, I could *shoot*. (Par. 9)

Connotations of the word *shooting* in the narrative are /bitter/, /sorrow/, /predicament/, /worthlessness/, /loss/, /humiliation/, /attack/, /cruelty/, /violence/, /oppression/, /bullying/, /becoming the target/, /discomfort/, /rioting/, /dread/, and /killing/ which are intimately linked to the italicized words above and below:

[...] in an aimless, petty kind of way *anti*-European feeling was very *bitter*. No one had the guts to *raise a riot*. I was an obvious *target* and was *baited*. The young Buddhist priests were the *worst* of all. (Par. 1)

I was all for the Burmese and all *against* their oppressors, the British. I *hated* it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. The *wretched* prisoners huddling in the *stinking* cages of the lock-ups, the grey, cowed faces of the long-term convicts, the scarred buttocks of the men who had been *flogged* with bamboos — all these *oppressed* me with an *intolerable* sense of guilt. (Par. 2)

Finally I *fired* my two remaining shots into the spot where I thought his heart must be. (Par. 12)

Connotations of *shooting* have been tried to put forward. As can be seen from the examples, there is no limitation in the production of connotative meaning of any kinds of words. However, the situation is not the same in the generation of denotative meaning. There is always restriction in the production of the denotative meaning of a sign. The important reason for that is the objective and direct relationship of the denotative meaning of the words between the linguistic sign and its referent. On the other hand, the relationship between the same sign and its referent is subjective and indirect in connotative meaning. That is, while the denotative meaning of a word does not differ toward individual and context, connotative meaning differs as it depends on individual experiences and the context of a message. Therefore, both context and individual experience are the determinative factors in the production of connotative meaning of any kinds of words.

3.1.2 Synonym/Antonym

In general, a synonym of *elephant* is *very big* and an antonym of it is *very small*. Synonyms of *elephant* are seen as *great*, *large*, and *huge*, which help to describe the elephant in the narrative. The antonyms of the words found in the text can be stated as *great/little, large/small*, and *huge/insignificant*.

It is possible to associate the word *elephant* with the animal itself, its physical appearance, and situation. In this case, the word *elephant* can be linked to the words *huge*, *active*, *mad*, *precious*, and *strong* at the beginning of the narrative. However, the words undergo change toward the end of the narrative and give place to the antonyms of the stated words, which also represent the elephant itself, its physical appearance, and situation, such as *little*, *inactive*, *calm*, *worthless*, and *weak*. A serious transformation between the synonyms and antonyms of the words, which adds value to the formation of the semantic universe of the text, comes into question. The most concrete example of this transformation is the lexical differences between the initial and final situations of the elephant throughout the story.

It is also possible to evaluate the word *elephant* and its denotative and connotative meanings at the lexical level in the sense of their oppositions such as *tameless/tame, mad/sane, killer/killed, harmful/harmless, worthful/ worthless*, *strong/weak*, and *alive/dead*. There is no meaning of a word on its own, but

denotative/connotative or synonymous/antonymous relationship of that word has many meanings.

Synonyms of the word *shooting* are:

The scarred buttocks of the men who had been *flogged with bamboos*. I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts. (Par. 2)

An elephant was *ravaging* the bazaar. (Par. 3)

The elephant had come suddenly *upon him round* the corner of the hut, *caught* him with its trunk*, put its foot on his back* and *ground him into the earth*. (Par. 4)

It is comparable to *destroying* a huge and costly piece of machinery. I decided that I would watch him for a little while to make sure that he did not *turn savage* again, and then go home. (Par. 6)

It seemed to me that it would be *murder* to shoot him. (Par. 8)

I did not then know that in shooting an elephant one would shoot *to cut an imaginary bar* running from ear-hole to ear-hole. (Par. 10)

When I *pulled the trigger* I did not hear the *bang* or feel the *kick*. He looked suddenly *stricken*, *shrunken*, immensely old, as though the frightful impact of the bullet had *paralysed him without knocking him down*. (Par. 11)

I sent back for my small rifle and *poured shot* after *shot into his heart* and *down his throat*. (Par. 12)

It was a damn shame to shoot an elephant for *killing* a coolie. (Par. 14)

Words synonymous with *shooting* can be extended such as *stab*, *wound*, *confound*, *knock down*, *hit*, *destroy*, *attack*, *kill*, *aim at*, *shoot*, *pull the trigger*, *paralyze*, and *murder* which are the clues to understanding the context of the narrative. One can easily notice that the tone of the context of the story is negative because of the proposed words at the lexical level.

3.2 Semiotics

Semiotics is a theory that seeks meaning. There are two different movements in semiotics. The first is Saussure-based and the other is Peirce-based semiotics. Although these two movements are different from each other, their main target is the same, since they search for the meaning itself. The method which is used in this study is Greimas' semiotic approach based on Saussure's principles.

Accordingly, the semantic universe of George Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant" will be analyzed through Greimas' semiotic trajectory.

The signification approach proposed by Greimas has taken hold of other disciplines. "Greimas may be called the founder of narrative semiotics which, unlike other semiotic theories that focus on signs, examines signification in a broader sense and always in light of the human world and its social contexts" (Bostic 2006: xi). His semiotic trajectory has the characteristics of being a discipline as well as a set of methods for the analysis of meaningful wholes (Yücel 2015: 127) that will also be applied for the analysis of "Shooting an Elephant."

