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Prolegomena to a Semiolinguistic Theory of Character

Modern structuralist and semiotic studies of the verbal arts are credited with having significantly advanced narrative theory, making possible, in particular, a new level of rigor and explicitness in the description of plot structure. But these studies are uniformly adjudged inadequate in their treatment of character. The norm against which this judgment is made, however, is not a competing theory of character, but particular types of narratives to which structuralist theory is assumed to be inapplicable.

Modern structuralist studies derive, directly or indirectly, from Propp's analysis of the Russian fairy tale. Literary critics uniformly assume that folklore is distinctively 'simpler' than written literature in the Western literary tradition. The greater 'complexity' of written literature is assumed to be specifically a complexity in character and not in plot.[1] In part, the presumed difference is quantitative—a greater part of written, 'high' narrative is devoted to character than to plot. If everything but the bare story were to be eliminated, it is claimed, little would remain, particularly of what interests 'sophisticated' readers. Oral literature, in contrast, is said to emphasize plot over character, in that the reader learns no more about the characters than the plot requires. And what the reader does learn is assumed to be less complex, in a qualitative sense. Characters in folklore are said to be mere 'personages', lacking individuated psychological essence. In the folktale, it is claimed, only external attributes are sketched, not the

[1] Some critics regard complexity of plot as a characteristic of 'low' literature (e.g., detective novels), with 'high' literature seen as approaching plotlessness. For such critics, structuralist theory of plot would be of marginal relevance to the study of 'high' literature.

personality traits, motivations, etc. that make for 'full' or 'rounded' characters with the complexity of individuals in real life.

In short, critics feel that there is so great a chasm between oral and written literature, with specific reference to character, that any approach to character that derives from Propp's work, no matter the degree of revision and refinement, will be grossly inadequate. This essay, however, is predicated on the assumption that Propp's work does provide an adequate point of departure for a general theory of character, one that would be valid for all types of narrative literature, oral and written, 'high' and 'low'.[2] To try to justify this assumption by plunging into a comparison of folktales with written narratives and a discussion of how Propp's treatment of character is applicable to written narrative, would be futile. It would constitute a tacit acceptance of certain presuppositions of critics that are fundamentally at issue. These revolve around the conception of a theory of character, and how such a theory is integrated into a theory of narrative. Clarification of these matters, prior to a detailed examination of Propp's work and proposals for its refinement, will dispel some of the doubt about the viability of a structuralist conception of character.

Literary critics' views on narrative, unsystematic and atheoretic as they may seem, do reflect tacit acceptance of one particular conception of a theory—a theory based on 'existence postulates'. The model for structuralist theory is radically different—it is an abstract deductive system of the type advanced in the 'hard' sciences.

A deductive system is 'abstract' insofar as it is independent of reality, i.e., empirical data. More exactly, the premises contain theoretical constructs—terms which do not have any meaning apart from their place in the deductive system—which are manipulative strictly according to logical principles of deduction. The terms *proton* and *electron* in modern physics are theoretical constructs in this sense. Braithwaite (1955: 51) notes that these terms "may have independent meaning in some subjective sense of meaning; I may think of an electron as a minute sphere and of a proton as a minute sphere with a greater mass; but this is not how the words are used in a treatise on physics." Any abstract system can, of course, be interpreted, i.e., given an empirical content, by introducing 'existence postulates', propositions containing terms which can be given a direct meaning, based on

[2] Although all narrative texts possess certain invariant structural or compositional characteristics that allow them to be identified as instances of narrative (as opposed, say, to instances of 'pure' description or exposition), differences among narratives undoubtedly exist. Once a general theory is available, it will provide a framework within which a differentiation of narrative types can systematically be effected.

empirical observation. These terms appear in conclusions drawn from the deductive system (the calculus), but not in the premises.

In the type of theory based on existence postulates, these come first in the logical sequence, rather than occurring solely as conclusions. In other words, the theory based on existence postulates does not contain theoretical constructs. Each term occurring in a postulate can be given a direct meaning, based upon empirical observation or some assumption about reality. This difference in the two types of theory has important consequences. Some of these, with specific reference to linguistics, have been pointed out by Lamb (1966: 546): "since linguistic structure is unavailable to direct observation, the existence-postulate approach must necessarily lead to theories based upon external manifestations of linguistic structure, i.e., phenomena which belong in such domains as psychology, sociology, physiology, and physics; whereas the independent linguistic theory [which is a deductive system] can be a theory of linguistic structure itself", i.e., not anchored in some 'reality' outside language.

The disadvantage of the existence postulate theory is that, since each postulate is directly based upon an assumption about reality, each is independent of the theory as a whole. Consequently, the whole theory collapses if any one of the postulates fails to correspond to reality. With the other type of theory, "the check . . . for correspondence with the empirical data comes only after the whole theory is constructed, so that each aspect of this checking can be made in the context of the total theory" (Lamb, 546).

While none of the structuralist work in narrative can be said to be advanced enough to be formalized as a hypothetico-deductive system, it is oriented in that direction. More exactly, its immediate goal is a formal system of definitions, and such a system need not be part of a mathematico-deductive calculus. Such a system is one in which all of the definitions presuppose other definitions in the same system, with the exception of a minimum of undefined terms (cf. Lamb, 556). Thus, the term *character* would have no meaning apart from its place in the total system; in other words, its definition would not be directly tied to assumptions about reality. This is the ultimate—unwitting—import of Barthes' observation that "Structural analysts, scrupulously avoiding to define the character in terms of psychological essences, . . . define the character not as a 'being' but as a 'participant' " (1966: 16).[3]

[3] The context of Barthes' remarks, including certain comments on Propp's work, clearly indicates his failure to recognize the existence of two distinct conceptions of a theory. Other writers, essentially following Barthes, see the distinction between literary criticism and structuralist narrative theory as reflecting a difference in ideology or world view.

To define a character as a 'being' is, in effect, to formulate an existence postulate in which *character* is given a direct meaning based on some aspect of non-literary reality—namely, our observations and inferences concerning the personality traits and motiviations of people around us. The vulnerability of a narrative theory containing such a postulate can easily be demonstrated. As we have indicated, critics holding this conception of character reject the structuralist conception, on the grounds that it holds only for the 'simple' narratives of folklore and, possibly, written works of 'low' literature. However, the critics' notion holds for only a very restricted part of 'high' written literature, that produced in the tradition of realism that was dominant in the nineteenth century.

If a discussion of types of theory still seems rather remote from literary study, we can rephrase the same basic issues in terms that are more familiar. The structuralist conception of narrative (and character) is formalistic, whereas literary critics who reject it hold a non-formalistic conception. *Formalistic* in this context, it should be stressed, does not exclude meaning, though it does exclude reference. The relevant contrast is between 'formal' and 'substantial', in approximately the Saussurian sense of the extra-linguistic, or 'pre-linguistic', reality that language can refer to (denote). Meaning can be treated formally, in terms of language-internal 'sense-relations' (cf. Lyons 1968: 424ff).

A non-formal conception of narrative is thus one that treats narrative discourse as transparently mimetic. Apropos is Barthes' (1970: 154) observation, with respect to historical discourse, that it "like all discourse with pretensions to 'realism', . . . believes it need recognize no more than two terms, referent and expression, in its semantic model" (cf. also Hendricks 1974). A formal conception of narrative would recognize that beyond the language of the narrative text, there is not some extra-textual 'world' of 'events-in-themselves'. Rather, there is an organized semiotic representation—a complex 'message', generated by a second-order semiotic code, which is manifested by the first-order code that is 'human language' in the usual acceptation of the expression. In this conception characters are not 'persons', but semiotic entities.[4]

The above conception of narrative, as developed within the framework of semiolinguistics (Hendricks 1973b), becomes a theory of the global structure that underlies any narrative text—a structure that is distinct

[4] Although literary critics do not generally recognize the formal nature of characters, they do recognize that what characters say cannot be taken as straight-forward assertions possessing a truth-value; rather, the dialog of characters in a novel is seen as fulfilling certain purely poetic functions.

from—on a higher stratum than—the language of the text itself. A semiolinguistic theory of character in particular is a theory of one component of this global structure.

Note that this formal approach does not preclude a distinction between the 'psychological' and the 'apsychological' narrative. It can be formulated in terms of the type of properties predicated of the characters: an apsychological description would be restricted to external traits—age, sex, physical appearance, etc.; a psychological description would utilize internal traits pertaining to personality, attitude, etc. These two types of traits approximately correlate with the formal grammatical distinction between stative and non-stative adjectives. A stative adjective cannot occur in predicative position with a verb in the progressive, whereas a non-stative adjective can; cf. **Mary is being beautiful* with *Mary is being deceitful.*

The greater complexity critics attribute to 'high' literature can be reinterpreted in terms of this formal distinction between character attributes. They would claim, then, that folklore and 'low' literature do not utilize psychological traits and hence the theory of character that has developed from the study of such narratives cannot do justice to high art. However, there is one serious weakness in critics' notion of psychological narrative. They take it to imply that definite discrete blocks of text explicitly set forth internal traits; but this is true of only one particular literary technique—that of direct characterization. Another widely used technique is that of indirect characterization. It is one in which the author implies personality traits by 'showing' us the characters in psychologically revealing acts. This technique ultimately rests on the fact that most of the vocabulary for representing action is not objective. A given verb will often convey or strongly imply information about the agents (and/or the author); cf. the difference between *He put the money on the table* and *He flung the money on the table.* The verb *fling* is typical of the vocabulary of action in that it has certain semantic components indicative of motivation, etc. that are transferable to the agent.[5]

If most verbs of 'action' imply psychological traits, then it would seem that all narratives exemplify the indirect method of characterization. Maxcey (1911: 117), in fact, has noted that there is hardly a narrative, from the simplest to the most complex, that does not exemplify the indirect method. He cites as an example the fact that, from the simple outline of the parable of the prodigal son, generations of sermon writers have produced a veritable library of psychological interpretations of the major dramatis personae.

[5] Note that most verbs, like the psychological adjectives, are non-stative.

If psychological interpretations can be as diverse as Maxcey indicates, then this could be seen as an indication of the essentially apsychological nature of 'simple' narratives, with the psychological aspect being imposed by the analyst. It could be argued that there needs to be some objective evidence that the author intends for psychological traits to be inferred. It is not clear what such objective evidence would consist of. Total uniformity of analysis is not a feasible criterion. By using the indirect technique, authors necessarily relinquish some control over the reader's response.

One possible objective indicator of the indirect method would be the author's inclusion of actions that do not contribute to the plot development, but serve exclusively to imply character traits. This indicator is present in a number of narratives that literary critics prejudge to be apsychological, including the Russian fairy tale investigated by Propp. In a discussion of instances in which the expulsion of someone in the Russian tale is not the doings of a villain, but rather "the unsavory character of the person exiled", Propp cites a tale in which a son tears off the arms and legs of passers-by, and is driven out by his grandfather. "Although the deeds of the exiled person constitute *action*, the tearing off of arms and legs cannot be considered as a function of the course of the action. It is a *quality* of the hero, expressed in the acts which serve as the motive for his expulsion" (Propp 1968: 76).

It seems fairly certain that direct and indirect characterization are not mutually exclusive, but are complementary. One reason is that for the delineation of external appearance, etc., the author necessarily has to use the direct method.[6] Certain aspects of internal characterization, especially a character's 'stream of consciousness', cannot really be implied by action —a fact which accounts in part for the differences between written narrative proper on the one hand; and drama and cinema, on the other. Furthermore, there is the fact that internal and external traits are often closely linked. A physical trait may serve as a 'sign' of a particular personality type (cf. Wellek and Warren 1956: ch. 16).

There is much to learned about literary techniques of characterization— but we should not lose sight of the fact that a theory of *characterization* is not identical to a theory of *character*. Critics, however, tend to confuse the two—as some of their objections to structuralist theory of character indicate. The two can succinctly be differentiated by referring back to the semiolinguistic model of narrative discourse sketched earlier. The object of a theory of character is one component of the global narrative structure that lies on

[6] The possibility of inferring some physical traits from action does exist to a restricted degree—but it has limited applicability (e.g., in detective fiction).

a stratum above that of the linguistic structures which serve to manifest the narrative structure. There is no simple one-one relation between units on the two strata. What accounts for the discrepancy between them is the range of narrative techniques or devices, which intervene between narrative structure and the textual surface. The differences critics note between 'psychological' and 'apsychological' narrative pertain to reflections on the textual surface of the particular techniques used by the author. These differences do not exist on the stratum of narrative structure. In the representation of narrative structure, all character traits are explicitly indicated, irregardless of their mode of manifestation on the textual surface. In other words, the underlying structure of a narrative in which the technique of direct characterization is utilized will not differ in form from the underlying representation of a narrative in which the indirect technique is utilized. One and the same narrative structure can be actualized in various ways—the character traits can overtly occur, in blocks of text more or less distinct from the 'plot' proper; or there may be a syncretism whereby plot and character traits are manifested in a single 'action' statement. This option is comparable to the one in English morphology, whereby Verb + Past Tense can have an analytic manifestation (*hunt-ed*), or a more synthetic manifestation (*win* + *-ed*=*won*).

