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CAN PEOPLE BE (RE)PRESENTED IN FICTION?: TOWARDS A THEORY OF NARRATIVE AGENTS AND A MATERIALIST CRITIQUE BEYOND TECHNOCRACY OR REDUCTIONISM

Headnote 2024 DS*: This essay, written in 1981-83 for a US conference. I continued to use the Table in it and my main argument about narrative agents several times, but this first approach is the only one that contains my view of the professional history (the Greimasians and Lukács) I was reacting against. All of this happened before I got my first rudimentary PC, so the footnotes exist only in my book* Darko Suvin: A Life in Letters*, ed. Ph.E. Wegner, Vashon Island: Paradoxa, 2011, 53-72. I have now ever so slightly edited it.*

0. I believe that fiction is differentiated from other types of social discourse (journalism, scientific texts, philosophy, etc.) by the presence of two necessary and sufficient formal factors: *narrative space/time* (so far best analyzed by Bakhtin's chronotope), which is a transposition and reelaboration of preceding, largely extra-literary concepts of space and/or time; and *narrative agents*, who are a reelaboration and transposition of largely extra-literaryconcepts about people. These two factors are perhaps two faces of the same coin; they are certainly to a great degree consubstantial. For a first approach to an already very complicated matter, I shall in this essay reluctantly but entirely forget about the chronotope, and concentrate on agents as fictional simulacra of people.[1/]

1. The Lay of the Land: The Political Stakes

1.0. Before getting into the inevitably somewhat specialized arguments, I want to discuss their intertext, which I suggest in my title by way of the possibilities lurking within both "people" and "(re)present." This intertext or practical context is situated at the interface between fictional and other ways of viewing, interpreting, and constructing reality.

1.1. "People" (*gens, Leute*) means, of course, something like women plus men plus children; it does not denote THE people (*le peuple, das Volk*). This essay will focus on the images of people rather than on the *interests of the people* that can be found (re)presented in fiction. Nonetheless, these overlapping connotations are an important signal, for how people are presented in literature will intimately co-determine what interests that literature might re-present. The stakes here are therefore very high -- both for Marxian critics dealing with culture and for the fate of fiction itself. This subject is a privileged way of entering into and indicating an answer to the radical democratic and socialist question: is fiction more than opium for (the) people, is it also (as this usually truncated text of Marx continues) the heart of a heartless world? Is fiction only ideology or also utopia and/or cognition? Is there, then, a cognitive (and thus politically usable and ethically justifiable) reason for a radical critic to investigate fiction -- be that Shakespeare or *Dallas*, Homer or science fiction, Proust or Piercy, comic strips or Brecht? Especially when that will involve a halfway conscientious critic in the indispensable

mediations of the meta-meta-discourses of modern criticism, and thus leave less time for more direct radical action?

Many radicals throughout the years have come, with reluctance or enthusiasm, to share with pragmatists and philistines the conclusion that there is NO such reason, that a radical cultural critic is an oxymoron of the order of fiery ice or planned disorder. Nikolai Chernyshevsky, the leader of Russian revolutionary populism, said somewhere (the image was to recur in the Soviet debates) that sausages came before Shakespeare. From a vulgar materialist (bourgeois as well as "socialist") point of view this is undeniable: people cannot exist without eating, they can exist without fiction, can't they?

Yet can they? In the depths of the 1930s Depression, didn't Hollywood thrive on perverting the pennies of millions of jobless into profits from soap-opera movies? Does not every halfway intelligent regime in economico-political difficulties buttress itself through the most popular forms of fiction at the same time (if not before) it tries political solutions? The genres vary: in Elizabethan times it was theatre, street-ballads or preachings (even technically speaking, largely fictional); in the 19th century, popular novels; today, TV. The orientation remains constant. The Biblical author had better food-imagery than Chernyshevsky, alas: not by bread alone liveth man but also by fictional images -- which explain why bread is or is not there, why pie in the sky will come by and by.

Thus, to continue with examples from revolutionary leaders, it was not only Che Guevara who might have thought that machine-guns were more important than speeches, nor only Mao Zedong that working in people's actions (in the sense that a sculptor works in marble) was more important than working in poems. Many pragmatists with less flair for insurrection or liberating politics take such an attitude unthinkingly. Let me call this operative attitude (or gesture, in Brecht's sense of *Gestus*) by the name of arguably the greatest 19th-century poet, also a Communard, who very early on abandoned poem-writing for gun-running: it is the *Rimbaud syndrome*. I do not maintain that Che or Mao took the wrong decisions *for themselves*: that would be ignorant and presumptuous. I do maintain that when the Rimbaud syndrome is adopted as a norm imposed on all possible future Rimbauds, it is pernicious. All of us who have worked within movements aspiring to radical democracy and economic justice, including movements claiming Marxist ascendancies, remember well how our eccentric involvement with not immediately operative sign-systems -- in particular with fiction -- met in general with two responses: either with hostility, or, in the case of our most well-meaning and shrewd comrades outside the cultural (wordsmithing, picture-making, and similar) trades, with the pitying smile of forbearance for childish pursuits. (Indeed, I seem to detect some echoes of the Rimbaud syndrome in this conference too, where according to my count one can find one and one third session out of 13, or 10%, devoted to fictional communication...)

Yet we people dealing in culture have a good deal of historical irony to fall back upon. Thus, Chernyshevsky's main positive influence was not in his failed revolutionary action but in his writings, in particular in a fictional text called *What Is To Be Done?* (1865), which 40 years later inspired a young man called Volodya Ulyanov to write a non-fictional text of the same title, setting out the theory of a future Leninist party -- hardly an ineffective text. A dozen years after the second *What Is To Be Done,* its author, then already V.I. Lenin, would interrupt his possibly most important and certainly most utopian piece of wordsmithing (called *The State and the Revolution*) with a concluding statement that it is better to make a revolution than write about it. What I'm arguing is not that he was wrong but that he was (necessarily) oversimplifying: that without Chernyshevsky's fiction as well as Chernyshevsky's organizational tradition (which led to Ulyanov's elder brother being executed by

Tsarism) many central features of the united theory and practice of Leninism would not have existed in the same form. And one thing a good look at fiction and art in general -- which fuses conceptualization with sensuality -- can teach us is that phenomena only exist in given forms: *not to exist in a given way* means *not to exist*, period.

The historical record goes on to Che Guevara and Mao Zedong. I cannot even hint at the richness of their lives' work, but I wish to isolate one important lesson to be drawn from them: what survives after a generation. A large part of what survives from such lives are narrative images, agents with actions. Che is in this domain surviving as something like a Marxist version of an Arthurian or Spenserian Knight of Justice giving his life for the cause, a revolutionary Christ-like intercessor for the oppressed; this image is so potent that even Hollywood felt compelled to attempt coopting and neutralizing it. Similarly, Mao is increasingly becoming a twofold narrative agent: the writer of certain kinds of texts, and an imaginary type within global political discourse (the leader of the Long March, the speaker at Yenan, the swimmer in the Yang-tse, etc.). It is not that the practice or *praxis* of fiction is better than, but merely that it is indispensable for and indispensably allied with, the *praxis* of revolutionary change. Indeed, fiction or narrative (in the wide sense of telling a story with agents and space/time, which englobes equally what the old theories called epic, lyric, and dramatic fiction), is inextricably enmeshed with all social practice. If any ideology or movement pretends to kick narrative and images borrowed from fiction out the front door, they will return by the cellar window. Surely it would be better to do knowingly what you have to do anyway: for only thus, as Hegel said, do you truly do that. Only thus, furthermore, can what you do be consciously controlled and corrected.

This is not to deny that the Rimbaud syndrome remains a very important and open particular historical -- as different from general theoretical -- question. But it too is an important question because, before the gun-running, Rimbaud had an unsurpassed way with words, in his case organized into verse images and narratives.

1.2. It might have become apparent that my title conceals some basic choices. Along with the connotational resonance between people (plural) and the people (collective singular), another, more polarized choice is whether either is being -- is to be -- "*re*-presented" or "represented," or indeed simply "presented."

Re-presenting I take to refer to a supposed copying from or reflection of a supposedly otherwise known external reality. Two minutes' thought suffices to render this untenable in any literal form, so it is quickly provided with a codicil to the effect that a subjective prism is interposed between the objective reality and the image of (the) people. Then it turns out that a norm for the rightness of that prismatic refraction must be found in order to obviate the possible multiplicity of prisms (say avantgardist or mystical as against "realistic"), and that the normative prism is that of the ruling ideology -- be it socialist-realism or the awful capitalist-realism we can see in the halls of any US university as paintings of presidents and board chairmen. This, in short, is a static, conformist, Philistine theory of artistic mimesis, banal and without much interest.

However, if people are represented in fiction as a selection, condensation, and displacement of surface empirical events and the ruling ideological way of seeing them, if they are seen as in a partially

steerable daydream, then representation or mimesis is not to be understood as simple copying. No doubt, any thinking is based on models. But representation in fiction is then a process of taking model-images of people from non-fictional ways of understanding and of reconstructing social reality into a process that (in ideal cases) develops roughly as follows: the new images go about subverting the heretofore received fictional norms of agential structuring; but as this is happening, the images themselves are in turn modified in and by some autonomous principles of fictional structuring; all of which together enables the resulting views of relationships among people, elaborated by the restructured piece of fiction, to return into our understanding of reality or ideology *with a cognitive increment*; this better understanding permits what Brecht called interventionary, effective, or engaged thinking (in the technical sense of meshing or being in gear). For Brecht, an image or model of a person can be drawn up into which might be inserted attitudes that the person observed might not have found by him/herself: "but these imputed ways of behaviour do not remain the observer's illusions; they turn to realities: the image has become productive, it can change the person modelled, it contains (realisable) proposals. To make such an image means to love." (Brecht 20:170) The great Brechtian and indeed Marxian theme of a productive or creative eros has been formulated before and better than in all the privatized *jouissances*.