According to Greimas, there are two structural components in the formation of meaning. The first is surface structure and the second is deep structure. A path followed from the deep to the surface structure expresses the meaning production process, and vice versa shows the analysis process of a meaningful whole. The former is generally followed by authors, as Orwell did in the generation of "Shooting an Elephant," whereas, the latter is followed by semioticians to interpret the narrative. Bertrand (2000: 29) explains Greimas' signification process in three stages as descriptive, narrative, and thematic levels.

The descriptive level is examined in terms of person, space, and time, which are accepted as the constructive elements of the level. Narrative persons encountered at the descriptive level are passive, whereas they are active when they move to the narrative level, which is analyzed in terms of narrative programs divided into two as micro and macro programs (Martin and Ringham 2006: 48–132). Each program is critical for the maintenance of the narrative. Throughout the process, actants feature in the continuity of the story. Therefore, at the narrative level, actants are evaluated in each narrative program with the help of Greimas' actantial schema. "The analysis of actants displays the acts of actants, their functions, intentions, and relationships with each other in the plot" (Kalelioğlu and Günay 2018: 237), and it is possible to examine them in the actantial schema. Ideological structures which are given implicitly at the thematic level of the narrative are disclosed. In this way, the elementary meaning on which the narrative is constructed is revealed. Thematic level analysis in the deep structure is more difficult than the analysis of other levels in the surface structure because the thematic level has the characteristic of being the most abstract level of all. For this reason, Greimas' semiotic square comes into prominence in the studies of deep structures of the narratives.

The sum of the three levels of meaning aforementioned can also be defined as "narrative syntax" (Greimas 1971: 793), which points out the systematic organization of each of the levels, the relations of the formative elements at

each level, and the articulation process of them with each other to construct the semantic universe of the narratives. Attendantly, not only is the production process of the semantic universe of "Shooting an Elephant" explained, but also the syntax of each level of meaning is exposed throughout the semiotic analysis.

3.2.1 Descriptive syntax

The descriptive level of the narrative can be assessed with regards to the person, space, and time. According to Kalelioğlu, narrative persons can be examined in three basic groups as real, legal, and collective narrative persons. A real narrative person represents the one who shapes in flesh and bones, and has human qualities. A legal narrative person stands for the umbrella organizations that represent more than one person and have the power of sanction. A collective narrative person stands for a group of people or the masses (2018a: 270). However, the actor is not enough on its own to form the descriptive level. Therefore, the existence of the formative elements is vitally significant to construct the descriptive level of the narratives (Yücel 1979: 11). What Yücel states, in fact, can also be seen in "Shooting an Elephant." Orwell has paid attention carefully in his acts on both the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes when choosing the signs to create the descriptive level. Accordingly, the setting including the period and the place of the incidents, the peculiarities of the period, the characters, and the events are organized rationally and realistically.

Narrative persons may not always be human, as they are seen in various ways and shapes such as animals, objects, religious, or abstract identities (Kalelioğlu and Günay 2018: 235). There are two real narrative persons in Orwell's story; one of them is a human being – /police officer/ – and the other one is an animal – /elephant/.

One of the most critical aspects is the "point of view" (Genette 1983: 162) of the narrator. Orwell prefers using the first-person narrator, as he experiences all the events himself as a /police officer/. Therefore, he narrates the incidents directly using the "I" pronoun. On the other hand, the /elephant/ is personalized and sometimes addressed with the third-person singular pronoun by the narrator.

> In Moulmein, in Lower Burma, *I was hated* by large numbers of people — the only time in my life that *I* have been important enough for this to happen to me. (Par. 1)

> The sub-inspector at a police station the other end of the town rang me up on the phone and said that an *elephant* was ravaging the bazaar. (Par. 2)

The prominent descriptive features of the narrator are /young/, /inexperienced/, /insignificant/, /unlovable/, and /European/, and the thematic roles assigned to him are /sub-divisional police officer/ who is the authority in the city. However, the narrator is an anti-imperialist although he is British and subservient to the Empire.

> I was all *for the Burmese* and all *against their oppressors*, the British. As for the job I was doing, I *hated* it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. (Par. 2)

Because of his anti-government feelings, the narrator also gains various thematic roles such as being a /reluctant attendant of the Empire/, an /insurgent against the power and imperialism/, and a /killer/.

The second real narrative person is the elephant whose thematic roles are /mad/, /escapee/, /aggressive/, /dangerous/, /hungry/, /wounded/, /agonized/, and /dead/.

> *It* was not, of course, a wild *elephant*, but a tame one which had gone 'must'. *It* had been chained up, as tame elephants always are when their attack of 'must' is due, but on the previous night *it* had broken its chain and escaped (Par. 3). It is a serious matter to shoot a working *elephant* — it is comparable to destroying a huge and costly piece of machinery. (Par. 6)

The other thematic roles of the /elephant/ are /unleashed/, /hardworking/, and /valuable/.

The legal narrative person is the /British Empire/.

> I had already made up my mind that *imperialism* was an *evil thing* and the sooner I chucked up my job and got out of it the better. I did not even know that the *British Empire* is dying. (Par. 2)

Descriptive features of the /British Empire/ are /cruel/, /oppressive/, and /dominant/, and the thematic roles are /supporter of absolute rule/ and /master/.

The first collective narrative person is the /Moulmein community/. The members of the community are /Burmans/, /the young Buddhist priests/, and /Indian constables/.

