



## DECODING SEMIOTIC PUZZLES: MANIFEST TV SERIAL, STRUCTURAL IMPLICATIONS AND POSTHUMAN PROTAGONISTS

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### Abstract:

The supernatural drama, recognizable for the supernatural (or mind-expanding) element within the plot, has become an established genre within contemporary international cinema as well as television series. The story of a supernatural drama mostly centers on a paranormal occurrence and what occurred to a group of heroes, while various characters are occasionally brought to the forefront. It includes pieces of the puzzle or some issues that are thought to be manifest, presented to the heroes in the form of semantic codes, and resolved throughout the narrative. The supernatural drama presents a rational approach to the supernatural element in the form of television series as well, burying it within the story and disclosing it gradually as the plot progresses. This study aims to have a structural and semiotic analysis of the television series Manifest. This study is based on the assumption that the Manifest television serial creates a reality that each participant in the narrative reflects a transhumanist perspective that never surfaces nor is emphasized in the movie. As a result, it is based on examples of how the Manifest and Transhumanism ties are constructed using different passages from the narrative and other extra-textual aspects.

**Keywords:** transhumanism, posthuman, mythology, manifest, faith, immortality

### 1. Introduction

From the earliest writings onward, it is remarkable that the human being has always been elevated to the fore with the features that are superior to himself, he has been heroized, and he has been placed in the role of dynamic and transforming leader. The majority of contemporary stories highlight the fact that human qualities like empathy, respect, love, and self-sacrifice are

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often viewed as flaws and that humans are capable of being "self" free from these flaws. Modernity has supplanted the philosophy that emphasizes looking out for one another, communicating by sensing oneself, nature, and others, and leading a more communal life as a part of nature. While historical societies like the Mayans and the Aztecs, the Aborigines and Indians, and the Dogons are considered to be old but have a collective memory. In this sense, collective memory functions as a particularly creative form of empathy. It can be characterized as a social framework that can comprehend and experience the suffering, delight, happiness, and sadness of any of the involved people in the community. A community where everyone considers others, values, and cares about one another might be used to describe it. A social organization that does not compromise on its ideals or replaces one value with two new ones is necessary for collective consciousness and collective memory. It necessitates a reasonable and equitable way of living, one that emphasizes sharing and the understanding that everything belongs to everyone, without establishing a division between self and others. On the other hand, the ideas of "collective memory" put forth in a political sense seem to concentrate on not forgetting specific events and not being forgotten.

The speculative design used to be regarded as an exclusive activity reserved for artistic and academic communities, but it has gained popularity and is now carried out in a wider range of settings and by a wider range of people. The television program *Manifest* offers a wonderful examination of participatory dreaming based on a group experience, which is helpful in comprehending this putative "participatory turn." Even if the majority of the participants think this "Calling" is something that cannot even be thought about, the protagonists quickly convince them to share their perspective with us. Specifically in the *Manifest* episodes, mostly the "otherized" people were provided priority so that they can also be visible and heard. This is not only a participatory form of dreaming it also brings in a form of inclusiveness to embrace each and every one of the community by assigning to each of them the activities and responsibilities that need to be performed.

This raises the issue of how many various facades there could be for the truth or anything else, including those of spectatorship, reflection, generative reflection, shared creativity, and shared authorship (participatory speculative design processes borrowed from Farias, Bendor, and Van Eekelen, 2022) initiative and finally ownership mostly go to the protagonists. For example, in their article, the authors Griaule & Dieterlen, provide a brief and explicit account of how the Dogon cosmogony and their social structure are related through a discussion of a few bodies and concepts, including myths, the man, the tribe, kinship, territorial organization, the homestead, the Hogon (the clothing, the homestead, and the economic functions of the Hogon), totemism, technology (iron-work and weaving), and international alliances (Griaule & Dieterlen, 1954). Their article examines how supernatural dramas combine facts about transhumanism with contemporary feature writing to help us grasp it better. The supernatural drama has established itself as a recognized subgenre of modern international cinema, identifiable by the supernatural (or mind-expanding) element within the plot, since the premiere and subsequent box office success of *Ghost* (1990) (Van Poppel, 2004:114). This situation can be evaluated as the people of 12 different signs, each of which carries a different sign. It is evaluated by many astrologers that these individuals, each of whom is unique within the framework of the energies

they receive from birth, receive unifying effects with the effects of the zodiac, their ascendant signs, and that they can think and act outside of their nature from time to time. This brings along a state of balance that must constantly follow one's own line and be in constant communication with others.

Apart from the indigenous societies and their applications, modern people started dreaming through media. Smith (2022) argues that since time unremembered, humankind has used language, gesture, and other symbolic systems to create meaning in common. And from these distant beginnings to today's social media platforms, competing power elites have struggled to control access to and dictate the terms of distribution of these systems. Thus, even if the emergence of television after 1923 and its popularity in homes after the mid-1930s seemed to dethrone radio, it can be said that today, both radio, audiobooks, and e-listening materials are on the rise. With the broadcasting of many podcasts, digital audio, and other digital media products over the internet in a way that can be downloaded to computers and portable devices, people can listen effectively while doing another job, walking, resting, or driving in traffic. Later on, cinema gains more popularity and even now attracts many people with its 3D cinema saloons, with its comfortable seats, superior sound system, and mysterious magic power. The television sets, on the other hand, are so close by, being at home with their turn-on and turn-off capabilities and inviting so many guests, with topics with well-known popularity every day and night.

