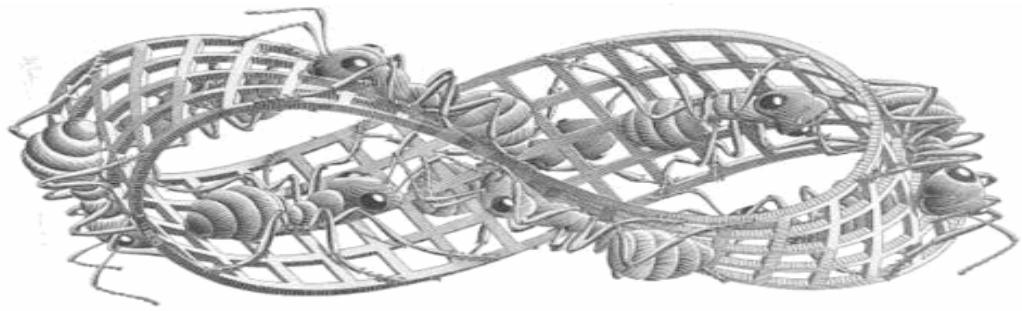
a place of mind

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

EDCP 585
Fieldwork in Actor-Network Theory
Lecture Notes

S. Petrina (22 April 2019)

III. Intellectual History of ANT, II
Actors, Agents, Actants : : Reactors, Counter-Actors, Double Agents, Reactants



1. **Actantics (Dramatics & Theatrology)**
    a. Note that for all ANT has had to say about networks, very, very little is said about actors. One gets the notion that "actors" are a given, taken for granted entity (i.e., without history or drama).
    b. Are actors networks? If an actor is a network, is a network an actor?
    c. Actor-Network Theory
        i. Callon & Latour ("Unscrewing the Big Leviathan," 1981, p. 286): To replace the usual divisions (macro/micro; human/animal; social/technical), which we have shown to be unprofitable, we need terms in keeping with the methodological principles stated above.
            1. What is an 'actor'? Any element which bends space around itself, makes other elements dependent upon itself and translates the will into a language of its own. An actor makes changes in the set of elements and concepts habitually used to describe the social and the natural worlds. By stating what belongs to the past, and of 'what the future consists, by defining what comes before and what comes after, by building up balance sheets, by drawing up chronologies, it imposes its own space and time. It defines space and its organization, sizes and their measures, values and standards, the stakes and rules of the game— the very existence of the game itself. Or else it allows another, more powerful than itself, to lay them down.
        ii. Latour ("On Actor-Network Theory: A Few Clarifications," 1990/1996)
            1. Latour (1996, p. 374): First, the granting of humanity to an individual actor, or the granting of collectivity, or the granting of anonymity, of a zoomorphic appearance, of amorphousness, of materiality, requires paying the *same semiotic price*. The effects will be different, the genres will be different, but not the *work* of attributing, imputing, distributing action, competences, performances and relations. Secondly, actors are not conceived as fixed entities but as flows, as circulating objects undergoing trials, and their stability, continuity, isotopy has to be obtained by other actions and other trials. Finally, what is kept from semiotics is the crucial practice to grant texts and discourses the ability to define also their context, their authors— in the text —, their readers —in fabula — and even their own demarcation and

metalanguage. All the problems of the analyst are shifted to the "text itself" without ever being allowed to escape into the context (Greimas 1976). Down with interpretation! Down with the context!

2. Latour (1996, p. 374): When it says that actors may be human or unhuman, that they are infinitely pliable, heterogeneous, that they are free associationists, know no differences of scale, that there is no inertia, no order, that they build their own temporality, this does not qualify any real observed ac- tor, but is the necessary condition for the *observation* and the recording of actors to be possible. Instead of constantly predicting how an actor should behave and which associations are allowed a priori, ANT makes no assumption at all, and in order to remain uncommitted it needs to set its instrument by insisting on infinite pliability and absolute freedom.

iii. Latour ("On Recalling ANT," 1997)

1. The second nail in the coffin is the word actor in its hyphenated connection with the notion of net. From day one, I objected to the hyphen because inevitably it would remind sociologists of the agency/structure cliché, or *`pont aux ânes'* [tool to hold the horse's mouth open] as we say in French.
2. The managerial, engineering, machiavelian, demiurgic character of ANT has been criticized many times and by many people in this room. More exactly, critiques have alternated, quite predictably, between the two poles one turned around the actor, the other turned around the network; the first critiques have insisted on the demiurgic, male like, hairy gorilla character; the second on the dissolution of humanity into a field of forces where morality, humanity, psychology was absent; demiurgy on one side; death of man on the other.
3. No matter how prepared I am to criticize the theory, I still think that these two symmetrical critiques are off target. The idea was never to occupy a position into the agency/structure debate, not even to **overcome** this contradiction. Contradictions should not be overcome, but ignored or bypassed. But I agree that the hyphenated term made impossible to see clearly the bypass operation that has been attempted.

