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On Dramaturgic Agents and Krleža's Agential Structure: The Types as a Key Level (1984, 7,900 words)

Fortunately, it is not my task here to present the large and much discussed -- though not at all well-known in English -- dramaturgic *oeuvre* of Miroslav Krleža (1893-1981), the dominant cultural, literary, and dramaturgic figure that bestrides 20th-century Yugoslav literature like a giant out of Rabelais.¹ I must commit two overlapping sins of omission if I am to speak at article length about his plays: first, presuppose them as known, and discuss only one rarely treated but sufficiently significant aspect in a new light (an analysis which may contribute to dramaturgic theory in general); second, neglect most nuances and possible but not strictly mandatory branchings within my argument, such as a systematic distinction between Krleža's rather differing phases.

A brief, handy, and defensible subdivision of Krleža's playwriting might define its main phases according to: 1) the tendency toward expressionism, ca. 1913-1919, producing the plays *Maskerata*, *Legenda*, *Saloma*, *Kraljevo*, *Hrvatska rapsodija*, *Kristofor Kolumbo*, *Michelangelo Buonarroti*, *Adam i Eva*, and *U predvečerje* the early and late plays in each phase are, naturally, less typical of it); 2) the tendency toward *Neue Sachlichkeit* in the first half of the 1920s, producing the plays *Galicija* (reworked in the 1930s as *U logoru*), *Golgota*, and *Vučjak*; 3) the return to the Ibsenian dramaturgic model, from the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s, producing the three "Glembayev cycle" plays *Gospoda Glembajevi*, *U agoniji* (successfully enlarged by an additional act after the war), and *Leda*; 4) a coda of largely unsuccessful attempts after the Second World War at syncretic retrospective in a few fantasy plays, the only full-scale one being *Aretej*.

1.

The approach to agential analysis in dramaturgy that I shall develop here, based on a hypothesis explained at some length in other places², requires a more extensive though still very abbreviated premise to my investigation of Krleža.

The presuppositions for a theory of agential analysis have a pure Slavic pedigree going back to Russian works from the 1920s, beginning with Propp and the other Formalists, and continuing to Bogatyrev and Jakobson as links with the Prague Circle of the 1930s-40s. Nonetheless, my hypothesis arises out of considerations which were developed later and, except for the Tartu school of Lotman, Uspenskii, etc., not primarily in Slavic languages, but in French and Italian narratology or semiotics.

The first question that arises at this point is one of pertinence. Is it useful to employ the complex and sometimes clumsy machinery of (even a non-scientistic variant of) semiotics to analyse such well-known works as a canonical and canonised play or group of plays by Krleža (or, say, by Shakespeare)? My answer is conditionally but clearly positive. Positive, because dramaturgy is, within a cluster of young disciplines such as the theory of literature or of fine arts, one of the youngest and least developed: it cannot afford to refuse illumination of its domain, wherever that illumination originates. Only conditionally positive, because I must concede that the highly interesting cognitive potentials of semiotics have been dominated up to now, at least in dealing with narrative and including dramaturgical agents, by an ahistorical universalism and scientism, a syndrome I have elsewhere called glossocracy (or, if one prefers, linguistic imperialism).

I hope that we shall be able to build upon the historical fundamentals of agential analysis in Aristotle and Propp, who proceed by means of socio-historical induction from precise cultural processes such as genres and discursive traditions, not by unchecked deduction from very dubious “universal laws which constitute the unconscious operation of the spirit.”³ Should it prove possible to use semiotics as an analytical technique rather than a technocratic ideology, then such semiotics of dramaturgy may take a useful, perhaps even a key, place within the polyphony of critical approaches.

Within the agential theory that has to cope with such vexed knots as character and type, we especially need (be it said with some sadness) not so much new as coherent and encompassing views. As a first approximation, I shall define narrative agents (although I shall talk further of *dramaturgic agents*, since I hold that plays are a highly specialized and specific form of narrative) as *all nouns or nominal syntagms that can be imagined as separate animate entities, and thus* (in contrast to the inanimate *objects*) *as able to undertake an action in a given textual universe*. This is not a fully formalized definition perhaps, since it begs a number of unresolved questions: e.g., what may be an action? Nonetheless, it seems to me that its mixture of intuitive and verifiable elements should be sufficient for a first approach. One should add that when the text is a play, the important agents are not simply established imaginatively as present within the play's possible world, but as a rule *visually ostended* (on a real or imagined theatre stage) for more detailed analysis.

If one accepts some such delimitation of this field, then the first significant fact that stands out is its grave underdevelopment. From Bakhtin to Chatman and Culler, two full generations lament the scandalous blanks in even a theory of surface level agents, the *characters*. These writers maintain that practically the only advance in this field between Aristotle and the end of the 1970s was E.M. Forster's distinction between “round” and “flat” characters (I would call them characters and types).⁴ A possible exception may perhaps have been French semiotics with its theory of actants, beginning in 1966 (the date of *Communications* no. 8, devoted to the analysis of *récit*, and of Greimas's first book). I have been forced to conclude, however, in my *Versus* article cited, that despite its stimulating and pioneering of prospects, this attempt has only renewed the old insight that agential analysis has to encompass several levels. (Aristotle and Propp had already called these levels *pratto* vs. *ethos*, viz. function vs. *dramatis persona*; Propp and Souriau were also perfectly clear about the possibility of distributing participation in their metatextual or deeper agential level among several textual agents, and vice versa.) The reason for my conclusion is that two basic objections to Greimas's theory seem to me unavoidable.

