

1987

## General Theory of Literary Fiction

How should who communicate what <sup>(deliberate non-truths)</sup> to-whom by-what-medium  
in-what-form, why.

Under what conditions are deliberately <sup>(admitted)</sup> untruths written & conveyed

Re each matter, we describe the situation, criticize it, analyze it, prescribe criteria and procedures.

### The Nature of Communication

#### Truth & Untruth

#### Deliberate untruth

#### Literary untruth

### The Ethics of Communication

#### The Nature of "Good Untruth"

#### The <sup>relative and comparative</sup> Effectiveness of Good & Bad Untruth

#### Who Should Write

#### Who Should Publish

#### Who Should Control

#### Who should Read and Hear of Writing

#### What Should be Said

#### How Should It be Said

# General Theory of Literary Fiction (Fiction & Literature)

Truth & Fiction: The Problem of the Novel June 1987 Sty...

a General Theory of Literary Rhetoric

Long novels & short novels

\* The longer the novel the more there is to say,

The shorter the novel the less there is to say.

One has the feeling in reading Marg. Duras' novels that they have from shorter but are all too long

Therefore, words, phrases, sentences that are essential grow fewer instead of greater in popularity to the novel.

- A communicates
1. Truth (Non-truth)
  2. Fiction (i.e. deliberate non-truth)
- Why how when in what form w/ what effect

I Describe what:  
II Prescribe which:

A<sub>1</sub> communicates X<sub>1</sub>  
to B<sub>1</sub> by M<sub>1</sub> means

why?  
to what effect?

EB277 (Novel) outside conventional but well-done

Characteristics

Plot

Character

Scene or setting

Narrative Method of pt. of view of narrator

Scope (dimension)

[Length]

Morph, symbolism, significance

Style (romantic, impression, expression, surreal, avant-garde)

Uses

interpret of life

& possession of

entertainment, escape

regret

change of culture

creator of life style by & assiter of taste

Types

historical

piquerique

gothic

psychological

warmers

epistolary

pastoral

apprenticeship (bildungsroman)

roman a clef

roman a clef

cult or coterie

detective, mystery, Miller

western

best seller

fantasy & prophecy

proletarian

erotic & satirical farce

Ch. 2.1.1. allegorical theories

Structuralist, drug users (hallucinatory)



Compare literary lying w

- religious lying
- political lying: <sup>everyday lying +</sup> policy + nationalism etc + ruling formulae
- lovers' & friends' lying
- parental lying
- business, sport & game, etc. lying
- historians' lying
- scientific & scholarly lying = modelling, prejudice, dogmatism etc.
- ~~not~~ advertisers' lying
- unconscious lying in all above (ideological & psychopathic)
- phenomenology of truth; pragmatism of truth



For all of above, lit lying is not only excusable: it is <sup>in some</sup> ~~of~~ great public benefit. It is <sup>among</sup> the best forms of lying. Give many examples in all areas above where fiction told lies that were antidotes to those lies. Further fiction reaches out beyond the truths of these areas into further & more imaginative & important truths.

→ explain later also why autobiog. & biog cannot attain the level of truth <sup>of fiction</sup> fiction ~~is~~ is capable of of which non-fiction prose is capable of. One comes to wonder indeed whether autobiog (& biog) insofar as they tell of the self must invariably be apologies, confessions, admissions of failure, <sup>self-</sup> exposés pro bono publico.

# The profits of lying by Fiction-writing

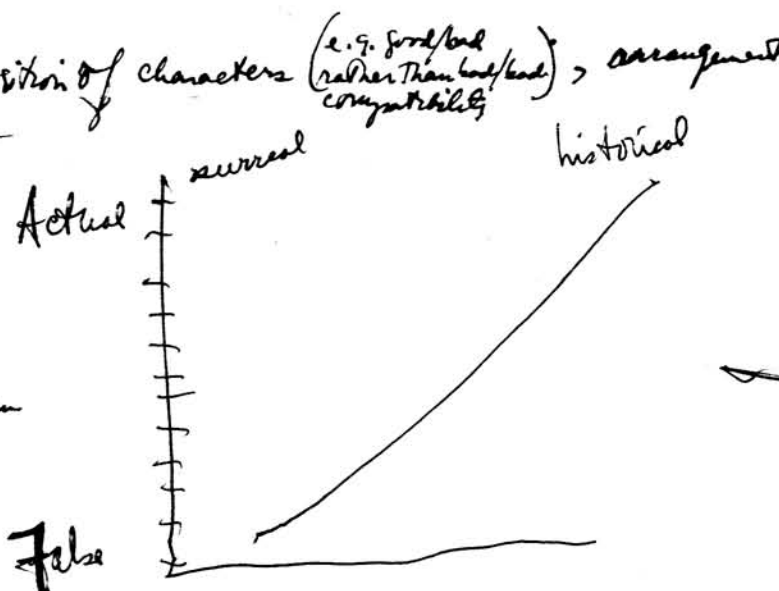
- \* No lack of documents
- \* All-purposive <sup>maker of</sup> Plot, action, char. etc.
- \* Sees future, past & present
- ∴ no embarrassing gaps resembling brain-lapses as w/ ~~autobio.~~
- ∴ fullness
- ∴ can set as many triggers, traps, etc. whenever & where necessary: complete control of time, space

With all of these advantages why isn't Fiction overwhelmingly more appealing than Truth

Ultimately, a great part of fate of fiction or truth, novel or biography, may be in the READER: Is the reader changing. Is there a fiction-prone or truth-prone culture? Examine what fiction does for the reader, as opposed to non-fiction. Will (Have) these functions be always pressing upon literature: heroes, gods, spectacular deeds, good/over/bad, weird locales (lost continents etc.), incongruous (impossible) settings like Time Machine etc.

Also important: timing, juxtaposition of characters (e.g. good/bad rather than bad/bad), arrangement of climaxes, satisfying beginnings & endings, elegant elisions of speech & dress & movements.

Also sheer richness (or poverty). The "Sheermers" that is possible (the extra bullets that can be fired) etc.



Also the heuristic function is easier in some ways (scope, expedience, etc.) but of interest (how'd we reach the North Pole etc.).

Literature creates its own elite. The "buffs", "fans", "connoisseurs".

# The Art of Fiction

A <sup>what</sup> tells B  
What, in part or all,  
pneumatology  
pneumatic!

What:  
PAST { should have been  
could have been  
not should or could but (portrayed as having been  
dreamt)

PRESENT { may be  
should be  
is postulated or dreamt to be

FUTURE { might become  
should "  
is postulated or dreamt to become

PLUS, WHAT WAS, IS, WILL BE  
(in varying proportions to the foregoing)

by means of  
(all the means of getting a  
message through)

in order to  
make money from B (as entertain,  
influence B (fool, intimidate)  
enlighten, dominate,  
help materially  
or physically)

The truth in fiction is that the  
novel is the center of the  
universe of the imagination.

Why are we - in our - writing, playing  
How do we know what to do?

going back to legends,  
lore, fables, secret history,  
rites & love,

## The heart of a novel is its lie.

The silliest kind of literary criticism is that which seeks to  
discover all the details of truth contained in a novel.  
If employs science to wrong end, since the criterion should be  
how well the author lies. If many matters are true,  
their discovery may help in other ways than the issue whether the  
novel is good. A novel 100% false is no ~~less~~ worse good fact  
than a novel 1% false - eg. may help discover a fact of history  
which is accountable & undiscovered