> In Moulmein, in Lower Burma, I was hated by *large numbers of people. The young Buddhist priests* were the worst of all. There were *several thousands of them* in the town. (Par. 1)

> The *Burmese* sub-inspector and some *Indian constables* were waiting for me in the quarter where the elephant had been seen. 'Go away, child! Go away this instant!' *He* was an *Indian*. (Par. 4)

The descriptive features of the Burmans are /cynical/, /yellow-faced/, /revengeful/, /crowded/, /frustrating/, /unarmed/, /angry/, /desperate/, /excited/, and /famished/. The thematic role of the Burmans is /the community victimized by the British imperialism/.

The second collective narrative person is the /European community/.

[…] in an aimless, petty kind of way *anti-European feeling* was very bitter. No one had the *guts to raise a riot*, but if a *European woman* went through the bazaars alone somebody would probably *spit betel juice over her* dress. As a *police officer* I was an obvious *target* and was *baited* (Par. 1).

The most fundamental feature of the /European community/ is that they are the /hate figure/ in Burmans' mind due to their /colonialist mindset/.

In *Moulmein*, in *Lower Burma*, I was hated by large numbers of people. (Par. 1)

One day something happened which in a *roundabout way* was enlightening. An elephant was ravaging the *bazaar*. Meanwhile some Burmans had arrived and told us that the elephant was in the *paddy fields* below, only a few hundred yards away. (Par. 5)

The story takes place in Moulmein which covers all other places such as /bazaar/, /way/, and /paddy fields/, and the descriptive characteristics of these spaces are /crowded/, /roundabout/, /steep slopes/, /poorly groomed huts/, and /poor neighborhoods/.

This was the *rainy season* and the ground was soft. (Par. 4)

Early one morning the sub-inspector at a police station the other end of the town rang me up on the phone. *In the morning* the elephant had suddenly reappeared in the town. (Par. 3)

It was *a cloudy*, *stuffy morning* at the beginning of the rains. (Par. 4)

The time in the narrative is /1920s—it was the period of the British invasion in Burma/, /rainy season/, and /early in the morning/.

The aforementioned descriptive elements such as person, space, and time constitute the semantic universe of the descriptive level of the narrative. Those elements are intimately related to each other because each one is meaningful with the other. The narrative persons in the story increase their radius of action thanks to the space and time.

As performed earlier in semiotic examinations of short stories by Martin and Ringham (2000: 149–154), Büyükkarcı (2018: 35–70, 113), and Büyükkarcı and Bulut (2018: 234), it is possible to analyze the use of frequency of the narrative

persons in the text, which helps us to observe the dominant character(s) in the story. Meanwhile, we will consider all forms of address of the author to the narrative persons such as nouns and other personal pronouns to be able to reach the accurate results.

Table 1: Narrative persons and the use of frequencies

Narrative Persons	Noun	Subject pronoun	Object pronoun	Possessive adjective	Possessive pronoun	Reflexive pronoun	Total repetition
Real	Sub divisional police officer (2^x)	I (110^x)	Me (-)	My (21^x)	Mine (-)	Myself (2^x)	(135^x)
	Elephant (44^x)	He (28^x)	Him (24^x)	His (26^x)	His & Its (5^x)	Himself (-)	(127^x)
Legal	Empire (4^x)	It (1^x)	Its (-)	Its (-)	(-)	Itself (-)	(5^x)
Collective	Burman/s-Indian/s (8^x / 5^x)	They (10^x)	Them (5^x)	Their (5^x)	Theirs (-)	Themselves (-)	(33^x)
	European/s (4^x)	They (-)	Them (-)	Their (-)	Theirs (-)	Themselves (-)	(4^x)

In Table 1, there are two outstanding narrative persons in the story. The frequency of occurrence points out the significance of the persons – /police officer/ and /elephant/ – that puts them at the center of the narrative, and the studied constructive elements of the descriptive level are arranged around these two real narrative persons.

3.2.2 Narrative syntax

The formative elements to construct the syntax of a language and of a narrative are different. Narrative syntax arises from the act of the narrative persons, their behaviors, and relationships with each other, whereas the syntax of a sentence arises from the appropriate sequence of the elements of language. The stated features which form the narrative syntax constitute the elementary stages of the development of the narrative (Günay 2013: 190). These stages can be evaluated as primary and secondary stages in semiotics. The primary stage indicates the results of the main facts and events, and the secondary stage predicates the descriptive elements which add value and attraction to the narrative.

Each narrative proceeds at a certain angle in every stage, which can be explained in Adam's chart that shows the sequences of narratives (1990: 16). The stages are shown of how a narrative begins, proceeds, and ends in its syntactic structure. Narrative has an initial situation which describes and gives clues about the characters, setting, and tone in the state of balance. Suddenly, another, unforeseen situation occurs to change the initial state. Then the narrative returns to the state of equilibrium in the initial stage as a result of various acts, and the story ends. The last situation is called the final state of the narrative. The sequence of the narrative shows that the narrative syntax is established on the state of "balance → imbalance → balance" as in Orwell's story:

Table 2: Sequence of narrative

I	Before	Initial stage	1st and 2nd paragraphs	Describes life and human affairs in Moulmein
		Complication or transformative force	3rd paragraph	Escapee elephant shows up
II	During	Dynamism or transformation	Between 3rd and 12th paragraphs	Efforts of capturing the elephant
		Resolution or equilibrating force	13th paragraph	Elephant is shot
III	After	Final stage	14th paragraph	Life in Moulmein resumes

Focusing on the initial stage, the first two paragraphs of the text mention the description of the city of Moulmein, of its people, and of anti-European thoughts and behaviors against Europeans.