Television shows have keen audiences specialized in certain types of narratives. The supernatural drama, as a television show format, also offers a logical handling of the supernatural aspect, hiding it inside the story and gradually disclosing it as the plot progresses. This study is based on the premise that each participant experiences a transhumanist perspective in a realm that is not depicted in the movie and is never discussed. It is therefore based on examples of how the Manifest and Transhumanism ties are developed using various passages from the tale and other extra-textual components. Although all the digitalization, new TV viewing platforms, and internet opportunities have negative effects on the popularity of TV series, movies shot with big budgets also make a lot of noise today. One of them is Manifest, Manifest is an American supernatural drama television series created by Jeff Rake that premiered on September 24, 2018, on NBC. The series, which created the agenda again with its launch by Netflix and reaching wider audiences, seems to have received 7.1 points from the audience according to the IMDb results, it has been maintaining its popularity in the Top10 list for 18 weeks, and only the total viewing data of the first season in hours is 16 million 410 thousand hours, and the total viewing data of the second season. and it reaches 11 million 930 thousand. According to Leishman, Manifest needed rescuing, and Netflix has stepped up to the plate (Leishman, 2021). The serial is said to be saved by Netflix because, when Manifest was on NBC, it had a budget of around \$4 million to \$5 million per episode, but the series will get a higher budget from Netflix (<https://www.justjared.com/2021/09/16/manifest-creator-netflix-exec-talk-about-the-budget-for-upcoming-episodes-of-final-season/>).

In its core sense, the supernatural aspects in supernatural fiction and drama are mixed with a plot about the protagonist's psychological dilemma and/or a dramatic conflict with the human and/or supernatural world, society, and other organizations. The supernatural aspects

in supernatural fiction and drama are mixed with a plot about the protagonist's psychological dilemma and/or a dramatic conflict with the human and/or supernatural world, society, and other organizations. In contrast to fictional beings that are viewed as good-natured (such as fairies, leprechauns, or elves), supernatural plays may employ folklore creatures that are presented as neutral or bad. Aspects, ghosts, witches, warlocks, and superhuman beings are the most common supernatural entities encountered in supernatural dramas or even just the supernatural genre as a whole.

## 2. Aim and Methodology

This study aims to have a structural and semiotic analysis of the television series *Manifest*. The purpose of this study is to analyze the television show *Manifest* from a structural, linguistic and semiotic perspective. The narrative style of the *Manifest* series draws attention through a structural point of view. As a result, the narrative's structure is sampled throughout the timeline, as Genette suggests in his narratology studies, and also takes into account his ideas like order and frequency, on the other hand. Instead of the series' narrative framework, what makes it so captivating and entertaining are the clues hidden in the puzzle format and how they are answered. Almost every episode has a new character pondering the meaning of one or more fundamental signs, which leads to the creation or perception of a higher reality through the putting together of puzzle pieces. At this point, viewing this hyper world requires hyper-human beings. The ability to see this hyperreality creates a barrier between normal people and superhumans. People will, nevertheless, have the chance to comprehend one another better if this gap is closed. These superhumans, who have taken on the role of God by being capable of foreseeing the future and communicating with each other in a strange way, they still struggle to get along with their friends, family, and other members of society as real human beings. Since they can see a higher reality because the god character is more predominant, they have evolved a different form of agreement and communication. These structural and semiotic assumptions are all intended to be revealed by this study.

## 3. Findings

The findings of the analysis could be summed up in two categories, the structural ones and the semiotic ones. Starting with the structural ones, it would be important to claim that the narrative has a cyclical structure. The hypothesis could be claimed with the examples provided within the *Manifest*.

Hauge suggests: *"Identification with a character means that the audience experiences emotion through that character. In other words, the audience puts itself inside the character emotionally to experience the story; if the character is in danger, the audience feels frightened; if the character suffers loss, the audience feels sad. The audience must identify with the hero of your screenplay. Otherwise, your audience won't care enough about your hero to remain emotionally involved in the story."* (Hauge, 1988:40-43). He also adds, *"If there is an arc for the hero, we see him rewarded for having overcome his inner conflict (or stuck once again, if he's a tragic figure who failed to overcome it)"* (Hauge, 1988:133)

## 2.1 The Textual Qualities

According to Scranton (2010), everything that occurs is influenced by cosmology. This claim expresses the cosmological concept of the "one thing" — the idea that what occurs "above us" in the universe's macrocosm is fundamentally similar to what occurs "below us" in the microcosm, at the level of creation that conceptually comes before reality as we experience it. So, the reality we come across perhaps reveals its characteristics even before it happens and only the believers, the ones who could leave everything and gets a glimpse of the truth or the larger picture of the situation could act in a better way. This assumption could also be carried back to the old times of 'dreaming together'. In complicated films, the conflict often happens only on one level of antagonism. For example, an action flick like the James Bond movie only has a conflict on the 'extra personal level'. A soap opera only deals with 'personal conflict' and if a film would only deal with inner conflict, it would be no more than 'a stream of consciousness' (Van Poppel, 2004:121). Hauge also insists on the type of conflict.

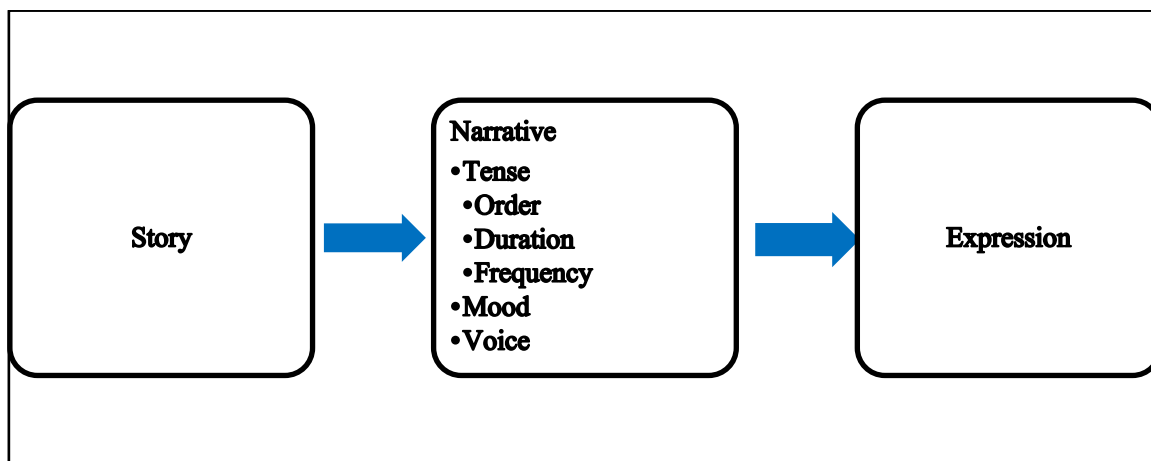
The text, having so many episodes in each season, reveals that there are many protagonists, regarding gender, age, race, social status, etc. That makes it possible for all types of audiences to identify themselves at least with one of them to continue watching it with greater intrinsic involvement. As Metz stated, the narrative is a doubly temporal sequence. There is the time of the thing told and the time of the narrative (the time of the signified and the time of the signifier). This duality not only renders possible all the temporal distortions that are commonplace in narratives (three years of the hero's life summed up in two sentences of a novel or in a few shots of a "frequentative" montage in film, etc.). More basically, it invites us to consider that one of the functions of a narrative is to invent a one-time scheme in terms of another time scheme (Metz, 1974:18).