We do not want to give the impression that the study of technique has no place at all in the semiolinguistic approach to narrative. It is true that many structuralists have focused almost exclusively on the underlying structures, but this has been in reaction to the fact that before the ascendancy of structuralist studies, narrative technique was almost the sole subject of literary discussions of narrative. However, the semiolinguistic approach is committed to bridging the gap, ultimately, between underlying structure and its linguistic manifestation. From this perspective, the study of technique is not an end in itself, but the means of dealing with the disparities between the first-order and second-order semiotic systems.

Although it is customary to speak of mappings of narrative structures onto linguistic structures, this does not mandate adoption of a generative-transformational model; that is, one in which abstract underlying structures are first generated, then 'transformed' or mapped onto surface structures. An alternative—and the one we adopt—is to proceed from the text itself to the underlying structure. The 'mapping rules' in this case take the form of a set of text processing procedures. These, however, are not 'discovery procedures'; i.e., they do not pretend to constitute a mechanial means of discovering the underlying narrative structure. The form and units of narrative structure are known prior to the analyst's formulation of the

steps of the procedure. And he must intuite the substantial structure of a given narrative text before applying the procedures to it. (For more discussion, see Hendricks 1973a.)

It should be reemphasized that the text processing procedures, while part of a complete theory of narrative, are not part of the theory of character proper. The two are potentially confusable, especially since part of the procedures consist in the analyst's drawing inference about character traits from the plot actions, in the case of narratives exemplifying the technique of indirect characterization. The confusion is compounded if the text processing procedures are regarded as constituting part of a theory of 'reading', in the sense of being a model of the cognitive strategies used by an individual in reading a text with 'understanding'. ('Reading' in this sense is akin to sentence processing, which is an aspect of what Chomsky terms 'linguistic performance', as distinct from 'competence'.)

After this preliminary clarification of what is meant by a theory of character, we can now turn our attention to specifying in detail the units of narrative structure and their interrelationship, and how they are to be represented. At present we have no clear idea about the exact nature of the structures underlying coherent discourse; but a widely adopted heuristic is to proceed as if these structures are comparable to syntactic structures. The specific comparison of narrative structure with sentence structure has so far not proved to be particularly fruitful. In part, this has been due to the absence of an adequate conception of the relation between narrative structure and sentence structure; and, in part, the conceptions of sentence structure available in the past were not very amenable to a fruitful analogy.

Consider, for example, the simplest form the analogy can take: character = (proper) nouns; plot = verbs. However, this does not go far enough; we need to specify how these parts interrelate to form a whole. The simplest conception is to regard narrative structure in the light of the structure of a single sentence; i.e., to assume that 'plot' and 'character' are clearly distinct units that can be combined to form a narrative in the same way nouns and verb are put together to form a sentence. One serious drawback to this analogy is that 'plot' is usually defined as the sequence of events in a story (and the principle that unites them). It would thus seem that any model of syntactic structure would fail to capture either the dynamic or combinatory aspect of plot. Some proponents of the analogy try to make it acceptable by nothing that a whole novel could be summarized in a single sentence (e.g., Sayce 1957). But such a summarization would be too gross to reveal much about the structural organization of the work.[7]

[7] If the internal semantic structure of a single action/process verb is taken into account

To be productive, the analogy between syntactic and narrative structure must be based on the assumption that narrative structure can be represented by a sequence or concatenation of units, each of which has a form or structural organization comparable to that of the sentence. That is, the basic analogy must be between the sentence and a constituent part of narrative structure, a part we propose terming the *narrative proposition.* An investigation into plot structure would deal with the syntagmatic organization of narrative units into a whole, and this is an area where syntax provides no suitable model. Plot structure is not illuminated by positing a simple conjoining operation comparable to that in syntax. Most efforts to date to extend linguistics beyond the sentence (or clause) do not offer very illuminating models either. For our purpose, that of sketching the foundations of a theory of character, we need only to focus on the internal structure of the narrative proposition and not on the syntagmatic relationships it enters into.

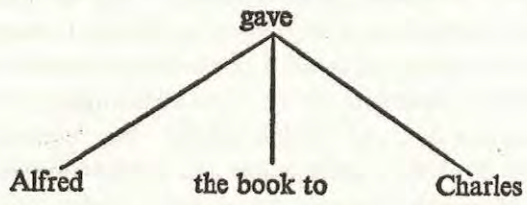
As for the justification for representing units of narrative structure in terms of syntactic structure, we can reiterate the fact that the narrative 'world' that transcends the language of a narrative text is not a collection of physical denotata, but rather, a realm of meaning. What the language of a narrative text refers to or denotes is not external reality, but a 'higher' level of meaning, a variant of what Hjelmslev (1961) referred to as 'connoted meaning'. Narrative is a semiotic entity, not a denotative (extralinguistic) entity. Furthermore, as Weinreich (1966: 447) noted, sentences which constitute definitions of dictionary entries are formally non-distinct from sentences that function as parts of normal discourse; in other words, a natural language functions as its own metalanguage. Of course, the narrative structures are not 'metalinguistic', but 'connotative'; but in Hjelmslev's system, both metalanguage and connotation involve first and second-order significative systems in a 'staggered' relationship. Despite the similarity in form, the narrative proposition—it should be reemphasized—is not identical with any actual sentence of the narrative text.[8] It is on a higher stratum, and it will normally be manifested by a sequence of sentences on the textual surface.

—analyzed as a transition from an initial state to a final one—the analogy with a single sentence becomes somewhat more acceptable, though still subject to the criticism of being at too gross a level.

[8] Narrative propositions differ from sentences of the textual surface in that the narrative function, unlike the 'action' verbs of the constituent sentences of the text, do not have connotations that allow character traits to be inferred. Narrative functions form a restricted set, provided by general narrative theory, and they are defined so as to exclude such connotations.

Given the clarification that the analogy between syntax and narrative structure pertains to constituent units of that structure, it is not the case that just any conception of sentence structure will serve as an adequate model for the basic unit. Consider the conception of sentence structure that was prevalent until recently. At the highest level of abstraction, a sentence was said to consist of a noun phrase ('subject') and a verb phrase ('predicate'), where the latter has as its constituents the main verb and any associated noun complements (direct object, indirect object, etc.). In other words, one noun (the grammatical subject) is given prominence over the other nouns, which form a subordinate part of the predicate.[9] Furthermore, the general assumption was that the subject noun governs or 'selects' the verb that can occur with it, i.e., the verb is subordinate to the subject noun (see Chomsky 1965).

For purposes of capturing the analytic separability of narrative structure (and its units) into the two aspects, 'plot' and 'character', we need a conception of sentence structure that treats nouns as coeval elements vis-a-vis the main verb of the clause. Such a conception has in fact been recently embraced by a number of linguists; and it can be traced back at least to the French syntactician Lucien Tesnière (1959); see Robins (1966), whose discussion of Tesnière we follow. Consider, for example, the sentence *Alfred gave the book to Charles.* Rather than analyzing this into the two parts *Alfred* and *gave the book to Charles*, Tesnière would diagram it as follows:



As the diagram implies, Tesnière regarded the main verb as the central (governing) element of the sentence, with all of the nouns subordinate to it. Centrality of the verb is not a trivial contention—it correlates with some of the major differences between contemporary syntactic research and that of the earlier 'descriptivist' era. Note that most arguments that the subject noun governs the verb are purely formal and pertain to 'surface' structure, e.g., subject-verb agreement. For example, a sentence such as *The birds is*

[9] This conception of syntactic structure can serve as a model for the delineation of one particular character as principal, the 'hero' (see Sayce 1957: 129). But our concern is not with an internal ranking of the characters themselves, but with their relation as a whole to the 'plot' as an analytically separable component of the narrative.

singing would normally be interpreted as referring to more than one bird, but containing an error in verb agreement; that is, the number of the verb is assumed to be governed by the subject noun.

The evidence for the centrality of the verb, in contrast, is of a grammatico-semantic nature, pertaining to 'deep' rather than 'surface' structure. One compelling piece of evidence is that the native speaker, confronted with an unusual noun-verb collocation, e.g., *the chair cried*, will most likely interpret *chair* as if it were animate since *cry* normally cooccurs with an animate noun as subject (cf. Chafe 1970: 97). This example should call to mind our earlier discussion of the inferentiality of character traits from action. This process clearly is congruent with a syntactic model in which the verb is the governing element of the sentence.

Because of the increasing interest among linguists in underlying representations of sentences that are semantically perspicuous, the verb-centered approach has been rather widely embraced. However, the most direct influence on American linguists has not been Tesnière's work (though cf. Fillmore 1968: 17), but modern symbolic logic, which concerns itself with the 'propositional' content of sentences. The notation of sentences in terms of the functional calculus is also one in which the verb is central, the nouns peripheral. The sentence diagrammed earlier in the manner of Tesnière would have approximately the following representation in the functional calculus: gave (Alfred, book, Charles). In logical terminology, *gave* is a 'function'; and *Alfred*, *book*, and *Charles* are 'arguments'. Functions in logic are classified as one-place, two-place, etc., depending upon the number of arguments they conceptually require. For example, the function *sleep* is one-place (*John slept*), whereas *give* is three-place.

It is an oversimplification to equate logical function with the grammatical category 'verb'; and argument with 'noun'. From the perspective of logic, most major parts of speech are 'functions'. The basic dichotomy is between 'things' and the properties or relations (i.e., functions) that can be ascribed to those things. The simplest kind of argument, according to Reichenbach (1966: 255), is a proper noun—a symbol coordinated by definition to an individual thing. But there obviously are many more individual things that we refer to in our daily use of language than there are proper names. Natural language has a way of overcoming this problem—the method of 'description'. For example, various nominalizations can be used (*the pretty girl in the yellow dress*, etc.). These identify just as proper nouns do, the only difference being that they have internal syntactic structure. Even a single common noun (e.g., *anthropologist*) can be termed a 'description' in this sense; thus the sentence *John saw the anthropologist* would have the

following logical representation: (∃Y) a(Y). s(X_1, Y). This may be verbalized as 'John (X_1) saw (s) someone (Y), and this individual is an anthropologist (a).' The logical representation captures the fact that common nouns in ordinary language are not purely denominative, but are a syncretism of denomination and description. However, indefinite nouns occurring in the predicative position are purely descriptive (equivalent to a one-place function); e.g., *John is a bachelor*. Here *bachelor* does not denote an individual, but describes the individual identified as 'John'.

The logical analysis of common nouns can be traced back at least to the writers of the Port-Royal Logic (see Chomsky 1966: 43f), who spoke of sentences such as *John saw the anthropologist* as expressing a 'complex' proposition (a combination of two simple propositions). Linguistic evidence of this complexity includes the fact that such a sentence can be negated (contradicted) in two different ways: it can be denied that John saw anyone, or that the person John saw was an anthropologist. In schematic form, we can have either:

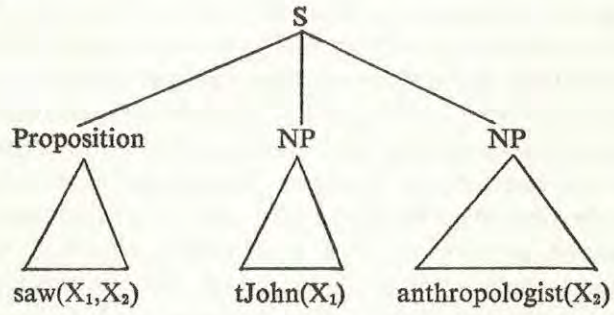
(i) Negative (John saw someone). This one was an anthropologist.
(ii) John saw someone. Negative (This one was an anthopologist).

Actually, the above sentence is at least three-ways ambiguous: it can also be denied that John was the one who saw the anthropologist. This fact suggests that proper nouns are not 'pure' logical arguments. They may tilt more to the denominative than common nouns, but they generally contain some descriptive components—e.g., a name can indicate nationality (Johann vs. John) sex (John vs. Joanna), and so on. Thus, a name can be treated as a property (one-place function) attributed to a denotatively 'pure' argument. A simplified representation of *John saw the anthropologist* along these lines would be: saw(X_1, X_2). John(X_1). anthropologist(X_2).

Some linguists (e.g., Bach 1968) have based their analysis of sentential deep structure on the type of logical analysis sketched above. Other linguists have argued that certain basic modifications of logical analysis are necessary in order to adequately account for natural language. We will briefly discuss one instance here, which will prove to be particularly pertinent to narrative theory. McCawley (1971: 223) has pointed out that a logical representation of the type just presented would have to be modified if it is to correctly present the meaning, in normal usage, of a sentence such as *John saw the anthropologist*. The conventions of logic are such that to deny a conjunction is to assert that at least one of the conjuncts is false. But someone who says, "I deny that John saw the anthropologist" is specifically denying the conjunct saw(X_1, X_2), not the conjuncts that assert that X_1 (the individual denoted by this argument) is called 'John', or that X_2 is an anthropologist.