> In Moulmein, in Lower Burma, I was hated by large numbers of people. I was sub-divisional police officer of the town, and in an aimless, petty kind of way anti-European feeling was very bitter. No one had the guts to raise a riot, but if a European woman went through the bazaars alone somebody would probably spit betel juice over her dress. As a police officer I was an obvious target and was baited whenever it seemed safe to do so. The young Buddhist priests were the worst of all. (Par. 1)

The descriptive elements and the depiction of them are, generally, given at the beginning, which aims at preparing the readers for the narrative. Orwell describes the place where the story is set. It can be understood from the

beginning that there is a sharp disgruntlement which has been extending over time between the locals – Burmans – and the occupiers – Europeans.

The continuation of the story is provided by the articulation of the sequences in Table 2, which also shows an ongoing chain of events in the narrative. The articulation of the sequences exists at each stage of the narrative. There are significant points within these stages which cause a sudden change that deeply affects the flow and speed of the narrative. What influences the flow of the narrative and changes the speed is the "transformative force" which is the precursor to the subsequent events in the narrative.

> One day something happened which in a roundabout way was enlightening. Early one morning the sub-inspector at a police station the other end of the town rang me up on the phone and said that an elephant was ravaging the bazaar. (Par. 3)

The incident represents a transformative force which disrupts the balance and stability of the story. The transformative force makes the narrative gain momentum, which leads to the development of the story and its acceleration. In this case, the transformative force is an important intersection that allows the passage of the narrative from the initial part to the development part of the story.

The "transformation part" occurs as a result of the transformative force. This is the longest section of the narrative in which most of the incidents take place because of an unwanted situation that emerged at the beginning. The diligences and measures taken in this part are to be able to return to the equilibrium condition at the beginning. For instance, the events taking place between the 3rd and 12th paragraphs are just for rebalancing the narrative.

> I wanted to see what was happening and I got on to a pony and started out. (Par. 3)

> We began questioning the people as to where the elephant had gone. (Par. 4)

> The orderly came back in a few minutes with a rifle and five cartridges. The elephant was standing eight yards from the road. (Par. 5)

> I shoved the cartridges into the magazine and lay down on the road to get a better aim. (Par. 10)

> When I pulled the trigger I did not hear the bang or feel the kick but I heard the devilish roar of glee that went up from the crowd. (Par. 11)

> It seemed dreadful to see the great beast Lying there, powerless to move and yet powerless to die, and not even to be able to finish him. (Par. 12)

The quotations which indicate the sequence of actions taking place in the paragraphs forms the longest part of the narrative. The success of the events taking place in those parts returns the narrative to its initial state.

However, it is not easy because there is a need for "equilibrating force" to return the story to its balanced state. Here, eliminating the problem that emerges through the transformative force by means of the equilibrating force comes into question.

> I heard later that it took him half an hour to die. (Par. 13)

> Afterwards I was very glad that the coolie had been killed; it put me legally in the right and it gave me a sufficient pretext for shooting the elephant. (Par.14)

The narrative returns to the state of absence of the elephant, and it quickly comes to an end with the solution of the problem. The final stage of the narrative is not extended. In general, the story returns to its initial stage – balanced condition – just after the short evaluation of the result in the end.

Greimas "examines the states of the narrative from the beginning to the end; the development of the narrative; and the transformation of actants taking place in the narrative in four stages" (Kalelioğlu 2018a: 140), which reflects the organization of the narrative program. "The term narrative programme refers to the abstract representation of syntactical relationships and their transformation on the surface level of the utterance" (Martin and Ringham 2006: 132). Greimas examines the syntactic structure of a narrative in four sections:

Table 3: Narrative program

Adam's narrative sequences	Before	During		After
	Initial stage	Developmental stage		Final stage
Stages of Greimas' narrative program	Contract	Competence	Performance	Sanction
Actantial relation	Sender–subject	Subject–subject	Subject–object	Subject–sender
Modal profile of actants	Informing Having-to-do Wanting-to-do	Having-to-do Wanting-to-do Being-able-to-do Knowing-how-to-do	Being Doing	Knowing Persuasion
Manner of action	Persuasive manner			Interpretive manner
Dimension	Cognitive	Performative		Cognitive

In Table 3, the narrative program has four dimensions, that is, "contract, competence, performance, and sanction." In contract, the interaction is between the sender and the subject. The sender should persuade the subject to make the contract. In competence, the subject questions his competencies and mends its fence. If there are deficiencies, the subject struggles to complete them to be able to move to the next stage. In performance, the subject needs to perform the task appropriately. In sanction, the subject needs to convince the sender, who decides whether the subject is successful or not in actualizing the contract. If the subject accomplishes the contract, he will be rewarded, if not he will be punished by the sender (Kalelioğlu 2017: 176).

The role of the narrative persons is important in the realization of the acts and events. Narrative persons at the descriptive level are actors, whereas they turn into "actants" at the narrative level. The actants such as the /police officer/ and the /elephant/ are in charge of carrying out all the acts and events causing transformations in the story.

There may be more than one actant with different duties in a narrative. It is possible to study the actants in terms of their functions, relations, responsibilities, and added value to the narrative throughout the story. Narrative persons are not dealt with by their names, but by their functions. The number of characters and their names may be countless, whereas the total number of actants is just six, namely /sender–receiver/, /subject–object/, and /helper–opponent/ in Greimas' "actantial schema." The relationship of actants with each other determines the semantic axes in the schema. Accordingly, on the axis of transmission, sender/receiver; on the axis of desire, subject/object, and on the axis of power, helper/ opponent are the significant actants (Hebert 2011: 71). All the actants have an intimate relationship with each other just as the actants in the actantial schema made for Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant" below.