First, Greimas articulated the level which he called the actants – the level of *function* in the action or plot – by means of an undue extension of Indo-European syntax into an eternal analogy to the workings of the human brain. In so doing, he forgot his patron saint's warning that “there is no language whose vocabulary can be deduced from the syntax,” and that therefore in narrative entities, *a fortiori*, grammar and vocabulary do not even operate on distinct levels, but “adhere to each other on their whole surface and completely overlap”⁵: that is, in narrativity – including drama – everything is simultaneously both syntax and vocabulary. In this domain, therefore, Souriau's pre-semiotic account of “thematic forces” seems much more useful (with due translation from his astrological vocabulary into the theatre vocabulary, I propose, of the Protagonist, Antagonist, Value, Mandator, Beneficiary, and Satellite).

Second all Greimasians, following the master, hesitate between using two levels and hinting at more (usually three) levels of agential analysis. That possible third level had already been mentioned, though not systematized, by such precursors as Bogatyrev (type) and Souriau (*rôle* and *rôle pur*), and most succinctly and authoritatively within the vocabulary of the time by Frye (stock type):

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.⁶

The French semioticians simply transferred the whole discussion to the field of universalist syntax, and used the terms *rôle* and *rôle actantiel* in Greimas⁷, *role* both in Alexandrescu's useful discussion of Faulkner and in Bremond's eternal agential inventory, *rôle formel* in Rastier, *emploi* in Hamon, etc. It might be argued that the term used is not of *primary* importance if the level of analysis seems clearly delimited and articulated, but I believe it is at least of *some* importance: we have learned that language speaks us as much as we speak it.

Thus, I would not favour “role” in French or English because it invites confusion, both with an actor's part of the theatrical text and with the once fashionable sociological theory of role playing, which feeds back into some theatrical and dramaturgic theories. On the contrary, “type” not only is suitably Anglo-French, but also draws useful sustenance from two sources: first, from the theatre tradition (primarily in English) shrewdly used by Frye and associated with such terms as “type of role,” “type-cast,” “stock type,” etc.; and second, from a confrontation with its wide use in literary criticism, e.g., with both biblical and Lukácsian typology, accepting their richness and rejecting their rigid limitations.

At this point, it should be possible to inventory at length a number of contributions to a clear definition and delimitation of what I take to be this third, intermediate level indispensable for agential analysis. I have picked up hints from the names mentioned so far, as well as from Doutrepoint, Todorov, and Ubersfeld,⁸ in order to construct the following Table on p. 4 which I present as my basic hypothesis. It should be stressed emphatically that the three levels of analysis, numbered in my table from the deepest level upward, are cumulative and not alternative. The two basic ones, actants and types, occur in every dramaturgic text; the uppermost one, characters in Forster's “round” sense, may or may not be present in any given text (this depends on epoch and genre). This may already point to the key position of the intermediate level.

At any rate, in this article, which does not pretend to exhaust the interpretation of any particular text, I shall focus on the second level of *types*.

Type can be best defined, perhaps, 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.”⁹ This definition seems to avoid any apriorism (biblical, Lukácsian, or other) in favour of socio-historical contextuality *à la* Bakhtin: typicality can in this sense be based on *any* categorization that has been taken in cultural history -- rightly or wrongly from a present point of view -- to classify people or agents. Types can therefore be classified, and have been, by sex-cum-age, nationality, profession, social estate or class, physiology moral philosophy (Aristotle's *ethos*, the Galenic “temperaments” or “humours”), and often by what we would think are combinations of these categories Diderot's *conditions*, e.g., Father or Judge, seem to contaminate profession, class, and social role), etc.

If the above hypothesis is acceptable, then the very useful term “*emploi*,” or (more clumsily) the terms “stock character,” “stock figure,” or “line (of business)” – e.g., *ingénue*, *june premier*, *père noble*, *raisonneur*, villain, heavy, walking gentleman – can be seen as 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 surfaces and attendant loss of clarity).

To give just one example: the agential semantic field of warring or warrior may be articulated as an ideal (but also largely historical) sequence traversing the scale of predicative complexity (see column 2 in my table). At its lower end, one would find a mythological personification of War or Ares in antiquity, or analogous agents in theatre outside Europe (e.g., the Peking Opera), or an

<i>Agential level</i>	<i>Predicative articulation</i>	<i>Narratological locus</i>	<i>Verbal status; deep structure</i>	<i>Visualising status</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Historical duration</i>
3. CHARACTER (<i>personnage</i> or <i>personnage-personne</i> ; "round"); – not obligatory	A great (though not unlimited) number of possibly conflicting predicates/traits	Always textual and a <i>dramatis persona</i> (when it exists)	<i>Proper name</i> ; = 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 (<i>type</i> or <i>personnage-type</i> ; "flat"), e.g. Vice, Pantalone, Miser, Father, Soubrette; – obligatory	A small number, – usually 2-6 – of compatible predicates/traits	Metatextual or textual, according to whether level 3 exists or not	<i>Common or generic noun</i> , can be proper name raised to that status; = noun + one or a few attributes, or nominal syntagms	Necessarily figurative; not necessarily individual	Societal type, by age + sex + profession, &/or social group, &/or temperament, etc.)	<i>Courte durée</i> : generations or Centuries.
1. ACTANT (substitute for Greimas's Syntactic terms those of Protagonist, Antagonist, Value, Mandator or Beneficiary, and Satellite). – obligatory	One predicate as common denominator of a bundle of semic predicates	Always metatextual; no discrete appearance as <i>dramatis persona</i>	<i>Common noun</i> ; = "force which does what is indicated by the noun"	Not necessarily figurative; necessarily not individual	Function in narrative action	<i>Longue durée</i> : epochs or millennia.