Note that these observations do not contradict the claim that *John saw the anthropologist* can be negated in at least three ways. Consider an instance in which someone asserts, "I deny that John saw *the anthropologist*", where italics indicate stress. In this instance, what is being denied is that John saw a particular individual (denoted by X_2). It is not being denied that X_2 is an anthropologist. The speaker could go on to assert that John saw another individual (denoted X_3, who could be described, say, as a psychologist).

It thus appears, to paraphrase McCawley (223), that in some sense the meanings of the expressions *John* and *the anthropologist* play a subordinate role in the meaning of the sentence *John saw the anthropologist*. If symbolic logic is to provide an adequate representation of meanings in natural language, it will have to be supplemented by a device for indicating this subordination. Such a device is lacking in logic because it has been used primarily to represent mathematical propositions, which contain entities that have been either explicitly postulated or defined. In ordinary uses of language, however, one does not begin a conversation with a list of explicit definitions. McCawley suggests (224) that noun phrases fulfill a function comparable to postulates and definitions in mathematics—they state properties which the speaker assumes are possessed by the entities he is talking about. McCawley proposes that the semantic representation of a sentence consist of a 'proposition' and a set of noun phrases, which would provide the material used in identifying the arguments of the proposition. Our illustrative sentence would have the following representation (adapted from McCawley).



After this brief exposition of some recent conceptions of sentence structure, we are now ready to return to a consideration of the analogy between syntactic structure and narrative structure. It is clear that we have come a long way from the simple equation of characters with nouns; and plot with verbs. For one, instead of the single category noun, we have two entities,

denominative arguments and descriptive one-place functions. The latter comprises names, as well as other properties predicated of the arguments associated with the functions.

The usefulness of this rather abstract conception of sentence structure as a model for (units of) narrative structure can be shown by demonstrating how certain essential remarks made by Aristotle in the *Poetics* can be re-interpreted in terms of it.[10] First, consider Aristotle's observation that ". . . without action there cannot be a tragedy; there may be without character" (VI, 9). Such an assertion would not seem to make any sense if the translation into linguistic terms were based on the simple equation of characters with nouns, and plot actions with verbs. Sentences necessarily consist of a verb and at least one noun. The only exceptions (other than sentences such as *It's raining*, which are sometimes treated as lacking a noun) are elliptical sentences. However, such sentences have nouns (arguments) in their underlying representation—this is why reference is made to the number of arguments 'conceptually required' by a given function; not all arguments are necessarily manifested in an actual sentence. Since our discussion pertains to narrative structure and not to its linguistic manifestation, the usual notion of ellipsis is inapplicable.

To be properly interpreted, Aristotle's comment needs to be placed within the context of his own set of definitions. He stipulates that "Tragedy is the imitation of an action; and an action implies personal agents, who necessarily possess certain distinctive qualities both of character and thought . . . By Character I mean that in virtue of which we ascribe certain qualities to the agents" (VI, 5). Note that Aristotle, by referring to both 'characters' and to 'agents', recognizes two types of entities. These seem to basically correspond to those proposed by McCawley—the 'agents' are the arguments conceptually required by each function; and 'character' is a matter of the associated 'NP's', which give the properties of each agent.

Note that Aristotle actually refers to the possibility of a tragedy without character, not one without characters. This points up a confusing ambiguity in the term *character*. It can refer either to an individual 'agent' in a narrative; or, as a sort of 'mass' noun lacking a normal plural, it can refer to the assemblage of all the properties that are predicated of the arguments entering into the narrative propositions. It is the mass noun that is used in speaking of plot and character as the two major structural components of a narrative. In this context, we do not refer to 'plot and characters'.

[10] We cite the English translation by S. H. Butcher.

To avoid confusion, there should be a modification in terminology. One possibility would be to restrict the term *character* to its usage as a mass noun. We would then need a replacement for the 'count' noun *character/characters*. The term *agent*, used above, is not suitable; as we will presently see, it must be reserved for another concept.[11] We propose the term *participant/participants* to refer to individuals minus all properties that may be predicated of them, including proper names. (*Argument* will be reserved for a minimally distinct symbol, e.g., *X*, that denotes a 'participant'.) This terminological distinction between *character* and *participant* has the virtue of capturing the insight that nomenclature constitutes the minimal degree of characterization.[12]

One terminological problem remains, for the count term *character*, in popular usage and in the usage of literary critics as well, does not refer to an individual minus all properties. Rather, a character is, say, 'Duncan, king of Scotland'; or 'Banquo, a general of the king's army'; or 'Fleance, son to Banquo'; etc. In other words, a 'character', in general usage, does not refer to an individual denoted by an *X* or a *Y*, but implies reference to a minimal amount of information that serves to unambiguously identify the participants—proper name, social or consangual relation to another participant, etc. An appropriate term for characters in this sense is *dramatis personae* (with singular *dramatis persona*). This term is perhaps most closely identified with the drama, where by convention the published text of a play is preceded by a list of all the participants identified by name and a descriptive phrase. The example just cited (Banquo, etc.) comes from the text of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

Essentially the same type of information provided by a list of dramatis personae is included in a so-called 'index of characters' that a literary scholar may prepare for the work of a given author. For example, the index Brooks (1963) prepared for the works of Faulkner includes the following entries: "Benbow, Horace (Belle Mitchell's second husband) . . ." "Snopes, Flem (son of Ab by his second wife) . . .", etc.[13]

It is the type of information provided by character indices, etc. that, strictly speaking, basically corresponds to what the 'NP's' provide in McCawley's model of syntactic structure. 'Character' in the literary sense

[11] This concept is that of the 'role' an argument plays in the narrative proposition. Our equation of Aristotle's 'agents' with McCawley's units in the proposition thus needs to be modified.

[12] This insight is implicit in Propp (1968: 87; cf. also 112–13); he notes that "The nomenclature and attributes of characters are variable quantities of the tale."

[13] Character indices such as Brooks' generally include page numbers of the works in which each character appears.

transcends mere identification; it is a matter of description. However, the distinction between properties that identify and those that describe is one of function and not form. And the 'function' pertains to the textual surface —the way in which characters are referred to in the course of the narrative, and the syntactic form in which properties are actualized (e.g., whether by means of restrictive or non-restrictive relative clauses). Note that the properties chosen by critics for inclusion in indices are more or less randomly chosen—they are not necessarily properties utilized in the participant identification system of the narrative text. For our purposes, properties that identify may be regarded as a subset of those that describe. The term *character* thus refers to the assemblage of *all* the properties that are predicated of the participants in the underlying representation of narrative structure. 'Character' constitutes the description of the participants.

Let us now consider a second assertion (correlative to the first) made by Aristotle in the *Poetics* that can be related to the model of syntactic structure (adapted from McCawley). According to Aristotle, plot is "the first principle, and, as it were, the soul of a tragedy: Character holds the second place" (VI, 14). This statement is equivalent to the assertion that NP's are subordinate to the proposition in syntactic structure. However, it may be objected that the syntactic model does not provide a completely satisfactory basis for the claim that a universal characteristic of narrative structure is that the structural component 'character' has a subordinate status to the component 'plot'. This is a crucial claim to establish, for literary critics base their rejection of the structuralist approach to character on the supposed 'fact' that some narratives ('low') are plot-dominated, whereas others ('high') are marked by the domination of character over plot.

Objection to the syntactic model as an analogue to narrative structure could take the following course. The syntactic model is one of individual sentences. In the representation of the underlying structure, there is an analytic division into a proposition and a set of NP's. These two components are always realized syncretically, as one sentence, and not as a sequence of an 'action' sentence (N + Vtr + N) and a 'descriptive' sentence (N is Adj). In the case of narrative structure, our model is one of a clear-cut separation of two components or sub-structures, 'plot' and 'character'. The former is represented by a syntagmatic chain of propositions. The latter is the assemblage of the properties predicated of all the arguments that occur in the various propositions. There will generally be a much greater number of properties posited for the arguments of narrative propositions than for syntactic propositions, since the narrative properties go beyond bare identification. Furthermore, we do not pair each narrative

proposition with a set of associated NP's, for the two components do not necessarily have a syncretic realization. They have an analytic (discrete) realization in the case of narratives in which the technique of direct characterization is used; that is, some of the NP's may be directly manifested as a sequence of descriptive statements. Consider these remarks by Wellek and Warren (1956: 208-09): "Older novelists like Scott introduce each of their major persons by a paragraph describing in detail the physical appearance and another analyzing the moral and psychological nature."

Our claim is that the aggregate of NP's in the underlying narrative structure are subordinate, as a block, to the narrative propositions, even when analytic manifestations occur (such as described by Wellek and Warren). This claim can be justified as follows. Note first that Maxcey, in discussing the direct method of characterization, states that the writer presents the various phases of his subject with all the exactness that would attend the definition of a term (114). This manner of speaking about direct characterization is reminiscent of McCawley's discussion of the difference between mathematical discourse and the everyday use of language: "one does not begin a conversation by giving a list of . . . definitions" (223). The device of subordination that McCawley proposes for the representation of syntactic structure is, in effect, in lieu of the characteristic of mathematical discourse beginning with a list of definitions.

The above remarks are only meant to be suggestive. Obviously, narrative discourse is part of natural language. What the above discussion indirectly acknowledges is that 'plot' and 'character' are disparate kinds of structure. More exactly, they correspond to two distinct types of discursive prose, which can be approximately correlated with the difference in grammatical form of the propositions representing them. The types are narration proper and description/exposition. 'Character' in effect is a set of 'descriptions' of the participants in the narrative events—regardless of whether these descriptions are directly manifested, or syncretized with plot events.[14]

Texts exist which are purely descriptive and/or expository. However, description, when it occurs in conjunction with narration proper, in what we term 'narrative discourse', is always *ancilla narrationes* (see Genette

[14] 'Description' is sometimes regarded as a third component of narrative, with plot and character being the other two. However, the only difference between 'character' and 'description' in that sense is that the latter is restricted to inanimate objects, the setting or 'scene' in which the narrative events take place. In our model of narrative structure, description of scene is not included in the representation of underlying structure. Such descriptions are assumed to be introduced as part of the operation of mapping underlying structure onto the textual surface. It is likely, however, that indicators need to be included in the underlying representation of permissible 'slots' for descriptions of scene.

1966: 157). That is to say, if a text is classified as a narrative, this implies that the instances of description are subordinate to the narration proper—even if, as in 'psychological' narratives, the description is quantitatively superior to the plot.[15]

The import of this is that a careful distinction should be drawn between 'theory of narrative' and 'theory of narration'. The theory of narration, in terms of our model, focuses on the narrative propositions and their interrelation. A theory of narrative encompasses a theory of narration as well as a theory of character. What we have at present is actually a rather developed theory of narration, with only the rudiments of a theory of character. Advances in the latter are likely to come from research into the structure of non-literary discourse, such as the essay. To assert, as some literary critics do, that structuralist and semiotic studies have concentrated on 'plot' to the almost total exclusion of 'character' is tantamount to asserting that efforts to date have focused on the superordinate component in narrative discourse (narration), to the relative exclusion of the subordinate component. Thus, critics who value 'character' over 'plot' are, in effect, expressing their lack of interest in narration.

Any theory of narration must ultimately be integrated into a theory of narrative. What will be required to achieve such a theory is not merely the development of a theory of description (of narrative participants), but also an understanding of how description is organically related to narration. A text that is pure narration probably does not exist. Maxcey was aware of the problem, for in his discussion of direct characterization (a discussion that applies to the underlying structure of all narrative discourse), he states that since it is essentially expository in nature, it is not structurally of a piece with the writing of which it is a part (115).

Literary critics generally do not concern themselves with such problems. Their approach to character is largely limited to judging the writer's characterizations in terms of their verisimilitude. They thus end up valuing conglomerations lacking global unity, for nothing in their conception of character indicates how individual traits contribute to the larger whole, save for being 'decoration'.[16] Character, in other words, is treated as one aspect of 'texture' rather than 'structure'.

[15] Incidentally, the claim that in psychological narrative, description predominates over plot may simply result from an overly restrictive notion of plot. Plot, however, is not to be equated with physical action, 'adventure'; it includes 'stative' interrelations of dramatis personae. In fact, most representations of plot consist of a syntagmatic chain of various 'states' of interaction of two participants.

[16] Concern for unity or coherence is largely restricted to each individual 'portrait', that is, a concern for how the individual traits attributed to an individual participant, or

However, there is one approach recognized in traditional literary criticism that does aim at integrating character into the over-all structure of the narrative. This is so-called 'thematic analysis', in which the properties of of the participants are given symbolic significance. Note, however, that this approach does not constitute an analysis of character in itself—character traits are merely a means to an end. A thematic approach is ultimately opposed to the conception of characters as 'persons'; the interest is not in the characters themselves, but in them as carriers of abstract conceptual notions.

We have already rejected the naive view of characters as persons; and it may well be that character in the sense of individual portraiture, while amenable to a semiotic analysis, is nevertheless an aspect of the texture of narrative. Rather than 'plot' and 'character' being the two basic components of narrative structure, the two components may be plot and theme; or, in more abstract terms, narrative structure may be a combination of syntagmatic and paradigmatic structures. This implies that the future development of narrative theory (as distinct from theory of narration) will be dependent upon advances in thematic analysis. As currently practiced by literary critics, thematic analysis is an intuitive, ad hoc process. Structuralist and semiotic theorists have not yet made much headway in formulating a more rigorous theory and methodology of thematic analysis.