Indeed, at this point the mimetic ambiguity of "representing" (which dominates present-day views) should probably be abandoned for the more productive and communicative, two-way duplicity of "presenting": presenting images taken from outside fiction as propositions or formative hypotheses for a narrative, but also presenting images transmogrified within fiction as proposals to the pragmatic world. Even in the best case of "Realism," representing suggests standing in for something that already exists, as a democratic binding mandate represents the opinions of the mandate-givers. Presenting may in the best, Brechtian case suggest instead erotic increment and plasticity. The roundabout route of art and fiction could thus hide a long-range operativity, intervention, or use-value, after all. That it does so, and that a horizon can be indicated within which it does so, is the argument of my essay. For if it did not, if people CANNOT be represented in fiction, a great part of the humanist and radical passion which is inalienably allied to a need of changing people's lives, of modifying the relationships among people, would be irrelevant to fiction, and fiction would indeed be irrelevant to it. To expand a remark of Brecht's about drama: if people do not fit (let me add what Brecht presupposed: in however autonomous ways) into the worlds of fiction, then fiction does not fit into the world of people.

1.3. Perhaps I could cap my introductory argument by two axioms:

First axiom: we need a MATERIALIST APPROACH. Our matter is in this case social discourse provisionally fixed in texts that interact with frames of acceptance and non-acceptance (ideologies). Therefore, *any hypothesis to be tried out has to be verifiable through ensembles of texts in interaction with "reading" frames*. This verifiability implies a/ that there exists both the possibility of falsification and the need for a readiness to alter the hypothesis; b/ (an application of Occam's razor) that the explainability of the text by means of the initial hypothesis is either equal or superior to the explainability by means of any previous, insufficiently materialist hypothesis. In short, hypotheses and text-ensembles-cum-reading-frames are partners or use-values.

First corollary: an anecdote has it that Matisse once showed a painting of his to a visitor who exclaimed he/she had never seen a woman like that, to which the painter answered: "It is not a woman,

it is a picture." The material pertinent to re-presenting people in fiction (and all texts) is not people but words, sentences, and what they imply in interaction with reading frames. More particularly, this material is (some equivalent of) a nominal syntagm with a given place in the story -- just as the pertinent material in Matisse's painting was colours and lines with a place inside a painting-frame. Paradoxically, all the lessons of Russian Formalism, without which we cannot begin making sense of fiction, belong here: under the heading of materialism (albeit a partial and inconsistent, not yet a dialectical one). Formalism is the A and B of any integrally materialist approach to art, from which we should then proceed to C, D, and so on.

Second axiom: we need a DIALECTICAL APPROACH. If social discourse is provisionally fixed in texts that interact with reading frames or ideologies, then all texts are incomplete products which freeze an ongoing intertextual process. Such textual and meta-textual dialogs form unceasing strategies of discourse between large human groups within a society. Therefore, *no text can be even correctly read* without filling in the concavities it designs by its own convexity, *without taking into account the significant presuppositions present within the textual positions*. In matters pertinent to the re-presentation of people in fiction, these presuppositions are attitudes toward people which are possible at the historical moment of the text's freezing. In the first axiom and corollary, materialism meant the central position of a material consisting of words and propositions combined in "transphrastic" (more than sentence-length) text-ensembles; in this second axiom dialectics means socially, ideologically precise historical differentiation.

Second corollary: the narrative agents of fiction (to be defined more closely in Part 3) will be re-creations not of actual or imaginary people but of given historically possible *attitudes toward* animate and active entities. Just as in painting such attitudes are subject to the possibilities of colour, line, and their disposition in two-dimensional space pretending to a third dimension, so in fiction the transposition of extra-literary attitudes will be shaped not only by given ideological interests but also by *longue durée* rules of language material, textual coherence, as well as fictional and general ideological conventions. *Longue durèe* does not mean ahistorical: it just complicates our materialist analysis with welcome historical dialectics of culture: in strange and imperfectly understood ways, Homer's sun still shines on us too. Paradoxically, images of people can be modified out of all empirical or naked-eye recognition -- e.g. into gods, talking animals, allegorical notions or disembodied narrative voices -- yet still remain fabular transpositions and re-creations of possible relationships between people. These image-clusters or agential constellations can be both decoded and transposed back into relationships between historical people (in significant cases, with an increment in understanding and a possibility of intervening into them).

1.4. In order to pass to my argument about a theory of narrative agents, I shall attempt to draw some conclusions from this first part. It seems to me that we are faced with two main alternatives for envisaging the presentation of people. *Individualist atomism* talks about the individual's mysterious essence, by definition not to be further analyzed; it is a competitive mystification. *Structuralist collectivism* talks about abolishing personality and substituting for it a camera eye; it is a static mystification. The first or subject-bound mystification implies the liberalism of "free enterprise" market, the second or object-bound mystification implies the technocracy of State-capitalist intervention and multinational corporations. Both finally see society as a stable vertical class-system, this layered stability being its fundamental condition and supreme value ("law and order"). If we,

instead, posit the historical and axiological priority of a dynamic and open horizontal system (which can then accommodate dynamic stability, and of which even temporary closures are special cases), a system in which meaning is not preexistent and located either in individual(ist) atoms or in the nodes of a structural(ist) grid but constituted in the interaction of the general and the singular -- then we can begin instituting a materialist and dialectical discourse about narrative agents.

It seems therefore necessary to proceed along two lines. First, to induce from historical evidence the possible forms of narrative agents, and therefore of agential analysis. This means we must reconsider at least two approaches that have pioneered a sophisticated analysis of fictional agents: a/ the Biblical and the Lukácsian notions of types; b/ the Greimasian notion of actants. I shall here be able only to briefly discuss Greimas's and Lukács's approaches. Second, to put these analytical tools into practice and see whether they illuminate it. In the following argument, drama will be used as an example of all narrative. However, in principle most descriptions and discussions in this essay (e.g. the summarizing table in 3.1) should be applicable to the theory of non-dramatic narrations too.

1.5. I shall conclude this first, introductory Part by an operative definition and a division of my further argument. Narrative agents can be in a first approximation defined as *all nouns or nominal syntagms that can be imagined as independent entities potentially able* (in contrast to the objects) *to carry out independent action in a narrative's imaginary universe or possible world.* However many central questions this still begs, its mixture of intuitive and verifiable elements seems sufficient for a first approach. The necessary linguistic and semiotic elements in this definition function within a "possible world" whose structures are largely borrowed from practical life. In other words, when not modified by new propositions, the presuppositions of dominant ideological ways of understanding everyday reality are retained in narratives. Narrative agents therefore both derive their traits from adjectivized cultural commonplaces and value judgments (such as brave, miserly, amorous) and structure the traits differently from empirical practice for the purposes of a better cognitive overview.

The study of narrative agents is seriously underdeveloped. It labors under two grave disadvantages. First, it is still largely naively impressionistic and positivistic. In the 1920s the very well informed Bakhtin noted bitterly that this field was in "a complete chaos":

> ...character, type, personnage, story hero, the famed classification of scenic emplois: the lover (lyrical, dramatical), the reasoner, the simpleton, etc. -- all such classifications and determinations of the geroi [Bakhtin's term for something like a narrative agent, DS] are given no common basis or common denominator, nor is there a unified principle extant for their reasoned ordering. Usually the classifications are uncritically contaminated to boot....

More than half a century later, Chatman's synthetical survey of Structuralist narrative analysis quotes with approval a lament about the scandalous blanks in even a theory of surface-level agents (the characters), a lament which maintains that the latest advance in this field were E.M. Forster's distinctions from 1928, notably between round and flat characters.[2/] Indeed, the illusionistic confusion of narrative agents and people from everyday life is still very much with us. Second, in the last 20 years there has appeared a symmetrical obverse of positivistic empiricism, the abstract apriorism of deducing agents from eternal psycho-biological structures sundered from social history. Given that among the

most interesting developments in cultural studies today is a sociohistorical semiotics, in Parts 2 and 3 I sketch a critique of both a-historical semiotics and a-semiotic history, and I offer my own proposals for a socio-formal theory of agential analysis centered on the key category of "type," as well as for some possibilities of its application to textual agents in general, including in Part 4 characters (principally in drama). This might lead, in Part 5, to some provisional answers to the question posed in my title.

2. For a Sociohistorical Semiotics of Narrative Agents: A Critique

> What does anyone tell me by saying "Now I see it as....."? What consequences has this information? What can I do with it?
>
> L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*

2.0. Barthes defined apophantic semiotics as a semiotics that denies the necessity and possibility of "attributing to the sign positive, fixed, a-historical, a-corporeal, in brief: scientific characteristics." Though the rest of this Part 2 may explain his scepticism toward certain kinds of "science," I would prefer to his sweeping farewell to scientificity and meta-language a more nuanced approach, which would still keep those terms *on condition* that they were subverted from within in order to approach the horizon he desires -- i.e. on condition that the apophantic science and meta-language acknowledge and respect their own sociohistorical constitution, in the double sense of sociohistorical coming into being and sociohistorical functioning. This condition could reconcile our technical needs, involving meta-levels and formalized analysis, and Barthes's salutary warning that "all relationships of exteriority between one language and another are, *à la longue*, untenable . . . ."[3/] Respecting the intimately sociohistorical character of all semiotics means acknowledging that in language any meaning of a term is a matter of historical semantics and pragmatics, and in non-verbal communication another variant of, as Eco puts it, a "cultural unit." In agential analysis this means returning to the Aristotelian-Proppian orientation and inducing from what Marc Angenot calls "such historical ideal-types as are the genres and the discursive traditions [...within] the general economy of social discourse." To indulge instead in supposedly pure deduction and a-historical universalism leads to a glossocracy that offers little result and that, moreover, is homologous to the technocracies of contemporary monopoly capitalism and monopoly pseudo-socialism. Adapting Lévi-Strauss, it can be said that simply to understand the meaning of a term, one must permutate it in the context of all the discourses pertinent to it.[4/] The sociohistorical discourses constitute at the very least one large pertinent group; freezing them out of the permutating process produces an impoverishment of great ideological significance but no scholarly justification.