The words *elephant* and *shooting* are analyzed in the sense of semantics previously. The most important reason to choose these words is the frequencies of use of the words in the narrative. The situation is the same at the narrative level, as they are used frequently. There are many narrative programs in the text. However, there is a unique macro-narrative program on which the narrative is constructed, and the rest of the narrative programs are micro-programs that support the maintenance of the story. The main characters of the story are the /sub-divisional police officer/ and the /elephant/ that are also frequently used as narrative persons in the narrative (see also Table 1).

The police officer is responsible for keeping order in the city. The elephant, on the other hand, has temporarily subverted the order and discomforted the

residents in Moulmain. In this case, the police officer who is authorized by law must catch the elephant and maintain the order. This situation represents the basic incident—macro-narrative program—that will be analyzed in Greimas' actantial schema.
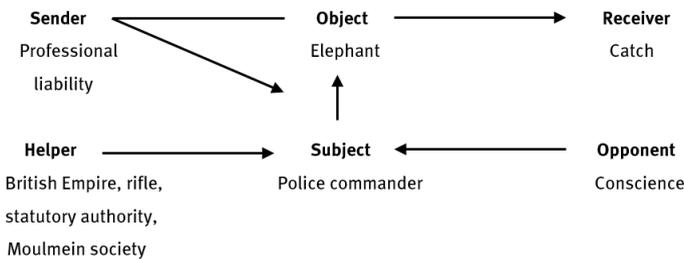
Sender (S_n): Professional liability
Subject (S_1): Polis commander (narrator)
Object (O) or Object of value (O_v): Elephant
Receiver (R): Catch
Helper (H): British Empire, statutory authority, rifle, Moulmein society
Opponent or anti-subject (S_2): Conscience

Figure 1: Actantial schema of macro-narrative program

There are visible changes as a result of the acts of the actants between the initial and final stages of the narratives, as in "Shooting an Elephant." These changes depend on the "conjoining – (Λ)" and "disjoining – (V)" situation between the subject and object as actants (Porter and Greimas 1977: 28). The subject who has initially drifted apart from the object (S_1 V O_v Λ S_2) manages to come together with the object at last (S_1 Λ O_v V S_2), which can be a good example for the disjoining and conjoining situations. This situation may change with respect to the agreement between the sender and the subject. The sender may ask the subject to get rid of the object. Then the situation should change conversely as (S_1 Λ O_v V S_2) → (S_1 V O_v Λ S_2). In either case, there is a challenging struggle between the subject (S_1) and the opponent (S_2) to obtain the object, and there will naturally be a winner and a loser (Kalelioğlu 2018b: 835). Each narrative is built on a contract between the sender and the subject in three ways. First, the sender may ask the subject to get the object as the subject is far apart from the object (S_1 V O_v Λ S_1) → (S_1 Λ O_v V S_1). Second, the sender may ask the

subject to retain the object $(S_1 \wedge O_v \wedge S_1) \rightarrow (S_1 \wedge O_v \wedge S_1)$. Third, the sender may ask the subject to get out of the object $(S_1 \wedge O_v \wedge S_1) \rightarrow (S_1 \vee O_v \wedge S_1)$.

It is possible to interpret the macro-narrative program of Orwell's story regarding the conjoining and disjoining states. There is a specific order such as /balance–imbalance–balance/ that creates the logical sequence and the general narrative program of the story. It is the police officer, as a subject, who has to restore the order in Moulmein in the trilogy of /balance–imbalance–balance/. This situation can also be explained as balance $(S_1 \wedge O_v \wedge S_1) \rightarrow$ imbalance $(S_1 \vee O_v \wedge S_1) \rightarrow$ balance $(S_1 \wedge O_v \vee S_1)$, which is closely related to the capture of the elephant – the disorganizer in Moulmein.

The actantial schema in Figure 1 shows the macro-narrative program of the story, the actants, and their relations with each other. The actants can be seen in different ways – sometimes as a person, sometimes as an animal or object, and sometimes as an abstract or a symbolic thing. The functionalization of the narrative program is made possible with the contract between the sender and the subject. According to the contract, the professional liability (S_n) orders the police commander (S_1) to catch (R) the elephant (O_v) who disturbs the peace in Moulmein:

> Early one morning the sub-inspector at a police station the other end of the town rang me up on the phone and said that an elephant was ravaging the bazaar. (Par. 3)

The subject, who negotiates with the sender to catch the object at the "contract stage," is responsible for the public order to keep the system established by the Empire. Therefore, the problems, which damage the order, are reported to the subject as a police commander.

> Would I please come and do something about it? I did not know what I could do, but I wanted to see what was happening and I got on to a pony and started out. I took my rifle, an old 44 Winchester and much too small to kill an elephant, but I thought the noise might be useful *in terrorem*. (Par. 3)

The subject, first, questions himself at the "competence stage" and evaluates his competency to be able to see whether he is ready to get into action at the subsequent stage.

> As soon as I saw the dead man I sent an orderly to a friend's house nearby to borrow an elephant rifle. (Par. 4)

> The orderly came back in a few minutes with a rifle and five cartridges, and meanwhile some Burmans had arrived and told us that the elephant was in the paddy fields below, only a few hundred yards away. (Par. 5)

The subject overcomes the deficiencies by obtaining necessary information about the elephant, and gets ready to actualize the agreement. Here, the subject hunts down the elephant at the "performance stage" to be able to restore the order in the city.