Propp's work on the Russian fairy tale does not offer much help in the area of thematics. It is true that he does sketch one type of 'thematic' approach, which he regards as supplementing his focus on the 'structure' of the tale (i.e., analysis into functions). But, as Propp notes, "since no single, generally accepted interpretation of the word 'theme' . . . exists, we have carte blanche and may define this concept in our own way" (1968: 113). Propp's concept of theme is therefore idiomatic, being a matter of the particular dramatis personae (and associated properties) who appear in the various tales. He notes, "From the point of view of composition, it does not matter whether a dragon kidnaps a princess or whether a devil makes off with either a priest's or a peasant's daughter. But these cases may be examined as different themes" (113).

Propp's 'thematic' analysis is clearly the same thing as the 'accessory study' of the tale that he alluded to at the beginning of his monograph: "The question of *what* a tale's dramatis personae do is an important one for the study of the tale, but the question of *who* does it and *how* it is done

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inferrable from his actions, coalese in one consistent portrayal. This concern could form part of an analysis of the conventions of 'realism' of character delineation, and the criteria for acceptable inference of traits from action.

already fall within the province of accessory study" (20). Propp only sketches his thematic approach in the *Morphology* (ch VIII and Appendix I); a fuller treatment is the subject of his paper on "Fairy Tale Transformations" (Propp 1971). Unlike the thematic approach of literary criticism, Propp's approach does focus on the traits of the narrative participants themselves; but his concern is not with the individual tale—it is with the entire corpus of Russian fairy tales. His study deals with the 'transformations' such traits undergo from tale to tale. These transformations are not to be confused with grammatical transformations (as developed by Harris and Chomsky). The proper analogy is with the laws of sound change developed by nineteenth century historical linguists. Propp explicitly speaks of reconstructing a 'proto' form of the Russian tale, from which all the others could be derived (89).

Propp's approach to character might seem irrelevant to the study of 'high' written literature—but critics do concern themselves with groups of texts, particularly the complete works of a given writer. Propp's approach actually offers several advances over the non-analytic character indices that critics sometimes prepare; e.g., the index for Faulkner prepared by Brooks that we cited earlier (cf. Propp 1968: 91).[17]

At this point we have reached an impasse in our efforts to lay the foundation for a theory of character in the Aristotelian sense (the description of participants in the narrative events) that would pertain to narratives considered individually. However, there does remain another avenue to explore, and Propp's work provides a good point of departure. When critics talk about Propp's treatment of character, and the structuralist theory that derives from it, they are not primarily referring to Propp's 'transformational' analysis of properties of participants; rather, they are referring to what Propp (1968: 100) himself termed his 'seven-personage scheme', consisting of hero, villain, false hero, helper, donor, dispatcher, and the princess and her father. This scheme is a prerequisite for Propp's transformational analysis of properties across tales, but it is also an important part of his functional analysis of the structure of tales.

Among commentators on Propp, there is rather widespread confusion concerning this aspect of his work. A good share of the blame rests with

[17] It should be noted that Propp's analysis of 'character' could be regarded as the point of departure of Lévi-Strauss' work on myth, which promises to be of great value to the 'thematic' symbolic interpretation of narrative. The basic limitation of Propp's work in this regard was his assumption that the 'transformation' of an element at one point in a particular tale will not have any necessary effect on elements at other points in the same tale (see Propp 1971: 95). This assumption of independence was challenged by Lévi-Strauss in his (1960) critique of Propp; and his multi-volume *Mythologiques* provides evidence for the interrelatedness of such elements in a body of myths.

Propp. One minor point, but one that potentially can and has caused confusion, is a matter of terminology. Propp uses the term *personages* not only to refer to 'hero', 'villain', etc.; but also to refer to named individuals with distinctive attributes, e.g., Baba-Jaga, Morozko, Ivan, etc.[18] It is 'personages' in the latter sense that account, in part, for the "amazing multiformity" of the Russian tale; whereas 'personages' in the former sense are one aspect of the "no less striking uniformity" of the tales (21). 'Villain,' say, is just as much a constant element, one recurring across the corpus of tales, as is the function 'Villainy'. The former no more specifies the 'who' than the latter does the 'how' (cf. Propp 12–13, 20).[19] Villain, hero, etc. can be said to identify the 'function' a character assumes in the narrative. It would obviously be confusing to refer to hero, villain, etc. as 'functions' since Propp already uses the term for entities of another type (Villainy, etc.); but a term other than *personage* is imperative. We will henceforth use the term *role* to refer to 'villain' and so on. Precedence for this term can, in fact, be found in Propp. The term occurs at least once, and in exactly this sense, in the paper on 'Fairy Tale Transformations" (Propp 1971: 108).[20]

In the second half of this essay we will examine in some detail Propp's approach to 'character' in terms of the roles of hero, villain, etc., as well as some of the proposed refinements of Propp's approach (including our own). Before turning to this, we want to indicate how the notion of narrative roles can be seen to be analogous to entities that form a necessary part of the model of syntactic structure that has guided our inquiry into narrative structre.

Let us briefly review the syntactic model that is the basis for our model of narrative structure. We have a 'proposition', consisting of a function and its conceptually required arguments; and subordinated to this proposition are various 'NP's', which consist of properties (one-place functions)

[18] Actually Propp—or at least his translator—uses the terms *personages, characters,* and *dramatis personae* in random fashion. For example, at one point Propp refers to the fact that "the tale evidences seven dramatis personae" (1968: 40; see also 87).

[19] Remarks in Propp (1971: 95) make clearer than any remarks in the *Morphology* that his 'seven-personage scheme' forms as much a part of the system of the Russian fairy tale as do the thirty-one functions.

[20] In this paper, but not in the *Morphology*, there is a fairly extensive use of vocabulary associated with the drama; e.g., there are references to "the actors in the fairy tale" (94); the 'cast' of the fairy tale (104, 105); etc. Since the translator of this paper is not the one who translated the *Morphology*, the usage may not be Propp's own. Incidentally, the term *role*, particularly in the drama, can be synonymous with terms such as *character*, *personage*, or *part*. But the sense in which we are using it is a fairly transparent transference from the 'performative' dimension of the drama. Just as a number of different actors can play the 'role' or character of Hamlet in the play *Hamlet*, without altering the role itself, likewise a number of different characters in the corpus of the Russian fairy tale can all play the same role in the fairy tale, e.g., that of 'villain'.

that identify and describe the individuals denoted by the arguments. But lacking from the representation so far is any explicit indication of the 'functions' of the arguments, the 'roles' they play in the proposition. In the functional calculus, the tacit convention has been for the order of arguments to reflect the surface structure order of nouns in English (and other SVO languages). Thus, the proposition see (X, Y) would be verbalized 'X sees Y', with the first argument (X) tacitly accepted as filling the role of subject; and so on. Just as arguments are distinct from properties, so roles are distinct from the other two. We thus need three conceptual entities for the adequate representation of the structure of a syntactic proposition: arguments (denoting individuals), properties of those individuals, and the roles that the arguments play in the proposition. The necessity for specifying roles can be easily demonstrated. Suppose that we are given the verb *bite* and the two nouns *man* and *dog*. Two different messages can be transmitted, depending on which noun is taken as subject and which as direct object.

A comparable rationale for narrative roles can be set forth. We cannot answer the question of "*what* a tale's dramatis personae do" without knowledge of the narrative role of each participant. Our working hypothesis in the second half of this essay will be that narrative roles are variants of syntactic roles. The postulation of a fixed, restricted set of narrative roles that would enter into the structural representation of any story is an important aspect of a general theory of narration (as distinguished from a theory of narrative). It constitutes what we will refer to as a theory of 'character'. It is important to emphasize that *character* will not have the sense it had in our earlier discussion, which pertained to properties subordinate to the narrative proposition, i.e., to 'character' as part of the theory of narrative.

After this bare indication of how the notion of narrative roles fits in with our over-all model of narrative structure, we are faced with another problem that demands attention before we can proceed. On the face of it, some fundamental divergencies exist between Propp's work and the theoretical framework of this essay. Consider Propp's assertion that the task of the analyst is to extract functions. In order to extract them, he must define them; and "definition should in no case depend on the personage who carries out the function. Definition of a function will most often be given in the form of a noun expressing an action (interdiction, interrogation, flight, etc.)" (21). Even if we appreciate that *personage* in this context is not being used in the sense of 'role', we still have to contend with Propp's use of deverbal nouns, a usage which seems to indicate that he specifically excludes

roles from his representation of plot structure. Contributing to this impression is the fact that, whereas Propp enumerates the functions in ch. III of his monograph, it is not until ch. VI that he formally introduces the inventory of roles. From this order of presentation, it would appear that the roles are solely utilized in the 'transformational' study of properties. Finally, there is the fact that in the last chapter of his monograph Propp proposes two alternative definitions of the 'fairy tale'; it may be considered either as "a story built upon the proper alternation of the above-cited functions in various forms, with some of them absent from each story and with others repeated" (99); or as "tales subordinated to a seven-personage scheme" (100).

Despite Propp's presentation, he in fact treats the two definitions as complementary. The seeming divergence of Propp's work from our theoretical framework again is due in part to terminology. Propp's term *function* is not equivalent to our term *function*. A Proppian 'function' is not simply a nominal form of the 'function' (verb) that forms the pivot of what we term the 'narrative proposition'. A Proppian function is actually derived from an entire proposition. Consider: pursue (X, Y), where *pursue* is a 'function' (in our sense) interrelating the arguments *X* and *Y*. The derived (nominalized) form of the proposition would be *X's pursuit of Y*. With such constructions, it is possible for at least one argument to be 'absorbed' into the deverbal noun. In the case of the 'one-word definition' (Pursuit) that Propp provides, both arguments have been absorbed.[21]

The equivalence of Propp's one-word designations of functions to entire propositions is apparent from the 'brief summary of each function's essence' that he provides in addition to the one-word definition (25). For instance, the summary of Pursuit is "The hero is pursued" (56); for Struggle it is "The hero and the villain join in direct combat" (51); etc. It may still seem that most of these 'summaries' differ in at least one significant detail from the form we have proposed for the narrative proposition: they mention only one participant rather than two. However, these exceptions are passive constructions: "The hero is branded", "The villain is defeated", etc. If these are recast as actives, then two participants would be explicitly mentioned: "The hero defeats the villain", etc.[22]

[21] Propp's 'function' thus corresponds to what the logician Reichenbach (1966) calls a 'descriptional function of the event type'; cf. also Jespersen's (1933: 316f) discussion of 'nexus-substantives'.

[22] A few active constructions do occur that explicitly mention only one participant; e.g., "The hero acquires the use of a magical agent". But consider the 'definition' that Propp provides, in addition to the 'summary': provision or receipt of a magical agent (43). 'Provision' pertains to the donor, and 'receipt' to the hero. In grammatico-semantic terms, the donor is agent, and the hero patient; see the discussion below. Another ex-

One real difference between Propp's summaries and our narrative propositions does exist: Propp dispenses with arguments denoting unique individuals—or, more exactly, he relegates them to an accessory study. It is necessary to emphasize this point, because Propp's utilization of narrative roles as 'arguments' may seem to constitute an instance of a fairly widespread figure of speech—the use of a role to refer to the occupant of that role. (Cf. the reference, in syntactic discussions, to 'the subject' rather than to 'the noun *N* functioning as subject of the sentence *S*'.) Instead, Propp's practice is comparable to the use of *x*'s and *y*'s for 'unknowns' in algebra (cf. references, in detective stories, to 'the murderer' before his identity is known).

In algebra *x*'s and *y*'s are referred to as 'variables', whereas Propp refers to functions and roles as 'constants'. 'Constants' in the mathematico-logical sense would be exemplified by the dramatis personae of the Russian tales. Propp's usage is justified by the fact that the 'variability' of roles, in the sense that a number of different individuals can serve in a given role, results from a recurrence of the same relationship between entities. Narrative roles are not entities, but relations between entities. In this respect they are identical to the syntactic roles. For example, 'subject' is a particular relation between a noun and the rest of the sentence. While words do possess some inherent properties (i.e., 'animate', 'count'), no word is inherently a subject— one and the same word can be subject in one sentence and direct object in another. It is the constancy of the relational configuration that allows a range of words, with different inherent properties, to potentially serve in a given syntactic role.

It is necessary to emphasize that narrative roles are constant relational configurations, for the term *role* is sometimes used to refer to a stock character or 'character type', defined by inherent properties.[23] In fact, examples include the 'villain', who wears a black hat; the 'hero', a man admired and emulated for his achievements and qualities; etc. While Propp uses some of these same labels—'villain', etc.—his roles are independent of such detail; hence their value in dealing with the permutability of traits, from tale to tale, of groups of equivalent characters (equivalent in terms of interrelationships).

Despite the reference above to 'groups of equivalent characters', the narrative roles should not be primarily regarded as categories, which can

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ception is "The hero leaves home" (39); but such functions might better be reclassified as 'auxiliary elements for the interconnection of functions' (71).