As I noted in a study written in 1980 (to which I refer the reader for a fuller discussion of all matters in this Part 2), the analysis of narrative agents was relatively little developed by Structuralism and the *structuralisant* semiotics and narratology.[5/] Apart from the forgotten Bakhtin, systematic work in agential analysis began only in the wake of Lévi-Strauss, with the works of Greimas and the *Communications* authors. It is their problems which will be considered in this section. I shall limit myself to the dilemmas and aporias of their basic ideological premise, glossocratic universalism, only in the domain of *the number and nature of agential levels* in narratology (including dramaturgy). Since this was most authoritatively developed by A.-J. Greimas, I shall concentrate on that part of his work which

provided a generally recognized framework for most later Structuralist dealing with narrative agents. I shall first briefly argue for a different articulation of the deepest level of narrative functions (the actants), and then at more length for a different, "pragmatic" nature and hierarchy of the other levels.

2.1. Aristotle and Propp had, in their different ways, both distinguished two levels of agents (*ethos vs.* pratton, or dramatis persona vs. function respectively). The first of them is to be read off immediately from the surface elements of the text; the second is not, but is to be found by further analysis (it is usually called meta-textual). They also stressed that this second, more general and abstract level was the strategically more important one. Propp concentrated in his functions on actions, which only secondarily define 6 or 7 "spheres of action" by as many main agents: hero, villain, donor or provider, helper, sought-for person (and her father), dispatcher or mandator, false hero. Obviously, this is both too much and too little: false hero and villain are both antagonists, the term "hero" contaminates narrative function and ethical approval (e.g., Tartuffe is the narrative but not at all the axiological "hero" of Molière's play), the "sought-for" agent can instead of a princess be any value (e.g. the Grail), etc. Just as interestingly, though discussing the opposite pole of Individualist dramaturgy of the last four centuries in Paris, Souriau worked out "dramaturgic functions"[6/]. Somewhat confusingly he identified them with astrological signs, which he fortunately disambiguated by adding clear definitions and persuasive examples. His six functions were the Thematic Force, the Value or Wished-for Good, the Beneficiary (of that Good), the Adversary, the Arbiter (who attributes the Good), and the Helper who is always a "redoubling" of one of the first five functions. Both Propp and Souriau were also perfectly clear about the possibility of distributing participation in meta-textual agents among several textual ones as well as about the obverse possibility: thus, whether the magical object given to a hero be one horse or a ring out of which issue three youths, this will always represent the Helper's "sphere of action" (Propp 19-20, 79); the Adversary may be single or divided into eight as in Molière's *Les Fâcheux* (Souriau 95-100). Greimas's first attempt in *Sémantique structurale* did not go much beyond reactualizing (be it said in his praise) the multi-level agential analysis of Propp and Souriau into the two levels of *actants* and *acteurs*.

It should be clear that Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* is not a synthesis but a halfway house between his scrupulous and brilliant historical induction and a pioneering formalizing deduction. (Propp's later works then established a more convincing balance, unfortunately not explicitly applied to narrative agents.) The attendant weaknesses were noted by Lévi-Strauss and Greimas, who rightly attempted a more consistent formalization. But in the process Greimas, at least, lost sight of Propp's strengths based in historical feedback, and misused him by transferring the debate onto the domain of universalist syntax, a dubious advantage. He proposed a basic scheme of agential functions applicable to all narratives and divided into Subject, Object, Addressor, Addressee, Helper, and Opponent (*sujet, objet, destinateur, destinataire, adjuvant, opposant*). Greimas's pseudo-syntactic terminology and organization of this deepest level of agential functions "offers little evidence how this model [of actants] would work in practice..." (Culler 234). The most useful course is, then, a return to a non-individualist widening and grounding of Souriau's narrative functions. I propose to translate his articulation into the more historical and theatre-based vocabulary of the independent functions of Protagonist, Antagonist, Value, Mandator, Beneficiary, and the dependent function of Satellite.[6/]

Greimas's breakthrough came in his essay "La structure des actants du récit."[7/] The *existence* and *narratological status* of the two levels which he called *actant* and *acteur* are from that time on generally accepted in agential theory (so that this essay will take them for granted, while not treating exhaustively

their outstanding problems, from ontological basis to predicative articulation). In between them, he tentatively and without systematic explanation added a third level, called rôles and defined as "elementary actantial units which correspond to coherent functional fields" ("units actantielles élémentaires correspondant aux champs fonctionnels cohrents") -- e.g., *Père* or *Prétre*.[8/] Greimas's final refinement on the agential theory came in the essay "Les actants, les acteurs et les figures" in Sémiotique narrative et textuelle, where he worked out eight *rôles actantiels*. I have analyzed in great detail (Suvin, "Per una teoria" 91-92) the resulting unclear oscillation between binary and ternary typologies, culminating in the Greimas-Courts attempt to systematize such contradictions.[9/] Greimas's first approach had in 1966 been accompanied by engaging modesty-bearing disclaimers such as "Cette interprétation vaut ce qu'elle vaut" ("This interpretation is given for what it's worth"). He there also acknowledged that his actants were "extrapolated from French syntax," which 50 pages later became "extrapolated from the syntactic structure" ("extrapolées en partant de la syntaxe française" -- "l'extrapolation de la structure syntaxique," *Sémantique structurale* 134 and 185). In the essay from *Sémantique narrative et textuelle* this had already advanced to "a structure...that appears more and more able to account for the organization of the human imagination..." ("La structure actantielle apparat de plus en plus comme tant susceptible de rendre compte de l'organisation de l'imaginaire humain...")! His latter end -- and that of many followers -- forgets the beginning.

What is the basis of such hesitations and contradictions? It would be ungracious to seek it in personal incompetence: Lévi-Strauss too hesitates between affirming with equal imperturbability two opposite and contradictory positions. On the one hand, he says, there exist some "universal laws which make up the unconscious activity of the mind." On the other hand, "the physical universe [is a] projection of the social universe": as far as the linguistic model in general is concerned, the error of formalism lies in forgetting "that there is no language whose vocabulary can be deduced from the syntax." Perhaps his corollary that "to tackle first the grammar and to leave the vocabulary for later means to condemn oneself never to create anything but an anemic grammar and a vocabulary that used anecdotes in place of definitions" should be subject to some clarification of the level of analysis envisaged; nonetheless, I would agree with the particular application Lévi-Strauss then proceeds to make, i.e. that this interlocking is indissoluble in narrative entities such as myths and tales, where grammar and vocabulary do not even operate on distinct levels (as he acknowledges they do in language) but "adhere to each other on their whole surface and completely overlap," so that in narrative texts everything is simultaneously both syntax and vocabulary.[10/] It is at any rate obvious that overarching ideological causes must be sought for such fundamental epistemological oscillations in such leading theoreticians.

2.2. To get at such causes, a meta-theoretical detour is unavoidable. For, it is only the ideologies of technocracy which believe that they can formalize their own truth, that they can lift themselves up by their own bootstraps without paying the price of a dependence on a hierarchically superior system or context (an epistemological version of their belief in quick economico-political fixes which take into account neither transcendental values nor the deeper demands of practice).[11/] This is the meaning of Greimas's agnostic stance claiming that whether we think the semantic organization of meaning(s) is inscribed into social reality, or whether we postulate such an organization for heuristic purposes, the practical consequences will be the same ("...soit qu'il existe une structure sémantique organisant l'univers du sens, soit qu'une telle structure est postulée en vue de l'investigation de l'univers sémantique .... [l]es conséquences pratiques seront les mêmes..."). This allows him to conclude that in any case the

investigator will find given "universes" for investigation; even in that essay, dealing with the relation of semiotics and natural sciences, Greimas systematically avoids committing himself as to whether such a "universe of meaning" is one of discourse only or of other practices too -- e. g., it is unclear whether "semantic" in this passage, as in his whole essay, refers to natural or formal languages. It is at this price that his investigation proceeds to construct formal models supposedly in conformity with such an unexplained "preexisting structure" (*Du Sens* 39). This is not a stance that necessarily arises from semiotics: Peirce, who thought that both our interests and our experience of objects were extra-semiotic, would have denied it.

Since all happens within language anyway, Greimas is implying, the "world of meaning" is going to be linguistic -- here "semantic" -- in any case. Yet this is a technocratic blanking out of some fundamentals of his model-discipline. For nowhere is the existence of hierarchical levels of analysis clearer than in linguistics, where the formal or syntactic meaning of any element (e.g. a phoneme) is its function as an integral meaning of a superior level (e.g. of a morpheme). By that token, then, the question immediately arises: what is the hierarchically superior level to the uppermost linguistic level, that of the sentence? When they do not refuse to answer, most linguists concede this is the (or a) pragmatic level of extra-linguistic reality.[12/] Only the semantico-pragmatic meaning is usable and to be used in the sense current outside specialized linguistic usage. Greimas's famous title Du Sens (On Meaning) plays with this ambiguity. So far as I can see, he never explicitly argues that syntactic meaning is to be substituted for semantic meaning beyond the sentence -- i.e. in narratives. However, his whole proceeding presupposes this hidden theoretical claim, which necessarily turns out to be untenable in practice.