allegorical personification such as the medieval *Ira* (Wrath). All such agents are predicatively poor *types* (though not at all necessarily ineffective), since they have only two traits: the warlike characteristic (wrathfulness, aggressiveness), and the position or *Stellenwert* in the system of polytheism, cardinal sins, or anything similar. The *commedia dell'arte* *Maschera* of "Capitano" has about half a dozen traits: officer, middle-aged, braggart, coward, indigent, and Spaniard (though the ethnic trait varies according to local history and prejudice). It seems to me constitutive of any type that *it possesses 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 investigated), which are all *culturally congruent or compatible*. This compatibility should be explainable in every particular historical case as the result of a feedback interaction between the social reality from which the traits come and the criteria of verisimilitude shared by the audience for whom the play is intended. On the contrary, any character in the sense of the uppermost level in my table, say Falstaff, will unite in him/herself at least two *conflicting*, i.e., culturally incongruous traits. To take an example from the Krležian corpus at hand: first lieutenant Walter in *U logoru* occupies a transitional position between type and character. The play's *didascalia* indicate this position clearly: on the one hand, they call him "a typical no-good" (a pun in Croatian, "tipični tip"); on the other hand, they allot him the traits (in order of note) of "cheery intimateness," "despair," "bloodthirsty commanding," "arrogance," "failure of nerve," and "brutality."

If anything like the hypothesis in the above table is accepted, however, far-reaching consequences ensue for the history of dramaturgy. In that case, the answer to the question “which agential level is to be found on the surface of the text, and which in the presuppositions or depths of the text?” is neither single nor eternal, based on a universal syntax and/or the structure of the human brain. On the contrary, it is a changing answer, and the changes rest on dominant aspects of socio-historical relationships between people of whom and to whom that text speaks. Such changes happen, no doubt, within a *longue durée* measured in epochs, but they are nonetheless part and parcel of the major, “geological” shifts in human history. The individualistic practice or notion of “character” – in other words, a whole new narrative and analytical level of agents – arises in the period embracing Boccaccio, Cervantes, Shakespeare, and Molière, in whose texts one can palpably trace its coming into being. Character in the sense of my table clearly seems a key ideological notion and fictional device, born together with the bourgeoisie, capitalist economy, the turn of human relationships toward atomisation, quantification, and reification including equality before the law, and the whole well-known historical cluster accompanying the rise of this new, individualist *epistémé*.

The startlingly radical changes in the historical semantics of key terms such as “individual,” “personality,” “character,” or “subject,” are in themselves sufficient proof. In English, “individual” originally meant the opposite of what it came to mean in our last two centuries, namely an indivisible unity or community in multiplicity, e.g., the Christian Trinity or “the individuall Catholicke Church” (as Milton still wrote). After a protracted semantic shift in 16th-to-18th century, “individual” came to mean the opposite. The singular noun “individual” emancipated itself from explicit and subordinate relation “to the group of which it was, so to speak, the ultimate indivisible division” only late in the 18th century – a characteristic example of the new usage occurring in Adam Smith! The full-fledged ideology of “individualism” then emerged in the 19th century, in the English translation of Tocqueville (characteristically, a French reflection on the young America), who calls it “a novel expression, to which a novel idea has given birth.” And the use of “character” for fictional agents begins in English 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.¹⁰ Such diametrically contrary meanings before and after the Bacon-to-Rousseau watershed evidence how the interhuman practice of a radically new social construction of reality changes even some basic elements of cultural vision, and thus of dramaturgical horizons, too.

To avoid misunderstandings, I shall add that none of my arguments so far speaks to the historical necessity and value – or the obverse – of the rise of individualistic character. In this domain we need much more fundamental investigation by critics willing to admit, and if warranted compensate for, their inevitable initial biases, in order to strike a balance between the obvious huge advantages and the obvious huge limitations of that truly epochal shift to individualism. For the enrichment initially brought by the rise of such a “character” is undeniable, and cognate to the epoch of sudden urban changeability. A character is defined by having among its more numerous traits at least two culturally conflicting or contradictory ones. Its kind of behaviour, therefore, cannot be fully foreseen; it differs from the fully foreseeable kind of behaviour of a Miser, an *Ingénue*, a *Senex*, or a *Miles gloriosus* (though the concrete or detailed behaviour of any such type is not predictable, of course, or one could write only one play about each type). Nonetheless, without treading further into this minefield, I wish to note two limiting aspects to character.

First, it is as a rule built upon a metatextual (or should one say “bathytexual”?) existence of one or indeed several types; I shall return to this aspect in my discussion of Krleža. Second, the victory of the individualistic character has never been complete. It has always been confined not only to the individualistic epoch, but also to its typical or dominant genres, e.g., the psychological novel and well-made play as opposed to the fairy tale, paraliterature, farce, melodrama, and the great bulk of modern avantgarde literature and drama of the last 100 years (which would in this hypothesis look like the beginning of the end of individualism).

The instability or “shallowness” of this agential level of characters is apparent in the semantic fact that their inalienable hallmark, the *proper name*, can return to social typicality and become a common noun simply with the addition of an article or a suffix. Molière's Tartuffe thus became “les Tartuffes” in the plural inside the writer's first *placet* to the King in August 1564, and not much later we find mention of “a tartuffe” and “tartufferie.” Similarly, when Molière and then Mozart took up Tirso de Molina's Don Juan Tenorio, the figure readily passed into the notion of “le donjuanisme” and the plural of “les Don Juans.” This process also occurs in the very midst of Krleža's most individualistic cycle of plays, the Glembayev series. The cycle's almost mythical foundation is the old family legend reappearing at each crisis (in Krleža's original German, which here has a function analogous to Tolstoy's French): “*Die Glembays sind Mörder und Falschspieler*” (“The Glembays are murderers and cardsharps”). The whole cycle finally results in the notion of “glembajevština” (roughly, “glembaydom”) as a syntheticizing typical phenomenon that supplies a common denominator precisely to some of Krleža's most worked-out *characters*. With these comments, I pass to consideration of some key aspects in the agential system of his plays.