Genette uses Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* as a work to identify and name the basic constituents and techniques of narrative. Genette illustrates the examples by referring to other literary works. His systemic theory of narrative deals with the structure of fiction, including fictional devices that go unnoticed and whose implications fulfill the Western narrative tradition. From Genette's perspective (1983), there don't seem to be any significant events that contribute to the overall plot given the length of the novel. Aside from their symbolic ideological overtones, the activities of the characters in the movie are somewhat unremarkable and unspecific. They are also not the key protagonists who drive the plot or decide when one episode ends and another one starts. Although efforts are made to provide a normal, usual, or average living, there are still certain difficulties. The Flight appears to be the story's most important component. Figure 1 visualizes the narratology theory of Gérard Genette. It is fascinating to see that his theory still works even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and even becomes the basis for AI production of screenplays.

### 2.1.1 Story

Didipu (2019) summarizes the systematic of Genette in a single sentence. Genette then divides tense elements into three parts, namely order, duration, and frequency. He reminds us that the main idea of the Gérard Genette narratology theory is outlined in his book entitled *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Genette proposed to use three different terms. First, said the

'story' which became signified or narrative content. Second, the narrative word is a signifier, statement, discourse, or narrative text itself. Third, the term narrating is an action or action to produce a narrative, or in a broader sense, as a whole real situation or fiction where the action takes place. Genette presents three categories of narrative structure as the basis for thinking, namely tense, mood, and voice. Genette then divides tense elements into three parts, namely order, duration, and frequency. Thus, the subject matter of the Gérard Genette narrative structure consists of five main categories, namely (1) order, (2) duration, (3) frequency, (4) mood, and (5) voice.



**Figure 1:** Visualization of Gérard Genette's Narratology Theory

Starting to sum up the story for example, the story is very specific. In its basic structure, the narrative sounds to be so simple. According to many different sources, the television serial is a very attractive one. Montego Air Flight 828 encounters a brief stretch of very bad turbulence as it flies from Jamaica to New York City. The 191 passengers and crew of the aircraft discover that more than five and a half years had passed while they were in the air, during which time they were assumed dead, when they touch down at Stewart International Airport in Newburgh, New York. This information is provided to them by NSA deputy director Robert Vance.

Having this story in hand, the same story could have been narrated and edited in several different ways. The story of everything and everybody could be handled in a linear way or in a cyclical way. The threads could be put in between the stories to follow the same order or they might also bring new perspectives to the story. For example, in handling the Alexandria Quartet, Durrell (1957, 1958, 1960) positions several different types of truth from each protagonist's point of view.

This part is very important, because, having the same experience, each of the 828 passengers handles their own experience in different ways, attributing the event many different meanings. Some of them handle it very scientifically, trying to understand what caused such a time lap. Some others look at it from the governmental security perspective suspecting each and every 828'er as an agent, even going too far to execute them. To some, this miracle is given as a second chance, and to others, it is the beginning of a new faith or religion, and worshipping and donating the 828 passengers is somewhat necessary in this respect. Some of the passengers

cannot prove that they are themselves because even the closest relatives do not believe them to be themselves. That means, even if the story is the same, it could have different narrative styles depending upon the stylistic variations of the narrator.

Throughout *Manifest*, the aspect of the story that discusses how individuals who come back will be adapting to the world they rejoin is one of its key components. As many different stories could be produced in this segment as there were survivors. The passengers must accept that their lives—and loved ones—are not the same as they once were as they reenter society. They also start to have guiding voices and visions, or "callings," that foretell future occurrences (<https://blog.r10.net/internet/netflix-en-cok-izlenen-10-icerik-listesini-acikladi>). Regarding the timeline of the story, it usually occurs that the story is established first in the mind of the individual protagonist and turns to be the discourses with the closest ones, for example, Michaela and Ben, and jumps into the society, the others, such as Jared to get help or the other 828'ers to solve the parts of the puzzle and gets back to the mind of the protagonist again.

The story takes place in the current day. However, mythical elements of the narrative implemented as extrinsic information are so much emphasized in several different parts of the narration. There seem to be so many different beliefs and faith systems mentioned in the whole episode of the serial. And even if it seems to be the history of religions or civilizations, the main output of the narrative emphasizes that history is constantly repeating itself. Within the different episodes, similar cases were also revealed such as the man spending a year in a cave, Zeke (Episode 12 of the 1<sup>st</sup> season), or the man drowning in the river, Griffin (Episode 15 of the 1<sup>st</sup> season) appears as the ones having similar markers in their blood and passing through the same time laps in their lives. Frequently mentioned 16th-century Egyptian scholar Yusuf Al-Zuras and his Tarot cards as well as his manuscript indicate that there were people in the past who postponed their death date (Episode 7 2<sup>nd</sup> season). These reiterations do not seem to be repeating the same event but rather exemplify other similar cases that might occur throughout the layout.