[23] See Barthes (1966: 16), who refers to 'psychological essences' rather than to inherent properties.

be established by some form of 'distributional analysis'. Several commentators on Propp, however, have erroneously concluded that the narrative roles result from a classification of the functions into 'spheres of action' according to the characters who 'support' them. Consider, for example, Greimas' discussion (1966: 172ff) of Propp, which essentially elaborates upon views of Lévi-Strauss (1960: 291). Greimas states that "if the actors [dramatis personae] can be established within a tale-occurrence, the actants [narrative roles], which are classes of actors, can be established only on the basis of the corpus of all the tales: an articulation of actors constitutes a particular tale; a structure of actants, a genre" (175). The establishment of roles thus requires that tables of the following form be set up (174).

	Message 1	Message 2	Message 3
Tale 1	F_1 a_1	F_2 a_1	F_3 a_1
Tale 2	F_1 a_2	F_2 a_2	F_3 a_2
Tale 3	F_1 a_3	F_2 a_3	F_3 a_3

In this diagram a_1, a_2, a_3 are particular dramatis personae; and F_1, F_2, F_3 are the functions that these characters 'support'. Although the dramatis personae vary from tale to tale, there is a constancy in the functions they support. Each dramatis persona, in effect, assembles several functions into a recurrent class, or 'sphere of action', constituted of F_1, F_2, F_3 in the diagram. Propp himself refers to the 'sphere of action' of the hero, the villain, etc. (We will have more to say later about the notion 'sphere of action'.)

One problem with Greimas' diagram is that only one dramatis persona is indicated, whereas almost all the functions are 'supported' by two. A more serious problem is that the diagram implicitly assumes the existence of a one-one relation between character and role, i.e., one in which only a single dramatis persona serves in a given role in a given tale (e.g., Baba-Jaga as *the* villain in a tale). The assumption, in other words, is that variation in the filling of roles is exclusively intertextual. However, Propp recognizes the existence of various types of intratextual variation; and all of ch. VI of the *Morphology* is devoted to that topic. (The 'distribution of functions among dramatis personae' is Propp's inexact way of referring to his concern for the relation between roles and dramatis personae within individual tales.) One type of such variation is that in which two or more dramatis personae within a given narrative serve the same narrative role. An example cited by Propp is the following: "if a dragon is killed in a battle

[with the hero], it is incapable of pursuit. For the pursuit, special personages are introduced: wives, daughters, sisters, mothers-in-law, and mothers of dragons—his female relations" (81). Another type of intratextual variation exists when one dramatis persona serves more than one role—either simultaneously or successively (80–81).

The existence of these types of intratextual variation makes it impossible for the narrative roles to be established by the type of distributional analysis Greimas postulates. Refer back to Greimas' diagram. Without a consistent one-one relation between character and role, F_1, F_2, F_3 would not emerge as a unity, a 'sphere of action', across a corpus of tales.

Greimas is well aware of the various relationships between individual dramatis personae and the narrative roles. The question then arises as to why he also speaks of roles as classes of dramatis personae, established by distributional analysis. The most likely answer is that he was misled by Propp's presentation, which is not always a model of clarity and systematicity. Propp himself refers to the narrative roles as 'categories' of characters (1968: 84, 87, 119). And he also talks about setting up tables in order to deal with the multiformity of the tale (88). But Propp does not always make clear the distinction between the analysis of intratextual variation and that of intertextual variation. He utilizes the narrative roles for the structural representation of individual tales, as well as for the 'accessory study' of attributes of the participants.

When Propp talks about setting up tables, he has in mind only the investigation of intertextual variation. Such tables would take the following form. (Propp himself provides no such example.)

Tale #	Hero	Villain	Donor	Helper	False Hero	etc.
93						
94						
95						
96						
n						

The name and attributes of the participant filling the role of 'hero' in tale #93 would be entered in the first row of column 1; the participant filling the role in #94 would be entered in the first colunn cell of row 2; and so on.

Since the roles themselves appear as headings in the table, the tabulation

of the tales cannot be the means whereby the roles are 'discovered' or established. The purpose of the tabulation is the facilitation of the 'transformational' analysis of properties. If a table shows that the villain in tale #93 is a young man; and in tale #94, an old woman, then the analyst can formulate a transformation along the dimensions of age and sex.

Given the diversity of properties of participants from tale to tale, it should be obvious that the narrative roles are indispensable for a transformational analysis. Without the constancy of the roles, the analyst would have no basis for saying that character *X* is a 'transformation' of character *Y*, rather than, say, character *Z*. It could be said that the roles serve as criterial features that allow equivalence classes of dramatis personae to be established, with the transformations operating within individual classes (rather than between equivalence classes).

We can now see a partial justification for referring to the narrative roles as 'categories' of dramatis personae. But it still remains the case that it is function that is primary—in that function establishes the category, rather than the category being established on formal, distributional grounds and then having a function secondarily associated with it. In practice, Propp's narrative roles are comparable to the tagmeme, the basic unit in the tagmemic analysis of sentence structure. The tagmeme is defined as "the correlation of a grammatical function, or slot, with the class of mutually substitutable items that fill that slot" (Cook 1969: 15). The notation of tagmemes clearly mentions both function and form; e.g., *S:N*, which indicates a subject slot filled by a noun phrase (Cook, 17).

Regarding the 'arguments' of narrative propositions as units comparable to the tagmeme is clearly advantageous when the goal is the comparative study of a large corpus of narratives. But what about the investigation of the structure of individual narratives? So far, our assumption has been that the arguments entering into narrative propositions denote unique individuals, with the narrative roles indicating the 'function' of the participants in the narrative events. However, Propp's discussion of intratextual variation demonstrates the necessity of regarding the arguments entering into the structural representation of individual narratives as being 'correlates of function and set'—though in some instances the set may have only one member. Consider the situation in which more than one dramatis persona fills a given role in a narrative (e.g., Propp's example of a tale in which the role of villain is filled by a dragon and his female relations). If each participant were denoted by a different letter of the alphabet (i.e., if arguments denoting individuals were used), then the continuity of role

would be obscured, and one aspect of the text's cohesion would not be properly indicated in the representation of structure.[24]

The fact of intratextual variation has another important implication. The analogy between narrative roles and syntactic roles such as subject and direct object, which has guided our discussion up to this point, is no longer tenable. In the case of syntax, there is a one-one relation, within a given clause, between role and word or phrase. One word is *the* subject, and not simultaneously the direct object.

While the preceding observation must force us to reject the analogy between narrative roles and formal syntactic roles, there is another type of syntactic role, utilized in recent syntactic analyses, which can potentially serve as a model for the narrative roles. We refer to roles of a grammatico-semantic nature, such as 'agent', 'patient', etc. Both types of role are relevant to syntactic analysis—the formal roles pertain to 'surface' structure; the semantic ones, to 'deep' structure. For example, the 'surface' subject of a sentence, in terms of its underlying representation, can be agent (*John hit the ball*), patient (*The ball was hit*), etc.

Grammatico-semantic roles, unlike the formal ones, are not tied to a fixed position in the sentence—they are independent of word order. Their greater flexibility is possible because the verb in effect 'generates' the roles; that is to say, some of the semantic features of the verb are transferred to the 'slots' for the arguments conceptually required by the verb. (Note that this transference is congruent with the syntactic model in which the verb governs the nouns.) More exactly, the roles are not derived from just the function (verb), but from the entire proposition (cf. our earlier discussion of Propp's notion of 'function'). The syntactic roles thus constitute instance of what Reichenbach (1966) terms 'descriptional functions of the thing type'. Consider a proposition of the form: love (John, Mary), verbalizable as 'John loves Mary'. We can 'solve' this proposition for *John*, thereby obtaining a 'description' of the person so named. In English, such a cescription can be formed by adding the derivational suffix *-er* to the verb *love*. That is, we obtain the descriptional equation John = lover (of Mary). The proposition can also yield a description of Mary, viz., 'loved one'. It can be seen that semantic roles are like formal ones in being relational—the primary difference being that the relation is between participants (mediated by the function); rather than being between a grammatical unit and the rest of the sentence (cf. our earlier discussion of the notion 'subject of', etc.).

[24] Note too that the perception of such continuities of role is an important aspect of the reader's ability to follow the thread of a narrative.

'Lover', 'loved one', etc. are not roles utilized in syntactic analysis. Rather use is made of a small number of roles, specified by grammatical theory. However, this small number of roles is derived, in effect, from a generalization of the specific roles that are 'generated' by individual verbs, as the following remarks by Fillmore (1971: 375) make evident: "The verbs *rob* and *steal* conceptually require three arguments, namely those identifiable as the culprit, the loser, and the loot. The words *buy* and *sell* are each four-argument predicates, the arguments representing the one who receives the goods or services, the one who provides the goods and services, the goods and services themselves, and the sum of money that changes hands."[25] Fillmore goes on to say, "It seems to me, however, that this sort of detail is unnecessary, and that what we need are abstractions from these specific role descriptions, abstractions which will allow us to recognize that certain elementary role notions recur in many situations, and which will allow us to acknowledge that differences in detail between partly similar roles are due to differences in the meanings of the associated verbs. Thus we can identify the culprit of *rob* and the critic of *criticize* with the more abstract role of Agent, and interpret the term Agent as referring . . . to the animate instigator of events referred to by the associated verb" (376).

It is at the lower level of specificity that the similarity between grammatico-semantic roles and narrative roles can be appreciated. Consider Propp's (1971: 95) observation on the 'motif' *Baba-Jaga gives Ivan a horse:* "Such a motif . . . contains four elements, of which only one represents a function. . . Baba-Jaga is a donor, the word 'gives' signals the moment of transmittal, Ivan is a recipient, and the horse is the gift."

We will tentatively propose that the relation between grammatico-semantic roles and Propp's narrative roles is not just one of similarity, but in fact one of identity—the narrative roles are less generalized variants of the ones used in syntactic analysis. Note, too, that semantic roles do not pose the problem that the formal roles did. In the case of the semantic roles, as in the case of the narrative roles, a one-many relation may exist between argument and role; for example, in a sentence such as *John shaved (himself)*, *John* is simultaneously agent and patient (cf. Fillmore 1971: 376f).

While Propp's roles are more specific variants of the semantic roles, nevertheless a degree of generality does exist—otherwise, Propp would posit narrative roles for each of the thirty-one functions in his system. The relevant methodological question that Propp's inventory of seven narrative

[25] Note the practice, which is typical, of referring to the arguments in terms of their roles. Fillmore could have made the derivation of these roles from verbs more perspicuous by referring to the roles associated with *rob*, say, as 'robber', etc.

roles raises is as follows: given concrete roles 'generated' by each of the thirty-one functions, how does one go about generalizing these roles, short of positing one abstract role that is all-inclusive? Note first that certain options exist in the operation of generalization. Consider the form the assertion *John loves Mary* takes when formulated in terms of a function and two specific roles: love (lover, loved one). The redundancy of this example points up the fact that certain information can be conveyed either by the function or by the roles—less information in the roles can be balanced by more information in the function, and vice versa. The choice made by grammarians is for less information in the roles. Propp's roles are more specific, but his 'functions' are more general than the verbs of sentences of the language—each Proppian function subsumes a range of different actions; e.g., an act of villainy can be a murder, an abduction, pillage, etc.

The greater specificity of narrative roles fits in with the nature of plot structure, which is primarily a matter of the interaction or interrelation of dramatis personae rather than 'action' per se. An agent is the agent of some action—the verb provides necessary specificity. In contrast, a helper, say, is not a 'helper of some action', but a helper of someone. Propp's roles more directly emphasize relations between individuals rather than the relation between an individual and his acts.

Propp's roles are primarily more specific variants of the one syntactic role of agent. His process of intermediate generalization—intermediate between roles for each function and the all-inclusive role of agent—amounts to a grouping of functions into subsets, which Propp refers to as 'spheres of action' (ch. VI). The membership of each sphere is constituted of functions whose specific agents are seen as having a common semantic denominator.

The question about generalization can be rephrased as a question about the grouping of functions into spheres of action. Propp merely presents the groupings as *faits accomplis*, offering no guidelines. However, it should by now be obvious that they are not obtained by recourse to any sort of distributional analysis across the corpus of tales, and that the individual characters filling the narrative roles are immaterial to the task of generalization. In other words, the spheres of action are not empirical groupings. This is the import of Propp's remark that "many functions logically join together into certain *spheres*" (1968: 79). Note that the establishment of the roles is not to be confused with the subsequent determination of how these roles are 'distributed' among the characters of particular tales. Also, the grouping of functions into spheres is not to be confused with another type of 'logical' grouping of functions that Propp also discusses: We"

observe that a large number of functions are arranged in pairs (prohibition-violation, . . . struggle-victory, . . . etc.). Other functions may be arranged according to groups. Thus villainy, dispatch, decision for counteraction, and departure from home (ABC ↑) constitute the complication" (64–5). These groupings are syntagmatic—they cooccur in a chain in particular tales—whereas the 'spheres of action' are more on the order of paradigmatic groupings. The distinction between the two groupings is obvious from the fact that generally functions in a syntagmatic grouping belong in different spheres. For example, Pursuit-Rescue form a pair, but the former belongs in the sphere of action of the villain; and the latter, in that of the helper.