iv. Hence, for Latour given the "bypass operation," it might once have been redundant and counter-productive to talk about "actors" and "networks," yet one is left, as the recent Latour (2013) demonstrates, ostensibly with one option: compose, trace, follow, and talk about actors and networks (i.e., follow the evidence).

v. Murdoch (1997, p. 332): Actors are networks rather than human beings and these networks are relentlessly heterogeneous. It makes little sense, therefore, to delineate a humanistic geography when humans and nonhumans so promiscuously exchange properties with one another (as Latour, 1993, believes to be the case at the present time).

vi. Higgott (1998, p. 5): **Informal regional economic integration is emerging de facto**. This is market-led and the principal actors are networks of firms and corporations regionalising production in East Asia.

d. Actor Theory (Actors Act)

i. What is an Actor?

1. Greimas (1982, p. 7): Historically the term actor has gradually replaced character (and dramatis persona), indicating thereby a greater desire for precision and generalization— a magic carpet or a business firm, for example, are actors— thus extending its use outside the purely literary.
    a. An actor may be **individual**, (for example, Peter), or **collective** (for example, a crowd), **figurative** (anthropomorphic or zoomorphic), or **nonfigurative** (for example, fate). The individuation of an actor is often marked by the attribution of a proper noun, though that does

not in any way constitute a *sine qua non* of its existence— a vague thematic role, "father," for example, may often be used to denote the actor.

b. At first, the term actor was linked and opposed to the term actant. From a comparative point of view, when dealing with a corpus of tale variants, it can be noted that a single subject-actant, for example, can be manifested by several occurrence-actors.

2. Boal, quoted in Cruz (1990, p. 43): The third chart asked, "What Is an Actor?" "An actor is a pressure cooker," Boal answered. "Inside the pressure cooker is a *person* with endless possibilities. Only some of those possibilities get expressed— the *person*ality. The theatre is the fire under the cooker." What the actor plays is the *person*age or character.

ii. Greimas (1982, p. 8): Along with temporalization and spatialization, actorialization is one of the components of discoursivization, and, like these two, is based on the implementation of the operations of engagement and disengagement.

iii. Lukács (1909/1965 pp. 160-161): The stylistic problem is defined under these conditions, that is, by displacements in the relations among men as caused by the new life (the dramatic material) and by the new ways men have of regarding and evaluating their relationships (the dramatic *principium stilisationis*). Limitations set by these possibilities become the limits of the new drama's expressive potential; and both types of limitation produce the questions which can set the stylistic problem. Perhaps we may briefly formulate these questions: what kind of man [or woman] does this life produce, and how can he [she or they] be depicted dramatically? What is his destiny, what typical events will reveal it, how can these events be given adequate dramatic expression? How does man [or woman] in the new life relate to the men [and women] in the world about him [her or them]? We must phrase the question thus, if we wish to arrive at a man [or woman] suitable for drama. Man [or woman] in isolation is not suited to the drama; no literary art can result from an isolation of human existence which would correspond to the art of portraiture.

iv. Stauffer (1949, p. 336): Where is the actor? In the original instinct? the recreated instinct? the moral endeavor? or the practical act which the world sees? How can we tell the dancer from the dance?

v. Singer (1961, pp. 88-89): The fourth issue in the phenomenological dispute concerns the very nature of the nation as an actor in international relations. Who or what is it that we study? Is it a distinct social entity with well-defined boundaries-a unity unto itself? Or is it an agglomeration of individuals, institutions, customs, and procedures? It should be quite evident that those who view the nation or the state as an integral social unit could not attach much utility to the phenomenological approach, particularly if they are prone to concretize or reify the abstraction. Such abstractions are incapable of perception, cognition, or anticipation (unless, of course, the reification goes so far as to anthropomorphize and assign to the abstraction such attributes as will, mind, or personality). On the other hand, if the nation or state is seen as a group of individuals operating within an institutional framework, then it makes perfect sense to focus on the phenomenal field of those individuals who participate in the policy-making process. In other words, people are capable of experiences, images, and expectations, while institutional abstractions are not, except in the our actor cannot even have a phenomenal field, there is little point in employing a phenomenological approach.

vi. Schyberg (1961, p. 58): What is especially attractive to me in this investigation, is, among other things, the possibility of gaining access, through the study of the actor, to the mechanical process of artistic creation itself. The art of acting is the only art

form in which the creative moment, the great psychological puzzle of all art forms, the secret of talent, is, to a certain degree, under conscious control of the artist, and therefore can be observed, because the actor must create at a certain hour of the day, and therefore must have worked out the means to master the necessary process. Because of his profession, the actor must create consciously.