2.

The hypothesis of my approach to Krleža assumes that the key agential level in his dramaturgy is the level of *types* in the sense of part 1. I should stress that this statement is in the first instance technical and not axiological. Only in the second instance, the technical or formal aspect having been clarified, could the interpretation intervene with a value judgement. At this juncture, then, I refuse to situate myself within the antithetic judgements about “typization” that find a positive pole in Georg Lukács and a negative pole in Henry James.

Furthermore, my argument and illustrations will be necessarily laconic, intending a suggestiveness which may prompt the reader's imagination, rather than the kind of fullness for which even a monograph would barely suffice.

The suggestion that practically in all of Krleža's *Legends* (the plays allotted at the beginning to his first phase) the textual or manifest agents are simply types will perhaps not seem too startling. The richest and central play of this cycle, *Kraljevo* (*King's Fair*), is wholly immersed in a non-individualistic, choral dance of life and death, which finds a collective personification in the cosmic *tamburitza* (a kind of folk mandolin) choirs behind the stage, and the mass Dionysiac *kolos* (round dances) on the stage. “All is one single merry-go-round ... under the huge tent of heaven” in this *theatrum mundi*:

... The woman from planetarium dances with the fat canonic, the customs officer with the lady, the burghers and the blind with the gypsy women and prostitutes, servant girls, soldiers, hussies, hooligans, magicians, all this whirls and dances. The black twister twists – dogs bark, horses have grown skittish, they rear up and trample people. ...

From the great whirlpool a chorus of the dead whirls out, who have danced in the hurly-burly. ... Many dead gallows-birds, they hold each other's rope tied around the neck, and then the poisoned ones with monstrously convulsed faces, with burning bodies, thickly sown with knives, some bear in their hands a bloody heart, others their heads, and from their veins blood pumps in streams – some have wax candles in their hands – priests, clerics. They all dance around Annie.

Even the fleetingly sketched-in love triangle in the foreground does not use characters. Annie herself is simply Her, “Everywoman,” “*victrix Eva*” in the plebeian version constituted by the semantic space of *Kraljevo*). As the young Križža somewhat breathlessly says in the stage directions, she is “a type of the ugly prostitute, who however has nonetheless already felt the great, not yet glimpsed Woman.” Even her name, that final guarantee of individualistic character, has been taken from the city ballad “Little Annie, my little soul” (“Ančice dušice”), where it stands simply for the type of a beloved girl. The same lack of individuality exists in the other proper

names of the triangle. Herkules (Heracles) is not only the emblematic victor in the Social Darwinist or Nietzschean sexual selection conflict, but also the current name for a circus role, the Strong Man: “he looks like a tricoloured poster and an advertisement for wrestling.” Finally, Janez is an equally emblematic loser, a dead suicide with rope around neck, funerary uniform, and wax-cabinet look.

The emblematic or poster-like nature of dramaturgic agents is here very thinly masked by a half-hearted attempt at “realistic” illusion, i.e. that Janez was a coachman at funerals, Herkules a circus performer, and Annie a cashier at the fair: the fair is obviously life itself. But even this clarification, if we were to take it seriously, would direct us only to another kind of typification, the professional typification. As we have already seen, a second form of typification is pseudo-biological; it ranges from the folk-baroque Dance of Death to Social Darwinism. Third and fourth types, abundantly used for all other figures, are the ethnico-regional (Turks, Jews, Macedonians, Chinamen, etc.) and the class “typification” (burgher women, a petty bourgeois, a peasant from a village near the capital city, etc.). In fact, *Kraljevo* draws its richness from a polyphony of all such typifications, which range from the baroque-allegorical to the quasi-Nietzschean. The “eternal triangle,” so familiar from the well-made play, is deconstructed again in many further Krleža plays, from *Maskerata* down to *Leda* and *Aretej*.

To remain in Krleža’s first, quasi-expressionistic phase, the so-called “genius plays,” *Kristofor Kolumbo* and *Michelangelo Buonarroti*, use a schematic conflict of the daimonic genius either with a mass chorus and/or with his nihilistic and sneering Alter Ego. The only differences among such typified dramaturgic agents are those caused by the semantic field of a given play (sailors, oarsmen, and vice-admirals around Columbus, viz. the Pope and his court, the Woman, and the people around Michelangelo). Towards the end of this sequence, the short play *Adam i Eva* shows in its title but and its cyclical composition that its couple of cyclothymic lovers are eternal types, regardless of the surface localisation in an age of railways and hotels. A similar agential disposition takes place even in *Golgota*, an early play of the following phase, where the localisation at a not otherwise specified time of trade-union strikes and police repression cannot hide the fact that the two principal dramaturgic agents, Kristijan and Ksaver, are a consistent viz. an inconsistent contamination of two types: the Father (who is always a negative, axiologically bad agent in Krleža) and the Traitor.