It may be becoming apparent, then, that the root of the Greimasian contradictions is to be found in the orthodox Structuralist glossocracy, best expressed by his reliance on the very peculiar Hjelmslevian linguistics as his epistemology. Greimas takes Hjelmslev as his authority for founding the actantial model in *the* syntactic structure of natural languages, equated with the organization of human imagination.[13/] This is a cognitively improper, in the above bad sense ideological sleight-of-hand. For, a formal system is defined by its signs not having any independent meaning outside the system, so that, in order to speak about anything, it must be in a second moment interpreted in the sense of finding a meaning for its signs. If the system then claims to be "wholly independent of any prior theory, it is in fact constructed *ad hoc*. Thus, if the logician subsequently pretends to search for its interpretation, he is as one who is asked a riddle for which he already knows the answer, and who delights in feigning ignorance!"[14/] Greimas's typical proceeding is a Structuralist *bricolage* in fundamentals, followed by a relentless scientistic and combinatory logic in consequences: a proceeding vaunted by his followers as elasticity and broadmindedness. The other way round, firm foundations and elastic applications, would have been much more sympathetic. Yet whenever he is analyzing actual narrative texts, Greimas finds -- to my mind not too surprisingly -- that deductive and universalist syntax is an insufficient fundament, and he hastens to supplement it with semantics: a crack through which the social history of people's relationships with each other and with the world of things, kicked out of the main door, partially and inconsistently oozes back by a cellar window. In his first book, he started out by hesitating between what he then called the syntactic actants proper and the semantic actants, even connecting the actants with Freudian investment of desire. In *Du Sens*, as mentioned, Greimas's analyses of a group of Lithuanian folktales required a Proppian recourse to the specific social semantics and indeed pragmatics of authority; and in his final development of actants, while allotting them an entirely syntactic nature, he stressed the semantic (or at least mixed) nature of the *acteurs* and the *rôles thématiques*.[15/]

Thus, the ideological horizon of glossocracy contradicts actual scholarly necessity. I believe this obscurely felt contradiction is the key to Greimas's shifting, overlapping, uneconomic, and often confusing categories, which becloud his undoubted flair for spotting strategic Gordian knots and his pioneering boldness (only in view of which are further attempts -- such as this critique -- becoming possible). It seems therefore imperative to say today that if we are to have a viable agential theory, the hesitation between universalist syntax and shamefaced semantics-cum-pragmatics is to be resolved in favor of sociohistorical contextuality and intertextuality in (say) Bakhtin's and Mukařovský's, and sometimes Lévi-Strauss's and Barthes's, "marxist" sense of a dialogic tension between the worldviews of specific societal groups. It is high time to recognize Hjelmslev's rigidly deductive approach as simply a misleading analogy, and to depose it from the narratological hegemony which it has illicitly enjoyed. 16 While the conceptual rigor of linguistics is an admirable example, when sundered from social verisimilitude and historical semantics it easily leads to "a rigorous irrelevance" (Culler 257).

2.3. One witty way of clinching the necessity of an integration of formalized linguistics or semiotics with investigation into socialized actions might be to note that the integration has become increasingly recognized as unavoidable in linguistics itself. It has taken the name of ***pragmatics***, defined already by Charles Morris as the domain of relationships between the signs and their interpreters, which clarifies the conditions under which something is taken as a sign. From Peirce, G.H. Mead, and Karl Bűhler, through Bakhtin/Voloshinov, Morris, Carnap, and the Warsaw School, to (say) R.M. Martin, Léo Apostel, and John R. Searle, pragmatics has slowly been growing into an independent discipline on a par with syntactics (the domain of relationships between the signs and their formally possible combinations) and with semantics (in this sense, the domain of relations between the signs and the entities they designate). But what is more, there are since the late 1950s strong arguments that it is a constitutive and indeed englobing complement of both semantics and syntactics. The basic -- and to any materialist unexceptionable -- argument for it has been suggested in 2.2: an object or event (word, text, shape, color, change, etc.) becomes a sign only in a ***signifying situation***; it has no "natural" meaning outside of it. This situation is constituted by the relation between signs and their users; a user can take something to be a sign only as it is spatio-temporally concrete and localized, and as it relates to the user's disposition toward potential action; both the concrete localization and the user's disposition are always socio-historical. Furthermore, they postulate a reality organized not only around signs but also around subjects, in the double sense of psychophysical personality and of a socialized, collectively representative subject. The entry of potentially acting subjects reintroduces acceptance and choice, temporal genesis and mutation, and a possibility of dialectical negation into the frozen constraints of syntax (in fact, by the most orthodox Structuralist standards, only such dynamics can make the temporary stability of any structure meaningful). It also re-grounds semantics: even in language, "one cannot tell the meaning of most words without observing how the word is used, and what effects it seems to have on our behavior." All words have a pragmatic value based on an implicit classification "that follows the kind of interest which they evoke [in the subject], the advantages or inconveniences, pleasures or sufferings, which they suggest."[17/] Thus, each and every semantic presupposition is also a pragmatic one (though the contrary does not obtain).

The signifying situation as the basic cell of pragmatics is clearly the theoretical locus of the hierarchically superior system that must finally allot significations and validate all other investigations into signs (including natural languages). Or, at the very least, pragmatics is the mediation between semiotics and an even more general theory of action or practice. Only pragmatics can take into account

the situation of the text producers and its social addressees[18/] and the whole spread of their relationships within given cognitive (epistemological and ideological) presuppositions, conventions, economical and institutional frames, etc. And only a semantico-pragmatic decision about pertinent presuppositions and levels of reading can make sense of an at all complex text (from, say, a proverb or parable), whose presuppositions, levels, and connotations would otherwise be practically infinite. Realizing much of this, the early Lévi-Strauss (Structuralism with a somewhat uneasy conscience) claimed his method could exhaust all the pertinent presuppositions because his texts -- the myths -- came from a supposedly less complex, "cold" (tribal) society, in which the presuppositions were presumed to be frozen and finite (which I doubt too). These pragmatic presuppositions about the signs' possible uses by their users, then, necessarily inscribe historical reality, as understood by the users, between the lines of any text (in the widest sense). Semiotics is either informed by an open historicity or it is, on its own methodical terms, truncated.

Equally, the sciences are, no doubt, texts (though not purely verbal ones), but the book of science is also -- for all its partial autonomy -- an interpretation of the book of nature, which is the presupposition of all scientific propositions. Furthermore, what exactly are the pertinent categories which constitute any object of investigation (in the widest sense, including a whole discipline) in the first place? This delimitation, which constitutes not only the cognizable domain but also the possible ways of envisaging and cognizing it, cannot be established from the object alone but only from its interaction with the social subject whose pragmatic point of view or approach is defining the pertinence, and by that token constructing the object's cognitive identity.[19/] To return to the terms of logics, linguistics cannot be its own epistemology, because no natural language can be wholly formalized without incurring semantic contradictions -- as we have seen that on a theoretical level Greimas inevitably does, when he is not being fuzzy. Therefore, linguistics cannot and does not provide the criteria valid for every type of cognition but on the contrary needs itself to be justified by an epistemology external to it.

Thus, for any pursuit of systematic knowledge, as semiotics, the formal logic of syntax is clearly indispensable. But it is not sufficient: if the analysis of a text must be begun, it cannot be concluded by an understanding of its syntax. This does not mean that for given, clearly delimited exercises syntactic rules could not be treated as an autonomous object of cognition. But it means that "[a] well definable (autonomous) syntax is only the syntax of syntactic categories as a purely formal syntax."[20/] A syntactically valid analytical system cannot be used to prove anything about an empirical object unless and until the system is related to a semantic interpretation and a pragmatic situation. As was demonstrated in the case of Greimas's actants used to explain narration.

2.4. In conclusion: if (and insofar as) Greimas's system of actants is taken as a claim for full interpretative validity with a solid epistemological basis, one would have to apply to it Piaget's evaluation of the philosophical school which (through Hjelmslev) underpins it, Logical Positivism: "...Logical Positivism has committed the imprudence of transforming method into doctrine, in other words of wanting to codify formalizing analysis and of making it co-responsible for a dogmatism ...." (Piaget ed. 84) I would not go quite so far as to call Greimas's method -- with a number of critics, e.g. Timpanaro -- objective idealism. Since it does not quite claim that the categories of the given sign-system determine *what* there is but "only" *how* anything is, I would rather call it a medium-rare semiotic idealism, a cross between agnosticism and thoroughgoing idealism.[21/] At any rate, it cannot account for changes in our cognition of the world (never mind changes in an external world). Greimas's is simply

one of the most developed attempts (and the dominant one in agential analysis) to investigate the meanings of a text by means of a text "linguistics," "grammar" or "syntax" -- all of which are in fact shamefacedly founded on the quite exceptional digital model of phonetics. This seems to me in all cases a dangerously ambiguous metaphor, and in the worst case a positive guarantee of wrong theorizing. The only safe course is to avoid the thing and the name too.[22/]

Nonetheless, I have suggested the presence of some undoubtedly stimulating aspects in Greimas -- mainly those taking off from Propp. Greimas addressed the crucial dilemma in studying narratives: into which system must a text be integrated in order to become meaningful, i.e. such that an interpreter may explain it? Positivism had answered this by putting its object simply into a quantitatively larger set of texts (an author's opus, a genre tradition, etc.). Structuralism was right to react against this in the direction of qualitatively different levels of analysis. But Structuralism was wrong in radically sundering deductive and formal cognition (a self-sufficient, closed system of signs) from experiential cognition based on reference to the extra-signic reality of social bodies.[23/] In cultural studies, Structuralism's answer (to apply to the investigated text a "grammar of narration") explains texts in function of a universal structure of the human (or, in Greimas, Indo-European!) mind, as evidenced in language. In a nicely sterile Hegelian antithesis, both Positivism and Structuralism bypass the actual historical situations in culture, its ***pragmatic hierarchy***. Cultural texts may be analyzed into cognitive levels only by seeing how those levels are intimately molded by precise societal values and tensions.