1. (p. 63): At the bottom of the mystery of the art of acting lies something which is at the bottom of most of the mysteries of human behavior: egoism. Or let us use the more pleasant expression: self-assertion. He [or she] who play-acts asserts himself [or herself] abruptly by talking and doing, by creating. He [she or they] provokes laughter or admiration. He [or she] is somebody, and he rises above the others, both above those whom he [she or they] imitates, and above those who are degraded into spectators: see what I can do?
2. (pp. 73, 76): Shakespeare's ideal is clearly enough the actor who feels his [her or their] role; Moliere's, the actor who characterizes it. In this difference lies the seed for a substantial part of the debate about modern theories of acting.... The complete actor is the one who shows us the true face of life in his playing. The comic and tragic masks are only symbols of the Janusfaced theatre. The true face of life is the tragic and comic masks combined in one. The theatre achieves its greatest, its most moving and unforgettable effects, when the tragic and comic elements of existence are united in a whimsical, poignant mixture and whole. It is then that we first experience the true catharsis, and the pain passes healingly through our senses. The actors capable of uniting the two faces into one are the true *histrionem*, the brilliant *hypokrites*, and merit the designation Shakespeare gave his actors in Hamlet: the history of the age in brief recapitulation.

vii. Schyberg (1962a, pp. 107-108): The actor in the modern sense of the word has come into existence. Theory in the art of acting is formulated and appears in print. The actor has come into existence. The actor has become an artist. Or has he [she or they]? We must put a question mark here immediately. Is an actor truly an artist?... Nathan may be right that not all actors are artists. Even Herman Bang, the Danish theatre expert who probably said the best things about the art of acting, justifiably called attention to the fact that "out of every hundred [actors], ninety-nine are always craftsmen and skilled laborers, imitators and routinists," and Stanislavski said in his principle theoretical work, basing his statement on a lifetime of mixed and bitter experiences with theatre people: "But the overwhelming majority of our actors are no more than petty tradespeople who make their career on the stage."

1. (pp. 110-111): Through acting words arise from the dead and come alive. The actor gives tangible existence to something that is only written and imaginary. He [she or they] transforms a fictitious character into a real human being. He [she or they] stands with his [her or their] person half-way between fiction and reality and, with the help of his [her or their] person, will unite them both and incorporate them in a higher entirety in his [her or their] person. The human body is the material with which he [she or they] works. Not only his voice but also his movements, carriage— eye expression, bodily rhythm, and the rhythm, tempo, strength and weakness in intonations and turns of phrases, must all-through imitation and characterization simultaneously convey an impression of a concrete verisimilitude and by means of intuition, imagination and soulfulness— of a higher truth which is immediately convincing, whether the actor is speaking or is silent. The words are the author's but the intonations are the actor's.

viii. Schyberg (1962b, p. 70): Wilhelm Meister did not become an actor himself, for he could only play himself-the characteristic sign of a dilettante. Meister became, as Goethe in conformity with Diderot gradually came to acknowledge, what the actor could never become: a human being; that is to say, an ethical, a social, a valuable human being. We are approaching the critical point. Is this the case? Is the actor not a human being?

1. (pp. 72-73): For the most part, actors, who "write books" often and willingly though most often with the help of others and mostly books aimed at self-glorification, memoirs about past triumphs or the reverse about the outrageous conspiracies which hindered these triumphs-have written surprisingly little about the nature of their art and the psychology of acting.... But naturally the shortage of informative statements about the technique of acting made by actors themselves is also connected, in a majority of cases, with an inadequate ability in the great performers to give a written account, to define that which their genius compelled them to do. It is difficult enough to act; to explain it satisfactorily in writing is nearly impossible.
2. (p. 77): In no other art form is yesterday's idol sacrificed so ruthlessly for today's favorite. In no other art form is an artist transformed overnight from the only "modern" to an absurd antique. Something of the spirit of the dark, barbaric and bloody battles connected with· chariot races, gladiators and martyrs still clings to the theatre. The theatre also is an arena— and a place of execution. Even today human sacrifices take place. In a figurative sense it is the art which devours people! The actor becomes the vanquished gladiator-and pity the vanquished!— or the sacrificed Christian; bound to his cross he is burned for the pleasure of the audience. A theatre public wants to see new blood.
3. (p. 78): What is required of an actor? It is possible for him to become the unique one who, by force of talent and originality, modifies and compels public taste to adopt new criteria for criticism, but generally he must represent a certain universally accepted type-the common denominator for the taste and desires of many people. If a person is not such a type he should think twice before seeking a position in the theatre. It is a necessary condition for most actors. But of course this art form, like all others, has its rich, many-sided nuances and different genres. There are the real, the genuine actors; and then there are those upon whom we hang, and into whom we weave, our wishful dreams. They may be stars in the theatre world, but they are sooner our instruments than we are theirs. Then there are the various categories of the art form, conditioned by the different character types: the hero and the lover, the comedian and the character actor, the paramour and the soubrette, the *raisonneur* and the simpleton, the funny old codger and the tragedian.

ix. Strauss (1985, pp. 5-6): The distinction between tasks and actors who carry them out needs to be taken with the utmost analytic seriousness, because they do represent different issues. (at any rate the distinction is central to the analysis in this paper.) The specific questions about tasks of course include: what, where, when, how, for how long, how complex, how well defined are their boundaries, how attainable are they under current working conditions, how precisely are they defined in their operational details, and what is the expected level of performance. (Which of those are the most salient dimensions depends on the organizational-work context under study, and we cannot emphasize too much that it is the researcher who must discover these saliences.) Two other important questions are: how they are put together in task clusters, and linked together in an organization of tasks. "Work" which constitutes the total arc, or some portion of it, is then

"decomposed" (Gerson, 1983), even perhaps in some arcs down to detailed mini-tasks-the most minute of tasks (such is epitomized, say, by the staggering number and minuteness of mini-tasks entailed in getting the space mission to and from the moon).