The first clear case of internally contradictory agents or characters in Krleža’s dramaturgy occurs in the play *Vučjak* (*Wolf Village*, 1923). I shall briefly discuss the most complex ones: Polugan in the Prologue; Krešimir Horvat, the protagonist and *jeune premier*, and Marijana Margetić, the female lead. Though appearing only in the introductory scene, set in a contemporary bourgeois newspaper office, the exploited factotum Polugan is provided with the character traits of poverty, nervousness, poor health, middle age, compassion for weaker people, limited understanding, and servility. Marijana shows the traits of prettiness, incipient middle age, resignation, panic/fear, hysteria, and poverty. After the arrival of the city intellectual Horvat into the village where she vegetates as the widow of the former schoolmaster, we also see her embarrassment, a “corrupt coquetry,” sexual promiscuity (admitted but economically justified), desperation, and finally suicidal propensities it remains unclear whether the last trait is meant to be taken seriously or not). Horvat, the spectator’s focus, is young, intellectual, and ill; he has a deep feeling of nausea and hate in response to the absurdity “of these philistines, of these idiots, of these soldiers, of this madhouse,” so that he constantly oscillates between furious irritation and morbid resignation.¹¹ In the introductory scene, he manifests a Rousseauist naivety about leaving for a bucolic Croatian village in which he hopes to find the antithesis of the newspaper and become a teacher of supposedly not yet corrupted youth. In the first act – when he has just arrived and met the hates and passions swirling around Marijana, as well as other material interests – the traits of shyness, sensitivity, and a romantic eroticism complete the setting up of his character. Frequent performance on Yugoslav stage has verified the richness of these roles for character performances.

Notwithstanding such character traits, I believe that Krleža has included in the play a clear decoding key that reveals the solid backbone of types which these characters overlay as well-developed musculature: a backbone which also serves as the play's central articulation and paradigm. That key is the visionary "Intermezzo" in an otherwise textually realistic play, Krleža's belated but unforgettable salute and goodbye to expressionism and overt allegory. This Intermezzo is a crucial document for understanding Krleža's whole system of dramaturgic agents. Though I cannot analyse it here, the simple listing of its main *dramatis personae* should suffice to prove my point -- about *Vučjak* at least.

In the Intermezzo, Marijana is transmogrified (I cite the author's post-Catholic Latin) into *Magna Peccatrix*, and Polugan into *Figura misera neurasthenica*. Horvat, the epico-lyrical I as the bearer of vision, is absent from the list of participants in the Intermezzo vision; but Krleža's stage direction calling him "a neurasthenic and decadent" (Act I), and his whole behaviour in the course of the play, reveal that Horvat is in fact a younger and more vital variant of the type represented by Polugan. In this play, it is not yet clear whether this character variant will (like Polugan) be broken, or whether he will (like many similar rebellious protagonists of Krleža's) be channelled into a systematic and conscious struggle under "some kind of flag" about which he momentarily dreams in the Prologue. The clear autobiographical elements in Horvat can be read as Krleža's personal and national self-critique. In line with this argument, Horvat could be called something like *Figura neurasthenica furiosa sed indecisa* in the above baroque Latin (a Galenic or Paracelsian "socio-medical" Latin, to mention only two figures Krleža was deeply fascinated by and assiduously studied). All of these agents obviously constitute a very particular typology, or system of typification, which was Krleža's road: it bridges the distance between the Croatian folk-baroque and the turn-of-the-century Scandinavian decadents (e.g. Strindberg) or Middle European philosophizing psychologists (e.g., Weininger) by means of a peculiar romantico-Nietzschean rebellion on its way to Marxism.

Looked at from this angle, the personal names in this play are themselves to a large degree typical or "speaking names." Horvat is the allegorical representative of Croatia (a variant of "Hrvat" = "Croat"); his first name, Krešimir, is a medieval royal name which connotes as well a person in battle ("kreševo") for a peace ("mir") which he does not attain and perhaps also for a different world (in Old Slavic and Russian, "mir" means also "world"). Marijana is drawn from Maria (Magdalen, of course): she is a great sinner, with much charm.

Polugan is, I think, a portmanteau word contaminating his positive function as the only real worker in the editorial office ("poluga" = "lever") with the negative connotations of his servility ("polutan" = "half-baked person, mongrel"). I cannot analyse the other dramaturgic agents in the play, but they can all be understood either two-dimensional types, or characters that develop or contradict the basic types upon which they are formed. I shall close by mentioning that the Intermezzo contains one *dramatis persona* absent from the rest of the play, but present metatextually on the actantial level as the Value: Krleža gives her the greatest number of names - she is the Bride, *Illusio sacra*, *Virgo fidelis aeterna*, or Happiness.

It might be equally interesting and useful to apply the same approach to Krleža's plays *U logoru* (*In the Military Encampment*) and *Gospoda Glembajevi* (*Messrs. Glembay*), since their characters could be analysed either in the same way (the protagonist of *U logoru* has the same name and character as the Horvat from *Vučjak*) or in a somewhat more complex way, by treating characters as interferences or contaminations of types (including the *emplois*). The semantic or topical field of *U logoru* is the army, or more precisely military patriarchal "force and rule," while the field of *Gospoda Glembajevi* is economic patriarchal authority and rule. In the first play, the basic typology of *Miles gloriosus* within the Austro-Hungarian army of World War I pertains to all the agents of non-Croatian provenance. The single, doubly negative exception is Puba Agramer (again, a speaking name, connoting roughly a Germanized middle-class boy from Zagreb/Agram), a contamination of the professional type of careerist lawyer, the class type of pseudo-gentry dandy, and the moral-cum-political type of the ethnic traitor - half-way between Wallenstein and Quisling

– who partakes in the colonisers' militarism as the lawyer of a branch-plant. His parallel in *Gospoda Glembajevi* is once more his civilian twin, so to speak, another careerist lawyer named Puba (Fabriczy-Glembay), whose nefarious justifications of the ruling class are this time set within the corresponding, if peacetime, Hobbesian world of economic warfare.

For the purposes of this essay, however, it seems more practical to focus on the main types found in Krleža's dramaturgic agents and on his varying of this invariant constellation.