Greimas's multi-level scheme of agents should therefore be, first, separated out of his inacceptable system and then reworked in a way that incorporates the semantic and pragmatic dimension, i.e. societal history and mutability. It should then become possible to use this reworked form within the epistemic axioms of my Part 1, within a need for observing material practice as well as the dialectical interrelations which obtain between the synchronic and the diachronic, structure and history, subject and object. True, no historical situation is fully formalizable, but it can (and I believe must) be investigated through a series of formalizations open to practice and focussing on strategic stages frozen for synchronic investigation. Next I will present a sketch of such a socio-historical semiotics of narrative agents: a study of signs, necessarily, but signs given meaning by choices within societal histories. No doubt, the socio-historical concreteness of my proposed new system will have to be inversely proportional to the area it is designed to cover. But it will use semiotics in the proper epistemological hierarchy dominated by relationships of people in signifying situations and not by glossocracy:

> It is essential that one does not confuse the ***systematic*** order in semiotics: syntactics -- semantics -- pragmatics, with the ***epistemological*** order of the dimensions of semiosis: pragmatic -- semantic -- syntactic dimension. The pragmatic dimension of semiosis is epistemologically of primary importance .... [T]he pragmatic aspects always appear at the beginning and at the end of the study of semiosis.[24/]

3. For a Sociohistorical Semiotics of Narrative Agents: A Proposal (With Types as the Key Level)

After all, Kafka is a realist!

(reputed exclamation by Lukács when he saw the Romanian castle where he was being interned in 1956)

3.1. I cannot provide here a lengthy inventory of extant narratological contributions to a clear definition and delimitation of the third, intermediate level of agential analysis. Beside Aristotle, Propp, Souriau, Bakhtin, and Lévi-Strauss, one should re-evaluate the use of agents in the Marxian tradition, from *The Eighteenth Brumaire* to Brecht and Benjamin.[25/] One should also sift and integrate the contributions of Structuralists (Barthes, Todorov, Greimas, Rastier, Hamon, Chatman, etc.) and of some other precursors. The Structuralists are perhaps best represented by Alexandrescu's book on Faulkner, situating between *personnages* and *actants* a level of *rôles*: in Faulkner's opus (itself a concrete refashioning of a historical and history-oriented genre), Alexandrescu found the *rôles* of Indian, Black, mulatto, farmer, aristocrat, Yankee, businessman, and intellectual (and I think other "roles" could be found too). However, since my present concern is to help build a theory of narrative agents, I cannot here give a detailed overview of work in this field. I shall content myself with acknowledging that I used hints from the older authors mentioned in Part 2 as well as from those in the preceding two paragraphs, also from Simmel, the Russian Formalists (Eikhenbaum, Balukhatii, etc.), Ubersfeld, and Doutrepont in order to propose the following table.[26/] I shall close this part with brief comments on it.

TABLE 1.

AGENTIAL LEVEL	PREDICATIVE ARTICULATION	NARRATOLOGICAL LOCUS	VERBAL STATUS, DEEP STRUCTURE	VISUALIZING STATUS	DEFINITION	HISTORICAL DURATION
3. CHARACTER *personnage* or *personnage-per-sonne*; "round"; presence not obligatory	A great (though not unlimited) number of predicates/traits, at least two of them conflict	Always textual and a dramatis persona (when it exists)	*Proper name;* d.str. = illusion of large number of not fully fixed attributes, only imperfectly retrievable from text + all contexts	Necessarily figurative (depictable); necessarily individual	Individuality as presupposed by bourgeois practice (e,g., economics) and ideology (e.g., psychology)	Almost point-like, changeable for each different ensemble of spectators
2.TYPE *type* or *perso n-:nage-type;* "flat", e.g.. Vice, Pantalone, Miser, Father. Soubrette; presence obligatory	A small number -- usually 2-6 -- of compatible predicates/traits	Metatextual or textual, according to whether level 3 exists or not	*Common or generic noun,,* incl. proper name raised to that status: d.str. = noun + one or a few attributes, or nominal syntagm	Necessarily figurative; not necessarily individual	Societal type, by age + sex + profession, and/or social group, and/or tempera ment...	*Courte durée:* generations or centuries

1. ACTANT Protagonist, Antagonist, Value, Mandator, Beneficiary, and Satellite; presence obligatory	One predicate as common denominator of a bundle of semic predicates	Always metatextual; no discrete appearance as dramatis persona	*Common noun;* deep str. = surface (= "force which does what is indicated by the noun")	Not necessarily figurative; necessarily not individuaI	Function in dramaturgic action	*Longue durée:* epochs or mil1ennia

I should stress first that the agential levels are cumulative and not exclusive. The two basic ones -- actants and types -- are to be found in every fictional text, while the uppermost one -- characters -- may or may not be present in any given text (this depends on its historical epoch and literary genre). Where characters are present, "each is a type but also at the same time a definite individual, a 'this one', as old man Hegel expresses it...."[27/] This points to the key function of the second or intermediate level of types, on which I shall focus here.

I have suggested in Part 2 that different scholars have used various, sometimes confusing terms for it: figure, role, and *emploi* in Vol'kenshtein; *rôle* or *rôle pur* in Souriau; "basic characters" in Eco's discussion of James Bond (85); *rôle* and *rôle actantiel* in Greimas (if I have understood him and when he uses them); *rôle* in Alexandrescu and (much less usefully) in Bremond; *rôle formel* in Rastier; *emploi* in Hamon (106); *rôle* and *personnage-type* in Ubersfeld (113-14, 131, and 150). Perhaps the actual term used is not of ***primary*** importance if the level is clearly delimited and articulated, but it is of *some* importance: language speaks us as much as we speak it. Thus I would not favor "role" in French or English because it invites confusion both with an actor's role in the theatre and with the sociological theory of role-playing.[28/] "Type," however, is both suitably Anglo-French and able to draw sustenance from a confrontation with its wide use in literary criticism and in the theatre tradition which can (in English more than in French) draw on such associations as "type of role," "typecast," "stock types," etc.

3.2. It seems necessary to confront here Lukács's pioneering use, symmetrically inverse to the Formalists and Structuralists, of terms such as "typical character." I have sufficient space here only for a first sketch of the splendors and miseries in his approach to narrative agents. I shall use for that purpose mainly his early *Theory of the Novel*, the essay on "intellectual physiognomy," and as his crowning achievement, *The Historical Novel* and the essays on Balzac.[29/]

The *Theory of the Novel* may not be thought fair game, since Lukács himself declares in his 1962 Preface that its writer's world-view "tended toward a fusion of 'left-wing' ethics and 'right-wing' gnoseology (ontology etc.)" (16). I would add to this a right-wing or bourgeois aesthetics fixated on 18-19th-Century "Realism" from Cervantes to Thomas Mann, and evident in his lifelong sincere hatred of Dada, photomontage, Brechtian dramaturgy, etc. A deep interest in Baroque drama or novel, as in Benjamin and Bakhtin, is beyond Lukács's ken -- not to mention Annglophone times, places, and less canonic genres (as Shelley's poem of allegorical satire used against him by Brecht). Thus, for all ideological changes, I think his basic stance is in some ways not altered from this phase until the end of his opus.

The "left" ethics are here, as always in Lukács, unexceptionable. They identify, first, the novel's form as "the mirror image of a world out of joint" (12), as the form that expresses a "lost utopian home" (92), a "transcendental homelessness" which comports "the homelessness of the soul in the mandatory order of the supra-personal value-system" (59):

> Thus, this first great novel of world literature [i.e. *Don Quijote*] stands at the beginning of the age where the God of Christianity is beginning to leave the world; where Man is becoming lonely and may find meaning and substance only in his soul which is nowhere at home; where the world has been cast loose from its paradoxical moorings in a present Other World and given over to its immanent meaninglessness; where the might of the existing...grows to unheard-of proportions . . . . (103)

As opposed to the Greeks, and to the Middle Ages, empirical life under the bourgeoisie has split off from the absolute necessity (*Sollen*) or Essence (*Wesen*) which united all figures of Hellenic tragedy or epic. The modern novel must painfully "dig up and build up the hidden totality of life." Therefore, "[the protagonists of the novel] are seekers.... [to whom] neither goals nor ways can be immediately supplied..." (57-58); "the hero of the novel grows out of this alienness to the outer world" (64). An allegorical struggle results, a psychomachia in which a "problematic individual" is opposed to but also conditional upon a "contingent world" (76). So far, so good -- except for the idealization of pre-bourgeois times, a reasonable though insufficient polemic strategy. 30 Indeed, the realization that in all significant senses there were no individuals in classical epic and tragedy -- that isolated individualities only come about when the context for the *dramatis personae* is reduced to "a hierarchical competition" (39) -- is a major breakthrough. It was in fact first, and better, explained in his 1908 long essay "On the Sociology of Modern Drama" (not yet fully available in English), and later best summarized by Arnold Hauser's still indispensable *Social History of Art [and Literature*]. It remains, in my opinion, the basis for historical typologies of the last 700 years of European (and later global) culture.