1. What about the carrying out of tasks by an actor? And what is an actor? An actor can be a unit of any size: a person, team, department, sub-division, division, organization, coalition of organizations. Actors can vary in a number of attributes: for instance, experience, skill, knowledge, training, occupation or other social world from which they come. Or as teams or units they may have worked together before or somewhat or not at all, and in various sub-combinations or numbers, skills etc. Actors in the total division of labor can of course act separately, having different tasks to perform, or may share some or all of the tasks. And of course they may work in close proximity or distantly, so their respective work is visible or not visible to the other.

x. Schweizer (1993, p. 470): In this paper I shall explore the prospects of one discrete method, lattice analysis, for the elucidation of the ordering of actors and possessions in material possessions data. Ethnographic and comparative research produces many data sets which simply specify for a set of actors (persons, households) which items from a list of possessions considered relevant in the community studied are present or absent…. Bourdieu analyzes the symbolic and social values associated with particular possessions-the way in which classes and class fractions reproduce themselves by paying close attention to life-styles and engaging in ever-shifting competitive consumptive displays. He hypothesises a mapping between social actors (that is, classes or class fractions) and particular patterns of consumption and uses the statistical technique of correspondence analysis (Weller and Romney 1990) to represent it in a common geometric space of low dimensionality.

xi. Lindholm (1997, p. 754): The postmodern critique therefore celebrates with enthusiasm a situation that it is not at all clear we ought to applaud. Motivated by a laudable zeal to realize the potential of the individual as a creative and autonomous actor, post- modernist theorists have imagined a world of infinite possibilities, where the creative anthropologist enjoys the pleasure of trying on and taking off cultural masks at will.... But once all the masks are off, where is the actor? And how does this tenuous figure decide which mask to wear next?

xii. Actors Act

1. Vandenberghe (1999, p. 40): The break with Levi-Strauss's objectivism comes at a later stage, when Bourdieu is going to criticize the "scholastic fallacy" that consists in the intellectualistic transposition of the theoretical models in the head of the actors, enthroning metadiscourses and metapractices as the principle of discourses and practices, suggesting that actors act according to the model, which is a bit like assuming that we constantly walk around like tourists in a foreign city with a map in our hands. As we will see later, in discussing the notion of habitus, the invisible structure of differences takes on real existence and is "occasionally" revealed in ordinary existence, veiled in the lived form of keeping distances, of affinities and incompatibilities, sympathies and rejections, etc.
2. Abell (2015, p. 30): The way in which film actors act is in many ways like that in which theater actors act, just as the way in which printmakers mark a matrix is in many respects like the way in which artists draw. Nevertheless, film actors often act differently from theater actors because they are aware of the effects cinematography will have on the representation of their

performances, just as printmakers mark matrices differently because they are aware of the effects that mechanical printmaking processes will have on the resultant image. Film actors will express emotions more subtly than theater actors when they know that they are being filmed in close-up, because they know that the more obvious expressions required for a theater audience will seem overblown when seen in close range on film.

e. Rational Actor Theory

i. Renwick (1995, p. 2): How does a society composed of selfish citizens exist without the oppressive authoritarian government required by Hobbes to prevent chaos? Smith's answer was a gentle piece of brilliance. Each of us can pursue our individual self-interest and, if there is no government interference, the free market will serve as an invisible hand to ensure that the common good will emerge. This means human nature can indeed be self- interested, as Hobbes had suggested and as much empirical evidence has seemed to confirm; yet we may avoid the evils of Hobbes's authoritarian solution by recourse to the market mechanism. As articulated by Smith and his immediate followers in economics, neo-classical economic theory carries certain basic assumptions both about human psychology and about the way the world does and should work. Let me mention seven that are discussed later in this volume and which seem critical for understanding why economists may differ from other social scientists in their explanations of human behavior.