> The elephant was standing eight yards from the road, his left side towards us. He took not the slightest notice of the crowd's approach. He was tearing up bunches of grass, beating them against his knees to clean them and stuffing them into his mouth. (Par. 5)

The intention of the subject is not to kill the object, although an elephant rifle in his hand. On the contrary, he intends to wait for the owner of the object without harming it. The subject is thinking about doing his best for the object, and wants to do it without damaging the elephant.

> As soon as I saw the elephant I knew with perfect certainty that I ought not to shoot him. (Par. 6)

However, there are detrimental facts that influence the positive, innocent, and harmless thought of the subject related to the object at the "performance stage" which prevent the subject from capturing the value object without harming it:

> I looked at the sea of yellow faces above the garish clothes-faces all happy and excited over this bit of fun, all certain that the elephant was going to be shot. They did not like me, but with the magical rifle in my hands I was momentarily worth watching. And suddenly I realized that I should have to shoot the elephant after all. (Par. 7)

The other facts that obligate the subject to capture the object regardless of damage to it are the real identity of the subject and the expectation of the Empire:

> I had got to shoot the elephant. I had committed myself to doing it when I sent for the rifle. A sahib has got to act like a sahib. To come all that way, rifle in hand, with two thousand people marching at my heels, and then to trail feebly away, having done nothing — no, that was impossible. (Par. 7)

The subject, who wants to catch and keep the value object without damaging it until its owner comes, has to change his mind because of the political and social repressions. "He is trapped in the role of the 'superior' white man who has traded in his freedom in order to create a powerful impression on the natives" (Quinn 2009: 306). The image of the "White Man" forces the subject to do the things that he never desires, although he is also exploited by the system he belongs to as a white.

> The crowd would laugh at me. And my whole life, every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at. (Par. 7)

People who have had their authority given to them by the imperialist governments just like the police commander (S_1) have been obliged to fulfill the wishes of others. One of the most significant reasons for that is the created perception of the strong and invincible White Man by the West in the East. It is a change of identity made by the power to produce an "image" of identity to be able to transform the subject in assuming the generated image (Bhabha 1999: 187). Also, the Eastern people's expectations of the White Man are shaped according to the produced perception. Those situations effect the state of the elephant (O_v) in the narrative program negatively since the White Man – the police commander – does not want to discredit the social perception compelled by imperialist government. Although the subject believes that killing the object is unethical, he feels compelled to kill it so as not to endanger the status of the White Man in the East.

> There was only one alternative. I shoved the cartridges into the magazine and lay down on the road to get a better aim. (Par. 10)

> When I pulled the trigger I did not hear the bang or feel the kick but I heard the devilish roar of glee that went up from the crowd. (Par. 11)

In the end, the police commander (S_1) kills the elephant (O_v) and reaches the value object to be able to restore the order that has been disturbed ($S_1 \wedge O_v \vee S_2$).

The police commander (S_1) is not alone in performing his acts at the performance stage since he has helpers such as the power of the British Empire, given authority, a rifle, and Moulmein society (H). In the actantial syntax, the task of these helpers is to assist the subject to reach the value object:

> I was sub-divisional police officer of the town. (Par. 1)

> Various Burmans stopped me on the way and told me about the elephant's doings. (Par. 3)

> Some of the people said that the elephant had gone in one direction, some said that he had gone in another. (Par. 4)

> The orderly came back in a few minutes with a rifle and five cartridges, and meanwhile some Burmans had arrived and told us that the elephant was in the paddy fields below. (Par. 5)

There are three elements, namely "helper, subject, and opponent" found on the performative axis. It is sometimes possible to encounter them in different ways

– concrete or abstract. For example, the opponent "conscience" (S_2) in Figure 1 has the quality of being an abstract opponent that puts the subject in the difficult position of killing or saving the life of elephant (O_v). Although the police commander is the representative of the British Empire, he is strongly opposed to the exploitation in the East:

> All this was perplexing and upsetting. For at that time I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing. (Par. 2)

> But I did not want to shoot the elephant. It would be murder to shoot him. (Par. 8)

The actantial schema made to analyze the macro-narrative program results in success with regards to the subject. The achievement of the subject has led to rebalancing the social life in Moulmein. The police commander, who wanted to take the control of the elephant initially, has had to kill it as a result of the influence of being a representative of the West. In fact, in ethical terms the elephant does not deserve to be killed, as it never attacks the police.

> It was not, of course, a wild elephant, but a tame one which had gone 'must'. (Par. 3)

However, encountering a member of the British Empire causes the death of the elephant, who is really innocent:

> I had got to shoot the elephant. I had committed myself to doing it when I sent for the rifle. A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things. (Par. 8)

The police officer would either shoot the elephant to protect the reputation of the White Man or harm that reputation in front of the British colony in the East. However, "he has to play the role he wrote for himself when he sent for the rifle. To do nothing at this point would make him the object of ridicule and laughter" (Quinn 2009: 306). This is not the issue of individual heart-searching or moral standing, but the issue of protecting or damaging the image of the White Man in the minds of the colonized.
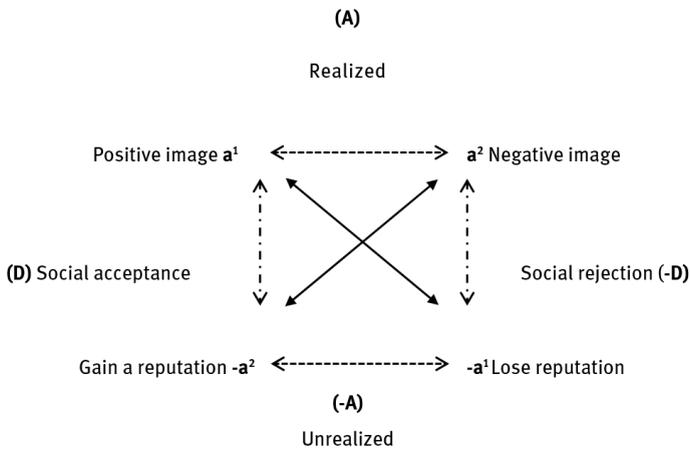
He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib. For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the "natives," and so in every crisis he has got to do what the "natives" expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it (Par. 7).