However, when Lukács comes to speak not of overall historical typology (his forte) but of what I here call narrative agents -- i.e. of the actual texture of any novel -- the hydra heads of the "right-wing" ontology and aesthetics rear up again. The novel form is correlative to "the epoch of perfect sinfulness" (157 -- which is why Dostoevsky, who no more presupposes such an epoch, is not a novel writer!). If so, then Man's "soul" -- Lukács's main agential term -- does not fit into its epoch any more: "the soul is either narrower or wider than the external world, which is given unto it as the stage and substratum of its deeds" (96 -- one sees why Thomas Mann portrayed Lukács as the Jesuit Naphta in *The Magic Mountain*). From Cervantes to Dickens and Balzac, one main current of the novel presupposes the "narrowing down of the soul" (111). Another current in the 19th Century evidences a soul wider than the fate empirical life offers it, so that the novel grows lyrical and actionless (Flaubert, Goncharov). It is not only that the philosophy of history has almost completely smothered feedback from particular novel analyses. Regardless of quite thinkable particular objections, Lukács's terms would not *allow* anybody who might wish to apply or supplement his historiosophy, to distinguish between people in everyday life and novel protagonists or other narrative agents. The abundant use of the term "form" remains quite metaphysical, situated within a kind of scholastic vitalism. Lukács is in fact here entirely innocent of the signic nature of narratives. Just like his great model, Hegel in *Aesthetics* (and like the Neo-Kantians), he still uses the crude Idealist ontology of form vs. content. Finally, his Feuerbachian, lay religiosity shows through this unmitigated discourse in capitals, about the Man and the World, poles apart from any societal or materialist (i.e., class-oriented) historicity. "Man" is here a "left-ethical" version of Hegel's Absolute Spirit, fallen from classical Eden into the bad times of bourgeois competition. If one compares

this to the praise of the bourgeoisie's achievement in The Communist Manifesto, the incompatibility between early Lukács and Marxism becomes palpable.

What the *Theory of the Novel* calls soul becomes in the 1930s' essay "The Intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization." Lukács's militant development toward Marxism and involvement in Hungarian, German, and then in Soviet ideological debates have, no doubt, given him some further tools and cleaned out the overtly religious terminology. Yet from Hegel to Goncharov, the continuities of his orientation are striking. The vitalist confusion of life and art, allied with some Soviet cultural factions' slogan of "the living man" to be represented in literature, lead him to posit that "the intellectual physiognomy...is the chief factor in creating living personality" (150). Having come out of the Exile from Eden, we are now back at a Genesis whose Adam is created by a reader of Hegel. The major advance is, however, represented by the insistence that the creative approach hinges on the writer's relating the individual to the universal. Lukács was certainly one of the philosophically best trained major critics of our century. Nonetheless, he retains the "right-wing epistemology" -- the short-circuiting of empirical and aesthetic phenomena, of people and their fictionally displaced and condensed simulacra. The fusion of individual and typical is explained in the old confusion of domains as: "Universal, typical phenomena should emerge out of the particular actions and passions of specific individuals." Furthermore (here the Soviet scientistic context may be strong), "typical" is defined as what relates to "the objective general problems of the age" (both 154). "Typical characters" such as Don Quixote arise out of the writer's having correctly defined "the basic issues and movements of his time" (158) -- at best, an a-historical extrapolation from the necessities of the Russian experiment in the 1930s. It is also necessary to put the characters into extremely intensified, i.e. again typical, *situations* -- though I am not sure whether this is a second requirement or the reformulation of the first one in line with Engels's famous letter on "typical characters in typical circumstances" from which the term seems to stem.[31/] Goncharov's protagonist Oblomov is, thus, not an "'average' man" but an intensified "social type," and it is very suggestively noted that this is obtained "through the intensification of a particular character trait," i.e. of sloth (165 -- how one wishes Lukács had met Propp!). In fact both the average philistine and the abstractly extreme superman are types divorced from significant social conflicts (168-69). But such hints are not followed up. It is never explained, first, whether typical is to character as universal to particular, or whether the typicality is the result of a successful fusion between universal and particular; second, what are the criteria for the successful fusion of typical and characteristic, i.e. for defining the basic issues and movements of one's time, beyond the messianic assumption from History and Class Consciousness (and more importantly from Stalin's era) that the workers' party necessarily knows this. It may not have been Lukcs's fault that formal systematizations were taboo at that time, but neither is it ours today that we cannot do without them.

The Historical Novel may well turn out to be Lukács's masterpiece in cultural analysis, like *History and Class Consciousness* in political philosophy. Both works contain bad mistakes -- the latter, the theory of the party, and the former, the Hegelian definition of drama. Nonetheless, having worked in its domain and used the book for a quarter century, I find it still fundamental: e.g., though Scott critics have added other aspects, nobody has bettered Lukács's chapter and his theory of Scott's "average protagonist" as nationally typical character. Lukács here manages to cap his tortured development from Hegel and Dilthey to Engels and Lenin with a populist class analysis in the creative spirit of the antifascist Popular Fronts. Thus, he can relate the protagonist (e.g. Frank Osbaldistone in *Rob Roy*) to the general outline of the plot, including the fictionally peripheral "extreme" agent or great historical personality (Rob Roy himself). Laws of literary constellation, having to do with historical forces but operating by specific fictional transposition and condensation (what Freud called *Verdichtung und*

Verschiebung), thus come to the fore in some chapters and are energetically developed, if never systematized across the book as a whole. True, Lukács was more comfortable with condensation or intensification -- "that is, the singling out of the significant factors from the entire complex of reality, their concentration, and the creation out of their connexions of an image of life upon a heightened level" (147) -- than with anamorphic transpositions, where "factors from reality" might be so coded that one would have to take into account the signic reality of the coding too. He can therefore still say: "The great historical figure, as a minor character, is able to live himself out to the full as a human being..." (47) -- the fuzziness of the agential terms (figure, character, and human being) making this sentence almost unreadable today. But elsewhere he talks of "the relation of the agent's individuality to the universality of the problem" (125), or of the lower-class protagonists in plays from Calderon to Hebbel as "hav[ing] within themselves that combination of individual passion and social substance which characterizes the 'world-historical individuals'" (120). His best pages in *Balzac and French Realism* and some other postwar writings then carry on in more detail and on a better known corpus insights arrived at with these tools: the discussion of the two protagonists in *Lost Illusions* repeats the pattern of inversion arrived at for Scott (Frank vs. Rob Roy). In some formulations, e.g. in the "Preface," he even begins to dissociate type from character and to explain their -- necessarily societal -- interaction. Only the lack of necessary formalization in the direction of multi-level analysis separates these results from my table in 3.1.

I should hope therefore that a properly developed theory of types would accept Lukács's "Left" ethical passion, philosophical depth, and historical richness, while rejecting his frequent "Right" ontology, epistemology, and aesthetics resulting in instrumental oversimplification -- symmetrical to the Structuralists' overcomplication. For Marxian literary and cultural critics Lukács is a Great Ancestor. But piety apart, we must sorrowfully note that, though parts of his work remain classical, much of it -- in particular the theoretical skeleton -- needs large-scale refunctioning.

3.3. Type itself is, then, perhaps best defined as in Whewell: "A type is *an example of any class*, for instance, a species of a genus, *which is considered as eminently possessing the characters of the class*." 32 This means that such a typicality gains its authority from the specific sociohistorical intertext with its ideological premises. It can and must be based on any categorization that has been taken in cultural history (rightly or wrongly from a present-day point of view) to classify people or agents. It will, then, include as important historical cases biblical and other theological typologies as well as Lukács's politico-economic one, but it will certainly embrace a larger domain. Thus, types can be and have been classified by sex-cum-age, nationality, profession, social estate or class, physiology and moral philosophy (Aristotle's ethos, the Galenic "temperaments" or "humours"), often by what we would feel are combinations of these categories (Diderot's *conditions*, e.g. Father or Judge, seem to contaminate profession, class, and social role), etc.

In that light, the very useful term "emploi" or (more clumsily) "stock character," "stock figure" or "line (of business)" -- e.g. *ingénue, jeune premier, pére noble, raisonneu*r, villain, heavy, walking gentleman -- is a particular though historically crucial case of my "type": a type with supplementary theatrico-historical codification, and one that has largely survived the rise of my level 3 -- the character -- though at the price of retreat from textual surface.

To give just two series of examples:

1/ a hypothetical Morality (or *Roman de la Rose) dramatis persona* called True Love has two traits: lovingness and its qualitative place in the courtesy system; Shakespeare's Rosalind in *As You Like It* is not at all exhausted by half a dozen ideologically compatible predicates or traits such as young, female, well-born -- she is also capricious or coquettish, cruel, etc.; as different from both of these extremes, the type and *maschera* of "amorosa" can be exhausted by half a dozen traits, e.g. "young, female, beautiful, not too shrewd, amorous." This is not only a property of the *Commedia dell'arte*: the soubrette is exhausted by something like "female, young, vivacious, lower-class," whereas the *ingénue* is "girl (i.e. female plus still younger), pure, middle-to-upper class." Of course, all traits such as well-born, pure, vivacious, and similar, are culturally, i.e. socio-ideologically coded, much as the Noh mask of "the somewhat sad young woman" or "the red-faced saké drunkard."