How an analyst obtains a given theoretical notion is immaterial to the theory itself; but in the case of Propp's work, a number of inconsistencies and lacunae mark his inventory of spheres, with the consequence that his narrative roles are in need of extensive revision. In order to improve upon his system of roles, we need to have a better understanding of the principles that presumably guided him. Therefore, we will now examine in some detail Propp's distribution of functions into spheres, beginning with the relatively unproblematic sphere of action of the donor (or 'provider'). It consists of only two functions, *D*, the preparation for the transmission of a magical agent; and *F*, provision of the hero with a magical agent. This role is obviously derived from the function Provision. The function *D* ('the hero is tested. . . .') itself would directly yield the role 'tester', a term Propp actually uses at one point (49). Since *D* is, in effect, a stage in a process leading up to *F*, the two roles can be replaced by the one term 'donor', which encompasses both tester and provider. This is one instance in which the syntagmatic grouping of functions overlaps with the grouping into spheres —though only partially, for the syntagmatic grouping includes *E*, which belongs in the sphere of action of the hero.

Another role that may seem even less problematic is that of dispatcher, for the associated sphere consists of only one function, *B*, 'the hero is dispatched'. However, it seems uneconomical to posit a role based on just one function. Since Propp defines *B* as 'mediation, the connective incident' (36), the role of dispatcher may best be regarded as one of the minor roles that Propp mentions in passing—specialized roles such as complainer, informer, slanderer, etc. (80). All of these are derived from elements Propp terms 'connectives', distinguished from the functions proper (70f).

The sphere of action of the helper includes the following functions: *G*, pastial transference of the hero; *K*, liquidation of misfortune or lack; *Rs*, rescue from pursuit; *N*, solution of difficult task; and *T*, transfiguration of the hero. With such a diverse collection of functions—from which specific

roles such as transferer, rescuer, ameliorator, etc. can be derived—it is harder to see exactly why they were grouped together and generalized as 'helper'. However, most of them do involve a constant relationship with the hero (the rescuer is the 'rescuer of the hero', and so on).

Perhaps the major problem with Propp's inventory concerns the roles of hero; false hero; villain; and the princess and her father. One surprising fact is that the sphere of action of the hero and that of the villain each consists of only a small number of functions. The constituents of the latter are: *A*, Villainy; *H*, Struggle; *Pr*, Pursuit. The functions in the former are: *C*, Departure; *E*, Reaction; *W**, Wedding. For some inexplicable reason, Propp omits function *I*, Victory, from the hero's sphere.[26] And *H* would seem to belong with equal justification in the hero's sphere.

The sphere of action of the princess and her father includes the greatest number of functions, which in itself suggests that a reanalysis would be in order. For example, one of the functions is *M*, Difficult Task, which like *D* in the donor's sphere involves a 'tester'. A more compelling indicator of the need for reanalysis is the fact that the label for the role refers to two specific dramatis personae, who do not appear in all the tales. Propp has seemingly failed to push the analysis far enough so as to uncover the invariant function that can be filled by a number of different individuals.

All of the problematic roles we have just considered—hero, villain, princess and her father—share one feature that sets them apart from the other roles. None of the labels are derived from verbs (along the lines of helper, donor, etc.). However, Propp does suggest alternative labels for most of these roles. The hero can be either a 'seeker' or a 'victim'. The princess is parenthetically referred to as a 'sought-for person', a description that cannot be applied to her father.

Note that 'sought-for person' and 'hero-victim' are not more specific variants of agent, but of patient. The fact that Propp's functions interrelate two participants implies that for every agent role, derived from a sphere of action, there should be a corresponding patient role, derived from a 'sphere of passion'. A partial pairing of patient roles with agentive ones is implicit in Propp's inventory: hero-seeker and sought-for person can form a pair, as can villain and hero-victim.

Greimas (1966: 176) has complained that Propp presented the narrative roles in the form of a simple inventory, stopping short of a systematic inquiry into the relations among them. The possibility thus suggests itself

[26] He also omits the function ↓, 'the hero returns'; and *o*, 'the hero's unrecognized arrival'—though a case could be made that they are non-functional connectives in that they do not entail any interaction between hero and another participant.

that the many problems Propp's inventory of narrative roles poses can be overcome by consistently reinterpreting the roles so as to create agent-patient pairs. This, in effect, is what Greimas has attempted. His refinement and revision of Propp's work results in an inventory of three pairs, which are said to be in a relation of 'opposition'.[27] These are as follows.

subject vs. object
sender vs. receiver
helper vs. opposer

We will later elaborate upon the notion of opposition that is relevant in this context; but first we want to discuss the linguistic basis of Greimas' inventory.

That Greimas firmly bases his system of roles on the linguistic analysis of sentential roles is manifest in his choice of the term *actant* (=*narrative role*), a term which derives from the work of the French syntactician Tesnière.[28] We cannot understand Greimas' refinement of Propp's inventory of narrative roles without a proper understanding of his refinement of Tesnière's syntactic analysis.

Tesnière recognized three actants: agent, patient, and beneficiary. Greimas, bothered by the fact that beneficiary does not presuppose an agent but a 'benefactor', proposes replacing the three roles by four, articulated into two pairs of opposites (130):

subject vs. object
sender vs. receiver

Greimas' choice of the terms *subject* and *object* is unfortunate, in that confusion with the purely formal syntactic roles of 'subject' and 'object' is inevitable. Greimas' clear intent is for the actants to have semantic import. Consider his discussion of the sentence *Eve gave an apple to Adam.* He notes

[27] Greimas refers to the number of roles as being determined by the aprioristic conditions on the perception of signification (173). Earlier in his book Greimas stated that signification presupposes the existence of a relation between terms (19).

[28] Strictly speaking, *actant* is not Tesnière's generic term for syntactic roles (relations between a noun and the governing verb). Actants are those roles most central to the process indicated by the verb. Less central roles exist, which Tesnière refers to as *circonstants*, and they are typically manifested by prepositional phrases functioning as adverbials of time, location, direction, etc. For example, in the sentence *John found the book in the library, John* and *the book* are actants, and *(in the) library* is a *circonstant.* Halliday (1970) draws the same distinction, using the terms *participants* (=actants) and *cir-cumstances* (=circonstants). However, the dominant trend is for *actant* to be used as a technical term in English, with *participant* used to refer to the noun bearing a given role. Halliday relates the lack of centrality of circumstances to their inability to take on the role of grammatical subject. However, there are some difficulties with this criterion. Consider *The studio is hot.* In Fillmore's (1968: 42f) analysis, *the studio* fills the circumstantial role of 'locative'; cf. *It is hot in the studio.* Another problem with this criterion is that some linguists make a distinction between 'inner' and 'outer' adverbials, with the former seen as more central to the verb than the latter.

that *Eve* is the point of departure of a double relation: one established between *Eve* and *apple*, and one between *Eve* and *Adam*. *Eve* is said to be simultaneously actant-subject and actant-sender. In the case of the sentence *Adam received an apple from Eve*, the syntactic substitutions are said to leave the 'semantic distribution' unchanged; i.e., *Eve* remains the 'subject' and the 'sender'. It is clear therefore that *subject* is simply a terminological substitute for *agent;* and *object* a substitute for *patient*.[29] It would thus seem that Greimas' reanalysis of Tesnière's actants primarily consists of a replacement of the single role beneficiary by the pair sender vs. receiver.

Halliday (1970) would use the term *recipient* to refer to the role filled by *Adam* in *Eve gave an apple to Adam;* this role, for him, is one type of 'beneficiary'.[30] This suggests that *sender* is a terminological variant of *benefactor*.

It thus appears that Greimas has successfully replaced a trichotomy by two dichotomies—a replacement that is important, given his semantic model and notion of opposition. However, his reanalysis of Tesnière does raise certain problems, which his choice of terms (*sender* instead of *benefactor*, and so on) serves only to highlight. For example, sender apparently is no more than a less generalized variant of agent. It will be recalled from our earlier discussion that agent is generalized from a host of more specific roles that are 'generated' by individual verbs. If sender is agentive, then receiver is a less general variant of the role patient. Although the term *receiver* is of the same morphological form as the term *sender*—both have the suffix *-er*, generally regarded as agentive—the verb *receive* is the converse of *send;* and the grammatical subject of *receive* is not agent, but patient. For example, in *He received a blow, he* is the patient of the action.[31] In the sentence *He received a gift, he* would be considered a beneficiary. From this perspective, the contrast between patient and beneficiary reduces to a distinction between detriment and benefit.

Fillmore (1968: 35f) analyzes the sentence *John gave the books to my brother* in terms of two subtypes of patient, which he includes in his in-

villain, and false hero, Greimas states that they do not have any parallels

[29] There seems to be no syntactic basis for these substitutions, and I suspect that here Greimas' syntactic analysis has been influenced by the anticipated application to narrative analysis; cf. the later discussion of 'subject' and 'object' as narrative roles.

[30] He notes that the beneficiary role can be divided into two subtypes, based on whether the prepositional phrase contains *to* or *for*. Halliday cites the following examples (147):

(i) *I've given Oliver a tie/I've given a tie to Oliver*

(ii) *I've made Frederick a jacket/I've made a jacket for Frederick*

Oliver (i) is recipient, and *Frederick* (ii) is 'beneficiary' in the narrow sense. A preferable term would be *benefactive* (cf. Fillmore 1968: 26).

[31] The derivational process that normally yields patient terms (past participial forms such as *loved one* or forms such as *employee*) is not as productive as agentive *-er*.

ventory of 'cases' (=roles), in lieu of a single role labeled *patient*. These are 'objective' and 'dative'; the former is, in effect, an inanimate patient, the latter an animate patient. Thus, in the above sentence *John* is agent; *books* is objective, and *brother*, dative.

We have tried to point out, in the preceding discussion, some of the problems with Greimas' inventory of syntactic roles—the major problem being the redundancy of having two agent roles, subject and sender; and two patient roles, object and receiver, with the latter in each case being essentially a more specific variant of the former.[32] These problems do not auger well for Greimas' application of syntactic roles to narrative analysis. Let us turn now to an examination of just how Greimas utilizes his revision of Tesnière's syntactic roles in his refinement of Propp's system of narrative roles.

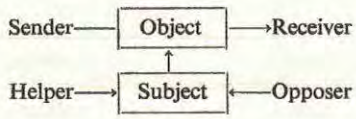
The same roles that Greimas introduced in the context of syntactic structure are applied to the narrative; and Greimas equates his terms to Propp's in a way that can be conveniently set forth in a tabular array.

Propp	Greimas
hero	subject
sought-for person	object
father of sought-for person; dispatcher	sender
hero	receiver

At this point we have an 'actantial model' entirely centered around the object, which Greimas says is simultaneously the object of desire and the object of communication (178). As for Propp's roles of donor, helper,

[32] This shortcoming could be rectified by equating Greimas' roles 'sender' and 'receiver' with the roles 'source' and 'goal', respectively, that Fillmore (1971: 376) recognizes in his revised inventory. They seem to be an elaboration of the single case 'locative' that he originally posited (1968). *Source* is defined as 'the place from which something moves'; *goal*, 'the place to which something moves'; *object*, 'the entity that moves or changes or whose position or existence is in consideration'. In the sentence *Eve gave an apple to Adam, Eve* is both agent of the action and 'source' of the apple, which is the 'object' that moves. *Adam* is the 'goal' of the motion of transference. The orientational notion of goal thus gets away from the notion of beneficiary. Grimes (1975: 119ff) explicitly draws a distinction between 'process' roles (agent, patient, etc.) and 'orientation' roles (source, goal, etc.), a distinction only implicit in Fillmore. This distinction seems superior to the one between actant and circumstance. As we will see, however, an interpretation of Greimas' 'sender' and 'receiver' as orientation roles is not supported by his application of these terms to narrative structure.

in the syntactic actants. But he does not regard them as immune to further analysis. He notes that two general spheres of activity can be recognized: one giving assistance by acting in the direction of desire, facilitating communication; the other, creating obstacles by being opposed to the realization of the desire or the communication of the object. He thus coalesces donor and helper into one role which he terms 'helper' (French *adjuvant*). Likewise, villain and false hero are coalesced in the role of 'opposer' (French *opposant*)—Propp's term 'villain' being rejected as pejorative (179). In the case of the Russian fairy tale, helper and opposer are said to be "only projections of the will to action and imaginary resistances of the subject himself, judged beneficial or hurtful in relation to his desire" (180). It is on this basis that Greimas asserts that helper and opposer are *circonstants* (circumstances) rather than actants proper (cf. footnote #28). The resultant complete model of narrative roles, including the important aspect of their interrelationship, can be diagrammed as follows.



The simplicity of this model, in Greimas' opinion, resides in the fact that it is entirely centered around the object of desire sought by the subject and situated, as object of communication, between the sender and the receiver. The desire of the subject is modulated into projections of helper and opposer (180).