In that way, the West shows its ruthless, ugly face to the East once again by not removing its invincible mask.

3.2.3 Thematic syntax

Thematic syntax forms the deep structure of the narrative. The aim of the deep structure analysis is to reveal the ideological facts on which the narrative is constructed. These facts are provided in an abstract or implicit way. Deep structure analysis is essential to expose the main purpose of the narrative. Thus, it is necessary to employ Greimas' semiotic square to be able to reach that goal. The semiotic square is the basic structure of signification. The structure refers to the logical relationship between the oppositions in the same context. In this respect, an attempt is made to reveal the logical framework of Orwell's story by focusing on the oppositions stated below. No sign makes sense by itself. Saussure states that meaning arises from the opposition of a sign (1959). The relationship of oppositions with each other is also significant in the semiotic square. There are four various semantic axes which show the contrarieties in the semiotic square. Each of these axes assigns a different meaning to the sign, and this variety reveals the relationship of a sign with other signs.

The main problem encountered in the narrative is the "image of the British Empire". Therefore, the initial point of the deep-level analysis is the positive and negative images of the Empire in the semiotic square. The British Empire represents the "White Man" in the broadest sense. So, the problem belongs not only to the Empire but to Western societies. In "Shooting an Elephant," we are uncomfortably aware that the killing of the animal is a face-saving act. Not to kill would be interpreted by the large local population as a sign of weakness and would undermine British control at a time when that control was coming increasingly into question (Quinn 2009: 9). It is the struggle of the British Empire to maintain the existence of its authoritarian image created in the East by using disproportionate force and exploiting the colonized societies. This effort has been put into practice by the Empire's arms and officers. The narrator who appears as a police commander has to act things that he never endorses for the Empire. At this point, he is in dilemma as he gets stuck in between fulfilling or not fulfilling the expectation of the Empire. However, whether he wants or not, he, who represents the power, has to impose sanctions and does the duties assigned to him so that the Empire can preserve its image in the East.

(A)

Realized

Positive image **a¹** <----------------> **a²** Negative image

(D) Social acceptance　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Social rejection (**-D**)

Gain a reputation **-a²** <----------------> **-a¹** Lose reputation

(-A)

Unrealized

Figure 2: Semiotic square

According to the semiotic square in Figure 2, the transition process includes:

> Positive deixis (D): /a¹ Positive image of the West/ - /-a² Non-negative image of the West=gain a reputation/ Positive transition process
> Negative deixis (-D): /a² Negative image of the West / - /-a¹/ Negative transition process
> Complex axis (A): /a¹ Positive image of the West/ - /a² Negative image of the West/
> Neutral axis (-A): /-a¹ Lose reputation/ - /-a² Gain a reputation/
> Contrariety relation:
> A / -A: Positive image of the West [A] / Negative image of the West [-A]
> a¹ / a²: Positive image of the West [a¹] / Negative image of the West [a²]
> Sub-contrariety relation:
> -a² / -a¹: Positive transition process [-a²] / Negative transition process [-a¹]
> a¹ / -a¹: Positive image of the West [a¹] / Non-positive image of the West [-a¹]
> a² / -a²: Negative image of the West [a²] / Non-negative image of the West [-a²]
> Implicative relation:
> a¹ / -a²: Positive image of the West [a¹] / Positive transition process [-a²]
> a² / -a¹: Negative image of the West [a²] / Negative transition process [-a¹]
> Suppositional relation:
> -a² / a¹: Positive transition process [-a²] / Party's desired society [a¹]
> -a¹ / a²: Negative transition process [-a¹] / Negative image of the West [a²]

(Kalelioğlu 2018c: 494–495)Protecting the image of the White Man is the central issue in the narrative, which can be explained in Greimas' semiotic square. There are various semantic axes, and it is necessary to know the relation of each of the axes with each other to address the stated problem. There is an opposition that comes into question such as /a¹ Western society/ and /a² Eastern

society/ considering the realized (A) axis in the semiotic square. The stated problem can be tackled within the framework of the Western and Eastern opposition, which reflects a serious conflict between the West and East because of the colonialist mindset of the West. The West has already proved its power over the East and has occupied the society to accomplish its bourgeois aim.

The occupying forces of the West, which reached the $/a^1/$ plane, completed the invasion process in the East and ensured a positive perception of its own power with the policies that followed. The continuity of this perception, which provides the permanency of the negative image of the Eastern society $/a^2/$, means the persistence of the affirmative image of the West in the colonized societies. In this case, the White Man, represented by the police commander in the story, should be very careful in all his actions and fulfills the tasks diligently not to demolish the image of being a White Man who belongs to Western society:

> Theoretically — and secretly, of course — I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British. I had had to think out my problems in the utter silence that is imposed on every Englishman in the East. (Par. 2)

> They had seen the rifle and were all shouting excitedly that I was going to shoot the Elephant. (Par. 5)

> I realized that I should have to shoot the elephant after all. The people expected it of me and I had got to do it. (Par. 7)

> A white man mustn't be frightened in front of 'natives'; and so, in general, he isn't frightened. (Par. 9)

/Western society/ as stated in the semiotic square should be watchful to maintain the power gained through battle and tyranny. Therefore, each institution formed within the Empire should do the entrusted tasks faithfully to maintain the status of the West on the $/a^1/$ axis. The narrator performed his task to contribute to the maintenance of the endless power of the West even though he did not support imperialism and the brutal practices of the Empire.