1. Actors pursue goals.
2. These goals reflect the actor's perceived self-interest.
3. Behavior results from a process that involves, or functions as if it entails, conscious choice.
4. The individual is the basic agent in society.
5. Actors have preferences that are consistent and stable.
6. If given options, actors will choose the alternative with the highest expected utility.
7. Actors possess extensive information on both the available alternatives and the likely consequences of their choices.

ii. Although there have been important modifications in it over the years, it is not unfair to claim that "[p]ractically the whole of classic economic theory is constructed within the framework of this model" (Simon, 1982, Vol. 1, p. 213).

f. Actor Analysis

i. Warren (1970, p. 222): In devising his own model for analyzing Metro Toronto, Kaplan asserts that "a partially integrated system, like Metro Toronto, must be described from the bottom up" (1967:22). He refers to this approach as actor analysis as distinguished from system analysis. He then considers how integration, both normative and nonnormative, is effected in the interaction of individual actors.

ii. Fischer (1977, p. 6): Actor Analysis: Based upon the identification and description of the resource development program and the supporting infrastructure it becomes possible to identify actors. It must be emphasized at this point, however, that in addition to simplifying the "technical" aspects of a program and the sup- porting infrastructure one must include the consequences or impacts of such activities. It is only when these are also taken into account that a reasonable assurance emerges that the list of actors is a comprehensive one.

iii. Hermans (2008, p. 2): Because the collection of suitable methods is not limited to methods for stakeholder analysis only, I refer to them as actor analysis methods to avoid confusion with the more limited notion of stakeholder analysis methods as they are generally conceived.

iv. Kermode, review of *Actors and Acting in Shakespeare* (2013, p. 271): The first chapter deftly weaves a carefully historicized study of acting terminology—making a "face," "gesture," and "accent"; "presence," "action," and "imitation."

g. Actant Theory

i. Greimas (1973/1987, p. 106): The linguistic reinterpretation we have proposed for *dramatis personae* and which is based on the Proppian description of the Russian tale of the fantastic, in the first instance seeks to establish a distinction between actants, having to do with narrative syntax, and actors, which are recognizable in the particular discourses in which they are manifested. This distinction, which we continue to consider relevant- if only because it has allowed us to separate neatly the two autonomous levels on which analysis of narrativity should be centered— of course has raised several problems from the beginning. Of itself this demonstrates the complexity of the problematics of narrativity. For example, we know that the relation between actor and actant, far from being a simple relation of inclusion of a given occurrence into a class, is instead twofold (see accompanying diagram).

1. (p. 112): actants and actors are not identical. 1. An examination of the object actant allowed us to identify two kinds of objects: those that are invested with "objective values" and those that possess "subjective values." Although our terminology is not perfect, the distinction is most certainly based on a structural criterion, that of their mode of attribution. This, in the first case, is accomplished according to *having* and, in the second, according to *being*. Another criterion must, however, be added to this one, that of their actorial manifestation in discourse. Whereas those objects invested with "objective values" are present in discourse in the form of individualized and independent actors (food or children in Tom Thumb), objects having subjective value are manifested by actors who are conjointly and simultaneously subjects and objects (Tom Thumb, as actor, is at the same time a hero-subject and an object of consumption for the giant, and ultimately a provider for his whole family). Thus, actantial roles can be distributed among actors in a conjoined or disjoined way.
2. Greimas (1982, p. 5): An actant can be thought of as that which accomplishes or undergoes an act, independently of all other determinations. Thus, to quote L. Tesniere, from whom this term is borrowed, "actants are beings or things that participate in processes in any form whatsoever, be it only a walk-on part and in the most passive way." From this point of view, "actant" designates a type of syntactic unit, properly formal in character, which precedes any semantic and/or ideological investment.
    a. The concept of actant has the advantage of replacing, especially in literary semiotics, the term of character as well as that of "dramatis persona" (V. Propp), since it applies not only to human beings but also to animals, objects, or concepts. Furthermore, the term character remains ambiguous since it also corresponds in part to the concept of actor.

ii. Bal, *Narratology* (1999, p. 197): In this model, the classes of actors are called actants. An actant is a class of actors that shares a certain characteristic quality. That shared characteristic is related to the teleology of the fabula as a whole. An actant is therefore a class of actors whose members have an identical relation to the aspect of telos which constitutes the principle of the fabula. That relation we call the function. This is a typically structuralist model: It is conceived In terms of fixed relations between classes of phenomena, which is a standard definition of structure.

iii.

h. Actant Analysis

i. Gahmberg (1983, p. 140): We have attempted to apply actant analysis on the "Chrysler crisis" in *Fortune* and *Business Week* (Broms and Gahmberg, 1982).
ii. White & Taket (2000, p. 702): The first phase involves identifying the details of the narrative, that is, identifying the surface structure of the narrative, by means of an actant analysis. This form of analysis is drawn from the work of Propp and Greimas, summarised in Hawkes. According to these authors, even though different narratives appear different on the surface, analysis reveals that they spring from a common structure. For example, Propp suggests that stories in many cultures share similar themes and that the number of these themes or functions is very small, whereas Greimas suggests that the functions of 'spheres of action' within a narrative can be organised in three sets of structural relations. These are Destinator versus Receiver, Subject versus Object and Adjuvant versus Traitor. Within each of these sets of relations are pairs of actants. An actant may be a particular character or it may be a function of more than one character.