The most striking and obsessive type is certainly *The Woman*; one could almost say the female principle, *das ewig weibliche*. Here one may also see most clearly Krleža's initial intertextual derivation from the commonplaces of the *fin de siècle* and *Jugendstil* (Strindberg, Przybyszewski, Weininger, etc.). In the *Legends*, this type is a rather one-dimensional young woman of passionate sensuality. Though this type will become more complex, it will remain embodied in a feline *femme fatale* right up to the culmination of *Leda*.

By the time of *Vučjak* and the three Glembay-family plays, however, this agent has been enriched by the addition to such conventional traits of a compassionate realisation that women are as a rule more sinned against than sinning: the *Magna Peccatrix* has been made such by a given (bourgeois) system of human relationships. The obverse of this socialist emphasis on what the system does to the characters is a muting, though never a full disappearance, of the compassionate presentation in the case of upper-class women (usually bored and scheming wives, e.g., baroness Castelli, Melita) in exact proportion to their social positions. But the compassion reappears with full force with Laura in *U agoniji* (*Agonising*), whose Petrarchan name indicates by contraries both the emotional and the economic exploitation of women in a way which would surely appeal to modern feminists.

This type of *Peccatrix*, biological first and biopsychological later, therefore moves, along with the main spaces of Krleža's dramaturgy, from the lower to the upper class, from professional prostitutes to adulteresses in alcoves. Much as in Shaw, and I think clearly in his (and Scandinavian) footsteps, it proceeds to unite the traditions of classical socialist critique and the drawing-room play.

The type of Woman culminates first, intensively, in the anatomy of adultery as economic exploitation and psychic humiliation in *U agoniji*. Second, it culminates extensively in the complex double triangle or erotic quadrangle of *Leda*. In its last act it culminates in the encounter between the professional “ladies of the night” and the two (in a manner of speaking) amateur *Peccatrices*, Melita and Klara (the aristocratic-cum-decadent vs. the plebeian-cum-*arriviste* variants). This bitter carnival play, as well as Krleža's whole dramaturgic model, ends with the “symbolic broom” of the humpbacked cleaning-woman sweeping the city free from the entire agential constellation. The plebeian streetcleaner is History as Lent: Krleža's dramaturgy is not only an almost perfect Bakhtinian example of Menippean satire, but also a baroque Marxism that Benjamin would surely have appreciated. With these two plays, Krleža's world, together with its agents – including the Woman – has grown exhausted, and the post-war *Aretej* (*Aretheus*) adds little of note to it.

As has been argued, Krleža's second constant type is the *Figura neurasthenica furiosa sed indecisa*, whom I shall call (in his own untranslatable Middle European term) *the Nervchik*. It comprises the various incarnations of the nauseated Croatian intellectual with an unclear antibourgeois orientation toward flying off at a tangent from “this Pannonian mire.”¹² The variants of this type – who is also invariably the *employ* of *jeune premier* – range from the bipolar split between Genius (Columbus, Michelangelo) and Alter Ego in the expressionist plays, to its “realistic” culmination when internalized by Leone in *Gospoda Glembajevi*. In Leone, this type – half-way between physiology and ideology – is richly intertwined not only with the *raisonneur* (as is often the case in other plays), but also with a reversed Prodigal Son situation: no fatted calf is killed in banking circles for the dissenter. Furthermore, Leone's internal split “against the Glembay within himself” (Act 3) adds to this the orthodox naturalist typology of inherited “bad blood” à la the Alvings or the Rougon-Macquarts.

Significantly, the already mentioned Laura from *U agoniji*, is one of the most interesting characters among Krleža's dramaturgic agents because she contaminates the two main types of the Woman and the *Nervchik*. Paradoxically, this contamination offsets the characterological weaknesses within which these two types, as a rule, manifested themselves. Like her prototypes, Ibsen's Hedda Gabler and Ellida Wangel, Laura Lenbach is stronger than the soft (not to say effeminate) Horvats I and II; and although she too is a *Magna Peccatrix*, she is not simply an erotically determined female, but also an economic and finally an existential subject on her own. In fact, turning Strindberg upside down, Krleža places her in a furious conflict both with her senile, ex-officer husband, Lenbach, identified with the collapsed Austro-Hungarian lifestyle, and, in the second part of the play, with her younger (and emblematically much more dangerous) *arriviste* lover, Križovec, identified with the upstart Yugoslav monarchy. The third point of this unhappy "eternal triangle" so frequent in Krleža, Križovec is the culmination of the wholly disgusting, subsidiary Krležian type of Sycophantic Lawyer, already adumbrated in my references to Puba I and II of the second-phase dramas. This tight and very densely packed constellation makes for Krleža's perhaps most intense play, where the steel backbone of such rich typologies holds up the equally richly fleshed-out (or innervated) characters of Laura, Lenbach, and Križovec. Similarly, in the extensive and more encompassing *Leda*, Melita and Klara also fuse the Woman and *Nervchik* types. As a result, that play's two main male characters, Oliver and Aurel (who are like the women characters, differentiated by social-class dynamics), retain some of the *Nervchik* traits, but foreground primarily the subsidiary type of Parasite.