Regarding the temporal analysis of a text consists first of numbering the sections according to their change of position in storytime. Here, the audience might discover how for example nine different sections were divided between two temporal positions between "now" and "once". Thus, in the timeline of the story, we might have a temporal analysis in the form of a perfect zigzag (Genette, 1983:38). There might also be the terms such as "anticipation" or "retrospection" or as Genette puts them forward "*prolepsis: any narrative maneuver that consists of narrating or evoking in advance an event that will take place later*" and "*analepsis: any evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point in the story where we are at any given moment*". The arrangement of the facts elevates the narrative to a new degree of comprehension, occasionally leading to simulations of synchronic events or anachronisms (placing the action in the wrong time period).

The narrative of the three seasons could be summed up as the experiences of each and every passenger of 828 after the landing on April 7, 2013. For example, the first episode starts with an explanation. It begins with a few phrases that foretell that from this point on, everything will change and that these moments are special. In other words, viewers can genuinely sense that what they are viewing is in the "past tense" and that the present will appear after a few odd events. Montego Air 828 flight is a pseudo name for the setting to take place. The actions stated



in the order they were prioritized in the narrative depict a linear sequence at the beginning. Yet, even if they seem to be summarized, in the beginning, we realize that the events are at the level of both referring to the past, present, and future. However, this past for example has different pasts in it as the linear storytelling goes on to the present time it also has different presents. It's the same for the future since they might be referring to several different futures depending upon the talk of the time.

According to Genette, narratives can simultaneously be attributed to a number of periods in time. The same phrase can serve as a cue for the same action in the past, present, or future (Figure 2). Perhaps the main success of the series is in the narrative structure that makes it possible. The various sets of acts from each episode are also repeated throughout the entire series, and sometimes it takes a while to figure out the solution and put the pieces together because even the protagonist is oblivious to the signs' meanings.

Action	Past	Present	Future
1	She's talking about the past	Michaela is summarizing the events of April 7, 2013.	She's talking about the future
2		With the call, the family members are divided into two	
3		Michaela and Ben talk about the marriage with Jared	They talk about the future in the past
4		Everyone gets scared during turbulence	
5		The plane landed and no mobile phone services	Actually, they are now in future
6		The passengers learn that the date is November 4, 2018.	
7		Confronting the other parts of the family	
8	Actually, it took part in the unknown past	Michaela learns about Jared's marriage and her mom's death	
9		The Media is Focusing on 828'ers	Signs regarding the future activities and impact of the media
10		Michaela learns that her apartment has been vacated.	
11	Lourdes and Michaela were best friends in the past	Michaela and Jared encounter with each other	Lourdes is married to Jared now and for future
12	First "Calling" says "Slower"	She saves the life of an unknown boy running after a ball	
13		Ben and Michaela talk about the callings	Dangers of being a guinea pig in the labs of the government
14	Her previous research	Saanvi gets back to her job in the clinic	Her previous research is in action and saved hundreds of people's lives
15	Actually, it was in the past.	Grace talks about Olive's therapy	

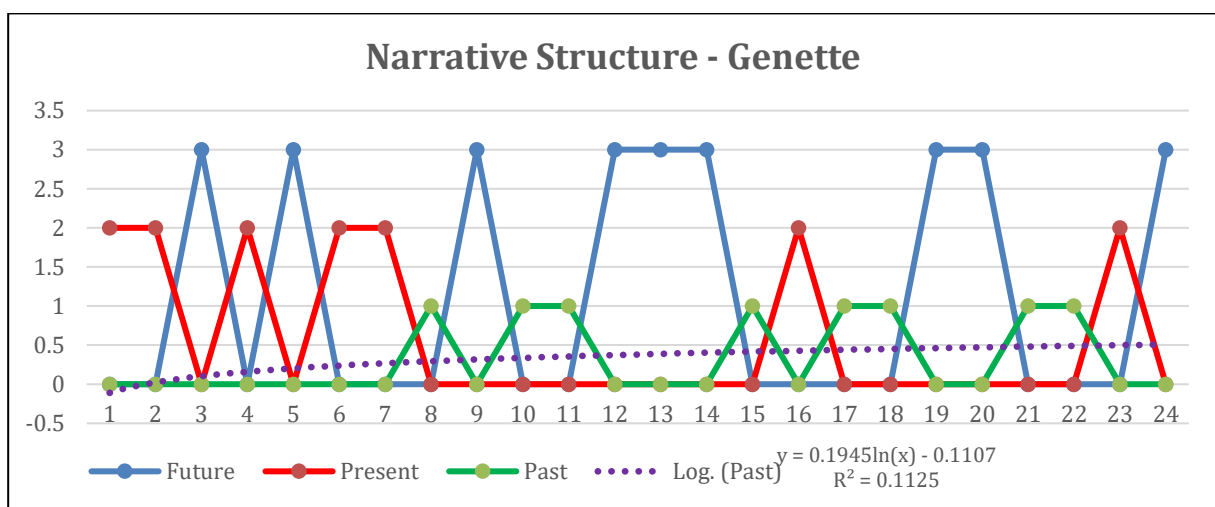


16		Michaela gets another " Calling" says "Set them free"	What to do related to the future?
17	Questioning the past five years	Michaela and Jared confront with each other again	
18		Ben confronts Olive during her sports practice	
19		Saanvi saves Cal for the sake of losing her job	
20		Jared and Michaela visit the dog owner	Two girls were set free through the Calling
21		Ben and Grace talk about the past	
22	Because she had a relationship with Dany	Grace needs to decide what she really wants	
23	To understand how she replied to them	Michaela visits the church	To learn more about the callings
24	The passengers	Most of the 828'ers had the same calling	The group of us

**Figure 2:** The timeline of episode 1 and temporal analysis

### 2.1.2 Narrative

The narrative has a lot to do with the protagonists. Here, even if it seems to be just one of the protagonists, Michaela is positioned as the storyteller, firsthand experiencing the event. However, in most cases, she will be encountering most of the other 828'ers and some others. This cyclical approach of the shift of the importance attributed to that character for that episode makes it easier to develop characters as well as to provide a chance for the audience to concentrate on different personalities. At each step, there would be the need to empathy the hero as much as the other characters. In most cases, if they cannot decide which one, they like most, these kinds of narratives might even cause a split not only in the story but also in psychology.