Or, 2/ the agential semantic field of "warrior/warring" may be articulated as an ideal (but also largely historical) sequence traversing the scale of predicative complexity indicated by column 2 in my Table. At its lower end would be found a mythological personification of War or Ares in Antiquity, or an analogous agent in theatre outside Europe (e.g., the Peking Opera), or an allegorical personification such as the medieval Ira (Wrath). All such agents are predicatively poor (though not at all necessarily ineffective) types, since they have, I think, two traits only: the warlike characteristic (wrathfulness, aggressiveness) and the relational position or *Stellenwert* in the system of polytheism, cardinal sins, or something similar. The Commedia dell'arte *maschera* of "Capitano" has already about half a dozen traits: say, officer, middle-aged, braggart. coward, indigent, and Spanish (though the ethnic trait varies according to local history and prejudice). It seems to me constitutive of any type that it possess a relatively small number of traits (I have not found more than half a dozen in any so far examined, but this field remains to be further investigated), which are all *culturally congruent or compatible*. This compatibility should be explainable in every particular case as the result of a feedback interaction between the social definition of reality from which the traits are taken and the criteria of verisimilitude shared by the audience for which the dramaturgic narration is intended.

A whole historical typology of narrative agents and their various levels could be done on the basis of the hypothesis tabulated above. If fruitful, it could serve as a beacon for research into narratological agents in general, from mythological tales through the Individualist novel to the present.

3.4. Some other lines of reasoning also speak in favor of finding types in all fictional narrative -- on the textual surface or underneath the characters of Individualism. Northrop Frye puts this succinctly and stimulatingly:

> All lifelike characters, whether in drama or fiction, owe their consistency to the appropriateness of the stock type which belongs to their dramatic function. That stock type is not the character but it is as necessary to the character as a skeleton is to the actor who plays it. (Frye 172)

Other post-Individualistic critics of diverse persuasions have noted that in any given culture there exist mental stereotypes, what Kant called "schematisms," for given concepts-cum-images represented in art (and, generally, used in social practice). In Auden's poem "The Truest Poetry Is the Most Feigning," the

problem of the poet-lover oscillating between empirical reality and fiction meant for a reading frame is, I think, addressed very realistically (italics mine):

> The living girl's your business (some odd sorts
>
> Have been an inspiration to men's thoughts):
>
> - - - - - - - - -
>
> We cannot love your love till she take on,
>
> Through you, the wonders of a paragon . . . .

These mental schemes are most palpably demonstrable in painting, and they have been persuasively demonstrated by Ernst Gombrich. All painting, he argues, comports the interaction of such schematisms in the painter's mind with the possible innovations (which go from zero in, say, ancient Egypt to the continuous care about strengthening the impression of mimetism in 19th century). All thinking passes necessarily through "sorting, classifying. All perceiving relates to expectations and therefore to comparisons."[33/] A useful philosophical collocation for such classifications is to say, in the medieval tradition, that they partake of *universalia* such as the Young Man, the Temptress, etc. In more modern language, we could say that these are agential perceptions and social constructions of reality; a portrait is the "construction of a relational model [...which] can be constructed to any required degree of accuracy...[in accordance with] its purpose and the requirements of society in which the given visual language gains currency."[34/]

In this view, no painterly motif can be truly seen -- i.e. not only optically registered on the retina but also made into a culturally comprehensible unit -- "unless one has learned how to classify and catch it within the network of a schematic form."[35/] The motif is not necessarily -- is usually not -- exhausted by being subsumed under a class of generic stereotypes, but unless this first identification is effected to begin with, the motif as motif will simply not exist for an audience, which will then see merely unrelated figures or indeed blotches of paint. Even the notoriously "realistic" Dutch genre-painting "created from a limited number of TYPES AND GESTURES, much as the apparent realism of the picaresque novel or of Restoration comedy still applies and modifies STOCK FIGURES which can be traced back for centuries .... The artist ... needs a vocabulary before he can embark on a `copy' of reality" (Gombrich 87, cf. also 140). Thus, as indicated by my caps in the above quote, to envisage agents (also) in terms of *universalia*, in terms of cultural units or classifications which then provide a basis for comparison for any new agents too, leads to the agential unit and analytical level of *stock figures* or *types*. Even the individualized character, if and when present in a narrative, will gain its full significance when seen as arising out of a more general level of types. As Culler notes, "...our cultural codes contain models [of various stock figures]: ...the *senex iratus* or heavy father, the *miles gloriosus* or braggart, the fop or coxcomb, the pedant .... [T]hese models guide the perception and creation of characters, enabling us to...attribute to each an intelligible role" (Culler 236).

This is, of course, quite consonant with the basic approach of semiotics (unfortunately as yet little applied in its practice). For, in semiotic theory, all imaginatively visualized elements of narration, including textual agents, do not signify their supposed mimetic equivalents from life: e.g., characters do not signify people from the street. Instead, an agent signifies the *class of entities* of which it is a member: not an "essential" class of course, as implied by Frye and sometimes even by Gombrich, but an "existential" one within a given sociohistorical paradigm. As holds for any semiotic entity, the *primary* condition of a narrative agent too is to be "representative of its class, so that the audience is able to infer

from it the presence of another member of the same class...in the [imagined narrative] world." 36 This also explains all the "mimetically" unexplainable "non-literal signifiers" in the agential domain, such as the two-dimensional cut-outs in Piscator's *Schweyk,* the dishonest statesman in Chinese theatre signified by the blue *mang* robe he wears, or any sufficiently non-mimetically presented -- e.g. masked -- agents. Thus, the upper-class characters in Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle* performance do not represent people who in medieval Transcaucasia went around masked: they signify instead the *typical* quality of that class, the "suppression of their human face" or impulse (e.g. motherliness) under the sway of the power and splendor inscribed in the masks.[37/]

Semiotically considered, a dramaturgic agent is always within "quotation marks" (Elam 89): it stands for or signifies a type -- on which further traits are then grafted in the case of characters. This connects evidently with Brecht's theory of estrangement (*Verfremdung*) as well as with his theory of the unit of dramaturgic semiosis, the gestural kinesic set-cum-attitude which he called *Gestus*. Brecht defined *Gestus* as being "sociohistorically significant (typical)," as partaking of some basic "social relationship prevailing between people of a given period" (Brecht 16:86 and 139; see also Elam 76seqq.). In dramatic and other narrative this is always a transposition of typical "features of social movement...heightened or exaggerated, so as to increase their very `sociability'" (Elam 78). Semiotics is today confirming that Brecht's basic theories, such as that of *Gestus*, have "only" the huge merit of explaining perennial dramaturgic practice. The stage figure and *Gestus* of Galileo, e.g., does not centrally stand for either the historical or any other imaginatively modified individual who had such-and-such a biography, but for a parabolic type one can perhaps call "the great but socially flawed scientist." In parables and similar allegorical or quasi-allegorical genres -- i.e. in almost all the literary and art genres before the rise of Individualism -- the particular, surface vehicle always intimately interacts with the universal, depth tenor. This holds also for their agents: types are always at or near their surface.

In sum, as a general philosophical proposition, any "unrepeatably individual" feature can only be recognized and analyzed within some net of general concepts and categories. "The 'individual' phenomenon in art does not testify to the lack of a system but to the intersection of several diverse systems in one single point." 38 A character can only be understood in dialectical interrelationship with historical concepts and categories of types, which shape the norms of verisimilitude shared by the author and his/her social addressee.

4. Some Indications for Situating "Character"

4.1. In this part I can only briefly suggest a program of book-length research needed to verify the usefulness of a historico-cultural theory of narrative agents. For, if the hypothesis developed earlier is correct, the answer to the question which agential level is to be found on the surface of a text and which in the presuppositions or depths of a text -- i.e. what is textual and what meta-textual -- is neither single nor eternal. It is not given once and for all by the structure of the human brain or unconscious 39 and/or by a universal syntax: on the contrary, it is a *changing* answer, based on dominant aspects of sociohistorical relationships between people -- both the relationships of which and to which that text speaks. Such changes happen, no doubt, within a *longue durée* measured in epochs, yet they are nonetheless part of the major, "geological" shifts in human relations. One clear instance of such an (in principle) wholly new narrative level is the rise of the Individualist *character* in the period between

Boccaccio, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and Molière, in whose works its coming into being can be palpably traced. Of course, this does not mean that agents with conflicting and sufficiently numerous traits – the characters -- cannot be found before the European 14th or 16th century or outside Europe. Basic epistemological shifts in a culture and in social practice come neither overnight nor out of nowhere. If we knew more about different cultures we could speak with more confidence about controversial matters such as a possible Antique or Hellenic Individualism arising somewhere between Aeschylus and Euripides. I shall have to leave this aside, as it is for my theoretical purposes indifferent whether to postulate the rise and coming into existence of bourgeois Individualism only or of several Individualisms which came and went (though I would be inclined to argue with Aristotle that in most Hellenic plays there is no character, only ethos, a Hellenic variant of type under the sign of constant categories from moral philosophy, physiology, etc.).[40/] I shall similarly leave aside the non-European cultures -- though I am again hard put to find characters in the dramaturgies of Noh, the Peking Opera, the Javanese *wayang-topeng* (where the principal actors cannot even speak) or the classical Chinese novel.[41/] But in European art, from the Middle Ages on, it seems clear that the deviation from *universali*a toward individuality "is a comparatively recent development."[42/] Character in the Individualist sense was born together with the bourgeoisie, capitalist money economy, economic rationality, atomization, quantification, and reification of human relationships including equality before the law, and the whole well-known historical cluster accompanying the rise of this new *épistémé*. It is the fictional equivalent of private property in the process of production and circulation, of independent individuals in the market "who are the possessors of commodities ...[and who] place themselves in relation to one another as persons whose will resides in these objects."[43/]