As for the evaluation of Greimas' system of narrative roles, it might seem that it cannot help but be inadequate because of inadequacies in his system of syntactic roles. However, our discussion of his system of narrative roles makes evident that Greimas has not in fact applied these syntactic roles to the narrative. The terms *sender*, *receiver*, etc. have a different significance in the context of the narrative than in the context of the sentence. Recall that Greimas analyzes the sentence *Eve gave an apple to Adam* in terms of the roles of subject and object, sender and receiver. Essentially the same act—gift giving—occurs as one event in the Russian fairy tale; namely, the functional sequence *DEF*. In discussing this sequence, Propp refers to 'objects of transmission' (49); and he notes that "Such acts of transference very often have the character of a reward: an old man presents a horse as a gift. . ." (44). It seems clear that Propp's 'donor' in this stiuation is simultaneously a 'subject' and a 'sender', with the hero a 'receiver'. It is therefore not clear why Greimas asserted that the helper

role (which subsumes Propp's helper and donor) does not fit into the scheme of pure actants (subject vs. object, sender vs. receiver), but rather is a circumstantial role.[33] In fact, the helper role would be totally unnecessary if Greimas actually applied the syntactic roles to the plot events. The conclusion seems warranted that Greimas has retained the labels from his discussion of syntactic roles, but has given them a totally different content. Consider the term *subject*, which in the context of syntax was a confusing synonym for 'agent'. As applied to narrative, *subject* is nothing more or less than a substitute for the term *hero*, in the specific sense 'the main character in a narrative' (cf. the use of *subject* in syntactic discussions to refer to the 'theme' of a sentence, i.e., what the sentence is 'about').

Likewise, Greimas' *object* is merely a terminological replacement for Propp's *princess* (or *sought-for person*). Greimas thus promulgates Propp's original error of equating a role with one particular character. Not all tales involve abduction of a princess. In fact, Greimas' model and choice of labels for the roles seem to be dictated by one event in one particular tale —the hero's receiving the princess' hand in marriage from her father as his reward for rescuing her from abduction. Greimas' analysis here seems to be influenced, not by syntactic investigations, but by Lévi-Strauss' conception of marriage as a 'communication' in which the woman is the 'message' that is exchanged. In this context, the terms *sender* and *receiver* have senses that derive from information theory.[34]

It will be recalled that the original impetus to revision of Propp's inventory of roles was his failure to indicate their interrelationship, specifically to present them as pairs of opposites. But the extant inventories of syntactic roles also lacked such an articulation, which led Greimas to replace the basic trichotomy of agent-patient-beneficiary by two pairs of opposites. However, Greimas' model of narrative roles ends up indicating a triadic interrelationship of sender-object-receiver, fully comparable to the syntactic triad of agent-patient-beneficiary. However, there is no problem with triads of roles in the model of narrative structure that is the basis of our discussion —all plot functions require no more than two arguments. Of course, multi-place functions do occur on the textual surface, but the narrative

[33] Propp makes clear, furthermore, that the 'gift' may be a living creature, who then acts *for* the hero—he performs the 'heroic' actions for the benefit of the hero. In such circumstances, the hero fills a 'benefactive' role, which is circumstantial. Likewise, when the hero-seeker is dispatched to find the abducted princess, he engages in an action which is *for* the benefit of the father-dispatcher.

[34] In a later work, Greimas (1971: 805) treats the abduction of the princess as another aspect of communication—the princess' society is the sender, with the villain the receiver. But it seems inappropriate to regard abduction in this light; one act is voluntary, the other involuntary.

propositions underlying the textual surface are more 'abstract'—certain information is inevitably lost, information constituting the 'storiness' of a story (cf. the notion of 'mediator' in Hendricks 1973b: 192–93). Consider a sentence such as *Alfred gave the book to Charles.* From a syntactic perspective, *Charles* is beneficiary, and possibly not as central to the process (of giving) as *book.* From the perspective of narrative theory, however, the book, an inanimate object, is peripheral. What is crucial is the dyadic relation that exists or is established, between Alfred and Charles. Reference to the book would be omitted from the representation of underlying narrative structure, which would only signal the nature of the interaction between Alfred and Charles.[35]

Let us now consider Greimas' model from the perspective of his having organized the narrative roles into opposites. Most discussions of opposition recognize different types of opposites, the major ones being antonyms (*good/bad*) and complementaries (*male/female*). Of the three pair of 'opposites' in Greimas' system of narrative roles, only helper vs. opposer would seem to be true opposites. At least, the terms are agentive derivatives of the antonymous pair *help/oppose.* However, there does exist a third type of opposition, 'correlation'. It is briefly discussed by Ogden (1967 [1932]), who regards it as a minor type: "Relative terms ['correlatives'] . . . integrate or make up a complete thought, and the relation regarded from the one side is not identical with, nay, is the converse of the relation viewed from the other" (68–9). Ogden's primary example is the pair *ruler/ruled:* "The relation of the ruler is that of authority, the correlation of the subject [the ruled] is that of subjection to authority. The correlate is required before we can interpret the positive term. Thus, Uncle is meaningless unless we know he is uncle of Nephew and Niece. . . . But Good is not the good of evil."[36]

Greimas' pairs sender vs. receiver and subject vs. object, which are specific variants of agent vs. patient, exemplify this type of opposition. (That agent and patient are correlatives is made manifest by Ogden's citation of a series of sentences of the form *The ruler rules the ruled;* see p. 70.) Note furthermore that while helper vs. opposer does not form a correlative pair, each term itself is relational. A helper is not simply 'one who helps', but 'one who helps someone'. This 'someone' is not the opposer, but the 'helped one'. Likewise, an opposer is 'one who opposes someone'; and again, this 'someone' is identifiable as the 'opposed one'. In the context of

[35] Cf. Burke (1957: 29): "When someone gives a gift, one may well ask himself what the gift 'represents'. What is going from the giver to the receiver? What relationship between them is being identified?"

[36] We should point out that Ogden's expression for antonomy is 'opposition by scale'; and for complementarity, 'opposition by cut'.

the narrative, both of these patient roles, the correlates of helper and opposer, are filled by one individual—the one who fills the role of 'subject' (hero).[37] Greimas' diagram of his actantial model clearly indicates that the 'subject' is the meeting round of the helper vs. helped one relation; and of the opposer vs. opposed one relation. Since both of these roles, helper and opposer, converge upon the seeker-hero (subject), it is he who is the central figure of the narrative—and not the 'object of desire' as Greimas claims.

The hero is 'subject' in the sense of 'one that is acted upon'. However, it would be a mistake to see the hero role as solely a passive one. The hero is active at certain points in the narrative—he does go in search of the princess; he performs certain tasks (e.g., in order to obtain a helper); etc. Likewise, the helper and the opposer are patients of some action at various points in the narrative; for example, the opposer can be the victim of at punishment, meted out either by the hero or a helper.

The observation that narrative roles can correspond to varying grammatico-semantic roles (either agent or patient) has important theoretical consequences. It is now clear that narrative roles must be distinguished from those associated with syntactic analysis. This is not to repudiate totally the earlier discussion developing the hypothesis that helper, donor, etc. are less generalized variants of syntactic roles. Rather, what has been established is a restricted version of that hypothesis—namely, all narrative roles are variants of the syntactic role of agent. The important implication is that narrative roles are distinctive in terms of agency—it is by means of what they do, and not what they undergo, that characters assert their identity. This is why characters are referred to as 'actors'. And this is why Propp (with only a couple of exceptions) established 'spheres of action' corresponding "in toto... to their respective performers" (79) and did not establish corresponding 'spheres of passion'.

The relation between narrative roles and syntactic roles can be clarified by invoking the notion of stratification. Narrative propositions exist on a stratum higher than the stratum of language proper, which serves to manifest the narrative structure. Just as the functions occurring in narrative propositions may correspond to verbs of the textual surface, likewise narrative roles may correspond to a syntactic role without thereby obliterating the distinction between strata. Consider a narrative proposition such as: rescue (Helper, Seeker-Hero), verbalizable as 'the helper rescues the hero'. Helper and seeker are both agentive, though from the perspective of 'deep' syntactic structure, helper is the agent and seeker the patient. (That is, in

[37] One could thus assert that *helper* and *opposer* are mediated correlatives; cf. the pair *father-mother*, whose correlation is mediated by *child*.

terms of a sentence occurring on the textual surface, seeker would be patient.) Since only the grammatico-semantic roles of agent and patient are involved in narrative propositions (more exactly, their textual-surface correlates), we can adopt the convention that the ordering of narrative roles in the narrative proposition is 'thematic', in the linguistic sense. The first argument specifies 'what the proposition is about' and corresponds to the grammatical subject of surface structure. The second argument thus corresponds to the direct object of syntactic surface structure. The subject of a narrative proposition may thus be agent or patient, depending on the grammatical form of the 'definition' of the narrative function. For example, given a narrative function *r*, defined as 'was dominated by', the passive form of the definition would indicate that the argument in first position fills the patient role, from the perspective of the syntax of the language of the textual manifestation (see Hendricks 1977).

An argument for the necessity of recognizing both narrative and syntactic roles can be developed along the lines of the argument for recognizing both formal, surface-structure roles (subject, etc.) and deep, grammatico-semantic roles (agent, etc.). Just as there can be shifts in the formal role of a noun with no shift in its semantic role, likewise the characters of a narrative can assume various semantic roles as the story progresses from sentence to sentence, while retaining a constant role in the narrative structure. To follow a story, a reader must be able to perceive this constancy.[38]

If all narrative roles are agentive, then Greimas' actantial model becomes even less acceptable, since his receiver and object are patient roles. Either these roles have to be modified, or entirely eliminated. Let us first consider the role of object, which Greimas identifies with Propp's sought-for person (princess). If the princess is solely a sought-for person who never initiates any action, then she has more the status of a stage prop and not a bona fide participant in the narrative. This conclusion follows from the fact that the alternation of narrative roles between being a syntactic agent and a syntactic patient is the norm in narrative discourse. Furthermore, as earlier noted, not all tales with a seeker-hero have a princess who is sought out by the hero. In fact, the 'object' of the seeker's actions may not even exist initially as a known individual. The seeker can be aware of a lack, but with no particular object in mind that would liquidate it. Consider Propp's 'brief summary' of function *a*, 'Lack', which he regards as a variant of *A*, 'Villainy': "One member of a family either lacks something or desires to have

[38] Cf. Pike (1964), who, however, does not recognize the stratificational nature of narrative discourse, and hence makes the mistake of regarding grammatico-semantic roles as "constant situational roles (of a plot) . . ." (5).

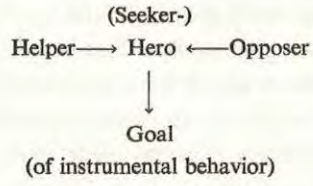
something" (35). Propp notes that one form involves "Lack of a bride (or a friend, or a human being generally). This lack is sometimes depicted quite vividly (the hero intends to search for a bride), and sometimes it is not even mentioned verbally. The hero is unmarried and sets out to find a bride. . ." (35). In such circumstances, it seems clear that the hero has no definite individual in mind; cf. a sentence such as *Mary wants to marry a millionaire*, in which *a millionaire* may be descriptive but not denotative, i.e., may not establish a 'discourse referent'.

Narrative roles denote relations between participants, but this is not the nature of the relation between subject and object in Greimas' system, as his own discussion tacitly recognizes. He states that the relation between subject and object appears in the Russian fairy tale with the semantic investment of 'desire', and he refers to this relation as teleological (176). The notion of teleology is implicit in Propp's statement of the central importance of the hero in the tale, made in the context of the observation that the hero himself may do nothing after receipt of the magical helper: "the morphological significance of the hero is nevertheless very great, since his intentions create the axis of the narrative" (50). The notion of intention fits in with that of teleology; the 'object of desire' is not so much a definite physical object as it is an internal representation in the mind of the hero which guides his activity and indirectly that of his helpers. This activity is instrumental behavior designed to achieve a given goal or end. It essentially has a single dimension in that it does not inherently entail interaction with others. Rather than helper and opposer being projections of the hero's will to act, as Greimas asserted, it is the 'object of the hero's desire' that is such a projection.

The hero as 'seeker' is thus not so much the seeker of someone as he is a person seeking, i.e., trying, to do something, to achieve a particular goal. It is only as a consequence of the successful completion of this action that an 'object' (e.g., a bride) is acquired. In the course of trying to achieve his goal by carrying out a plan of action, the hero may interact with other participants, who are secondarily involved in the hero's action—either in helping him carry out his plan, or in opposing it by setting up various obstacles.

If we take into account all of the considerations of the preceding discussion in formulating a system of narrative roles, the result could be schematized as follows.[39]

[39] This scheme does not include a role that is strictly equivalent to Propp's 'dispatcher'; but it may be regarded as an ancillary role, or one belonging to the 'prologue' of the narrative.



This system consists of only three (agentive) narrative roles. Since the relation between role and participant is rarely one-one, however, it is possible for a narrative to have only one character, who serves in all roles. Propp recognized that the hero can be his own helper, and he can also be his own opposer, though perhaps only unwittingly.[40] The resistance the hero encounters may be inanimate—terrain, inclement weather, etc.; in such cases, however, it is probably inadvisable to talk of a 'role', unless the force is anthropomorphized.