**Figure 3:** The graphic of the timeline of episode 1

The narrative structure according to Genette seems something like the following graph (Figure 3). In such a complex structure, it might be difficult for the audience to keep track however, in each episode, the beginning is repeated in several ways, and in each repetition, we discover somewhat new to solve the present problem.

This might be the most striking point of the narrative that the three main timelines are intermingling with each other to establish a certain narrative. According to Akimoto (2019), there might be some ellipsis in between the timeline. In this sense, the ellipsis can be interpreted as a choice of information that is discarded from the story. When Manifest is handled through the elliptic information, there seem to be many different types of elliptic cases within the story either the protagonists cannot provide the missing points at the time to continue the process of narrative, or the answers are not yet clear since it is the unknown future. Akimoto also puts forward that only iterative narrating can be translated into a method of memory construction from the subcategories of frequency. To him, a Singulative narrative is a normal form of story construction. The act of repeating can be considered as a memory rehearsal although it does not produce a copy of an event into a story. Yet, throughout the film, there seem to be so many singulative narratives specifically told by the protagonists having a “calling”. These all need to be repeated because in each repetition the others taking part in the “calling” might sense somewhat further information about what it is all about.

### 2.1.3 Narrative Expressions and Meaning

With today's technology, artificial intelligence has no practical boundaries. Artificial intelligence encompasses all of the software or gadgets we use every day. Innovations and technology might not always be secure, though! In the future, one might even need to prove that you're genuine, experts said, issuing crucial deepfake technology cautions (Kocabaş, 2022). Experts also called attention to a crucial distinction between authentic and fake photographs. Researchers from the University of California and the University of Lancaster in the UK and the USA created an experiment using artificial intelligence to create human faces. The research's findings, which were published in recent days, have alarmed experts (Nightingale & Farid, 2022). According to studies, a face produced by artificial intelligence and a real face is identical. The study's finding that artificial intelligence-generated phony faces appeared more trustworthy than actual human ones was its most concerning finding. The research's findings showed that these faces were not only incredibly lifelike but also nearly identical to actual faces and even more trustworthy.

GAN technology is another component of the artificial intelligence architecture. If the artificial intelligence, for instance, does not find a face that is comparable in any existing networks, it may come to believe that the false face it made is accurate and that the real face does not exist at all. Combining this technique with Deep Fake technologies from the film and advertising industries is possible. Generative Adversarial Network (GAN), a machine learning-based technique, is the name of the infrastructure it uses. It can develop new images, characters, settings, and human looks, and it learns using artificial intelligence training sets (Sattigeri, et al., 2019).

Throughout the episodes, there seem to be many film effects have been implemented into the film. However, the most striking expressions come not through the film effects or AI-

generated productions but through the human voice. For example, Cal says in the first episode of the first season, while still waiting at the airport: “If it’s really been five years, how am I still alive?”

Facial expressions, eyes, pupils, perspiration, and body language are all ways of expressing oneself and understanding others. The particular expression used in this case doesn't matter all that much. What becomes more significant is the fact that direct theoretical communication would require a unity in expression that is incompatible with the variety and diversity of the subject matter. According to Liestøl (1994), in order to portray variety and complexity through indirect communication, one can construct a fragmented collection rather than one core text that relates all components of a monolithic whole. Additionally, the expressions are limited to the discourse line and storylines, as well as the summary, ellipsis, scene, stretch, and pause that embrace the actions and events in between.

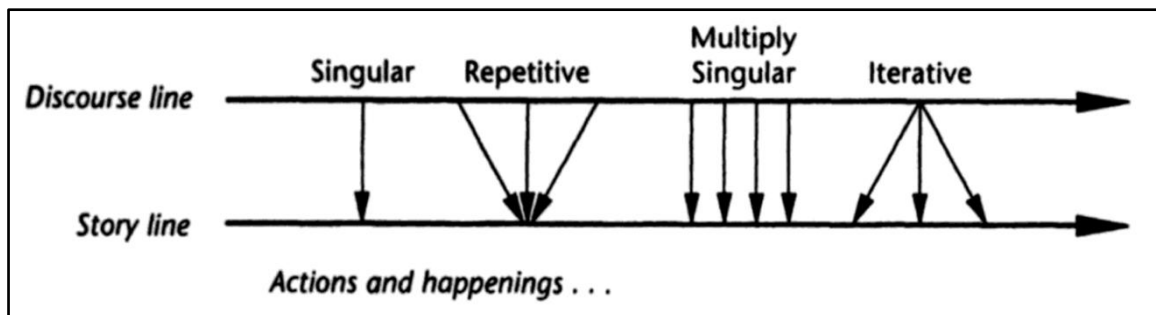


Figure 4: Frequency category between the storyline and discourse line (Liestøl, 1994)

The PR specialists mainly state that it’s not what you say but how you say it and they also alter the expression, it’s not how you say it but how you look when you say it (Scott, et.al., 2014). Just like in the motto, the quality of the expression in the narrative is much more important than the expression itself. Facial mimes and gestures to make it more memorable and effective are required. Since the main theme is to maintain the empathy of the audience, public opinion is much more important than artistic capability or the transcending experience. As Liestøl (1994) calls it, a kind of hypertext is designed to refer to the whole text. In this respect, frequency gains importance regarding Genette’s third category, concerning the number of references between storyline and discourse line, and subdivides into singular, repetitive, multiply singular, and iterative.

Regarding these classifications, Manifest, as text contains almost all these frequently repeated chunks in its hypertext. Sometimes it is Michaela or Ben acting alone or sometimes it’s the nature of the “calling” involving more than one person in the actions and happenings. The calling, until the meaning is clarified by everyone seems to be repetitive. Yet, sometimes, parts of the calling are grasped by several different people, which means it shows multiple singular features. Sometimes, it hits everyone else, as 828’ers so it becomes iterative. That means the narrative of Manifest indicates all the frequency of actions and happenings in its hypertext.