i. Character Study

i. Waack (1983, p. 80): In addition, the student teacher is encouraged to develop an extension of Stanislavski's dual role theory of acting [in *An Actor Prepares*]. This theory states that the actor performs two simultaneous functions: the actor-as-actor and the actor-as-character.
ii. Freeman (2000, p. 522): Good history, regardless of its audience, requires a finely tuned balance of historical detail, interpretation, and story-telling; it must make sense of the past on its own terms. This is the fundamental challenge of history. Character studies are one method of accomplishing this, but to have lasting value, they should not simply evaluate historical figures according to modem terms. They should bring to life specific people in a specific time and place with its own values and challenges. Books that manage this feat have the potential to do something really valuable-to bridge the gap between scholarly inquiry and the reading public.
iii. Haselstein (2003, p. 724): The literary portrait is particularly instructive in this regard. Before and after Stein, it was (and remains) an undertheorized and neglected minor genre which carried the historical burden of a comparison and competition between the "sister arts." Its discontinuous history is intimately bound up with the changing configurations in the systems of the arts, of genres and modes. Since classical antiquity, studies of character had not been visually oriented; but as the modern term "literary portrait" indicates, from a certain historical period on, a text with the objective of characterizing an actual person had to compete with painting, and to emulate the individual life-likeliness of visual representation.... Literary portraits can be defined as short and condensed prose texts which do not employ narration and ignore chronological time in their identification of psychological traits held to be essential for the represented subject in question. A variety of strategies are used to that end: the description of visual appearance figures prominently among them, as does the presentation of characteristic thoughts and actions and turns of phrase.
    1. (pp. 725-726): Referentiality is the crucial trait needed to distinguish the portrait from the better-known and in many ways similar genre of character studies, for texts in the Theophrastan tradition present imaginary individuals as representatives of social, moral, or psychological categories of human beings. To construct a character, details of typical behavior, habits, and abstract characteristics are defined and described as elements of a plausibly conceived personality; brevity is essential in creating the impression of a self-contained human being. When this tradition was rediscovered in the seventeenth century, writers relied on rhetorical models of probability and on

contemporary models of character typology just as the classical authors had done in their time.

2. This textbook juxtaposition of portrait and character suggests clear cut boundaries between the two genres. But particularly in French character studies of the late seventeenth and the eighteenth century, the Theophrastan tradition merged with a concept of literary portraiture based on classical historiographic representation, on portrait painting, and on the art of aphorism developed by moralist writing. While Theophrastan studies of character were highly selective and relied on the observation of external details of appearance and behavior in constructing one ruling quality, this new type of text focused on the inner states and psychological intricacies of a person and registered habits and actions only in passing. The simplification and the static dimension inherent in Theophrastan characters were countered by notions of identity as essentially complex and self-contradictory. In historiographical texts, biographies, and memoirs, literary portraits acquired a conceptual status that corresponds to that of the anecdote, but small set-pieces of portraiture were also included in novels and salon literature.

2. Agentics @ Agency (Agents Age)

a. Human (Personal)

i. Remember, a trenchant critique by Lee & Brown (1994) is that ANT "opens discussion by problematizing the nonhuman and leaving the question of human agency itself unasked" (p. 772).

ii. Sewell (1992, "A Theory of Structure," p. 19): Any array of resources is capable of being interpreted in varying ways and, therefore, of empowering different actors and teaching different schemas. Again, this seems to me inherent in a definition of agency as the capacity to transpose and extend schemas to new contexts. Agency, to put it differently, is the actor's capacity to reinterpret and mobilize an array of resources in terms of cultural schemas other than those that initially constituted the array.

iii. Emirbayer & Mische ("What is Agency?," 1998, p. 970): What, then, is human agency? We define it as *the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments—the temporal-relational contexts of action—which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations*.

iv. Bleeker (2006, "A Manifesto for Networked Objects," p. 8): Agency is about having an ability to foment action, to be decisive and articulate, to foment action.

v. However helpful, Bleeker's commonsense notion of agency as a possession has all the same issues of interpreting power as a force that one holds in potential.

vi. Instead, agency is exercised, much like power is diffuse and exercised in a Foucauldian sense.

1. This contradicts habits of arguing or explaining that power resides in "powerful" people, institutions, machines, etc.
2. Foucault speaks of power relations or relations of power
3. Foucault (*Power/Knowledge*, 1980, pp. 98, 99): Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation.
4. One must rather conduct an ascending analysis of power, starting, that is, from its infinitesimal mechanisms, which each have their own history, their own trajectory, their own techniques and tactics, and then see how these

mechanisms of power have been – and continue to be – invested, colonised, utilised, involuted, transformed, displaced, extended etc., by ever more general mechanisms and by forms of global domination.