The above system of narrative roles resulted from a reanalysis and modification of Greimas' 'actantial model'. Greimas, in turn, presented his model as a refinement of Propp's inventory of seven narrative roles. Let us at this point consider our inventory in relation to Propp's. It is obvious that ours is more homogeneous, in that all of the roles are agentive, and the labels for them are deverbal nouns (provided we retain the term *seeker*). However, this regulation has been achieved at the cost of ignoring part of the data that Propp attempted to account for. In particular, we have overlooked the fact that Propp recognizes two types of hero: not only the 'seeker-hero' (who is the focal point of the system of narrative roles just presented), but also the 'victim-hero' (36, 50, 80). The victim-hero is the one who is seized or driven out by the villain, with the thread of the narrative linked to his fate and not to those who remain behind.

The importance of this distinction between types of hero is implicit in Propp's observation that "There is no instance in our material in which a tale follows both seeker and victimized heroes . . ." (36). What is implied is that there are two distinct types of narrative structure. The distinction between them emerges with greater clarity in Propp's discussion of the fact that two pairs of functions are mutually exclusive within a single 'move' (i.e., a minimal narrative). The pairs are *HI* (Struggle-Victory) and *MN* (Difficult Task-Resolution). Propp asserts that "Tales with H-I and those with M-N are essentially tales of different formation . . ." (102). However, he does not adequately pursue this insight, for it comes into conflict with his earlier assertion, one of the basic theses of his work, that "All fairy tales

[40] The notion of a 'di ided' protagonist, one with internal conflicts, perhaps is most apropos of dramatic structure, which we will presently discuss.

are of one type in regard to their structure" (23). Later efforts to refine and generalize Propp's findings have ignored the evidence for the two types of narrative structure. This evidence is taken to indicate only certain inconsistencies in Propp's work, and his commentators have resolved them by the simple expedient of focusing on one or the other type of narrative structure.

The above remarks are elaborated upon in an earlier paper (Hendricks 1975), in which the attempt is made to differentiate and characterize the two types of narrative structure that are only hinted at by Propp's remarks. These two types are labeled 'instrumental' narrative structure and 'dramatic' narrative structure. We may sum up that discussion by means of the following array.

	Instrumental Structure	Dramatic Structure
Initial State (Disequilibrium)	Task to be performed (=Lack)	Conflict (=virtual confrontation)
Mid-State	Actualization of means	Direct confrontation ('struggle')
Final State	Completion success/failure	Domination ('victory')

The discussion of the two types of narrative structure in Hendricks (1975) focused on the functions. The present essay complements the earlier one by focusing on the system of narrative roles. We hypothesize that each type of narrative structure not only has its own distinct set of functions, but also its own inventory of narrative roles. The difference between instrumental and dramatic structure, in fact, can be properly appreciated only when the differences between the associated roles are also considered.

The system of roles just presented (a refinement of Greimas' actantial model) correlates with instrumental structure. The system clearly reflects or grows out of Propp's functional pair *MN*.[41] In developing the system of roles that correlate with dramatic structure, it is necessary to go beyond

[41] The fact that the system of roles that goes with instrumental structure is a refinement of Greimas' system means that a serious inconsistency mars Greimas' theory of narration. The balance of Greimas' model of narrative structure, his conception of narrative functions, etc., is comparable to our conception of dramatic structure. In later work, Greimas has tried to modify his system of roles so as to make it consistent with a 'dramatic' conception of narrative structure; e.g., he posits an 'anti-subject' role along side the role of 'subject'. But he retains the other roles, which are superfluous for dramatic structure.

Propp's recognition of a 'victim-hero', as distinct from a 'seeker-hero'. 'Victim' is a patient role; but all narrative roles are agentive, though participants can be successively agent and patient from the perspective of the syntax of the textual surface. Thus, the seeker-hero can be the 'victim' of actions of his opposers. Likewise, the victim-hero can be an agent on occasion—in fact, specifically a 'seeker', in that he searches for the villain who has victimized him. Note that Propp observes that the villain's "second appearance in the tale is as a person *who has been sought out* . . ." (84). Following the example with instrumental structure, the system of roles for dramatic structure grows out of the functional pair *HI*. Only two roles need to be specified, which we will provisionally label *hero* and *villain*. We may diagram their systemic interrelationship as follows:

hero ⟷ villain

This diagram is equivalent to a graphic depiction of Propp's function *H* ('hero and villain struggle').

By briefly considering some of the linguistic and logical properties of the verb *struggle*, we can quickly gain insight into the nature of the dramatic roles and how they differ from the instrumental ones. From the perspective of grammar, *struggle* is a reciprocal verb; thus, to assert that "the hero and the villain struggle" is equivalent to saying "the hero fights the villain; the villain fights the hero." Each participant plays an agentive role, a fact implicit in our earlier observation that the function *H* belongs to the sphere of action of the hero as well as of the villain. However, both participants are also simultaneously patients. Hence, the distinction between agent and patient is neutralized. This situation accounts for the fact that the terms *hero* and *villain* are not derived from verbs. Furthermore, it indicates that the term *villain* is not merely a pejorative variant of *opposer*. The latter term is inadequate in this context. Note that if *X* opposes *Y*, he may be described as an 'opposer'; but if, simultaneously, *Y* opposes *X*, then *Y* likewise can be described as an 'opposer'. (In this context, the more appropriate term would be *opponent*.) In dramatic structure, both participants have the same verb-derived description. It is necessary, however, to be able to distinguish between participants; otherwise, the representation of plot structure would be deficient. The terms *hero* and *villain* provide the necessary differentiation. (We will shortly propose an alternative terminology and discuss in detail some important semantic aspects of the terms for dramatic roles.)

From the perspective of logic, the function 'struggle' is symmetrical. As

the grammatical discussion above implies, a symmetrical relation can be analyzed as the superimposition of one asymmetric relation onto another asymmetric relation. If *X* and *Y* are in an asymmetric relationship, then the relation between *X* and *Y* is not the same as the relation between *Y* and *X*—it is the converse of the former. Consider, for example, the mathematical relation 'is greater than' holding between, say, the numbers 4 and 2. If we reverse the order of the numbers, then the relation that holds is 'is smaller than'. In syntax the agent-patient relation is asymmetric, and the converse relation is marked by use of the passive construction or a lexicalized equivalent. Thus, if *X* opposes *Y*, then *Y* is opposed by *X*. The two relevant roles are opposer and opposed one. With reciprocal verbs (symmetrical predicates), the converse is identical to the obverse. Thus, *X* is the opponent of *Y*, and *Y* is the opponent of *X*.

The roles associated with instrumental structure are asymmetric, reflecting the fact that the hero's intention creates the axis of the narrative. The roles associated with dramatic structure are in a symmetrical relationship, reflecting the fact that there are two axes of intention, which are in conflict. Hero and villain have a coeval status in their direct confrontation. From the villain's perspective, the hero is just as much an 'opposer' as the villain is from the hero's perspective. Each side in the conflict has its own goal to achieve. This conflict between two sides usually is resolved by the domination of one side, i.e., the symmetric relationship resolves into an asymmetric relationship.

Since the system of roles for dramatic structure is quite distinct, in terms of logical and grammatical properties, from the system associated with instrumental structure, it is confusing to have the term *hero* common to both systems. Given its strong connotation of centrality, of being widely interpreted as having the sense '*the* main character', the term *hero* is especially appropriate for instrumental structure. Furthermore, a suitable set of terms, with widespread currency, is at hand to refer to the two roles associated with dramatic structure—these are *protagonist* and *antagonist*, which derive from Greek *agon*, 'assembly, contest'.

Although *protagonist* and *antagonist* are in widespread usage, their status as narrative roles, as distinct from the individuals filling these roles, is not the accepted sense. Typically, *protagonist* is used as a term completely synonymous with *hero* in the sense 'main character'. In the plural, the term refers to the major characters, as opposed to the minor ones.[42] However, as we use these terms, they do not refer to any sort of ranking of characters in terms of importance. Since only two narrative roles are postulated, the

[42] Lévi-Strauss (1960: 129) refers to Propp's seven narrative roles as *protagonistes*.

underlying assumption is that dramatic narrative structure is 'polarized', and all the characters occurring in a narrative serve in one or the other role.[43] Although 'protagonist' and 'antagonist' are not sets of characters per se, these constant roles can be used to delimit sets of characters; they should thus be regarded as comparable to tagmemes, a correlation of a function and a set.

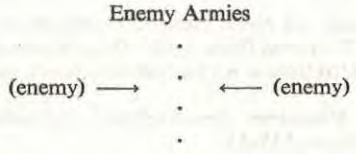
Once such sets of dramatis personae are established on the basis of a shared function in the narrative structure, nothing in principle prevents an internal ranking, such that one main character for each set is recognized, with the others being his 'satellites'. Furthermore, one can proceed to recognize one of the two 'main' dramatis personae as *the* major dramatis persona. Such rankings remain largely a matter of the intuition of the analyst, for we have very little explicit awareness of the factors that enter into the determination of the central figure of a narrative. It is not a simple matter of the dramatis persona who is the victor, the ultimate dominating force. The situation is quite different with respect to instrumental structure —its fundamental asymmetry leaves no doubt as to the identity of *the* major figure.

In conclusion, it should be reemphasized that this essay has dealt almost exclusively with character as part of a theory of narration; that is, it has dealt with systems of narrative roles that are an intrinsic part of the propositions representing narrative structure. Very little has been said about 'character' in the sense of the aggregate of properties of participants that are subordinate to the propositions. However, we suggested earlier that the narrative roles are presupposed by any of the possible approaches to the analysis of the properties. We will briefly discuss here how the narrative roles bear on the thematic approach, in which properties of participants are given symbolic significance. Our intent here is not so much to explicate the thematic approach as it is to further clarify the nature and essential differences between the two systems of narrative roles.

Most approaches to thematic analysis assume that theme is describable in terms of polar opposites (antonyms and complementaries) such as life vs. death, good vs. evil, order vs. disorder, etc. This conception of thematic structure thus implicitly assumes the dramatic type of narrative structure. At the very least, dramatic structure, with its polarized pair of narrative roles, lends itself to thematic interpretation more readily than does instrumental structure. It is suggestive in this regard that the English words

[43] However, provision must be made for the possible existence of very minor characters (e.g., Tobe, the Negro servant in Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily") who serve to 'mediate' the interaction of the two sides; cf. Propp's 'special personages for connections' (80).

opposite and *opponent* both derive from the same Latin word, *opponere* (the former from the past participial form, the latter from the present participial). Ogden (1967) notes that the *op-* in Latin *oppono* goes back to the asymmetry of the human body: although the body has two sides and two ends (symmetry), it 'faces' in one direction. "When, therefore, it faces itself in a mirror . . . or when it faces another body, an enemy (enantios), that which it faces, that which is placed over against (anti-contra-ob) it, is the primary opposite from which the long line of metaphor is derived" (96–7). Ogden continues, "both individual facings and the facings of armies, or more generally the facings of all opposed forces, are directional oppositions" (97). We may diagram this situation as follows (cf. Ogden, 16).



As we noted earlier, the symmetrical nature of the conflictive interaction central to dramatic structure yields function-derived roles that are non-distinct. We can now add to that discussion the observation that differentiation of the two sides is effected by associating 'opposite' terms with them; e.g., antonyms such as good/bad. Consider the terms *protagonist* and *antagonist*, which we use to label the two roles associated with dramatic structure. *Protagonist* can be analyzed into two semantic components, the relation (two-place function) *oppose* (*X*, *Y*) and the property *good* (*X*). *Antagonist* can be analyzed into the components *oppose* (*Y*, *X*) and *bad* (*Y*). (The terms *hero* and *villain* have much stronger connotations of good and bad, respectively.) It can be seen why the protagonist and antagonist roles readily lend themselves to the carrying of thematic 'polar opposites'—these may either supercede or be superimposed on the preexistent opposites of 'good' and 'bad'.

In the case of the roles associated with instrumental structure, there is no need for polar opposites to be components of their meaning. We can most easily illustrate this point with kinship terms such as *father*, *son*, etc. (The father-son relation is comparable to the helper-hero relation.) The term *father* can be analyzed into two semantic components, *male* (*X*) and *parent of*(*X*, *Y*). The relational component, unlike the one of *protagonist* and *antagonist*, is asymmetric: if *X* is the parent of *Y*, then *Y* is the offspring of *X*. The asymmetry in itself effectively differentiates the two participants, so that no contrast in properties is necessary; cf. the pair *father-son*, where

each has as a semantic component the property 'male'. Of course, if *father* is paired with *daughter*, we do have a 'polar opposition' between the properties 'male' and 'female'.

We do not mean to suggest that narratives with instrumental structure are incapable of bearing thematic significance. However, the preceding discussion should indicate why such narratives less readily bear such significance, or are less amenable to such an interpretation. Whereas 'opposition' (antonymy or complementarity) is gratuitous and happenstance in the case of the roles associated with instrumental structure, it is an intrinsic and necessary aspect of the roles associated with dramatic structure.

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