## 2.2 Semiotic Analysis of the Narrative and The Posthuman Characters

It could be emphasized that the century we are living in holds great potential for humanity and that the impact of cutting-edge technology, along with developments that go beyond the capabilities of the human mind and even put forth control over it, also highlights the significance of the humanism phenomenon of earlier eras. The ability to be generous and helpful enough to aid someone you have never met is the most human quality that has emerged in the evolution of theories about what it means to be completely human. Yet, true humanity goes far beyond lending a hand to friends and family members or doing a favor in return for some sort of benefit. In fact, the ability to extend a helping hand to any member of society is a quality inherent in humanity. As an example, humanity has pursued higher hopes of becoming a different human being thanks to the contribution of heroes endowed with superior qualities like "Batman, Superman, and Spiderman," *who was made heroic by the concept of "Six Million Dollar Man,"* a new human being produced with the help of technology and medicine. In the iconic 1970s television series *The Six Million Dollar Man*, when the main astronaut Steve Austin is critically injured during a test flight and on the edge of death, science and technology save the day. "*You guys, we can reproduce him*", say the scientists. Technology nowadays is adequate. We have the ability to create the first bionic man in history. He'll be Steve Austin. Better than before, actually, stronger, quicker, and smarter (Gallagher, 2012).

The text analyzed in this study was a text of a television serial. It had a circle, it had its own dynamics of design, production, and audience reflections. Depending upon all these parameters the text alters in each episode and each season. That's why, the analysis will only concentrate on how the protagonists symbolize the contradictions, how they portray their characters, or what their characters symbolize in each action. The following conclusions can be drawn from an analysis of the symbols and signs represented by the characters in the television series.

- **Conflict:** There is a perpetual tension between 828ers and outsiders. This results from the way they were portrayed by the government, the media, and their close friends and even families. The majority of the passengers think it is unfair to portray them as freaks like E.T. or aliens. Due to the nature of the callings, some 828ers were put into jail as outlaw people and this caused some prejudice on the side of the public. There's another, deeper inner conflict in most of the characters as well. Most of them have psychiatric issues and are reluctant to consult a therapist because of the post-traumatic effects of their near-death experiences, which have led them to believe that they do not deserve to live.
- **Shifting Values:** The 828 passengers lack the majority of abilities, visions, and changing habits because they did not spend the previous five and a half years with the others. Even if it isn't much of a time, the separation between earthlings and 828'ers leaves a void that will never be filled. The 828'ers struggled to fit in with the stream as the values evolved over time. For instance, even if Ben and Michaela were qualified before, they were deemed incompatible because of their mysterious "callings" while being unable to handle their working situations. The ancients offer a manifesto that places an emphasis on upholding long-standing customs and having a strong confidence in people, such as the

resilience of familial bonds and the enduring nature of love, respect, and faith. Only five and a half years separate them from those who have continued to live and uphold all of their principles. The old and the new are now at odds with one another in this situation. The question of whether people will stick with their new decisions or go back to their old principles arises.

- **Post-human:** Having random callings that annoy the 828 passengers and these people were mainly categorized as non-humans, agents, miracles, or the deceased caused most of them to be unhappy and introverted. It may seem very uncommon to label Manifest with the concept of Transhumanism or posthuman representations. Even if the story involves some supernatural aspects, the heroes of the story were always seen as one of us. Along with many of its discussions, the television show has never been handled through this perspective. The history of transhumanism, which dates back to the earliest civilizations, pagans, and ancient societies, must be emphasized. Transhumanism, from today's perspective, intends to maximize people's physical and cognitive abilities by undergoing a significant transformation with technological advancements, as well as to postpone illness and aging and, ultimately, to eradicate death. Today, a lot of narratives try to persuade people that human nature can be altered or changed. Although transhumanism as it is now understood has been successful in extending human life, curing some diseases, or delaying the aging process, the concept of creating a superior man occupies a different position.

The idea of posthuman does not belong to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but goes as early as the history of human beings. For example, The Chimera or Chimaera according to Greek mythology was a monstrous fire-breathing hybrid creature, composed of different animal parts from Lycia, Asia Minor (Graves, 2017), According to Homer the Chimaera was of divine origin. In front, it was a lion, behind it was a serpent, and in the middle, a goat, and was brought up by King Amisodarus as a plague for men. It is usually depicted as a lion, with the head of a goat protruding from its back, and a tail that might end with a snake's head (Thurston Peck, 1898). It was an offspring of Typhon and Echidna who was a monster, half-woman and half-snake, who lived alone in a cave. She was the mate of the fearsome monster Typhon and was the mother of many of the most famous monsters of Greek myth (Ogden, 2013:81) and a sibling of monsters like Cerberus and the Lernaean Hydra.

The term "chimera" has come to describe any mythical or fictional creature with parts taken from various animals, to describe anything composed of disparate parts or perceived as wildly imaginative, implausible, or dazzling. Yet, apart from the mythological narratives, there are some concrete findings to prove that human beings are close to the chimaera concept. The sculpture, which was first discovered in 1939 near Hohlenstein-Stadel in the Swabian Alps in Germany, appears to have taken 20 years to assemble. Found in the cave, it was created at one of the locations where humanity's first steps were made. This sculpture, which has a lion's head and a human body and is 40 thousand years old, shows the creativity and way of thinking of the people who lived at that time. Flint was used to carve the Lion Man statue, which was constructed of woolly mammoth tusks at the time (Kind, et al., 2014). The creativity of the first human beings is not only limited to artistic sculptures but musical instruments and figurative

arts objects were also been found in Swabian Jura and their surrounding landscape (Sanz, 2015:137).