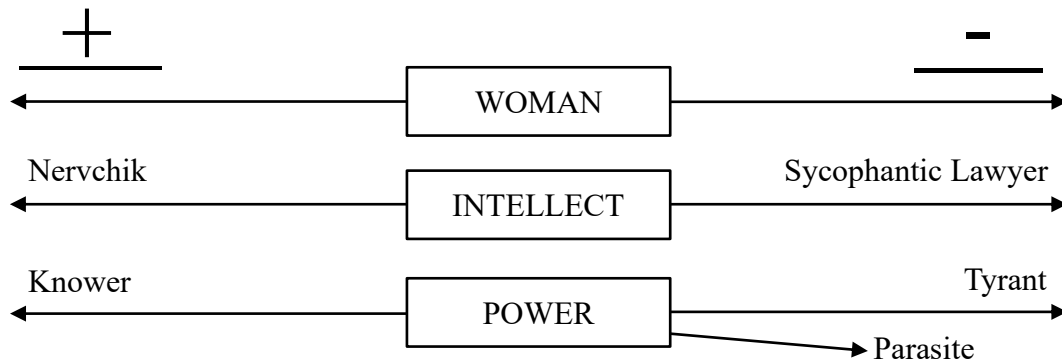
I shall conclude this very condensed overview by mentioning three subsidiary types that flank the Sycophantic Lawyer in Krleža's dramaturgic typology. First, the negative type of Patriarchal Tyrant, by definition male, is characterologically always secondary. But he may grow very important architectonically when the topic or semantic field of "fatherly authority" is foregrounded in a play. This description holds to a smaller or larger degree for the "Holy Father" (the Pope) in *Michelangelo*, the Supervisor in *Golgota*, the higher officers in *U logoru*, and most clearly, the old banker Glembay in *Gospoda Glembajevi* and the businessman Klanfar in *Leda*. The type is contaminated in some other characters by the *Senex ridiculus*, representing the breakdown of such a system of authority, culminating in Lenbach. In the key decoding Intermezzo of *Vučjak*, discussed above, this type is called *Pater diabolicus, legitimus, lupus*; and it should doubtlessly be interpreted primarily as class power and only secondarily (if at all) as the Oedipus complex.

The other two types are the Parasite and the Knower. Both of them appear later and more rarely in Krleža's plays, but they can be found fully developed in his essays and novels; both of them are always male. The Parasite (e.g., in *Leda*) is only mildly negative, a secondary product of the corrupt system and therefore (symmetrically inverse to Woman) merely somewhat more sinning than sinned against. The wholly positive Knower, who is also a Doer, appears in pure form only in Gregor of *U logoru* and possibly in Aretheus, protagonist of the eponymous late play. Finally, the actantial function of Value -- the Bride or *Illusio sacra* -- is never developed as an independent character or indeed type: unless there are some hints in the defeated Laura of *U agoniji*, she (it is always spoken of in female terms) is a utopian necessity dolorously absent from the text itself. For all the empathy, neither the Woman nor the *Nervchik* can fuse successfully with the Knower: Krleža's plays constitute a dramaturgy of permanent rebellion permanently falling back in defeat.

Looking backward at the typology uncovered here, one should note that it is primarily inductive. Its six members - the Woman, *Nervchik*, Sycophantic Lawyer, Tyrant, Knower, and Parasite - are only one rung above textual "facticity." For a fuller buildup of the Krležian typological system, they should be confronted with the system in his other works -- poetry, epic prose, essays.

As a last step here, I can only try to systematize the typological series found. I believe it can be subsumed under the three fundamental topical or semantic fields of Woman, Intellect, and

Power, each of which is a spread running from the axiologically or ethically positive (sympathetic or +) to the negative (antipathetic or -) pole:



(Obviously, Woman is a special case, amoral in the Nietzschean sense of existing beyond morality and immorality.) Further and more systematic permutations of these three fields of types (e.g., with the help of the “semiotic quadrangle” of contraries and contradictories), as well as a careful account of fusions or contaminations of the various fields and positions within them, could fully account, I believe, for the agential structure of Krleža's dramaturgy, i.e., for all of his *dramatis personae*.

In conclusion, it should be reiterated that this typology can best be understood as an updated *baroque typology*. I have elaborated upon this point in a previous essay (see note 1), and I want to stress here only that the updating is a moral-cum-political subversion, a vision from downside-up or from the lower-class point of view. Symmetrically opposite to the baroque religious and authoritarian dogmatics, resolutely this-worldly rather than other-worldly, Krleža's chronotope is, at first implicitly and then quite explicitly, a *socio-historical* one. Social history is omnipresent in his plays as a complex system of the fundamental and deeply rooted presuppositions of several concentric circles. Beginning with the most restricted one, it goes from “Pannonia” (i.e., the geographic space between the rivers Sava and Drava, the linguistic space of the Kajkavian dialect, the cultural space of the area of folk-baroque tradition around the city of Zagreb, etc.), to Croatia, to Yugoslavia, to the quondam Austro-Hungarian empire, and finally to the whole of *Mitteleuropa* -- that miraculously fertile terrain between ancient Burgundy and ancient Muscovy.

NOTES

- 1 By now the secondary literature about Krleža is an ocean. The two huge basic bibliographies by Davor Kapetanić, the primary “Bibliografija djela Miroslava Krleže,” in *Miroslav Krleža* (Zagreb, 1963), pp. 601-773, and the secondary “Literatura o Miroslavu Krleži 1914-1963,” in *Miroslav Krleža* (Beograd, 1964), pp. 335-451, can best be supplemented by Gojko M. Tesić, “Bibliografija o Miroslavu Krleži 1968-1973,” *Književna istorija*, 6 (1973), 351-424, who lists nine other bibliographies up to 1973. So far as I know, there are no separate bibliographies of secondary literature on his approximately 15 plays, nor am I aware of the plays having been translated or performed in English (but I have made no systematic exploration of either domain). For American views up to 1963, see Albert B. Lord, “An American View of Contemporary Yugoslav Literature,” in Charles Jelavich and Tihomir Vulović, eds., *Reports on the American-Yugoslav Seminar, Zadar, June 18 – 23, 1963* (Ljubljana, 1968), pp. 155-162. I have incurred debts toward the Yugoslav “Krležiana” too numerous to detail here, but I want to mention at least the indispensable names of Marko Ristić, Marijan Matković, Miroslav Feller, Branko Gavella, Aleksandar Flaker, Ivo Frangeš, Zdravko Malić, Ivan Slamnig, Mate Lončar, Zoran Konstantinović, and Viktor Žmegač as an indication of deepest debts. The only book-length treatment of some parts of Krleža's theatre