5. Foucault ("The Subject and Power," 1982, p. 788): *What constitutes the specific nature of power?* The exercise of power is not simply a relationship between partners, individual or collective; it is a way in which certain actions modify' others. Which is to say, of course, that something called Power, with or without a capital letter, which is assumed to exist universally in a concentrated or diffused form, does not exist. Power exists only when it is put into action, even if, of course, it is integrated into a disparate field of possibilities brought to bear upon permanent structures.
6. Power and knowledge imply one another (i.e., power-knowledge) and this suggests the same diffuse and distributed state of knowledge.
7. Foucault (*Discipline and Punish*, 1975, pp. 27-28): Perhaps, too, we should abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands and its interests. Perhaps we should abandon the belief that power makes mad and that, by the same token, the renunciation of power is one of the conditions of knowledge. We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. These 'power-knowledge relations' are to be analysed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to the power system, but, on the contrary, the subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations. In short, it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles mat traver3e it and of which it is made up, that determines me forms and possible domains of knowledge.
8. To analyse the political investment of the body and the microphysics of power presupposes, therefore, that one abandons — where power is concerned — the violence-ideology opposition, the metaphor of property, the model of the contract or of conquest; that — where knowledge is concerned — one abandons the opposition between what is 'interested' and what is 'disinterested', the model of knowledge and the primacy of me subject.

b. Nonhuman (Impersonal)
    i. Shaw (2013, p. 158): Agency rests typically in an action not in a state; it's not an inevitable character of something but is built up from animation, from the ability to move, negotiate the social and physical environment, interact, and think. From what I've said so far, we can see that some degree of agency might reasonably be given in common to people and horses, even if sometimes the quality of their agency differs. Moreover, the relative significance of animal agency must be seen in conjunction with our expectations for human agency. The interaction between different agents can be important, and when we consider that action, not state, is key, then we can see that the coming together of beings raises many interesting questions for the character of agency. Some recent conceptions of agency do encourage us to stress the possible interaction, social fusion, and cohesion of a

cavalryman and his horse (and other things too). At the pinnacle of social coordination is the unity, in which the man on a horse becomes the horse-and-rider. Recently, scholars from many different quarters have resisted the somewhat atomistic assumptions of the idealized rational agent that the military general under his "mask of command" might epitomize in history. Part of the appeal of military history for exploring agency is that it's easy to see that no one individual can possibly have mattered much unless he or she were in the cockpit of an organized aggregation, whose actions were clearly different from the actions of any one man or horse.

1. This insight can be approached from a variety of fairly radical ontological directions. Cary Wolfe in his *What is Posthumanism?* urges an approach that sees the human as "fundamentally a prosthetic creature that has coevolved with various forms of technicity and materiality, forms that are radically 'not-human' and yet have nevertheless made the human what it is." Wolfe not only wants us to see the need to deconstruct the assumed and steady categories but also to recognize the dynamic interaction of beings in patterns and systems. For Wolfe—and few others so far—the fluid structures of sociologist Niklas Luhmann speak in concert with Jacques Derrida to show how the nonhuman forces a transformation of human being. Related processes are central in Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter*. There, in the service of political ecology, Bennett takes up Spinoza and Bruno Latour (among others) to see a sort of agency existing in pretty much everything. The tracing of contiguous, related actions becomes crucial. The fact that any given thing is involved in a vast range of interactions with almost infinite intermediate effects becomes central to this vision, which is another way of resisting an excessive focus on human power.

3. Actorialization and Agentialization

a. Giving Voice, Listening and Reporting : : Making Visible

i. Spivak (“Can the Subaltern Speak?”, 1988, pp. 80, 89, 92, 104):

1. For the 'true' subaltern group, whose identity is its difference, there is no unrepresentable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself; the intellectual's solution is not to abstain from representation. The problem is that the subject's itinerary has not been traced so as to offer an object of seduction to the representing intellectual. In the slightly dated language of the Indian group, the question becomes, How can we touch the consciousness of the people, even as we investigate their politics? With what voice consciousness can the subaltern speak?
2. the Other of history. That inaccessible blankness circumscribed by an interpretable text is what a postcolonial critic of imperialism would like to see developed within the European enclosure as the place of the production of theory. The postcolonial critics and intellectuals can attempt to displace their own production only by presupposing that text-inscribed blankness. To render thought or the thinking subject transparent or invisible seems, by contrast, to hide the relentless recognition of the Other by assimilation. It is in the interest of such cautions that Derrida does not invoke 'letting the other(s) speak for himself' but rather invokes an 'appeal' to or 'call' to the 'quite-other' (tout-autre as opposed to a self-consolidating other), of 'rendering delirious that interior voice that is the voice of the other in us'.
3. As Sarah Kofman has shown, the deep ambiguity of Freud's use of women as a scapegoat is a reaction-formation to an initial and continuing desire to give the hysteric a voice, to transform her into the subject of hysteria…. Thus, when confronted with the questions, Can the subaltern speak? and Can the

subaltern (as woman) speak?, our efforts to give the subaltern a voice in history will be doubly open to the dangers run by Freud's discourse. As a product of these considerations, I have put together the sentence 'White men are saving brown women from brown men' in a spirit not unlike the one to be encountered in Freud's investigations of the sentence 'A child is being beaten'.