Regarding how the semiotic analysis of the text yields different posthuman characters and their actions throughout the text, there seem to be many different aspects to be considered. For example, Cal was suffering from leukemia and there was a distance between him and his classmates due to the physical and psychological conditions he had to bear. Yet, after the escape, he benefits from the special and free cure program and gets better physically, however, this time his friends were hating him because of his 828er label. He was unhappy in his own world because he couldn't bear the difference between him and his twin Olive. He feels all alone and the gap between him and his beloved ones seems to be an unescapable one. Most of the posthuman characters complain of a lack of understanding, being devalued, being subjected to psychological pressure and violence, or not having a purpose to make life livable. This is perhaps due to the fact that 828ers, like many demigod figures in mythology, could not feel that they were fully earthly or miraculous.

Ironically, Michaela's mother passed away during the course of her parents' marriage, which was depicted in the initial minutes of the series as the ideal union. Nevertheless, the mother occasionally directs Michaela through her voice and appearance, and old sayings that mean she is "level-up" in a way that could foresee the future. Grace and Jared began to look for enjoyment in their relationships with other people, something they had never imagined being able to do. More specifically, they have picked the candidates or their new partners, who will be able to make up for their previous losses. The customary framework and their old emotions, however, continue to have an impact on each of them, and when their partners return, they make room again in their lives for them. Michaela is unsure of how she feels for Jared, but she can't ignore Zeke, who has recently been involved in her life and is very much like her in many ways. Michaela marries him, believing that he doesn't have much longer, but a miracle occurs, and Zeke is able to recover from the effects of "Death Date." Being posthuman himself, Zeke has an advantage over Jared that is apparent from their first interaction with Michaela. Despite this, the two posthuman characters seem to get along better. Because of this, Michaela's choice to marry Zeke is depicted as the "destiny of fate," or divine planning, as opposed to coincidence. Moreover, Zeke has evolved into a being that has the ability to read people's minds in the form of an almost "level-up" posthuman. This was actually what AI and people throughout the ages were dreaming of.

On the one hand, the goal of implanting a chip in the human brain, creating superhumans, and creating smarter, stronger, healthier, and more conscious people is to fulfill the subconscious ideal of immortality. On the other hand, these goals are frequently seen in film storylines. Actually, Zeke is an example of both cases. On one hand, he's the one who survived for the sake of Michaela, only by coming across her photo on a piece of paper and falling in love with her. But on the other hand, he survived twice. And in this case, he seems to be immortal in the eyes of the 828 passengers providing hope for their altering the Death Date. Yet, this kind of antiaging or immortality is valid for all the passengers since they do not seem to get old even after five and a half years later.

Similarly, the news that Ben and Grace will have a child both makes the couple happy and sad. Knowing that their children will always be in danger for life makes them uneasy. For this, Grace is even ready to claim that the child is not an 828er baby, but her ex-boyfriend, Dany. However, Ben finds it pointless and unnecessary. The most interesting thing about pregnancy is that Grace can get callings too. In this sense, it is certain that Ben's demigod skills are passed on to his child, and it is understood that the child is not from Dany. Besides, this also highlights that Grace also has some post-human privileges as the mother of this demigod child.

It is clear that the newly introduced heroes have deified abilities that allow them to act as decision-makers rather than gods, that they are indifferent to human emotions, and that self-transformation (via the addition of mechanical components, super-powers, or new features) aids in our ability to absorb hero stories. On the one hand, it is possible to construct expanded conceptual fields, such as elevating the status of science and technology, and on the other hand, research on its intellectual and scientific foundation is ongoing. Hughes attributes the enlightened school of thought as the source of transhumanism, the idea that technology can go beyond the capabilities of the human body and mind. The internal conflicts and difficulties of the broad enlightenment heritage, therefore, appear to have been passed down to transhumanism as well (Hughes, 2010).

Immortality and the creation of a synthetic human image have changed and transformed from mythological symbols of heroes at quite different rates. Epics and mythologies gained importance, stimulated people's imaginations, and fostered their belief in fantastical and supernatural things, particularly in the eras when oral language predominated. Another crucial consideration is what made the powerful, unbeatable heroes of those periods unbeatable. This appraisal is made at a crucial juncture.

One other factor to be mentioned about immortality and being or becoming post-human 828ers: some of the passengers, including Ben and Michaela, feel that they are in fact already dead and somehow dragged into a different and inexplicable life. Because technically, parts of the plane have emerged from the depths of the ocean, the plane and the captain have disappeared inexplicably, despite the many unexplained murders or abductions connected with each other, people's thoughts are that supernatural forces are protecting the 828ers.

Analyzing the episodes, it's been figured out that many semiotic signs were scattered in most of the episodes. The myths and beliefs of earlier civilizations are brought up while having their investigation into any "calling" or whenever semiotically relevant images are seen. Therefore, it is revealed that using the fundamental knowledge of these old civilizations is necessary, despite the fact that the heroes of the series are portrayed to the audience as "posthuman." The first images from the movie that come to memory are those that conjure up negative, like fire, blood, or screams, which have a profound impact on humanity from the very beginning. Parts of the series also include references to the immortality-evoking peacock, a piece of Noah's Ark, Mount Ararat in Turkey, and several concepts from Mesopotamia or Egypt.

The movie appears to deal with happenings in the West of the world, but its fundamental ideas and cues appear to be originated from the East. It might also be referred to as a brand-new "enlightenment". The fact that Posthumans can witness dreams in which old communities' beliefs are present is, nonetheless, highly intriguing. Ben, for instance, hears some strange voices



and is unable to identify them. However, while passing by a Buddhist temple, something draws him in and he discovers that the voices are hymns sung by followers of this faith. By following these hymns, Ben saves the life of a young person, TJ who was submerged in the explosion.

The text's "new point of view" argues that posthumans are not a threat to civilization and that they play an important role in preserving the community, upholding traditions, and constructing an equitable and just social structure in which everyone is respected. Everyone, posthuman or not, needs to participate in building up such a strategy where human dignity is maintained at the highest level. In any event, without everyone's support, what happens won't be enough for society to benefit from, and those who don't support will experience things like sorrow and loss. So, whether they believe it or not, inclusion becomes necessary. Only a few of the 191 travelers who have posthuman qualities are actually conscious of such power because they have deified humans, on the one hand.