at this time, Branimir Donat's *O pjesničkom teatru Miroslava Krleža* (Zagreb, 1970), I basically dissent from. The reasons for dissent may be evident from my approach to that book's main subject -- Krleža's expressionist plays -- in my contribution to Ivo Frangeš and Aleksandar Flaker eds., *Krležin zbornik* (Zagreb, 1964), and published also in a highly condensed form as "A Voyage to the Stars and Pannonian Mire," *Mosaic* 6 (1973), 169-83, and almost fully as "La Vision des drames expressionistes de M. Krleža et la conscience plébeienne croate," *Most/Le Pont* 1/2 (1982), 25-45.

Note 2024: I have unknotted some complex sentences of 40 years ago and rectified a few details.

- 2 See this initial hypothesis in Darko Suvin, "Per una teoria dell'analisi agenziale," *Versus* 30 (1981), 87-109, which contains a secondary bibliography of over 40 items, and a detailed case study in "Semiotički pogled na neke vidove Vojnovičeve dramaturgije," in Frano Čale ed., *O djelu Iva Vojnovića* (Zagreb, 1981), pp. 319-46. Only titles directly cited in this essay will be identified in the notes; all translations are mine unless a translator is named. I am deeply indebted to the methodology of Lucien Goldmann and Raymond Williams, and to discussions with Marc Angenot, as well as to remarks, qualifications, and objections of William Dodd, Patrick Parrinder, Patrice Pavis, and Maria Vittoria Tessoro.
- 3 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurale* (Paris, 1958), p. 75 – to quote a (fortunately) not quite characteristic formulation by the methodological pioneer of Parisian semiotics.
- 4 Mikhail M. Bakhtin, "Avtor i geroi v èsteticheskoi deiatel'nosti," in his *Èstetika slovesnogo tvorčestva* (Moskva, 1979; originally 1920-1924), pp. 10-11; Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca NY, 1978), pp. 107-08, where three other laments ranging from 1936 to 1966 are also quoted; Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (London, 1980; originally 1975), p. 230; E.M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (Harmondsworth, 1962; originally 1928). I should add that Chatman exaggerates, for at least two kinds of glaring omissions may easily be found in his judgment: the trajectory from a theory of the "problematic individual" to a theory of types in Lukács's opus, and the demonstration of larger applicability of biblical typology in European literature culminating in the works of Auerbach. The two non-structuralist precursors also mentioned in this paragraph are Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale* (Austin, 1974; originally 1928), and Étienne Souriau, *Les Deux cent mille situations dramatiques* (Paris, 1950).
- 5 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurale deux* (Paris, 1973), pp. 16869 and 172. The post-Lévi-Straussian structuralist semioticians referred to in this essay are: Sorin Alexandrescu, *Logique du personnage: Réflexions sur l'univers faulknérien* (Paris, 1974); Claude Bremond, *Logique du récit* (Paris, 1973); Chatman (see note 4); A.-J. Greimas, "Réflexions sur les modèles actantiels," in his *Sémantique structurale: Recherche de méthode* (Paris, 1966), pp. 172-91, and "La Structure des actants du récit," in *Du Sens: Essais sémiotiques* (Paris, 1970), as well as "Les Actants, les acteurs et les figures," in Claude Chabrol ed., *Sémiotique narrative et textuelle* (Paris, 1973); Philippe Hamon, "Pour un statut sémiologique du personnage," *Littérature* no 6 (May 1972), 86-110; François Rastier, *Essais de sémiotique discursive* (Paris, 1973).
- 6 Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (New York, 1957), p. 172 and passim; cf. also Pëtr Bogatyrev, "Les Signes du théâtre," *Poétique* 5 (1971; originally 1938), 524, and Souriau, note 4, pp. 69 and 71.

- 7 Greimas, *rôle* pure and simple in “Structure,” p. 256, and two incompatible types of *rôles actantiels* in “Actants,” pp. 165-66 vs. p. 167, though his shifting, uneconomic, and overlapping categories also include *rôle thématique* in “Actants,” pp. 171-75; this is analysed in detail in Suvin, “Per una teoria dell’analisi agenziale” (see note 2), 90-94.
- 8 Georges Doutrepont, *Les Types populaires de la littérature française* (Bruxelles, 1926); Tzvetan Todorov, *Poétique de la prose* (Paris, 1971); Anne Ubersfeld, *Lire le théâtre* (Paris, 1978).
- 9 William Whewell, *The Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences* (New York & London, rpt. 1967), 1: 494.
- 10 All the examples and quotations from English historical semantics in this paragraph come from Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London, 1976), s.v. “Individual” (pp. 133-36) and “Personality.” (pp. 194-97).
- 11 Such a type of sensitive but ineffectively protesting protagonist and *jeune premier* has deep roots in the European social reality ca. 1870-1925 and it is also often present in the dramaturgy of the time. Lukács has in his early *History of the Development of Modern Drama* (here cited from the Serbo-Croatian edition *Istorija razvoja moderne drame* [Beograd, 1978], pp. 379-80) interesting words about the ubiquity of this type, whom he correctly but harshly calls “a pathological element.”
- 12 Cf. my essay cited in note 1. The best extant introduction to Krleža's opus, Jan Wierzbicki, *Miroslav Krleža* (Zagreb, 1980), devotes chapter 9 to the “figure of the alienated intellectual,” noting its kinship to the expressionist-phase “titans” and its typicality, and chapter 10 to discussion of Krleža's “baroque imagination.”