> No one had the guts to raise a riot. (Par. 1)

> The wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of the lock-ups, the grey, cowed faces of the long-term convicts, the scarred buttocks of the men who had been flogged with bamboos — all these oppressed me with an intolerable sense of guilt. With one part of my mind I thought of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny, as something clamped down, in saecula saeculorum, upon the will of prostrate peoples; with another part I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts. (Par. 2)

The representatives of Western society that serve for the Empire need to be adopted and approved by Eastern society to protect the image of the White Man $/a^1/$ and not to get into a scrape. This situation also applies to the police commander, as he is one of the representatives of the Empire. Western society builds up a reputation as a result of the efforts of those agents $/-a^2/$ and realizes its own positive image $/a^1/$. This self-realization process can be explained in the $/a^2 \rightarrow -a^2 \rightarrow a^1/$ cycle. Such an orientation will always ensure security and immunity of the positive image of the Western society.

However, there are other situations in which the positive image of the White Man can be damaged:

> [...] in an aimless, petty kind of way anti-European feeling was very bitter. No one had the guts to raise a riot, but if a European woman went through the bazaars alone somebody would probably spit betel juice over her dress. As a police officer I was an obvious target and was baited whenever it seemed safe to do so. The young Buddhist priests were the worst of all. There were several thousands of them in the town and none of them seemed to have anything to do except stand on street corners and jeer at Europeans. (Par. 1)

The maintenance of the positive image of the White Man $/a^1/$ hangs by a thread because Eastern society is always on the alert and looking forward to the mistakes of the agents of Western society. The slightest mistake could explode in the White Man's face and discredit his image $/-a^1/$. Thus, the positive image of Western society will begin to degrade from $/a^1/$ to $/-a^1/$. Thereby, the image will be destroyed and fall from Eastern society's grace $/a^2/$. Western society will be rejected and not recognized by the Eastern society at the end of the stated regression process $/a^1 \rightarrow -a^1 \rightarrow a^2/$. In this case, the positive image of the West $/a^1/$ will suffer a change with the negative image of the East $/a^2/$ that leads to the West losing its reputation, not having a voice in the East, and thus ending its colonialism $/a^2 \rightarrow -a^2 \rightarrow a^1/$.

The police chief has to meet the expectations of the Eastern people as a White Man or a sahib. This essentiality is to uphold the positive image of the West over the East:

> I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib. I had got to shoot the elephant. A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things. To come all that way, rifle in hand, with two thousand people marching at my heels, and then to trail feebly away, having done nothing — no, that was impossible. The crowd would laugh at me. And my whole life, every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at. (Par. 7)

The West has imposed its power and succeeded in pushing itself and its brutal regime through the East due to the pitched battles and unreasoned oppression on the /a¹/ axis. As a result, every individual who belongs to Western societies takes on a task to provide the continuation of the image of the White Man as strong, invincible, and wise. For this reason, the narrator – an imperial police officer – had to kill the elephant who had distorted the societal order established by the British Empire in order to guard the image of the West. It is possible to deduce that anyone who attempts to mistreat or to vilify the dignity and the system imposed by the Western power in the East must be exterminated. The "nonresident" White Man's fight in his colonial order is, in fact, the war of existence and of overrunning the local sources for his materialistic aim at all costs, including anomy in the East.

4 Conclusion

George Orwell's narrative is analyzed within the scope of a multidisciplinary approach based on semantic and semiotic data. These methods provide a chance for the objective and subjective interpretation of the text. The first part of the analysis is done by focusing on the two most widely used words *elephant* and *shooting* in the narrative with regards to boundaries of semantics. The study is fulfilled in the frame of semantic relations as denotative/connotative and synonym/antonym in the lexical field. As a result of the study, the added value to the narrative of the chosen words is studied.

The aim in the semiotic analysis is to bring out the formative elements of meaning in different semantic strata and to explain the value of these elements to the development of the narrative. The generation process of the descriptive, narrative, and thematic meaning layers is exposed separately throughout the study. The descriptive part of the narrative is evaluated objectively with regard to the actorialization, spatialization, and temporalization processes. The interpretation of the descriptive level is objective because it is constructed with explicit formative elements close to comment. The formation process of the each of these constitutive elements and their relationship with each other are described throughout the analysis. The basic narrative program is found at the narrative level – a more abstract level than the previous level – which is interpreted subjectively since it is formed with abstract, implicit, and open-ended elements. The two critical narrative persons, their acts, and relations, and the added value of them to the narrative are analyzed and interpreted at this level.

Finally, the most abstract level of the narrative is examined. In this part, the impressive dominance of significant signs and their contribution to the narrative are discussed. The dominance of the West over the East and by whom the maintenance of this domination is performed are explicitly revealed.

> I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. (Par. 7)

However, it is clear that the incidents among the narrative persons are based upon the ideological pressure imposed by the political power. The political insistence of the West puts not only the East but also the West itself in danger of losing its identity, since the thoughtless acts of the power breaks down social and individual norms and values in the narrative.

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