Historical semantics can prove that this is precisely the time when the modern meanings of key terms such as *individual*, *personality* or *character*, and *subject* arose. In English, "individual" originally meant the opposite of what it does after the 16th-17th century watershed, namely an indivisible unity or community in multiplicity, e.g. the Christian Trinity, or "the individuall Catholicke Church" (as Milton was still writing at this late date). The singular noun "individual" emancipated itself from explicit and subordinate relation "to the group of which it was, so to say, the ultimate indivisible division" only in the late 18th century -- a characteristic example of the new usage being in Adam Smith's political economy! The fully fledged ideology of "Individualism" emerged then in the 19th century, and was recorded in the English translation of Tocqueville, who characterizes it as "a novel expression, to which a novel idea has given birth." Similarly, the use of "character" for fictional agents dates from the mid-18th century; earlier, if applied to people at all, it had meant their more or less fixed nature, their reputation, or the fixed type and literary genre popularized by Theophrastus, La Bruyère, and Overbury. Finally, "subjective" also changed into its opposite: for the Schoolmen, it meant "as things are in themselves," i.e. according to their substance. It is "especially from Descartes" that "subject" came to mean the opposite, i.e. the thinking, isolated self. Correspondingly, "objective" metamorphosized from the meaning "as things are not in themselves" to that of "as things are in themselves," beheld by but deduced as independent of the thinking self. In English, the use of "subject" in grammar came in the 17th, and of "object" in the 18th century. The modern philosophical distinction subject-object (tacitly imported into the earlier syntactic use by Greimas & Co.) developed, of course, in and after classical German philosophy.[44/]

To verify this in terms of dramaturgic agents (see Table): the *kind or category of behavior* -- though not necessarily the concrete behavior itself -- of a type (as explained in section 3, e.g. a *miles gloriosus* or a La Bruyère *caractère*), is wholly predictable. As different from type, a *character* a/ must possess more than ca. half a dozen traits, b/ of which at least two are eventually found to be contradictory or

otherwise incompatible. Thus, in a character even the kind of behavior is not wholly predictable. In that sense, this character or *personnage-personne* is an upstart and newfangled kind of agent. It is limited not only by epoch but also by genre[45/] -- e.g. the psychological novel and "well-made play" as against fairy tale, paraliterature, and most of the avantgarde of the last century (which in this hypothesis is the beginning of the post-Individualist epoch).

I should make clear that none of my arguments have spoken to the historical necessity or value of the rise of Individualistic character. My provisional opinion -- on a huge subject that requires more investigation willing to admit and, if warranted, compensate for its initial ideological bias -- is that the rise of the character as an agential level (just as the rise of its economic and social analogues and bearers, the market and the bourgeoisie) has brought both great advantages and great limitations. The advantages were principally apparent during the ascending historical phase, in Europe, say, up to Balzac, George Eliot, and Tolstoy. In that phase, the character was the agential formulation of the freedom to break through the consensual constraints of hierarchically frozen social types and dogmatic normative systems, connected with despotic monarchism and a stagnant subsistence economy, toward larger horizons of life. The multiplication of traits and their conflictuality, the illusion of agential "roundness" and "three-dimensionality," connoted that human agents and actions were not explained, foreseen, and fixed. Their richness allowed these freshly conceived agents to slip through the clumsy and restrictive net of old *universali*a. In particular, the highly significant chronotopic analogs to this new structure of agents should also be investigated: where the types were timeless and set against a fixed background, so that they pretended to eternal and ubiquitous validity, a character can and does evolve in time and environment. But all such aspects turn into their contraries with the contraction and exhaustion of Individualism in our century. On the one hand, the price of its particular kind of freedom begins to weigh more heavily than its achievements as the bourgeoisie shifts from personal competition to fictitious corporative "individualities"; on the other hand, this shift as well as the failure (so far) of radical alternatives to bourgeois rule threatens all freedom (in the sense of enlarging possibilities of life), bringing about new monopolistic and stereotype-producing networks -- the Leviathans of states, corporations, armies, culture industry, etc.[46/]

4.2. Let me then take, at the end, the trajectory of one typologically and probably historically coherent sequence: one whose extreme ends would be the allegorical figure of Avarice (in a hypothetical Morality play) and a realistic *miser,* say Balzac's Gobseck. The two traits of "Avarice" (the homonymous predicate, and its *Stellenwer*t in the system of sins) expand in a Renaissance or post-Renaissance type into roughly half a dozen: the type Pantalone can be characterized by the traits "merchant," "old," "male," "Venetian," "amorous," and "miserly." Without that last predicate and trait, there would be no Pantalone: that is what dooms his amorous ventures to failure and makes him a permanent butt. Equally, however, it is the new fusion of this trait with the unambiguous class identification of Venetian merchant that makes for a both recognizable and popular hyperbole of "a precise historical function, as a representative of an industrious bourgeoisie," -- "the satire of commercial power" (together with homologous satires of the military power in the Capitano and of sterile learning in the Dottore).[47/] The biological age of Pantalone is highly significative: the fact that there is no type of the *young* merchant before bourgeois drama (though well-known in everyday life, and even in prose fiction from the *Novellino* and Boccaccio on) shows that the physical coding is an ideological hyperbole, a plebeian (and possibly also aristocratic) adverse judgement on the vitality of a new class, *épistémé*, way of behaving -- in short, of a new *type*. One step further, and we are at

Molière's Harpagon, who has a similar ideological profile but is already part of the way from type to character (though not quite a contradictory character), probably by way of contamination of several types. The watershed toward character is passed in Shylock, and precisely in his speech "Hath not a Jew eyes?..." (III.i): there is no type, I think, who can see himself simultaneously through the eyes of antagonists and through his own interiority, since this provides a union of contradictory traits *par excellence*. Though Shylock may for long stretches be a type, he is no longer only or primarily such (the same would hold for Richard 3 as against the Medieval Vice). Finally, the usurers and misers of realism such as Gobseck draw their strength from the interplay of characterological richness and the steel backbone of the old type, never totally buried under the surface of Individualistic character.

Indeed, it is remarkable that characters -- verbally bound up with a proper name -- can revert to social type and turn their name into a common or generic noun simply by adding an article or a suffix. Molière's Tartuffe became "les Tartuffes" already in his first *placet* to the King (August 1664); Don Juan turns into "donjuanism" or "Les Don Juans de village" (title of a play) as readily as Tartuffe does into "a tartuffe" or into "tartufferie."[48/] This measures the oftentimes small distance between the character and type levels in much literature since Molière: in dramaturgy, it is enough to mention the melodrama (that matrix of all Romantic plays), the vaudeville, or even the boulevard comedy whose art consists precisely in pasting the newest traits of the marketplace on the good old masks -- a *Commedia dell'arte* inverted, so to speak. As for modern drama, say from Jarry and Chekhov to Brecht and Genet, one could show that part of its strength consists in ironically violating those same type expectations hidden behind the characters (e.g. in Brecht's *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* the *miles gloriosus* for Eilif, the *ingénue for Kattri*n, the *niais, benêt* or simpleton for Swiss Cheese, and of course the miserly merchant for Courage herself).

5. In Lieu of Conclusion

In parts 2-4 of this essay I have argued two points. First, that to understand narrative agents it is necessary to take into account the interaction within each *dramatis persona* between the three levels of actantial function, sociohistorical way of categorizing people or type, and often also the particular -- individual but no less sociohistorical -- *characterization*. In this "spatial-form" (i.e. paradigmatic) textual interaction, hegemonies will shift between the three levels according to given historical periods (as well as given analytical goals).[49/] Second, I have argued that the most formalizing analysis can become precise, instead of formalistic, if and only if it enters into a feedback relation to the sociohistorical actuality of the field under scrutiny. That is why, instead of a "pure," technocratic and idealistic birth of agential theory (or indeed semiotics) from the spirit of syntax, I pleaded in Part 2 for this relation. To speak from within semiotics, such a feedback is, after all, built into its foundations -- in Aristotle, in Propp, and at least theoretically even in Lévi-Strauss, as well as in the best practitioners such as the latter Barthes and Eco. This could add the dialectics of historic mutability to the mechanistic atomism of the Formalists or the computerized statics of the Structuralists, and neutralize their respective metaphysics.

However, more than any particular (much less a fashionable) method of narrative and cultural analysis is at stake here. As I argued in Part 1, the reply to my title question is hugely important. What, then, is the reply? I hope my argumentation may lead toward two complementary conclusions. First: empirical individuals, people in the bourgeois Individualist sense CANNOT be represented in fiction.

They necessarily become on the one hand exempla (Auden's paragons), and on the other hand shifting nodes of narration. Nonetheless, and second: pertinent and crucial *relationships among people* -- not atomic or point-like but as a rule dyadic or differential -- CAN be represented in fiction. In fact, fiction *consists* in their representation and reformulation. This allows the reader to pleasurably verify old and dream up new, alternative relationships: to *re-articulate* (in both senses of the word) human relationships to the world of people and things. As Aristotle argued in *Politics* (I.2), humans necessarily live in communities (*polis*), they are "political animals." Thus, all central human relations are, in this widest sense, political. Significant fictional re-presentation of relations among people rearticulates, then, our political relationships.