### 3. Conclusion

As Scranton emphasizes, our cosmologies agreed that the universe began as a cosmogonic egg that held within it all of the unrealized potential of the future universe. Each tradition recognizes the terms water, fire, wind, and earth. The role of these initiates may simply have been to deliver the larger body of symbols to some future generation that would be more capable of recognizing and appreciating their most essential meanings.

Mersky (2019) emphasizes the importance of dreaming as thinking owing to Bion (1962) who suggests how social dreaming events can make use of thinking from the dreams. But, the most important of all are the dreams belonging to the whole, referring to the system of interconnected dreamers. Mersky also mentions the unconscious, comparing Freud and Jung's notions of the unconscious influences how one takes up the role of social dreaming host. Mersky also puts forward that for centuries dreams have been taken seriously by cultures from around the world and have been an important element of cultural and societal interest. In some cultures, for example, someone was chosen as the dreamer for the community and some were even elevated to a special status because of this function. He also mentions the Crow Nation, a North American Indian tribe, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Likewise, when a pale fox passes by – the animal whose tracks are said by Dogon diviners to portend the outcome of future events – the tribesperson naturally tends to think about judgments that must be made to distinguish between truth and false (Scranton, 2010).

The purpose of the basic narrative is to demonstrate how time differences can lead to several issues in society and how everyone should be moving at the same pace as one another. A more pluralistic, just, and egalitarian humanitarian approach is demonstrated, emphasizing that it is immoral to leave even one person behind, much like in the education slogan. It is proposed that even spending a short time on the same plane with someone we have never met before can forge a lasting connection. Each chapter attempts to clearly demonstrate this thesis' accuracy step by step. It is emphasized that everyone in society should be decent, not just a select few or even just one or two. This inclusive perspective reveals that this or any negative situation should be avoided altogether.

Belief systems and the distinction between the winners and losers come into focus when the concept of an aircraft transforms into the idea of being aboard a single ship, the Noah's Ark. Those who support this viewpoint urge other believers to proceed along their road without erring in order to spread their message to the audience. However, what is crucial to note here is that unaware and prejudiced groups in society may harbor unfavorable ideas, particularly as a result of the violent and criminal organizations they have created among themselves or as a result of media influence. This organization is particularly hazardous because of its tendency to act swiftly upon receiving information, to organize itself rapidly, and to intend damage on those who stand in their way.

Only a handful of 828ers fight against the whole world just to make it possible to correlate everyone under the same umbrella. Aside from that, having power does not ensure that it will be used for good. Griffin and Jace stand for those who have power and have the potential to abuse it. Additionally, Jace, Kory, and Pete will be able to resurrect, just like Zeke did after escaping the underground glacier. The police officers and Grace's brother would be killed when they returned, but they would also die because they were trapped beneath the ice. All of this demonstrates how power can be used both good and harmful. At this stage, concerns about being human—as the Indians have already mentioned—come to the forefront rather than concerns about being post-human. The old guy said, "*I have a fight inside me,*" just like in the Cherokee legend. "*There are two wolves involved. One is evil: bitterness, inferiority, falsehoods, false pride, grief, regret, avarice, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, and ego*".

The grandfather continued after turning to face his grandchild. The other embodies positive emotions. It consists of happiness, love, peace, hope, serenity, modesty, kindness, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The duel between the two wolves is fatal. You and every other person are engaged in the same struggle. His young grandson paused to think about it. Finally, he inquired, "*Which wolf will win?*" while turning to face his grandfather. The elderly Cherokee just said, "*The one you feed.*" The moral of the story reinforces our belief that no matter how post-human powers one may have, peace and balance within oneself will dominate one's actions. So, it might be inevitable for some of them make use of the power in the worse ways.

This study, which examines the first three seasons of the Netflix series *Manifest* from the perspectives of narratology and semiotics, is the first to question the show from this point of view. There hasn't been any discussion of transhumanism or post-human research in relation to the series, despite the fact that it has been on the minds of viewers for a while. In accordance with Gerard Genette's narratology criteria, the text's structural analysis has been conducted, and the necessary case studies and findings have been provided. Semiotic analysis reveals that the story refers to a multifaceted and cross-disciplinary field. It is clear that the text contains material from practically every field of study, including history, biology, etymology, animal species, philosophy, belief systems, and criminology. It is evident that there are more instances of the state making ethical decisions, despite the first displays of a guarded and inaccessible concept of the deep state that conducts experiments on humans. It has been often stated that individuals constantly lose faith in one another and that, despite living in a large society, they are all alone.

The idea that everyone has the potential to make errors in life and that those who do always deserve a second chance is another reoccurring theme. In fact, the majority of the heroes are made up of people who have gone through horrible times in the past, been a part of bad things, unintentionally or not, and been able to overcome them. This is one of the post-human traits that can be stressed. Additionally, it is inferred that there are high rates of crime, alcoholism, and drug use, particularly in the American society where the series is set. The fact that such situations occasionally include some of the most trustworthy and esteemed individuals is actually very unfortunate.

The majority of employees and young people exhibit a significant lack of confidence. It appears extremely common to wish to see people with post-human features, at least in television programs, in order to cope with this reality of society. In addition to all of this, it is known that the series' ideas have successfully made their way into the marketplace via its products and PR. Media and the creative businesses it spawned appear to be at work right now, just like with all other media goods. Agrawal (2023) points out that many such links and mysteries from science and mythology keep turning up throughout Manifest's runtime; however, the mention of the 16th-century Egyptian scholar Yusuf Al-Zuras and a certain kind of lost gemstone called Omega Sapphires caught our attention the most. Nowadays, most of the Manifest economy is considered through these kinds of souvenirs as we call them the products of the creative industries.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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