4. The subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with 'woman' as a pious item. Representation has not withered away. The female intellectual as intellectual has a circumscribed task which she must not disown with a flourish.

ii. Riessman (1993, p. 8): Feminists, for example, emphasize "giving voice" to previously silenced groups of women by describing the diversity of their experiences. I share the goal but am more cautious. We cannot give voice, but we do hear voices that we record and interpret.

iii. Casey (1995, p. 223): The problem, after all, is not with the voices that speak but with the ears that do not hear.

b. Nonhuman Actantialization
   i. Animism, anthropomorphism, fetishism, vitalism
   ii. Ascription, personification
   iii. Do non-humans or objects speak for themselves? Can the object speak?
      1. Smith (2013): In titling the collection *Silent Messengers*, the editors wished to emphasize their view that objects do not speak for themselves but instead acquire meaning as they move.
      2. Svabo (*Portable Objects at the Museum*, 2010): Objects, and in a broader sense the museum theme, do not speak for themselves, they depend on being bridged to the visitor. This is pointed out by museum scholar Eilean Hooper-Greenhill when she writes: “Objects do not speak for themselves. There is no necessary correspondence between meaning and artifact – no essential meaning, no single signification” (Hooper-Greenhill 2006a: 236).
   iv. Can the object emerge or materialize? Which is to ask, is there auto-genesis or autopoiesis for the object? Or, is there teleonomy from raw to made?
      1. Radlov (1975, p. 118): In a wooden stump, the statue already lies which will be carved from it. It is only necessary to understand all the possibilities concealed in it.
   v. Giving Voice, Listening and Reporting : : Making Visible
      1. Do objects want to be visible?

c. The **“new” enactivism**
   i. Enactment and Re-enactment
   ii. To do and to perform

d. The **“new” animism**
   i. Latour (“Where are the Missing Masses,” 1992, p. 159-160): What is interesting in this note is the humor of attributing a human characteristic to a failure that is usually considered ‘‘purely technical.’’ This humor, however, is more profound than in the notice they could have posted: “The groom is not working.” I constantly talk with my computer, who answers back; I am sure you swear at your old car; we are constantly granting mysterious faculties to gremlins inside every conceivable home appliance, not to mention cracks in the concrete belt of our nuclear plants. Yet, this behavior is considered by sociologists as a scandalous breach of natural barriers. When you write that a groom is “on strike,” this is only seen as a “projection,” as they say, of a human behavior onto a nonhuman, cold, technical object, one by nature impervious to any feeling. This is *anthropomorphism*, which for them is a sin akin to zoophily but much worse.

ii. It is this sort of moralizing that is so irritating for technologists, because the automatic groom is already anthropomorphic through and through. It is well known that the French like etymology; well, here is another one: *anthropos* and *morphos* together mean either that which *has* human shape or that which *gives shape* to humans. The groom is indeed anthropomorphic, in three senses: first, it has been made by humans; second, it substitutes for the actions of people and is a delegate that permanently occupies the position of a human; and third, it shapes human action by prescribing back what sort of people should pass through the door. And yet some would forbid us to ascribe feelings to this thoroughly anthropomorphic creature, to delegate labor relations, to "project"—that is, to translate—other human properties to the groom.

iii. Latour ("Do Scientific Objects have a History?", 1996, p. 77): The question I want to ask is whether it is possible to develop a sort of realism that would offer the agents of the world a more interesting role than that of passive object. Strangely, not many philosophers are interested in this metaphysical question. No matter whether they worship or hate science, most thinkers take for granted that scientific objects, accessible or not, behave as realists believe them to behave— that is in a passive and indifferent manner, wholly impervious to human history. The only alternatives that most philosophers can imagine are animism and anthropomorphism, horrors to which they always prefer the canonical version of objects seen *sub specie scientiae*. A. N. Whitehead is one of the interesting exceptions, and it is his "historical realism," though largely out of fashion, that I want to use as my guide or goad for this exploration.

iv. Latour ("An Attempt at a 'Compositionist Manifesto'," 2010, p. 481): But there is no way to devise a successor to nature, if we do not tackle the tricky question of animism anew. One of the principal causes of the scorn poured by the Moderns on the sixteenth century is that those poor archaic folks, who had the misfortune of living on the wrong side of the "epistemological break," believed in a world animated by all sorts of entities and forces instead of believing, like any rational person, in an inanimate matter producing its effects only through the power of its causes. It is this conceit that lies at the root of all the critiques of environmentalists as being too "anthropocentric" because they dare to "attribute" values, price, agency, purpose, to what cannot have and should not have any intrinsic value (lions, whales, viruses, CO2, monkeys, the ecosystem, or, worst of all, Gaia). The accusation of anthropomorphism is so strong that it paralyzes all the efforts of many scientists in many fields—but especially biology—to go beyond the narrow constraints of what is believed to be "materialism" or "reductionism." It immediately gives a sort of New Age flavor to any such efforts, as if the default position were the idea of the inanimate and the bizarre innovation were the animate. Add agency? You must be either mad or definitely marginal.

v.